



February MasterMind Meetup
Thursday, February 25, 2016

Crystal Cook: Welcome to our special training with Greg Gifford, "Local SEO - Don't Risk Your Business." Please type any questions you have in the Q&A Box.

Participant: I have multiple websites that are targeted to local niche markets. One ranks extremely well in Local Search for its keywords and I would like to try to get another site ranked in local for a set of totally different keywords. I can give a different phone number, website, but office location would be the same. Is there anyway to do this?

Greg Gifford:

So when it comes to the NAP information, you've got name, address, phone number... as long as 2 of the 3 are different, you're okay. So if it's a different phone number and a different business name with the same address, then that's still okay and you can still do that.

So I'm assuming when she said could give a different phone number, website, but office location would still be the same that the address is the only thing that's the same. Now if it's the same business name and she's doing two websites, that's going to be much more difficult and I would wonder why she'd want to do a different website, as opposed to just doing it all on one site.

Participant: I have a client who recently moved the location of their mechanics shop about seven miles. We've tried to change this in GMB but they have a Post Office Box, and they haven't received a postcard, we've requested twice, but no post card shows up. How can we verify the change of address with GMB when we have changed locations and now have a PO Box.

Greg Gifford:

The big problem here is why, if they have a physical location, are they using a PO Box? There's a huge difference between using a PO Box to get your mail and using an actual address in Google, because that's where your address is located. You don't necessarily have to receive all your mail there, but I don't understand why they'd be wanting to use a PO Box when they have a physical address.

So they need to use their physical address because Google's not going to let you use a PO Box to verify where you are because a PO Box is not tied into your location; it doesn't prove that you're at that location. You want to talk to them and make sure they use a real address and not a PO Box.

Participant: My local business address is not where I hold my business. Business is happens at Hotel locations where I host huge events.

Greg Gifford:

So you're a service business, this would be similar to something like a plumber, an electrician or a locksmith where people don't do business at your location, you service clients at their location. So you still use your address, in your Google listing just click that you want your address hidden so it doesn't show up publicly... but it still uses your address.

But it also really depends on if its event planning or whatever you're doing... if it's not pulling a map pack for those queries, then it may not be something that Google considers a locally oriented business, so the address part may not have as much play for him. But if it is pulling the map pack, that means Google does count it as a local business and he needs to use his actual business address.



Participant: DO display ads on local sites work for local signals or does it need to be a traditional/non-paid link?

Greg Gifford:

It needs to be non-paid, display ads don't count towards the algorithm.

Participant: Moz Local doesn't cover Australian businesses... yet. Is there something you would recommend in the meantime for us Aussies?

Greg Gifford:

I believe that Whitespark works for Australia, but I'm not 100% sure. I have yet to work with anyone in Australia, so I do not know for sure. I would get in touch with Whitespark. If they don't cover Australia, they would know a tool that does.

Casey Markee:

I'm going to go ahead and paste over some resources for you, you can take a look at those. Basically those are just listing citations... some of them have provided some updated resources on that so take a look at that and as Greg said - you might want to go directly to Whitespark as well.

<http://www.localvisibilitysystem.com/definitive-local-search-citations/>

<http://www.ngsmarketing.com/local-citation-sources-for-australia-germany-new-zealand/>

<http://www.davidmihm.com/blog/local-seo/australian-citations/>

Participant: Do you have a preference: whitespark vs. yext

Greg Gifford:

Those are not the same kind of tool. Whitespark is something you use to find any instances of your citations; Yext is a tool for citation management. So think of it as, if you've got incorrect information on a website, you'd use Whitespark to find out where that incorrect information is... so that you could go manually change it yourself.

With Yext, if you have incorrect information, Yext is going to go out and overwrite that information; so that your correct information shows instead. Now Whitespark is going to work for any website out there, Yext it has a partner network of 62-63 sites... so Yext will only work on those 60-something sites... so if it's not one of those sites, Yext is not going to touch it.

Now also with Yext, Yext is a tool that you have to pay monthly for. You could get Whitespark for a month to pull down your report, and then cancel Whitespark and do all your manual work yourself. Yext only works as long as you pay for it, so Yext's data feed supersedes anything that's listed on that website.

So as long as you pay for Yext, you're fine; but as soon as you decide you want to stop paying for it... it's up to that site to decide if they want to continue to keep the information there that Yext sent or if they want to revert back to what was there before Yext's feed came in, and in most cases it's going to revert back.

Casey Markee:

We actually use the analogy of spackle; Yext kind of acts as spackle. It's a quick way to push out a lot of citations that are uniform, so you can get results quickly because they update with the pipeline so fast... but it's a temporary situation.

Greg Gifford:



It's not necessarily though; it's a great solution if you're working at scale. I was talking to somebody at Moz Local last week where they've got thousands of locations that they have to manage and you can't scale that. You'd have to have a massive team to do citation work manually for thousands of citations.

So in those cases, if you're Home Depot or Target or something like that, it totally makes sense to use Yext because you can hit all of those high-level spots within that 60 or however many and it's an instant change. A lot of times, if you're doing things manually, you may have to wait 30 days for that database to refresh.

Yext changes everything instantly and if you're working at scale, you can click a button and push out the information to thousands of things all at once. So it does have its place, but if you're talking about a single-point local business, Whitespark and Yext are really two different kinds of tools.

Casey Markee: While we're on that subject, let's talk a little bit about citational submission and cleanup. You suggest users go [use] Moz Local, you didn't mention Bright Local at all; what do you think of their tool? Is that something that you use as well?

Greg Gifford:

Bright Local is awesome, as well. I actually use Bright Local and Whitespark both together. Same thing with our link building, we use three different link research tools because everything's going to pull slightly different information and you can get a better grasp of what the big picture is, if you're doing major work.

For most single-point businesses though, I would suggest Whitespark. It seems to have a better algorithm and pick up more stuff than Bright Local, but Bright Local is a great tool if you want to use that. It's got some other things in it that are really nice too, it's just kind of personal preference there.

Casey Markee: When we talk about citations, I know everybody on the call mostly knows that there are four major tier one providers... you've got Infogroup, Acxiom, Localeze, and Factual. Would you recommend one over another, when someone was initially approaching some citational work?

Greg Gifford:

No... you want to go back to the ecosystem slide (Slide 106) that I show each of the four major providers feeds out to the different second tier sites. So just hitting one isn't going to work as well as hitting all four.

Participant: Why not use hashtags on Facebook? Susan Garrett (highly successful) hosts contests for people who post a certain #hashtag on Facebook.

Greg Gifford:

That's a perfect example of when it would work to use a hashtag on Facebook. Because then if you are going to run a contest and you've got a unique hashtag to see all of the entrants that were in a contest, that's a great use.

But when you see people who are like... a Toyota dealer posts a photo of a car and they use ten hashtags with it; for example: #Toyota #FJCruiser #ToyotaLive #FJLive and just all these hashtags, that's not what hashtags are meant for on Facebook... it doesn't work that way. So if you're just using a hashtag for the sake of using a hashtag, absolutely don't. If you've got a legitimate business reason, like the reason mentioned... then definitely use it in that case.



Participant: GMB - When I logged into my clients dashboard he had created several locations (none verified). I deleted the ones that didn't apply and tried to verify the real GMB listing.... now we're getting a message that it can't be verified because of quality...should I call Google...

Greg Gifford:

I would get on phone support, just go back to the bit.ly/google-phone-support will walk you to get to the right form and how to fill the form out so that you can get on the phone with Google phone support, explain to them what happened and they'll work that out with you and you should be good to go.

Participant: clarification needed for one business that has 3 locations... please re-explain how to deal with getting local citations for each location

Greg Gifford:

So for the business that has three locations, you're just doing everything times three. Moz Local's paid tool is actually good because you can hit all of the top level (the big four) and it's ~\$89 per year, so I would suggest doing that. Then use the Moz local citation check tool to see how each of those three different locations look on a high level, to see if there are a lot of problems that need to be cleaned up or if they all look pretty clean.

And then you would just use Whitespark or Bright Local and look up each of the different NAP sets for each of the three locations, to go out and get the locations taken care of (for each location). So even though it's the same business and the same website, but you've got three locations; it's the same task set that you're doing, you're just doing it times three.

Participant: Defensive handgun trainer teaches classes at a local shooting range. Do I use his address but put in a service area?

Greg Gifford:

That's an interesting one... I would hesitate to put his information in as the same... unless potentially you've got name, address, phone number and as long as two of those are different - you're okay. So if you're using the same address as the shooting range, but that's the only place that the trainer does classes; then as long as the business name of the training would be separate and different from the shooting range, and if the trainer used a different phone number to book those classes (than what's used at the shooting range); then it would be okay to put in the same address.

But I would think that would probably be best, but again you'd have to kind of go see what kind of handgun training or classes - what sort of results are pulled, to see whether the other results showing up are using service area hidden addresses or physical addresses.

Participant: and what about Canadians REL Moz Local?

Casey Markee:

I pasted over a resource which is an exceptionally exhaustive list of citations broken down by country, that might be something you want to look at:

<http://www.localvisibilitysystem.com/definitive-local-search-citations/>

Greg Gifford:

There's a list on Whitespark too of best citation sources by country: That would explain what would work best for Canada... at least the main ones that every type of business should have.

<https://www.whitespark.ca/top-local-citation-sources-by-country>



Participant: How does an embedded Google map in the footer compare to having it on each page?

Greg Gifford:

Having it in the footer isn't necessarily a bad idea, unless it makes your footer giant. I would assume if it's in the footer, it's probably smaller. I would make sure that besides having it in the footer, at least on... if it's a multiple location website, on each location page; if it's a single location page, I would make sure at least the home page and the contact page have the embedded Google map in the content area of the site and not only in the footer.

Participant: If your business is in a suburb of a large metropolitan area, what is the best way to increase your chances of ranking in local searches for other nearby suburbs or the main metropolitan city?

Greg Gifford:

That's that local content silo strategy that I talked about, so just go to bit.ly/local-content-silos and there's a huge post there that outlines exactly what to do... that completely perfectly answers that question.

Participant: How best check search engine position? Google knows what I want to see, but I want to know what my customers see when they search for, say, "Silicon Valley New Year's Eve Party"

Greg Gifford:

...Really there's no good way, you can add a query string that you can add to the end of the URL. So if you do a Google search and then you add ? near=cityname that will get you kind of close to it, but it's not exact. Unfortunately that's something that really sucks for those of us that serve clients in different cities, is you can't really check that very well anymore.

Check with different tools: Bright Local, Whitespark; a lot of these local tools will have local rank trackers. I know Whitespark is about to roll out a big update to theirs, because I was talking to the Whitespark guy last week at the Moz Local event. Authority Labs has one, Stat Analytics has one... a lot of these guys have rank trackers that you can set to a particular location. But I don't know how well any of those work now that Google has pulled that, so you would just have to check around.

Participant: Should I call Google if we haven't gotten a post card

Greg Gifford:

Yes, call Google. Back in the day, before 3-5 months ago... if you requested a post card a couple of times and hadn't gotten it, you could just get on phone support and they could see in your account that you requested a couple of post cards and they haven't shown up... [then they would] just verify you. They won't do that anymore; they will not do verifications over the phone. But I would definitely call them and work through it and they'll make sure that you can get a post card, or make sure that that they can get you guys verified.

Participant: His office # but put the service area... which he pulls from.

Greg Gifford:

The answer doesn't change, as long as he has the separate phone number and business name from the gun range; he'll be fine.



Participant: Is NAP information in image file name/ALT text valuable?

Greg Gifford:

I wouldn't just spam your image file names, again remember if you really boil Google down it's just pattern detection. So if all of a sudden, all of the images on your site are just Dallas, Texas dentist; then that's going to look manufactured, that you're trying to cheat Google.

I would more worry about it in your alt text than in your actual image name. Now putting it in your image name could help that image show up in image searches, potentially. But really you're targeting organic for the website; I would worry more about alt text, but don't just spam it and make sure it makes sense... but definitely get it in that alt text, like I said earlier.

Participant: Silos work only when the business has multiple locations in a metropolitan area. What if the business has one location in a suburb and wants to rank well in nearby suburbs, as well as the main city?

Greg Gifford:

No, that's the whole point of silos; you do the silo because you only have the location in the suburb, but you want to rank well in nearby cities. You create the silo talking about those areas, even though you don't have a physical address there. Because your NAP information is only going to match the city that you're in, but you create these location silos of nearby cities so you can potentially rank in those cities.

Participant: yext vs moz local?

Greg Gifford:

Those are two completely different tools, so... Moz Local you pay and it sends your information to those... and it sticks. Yext is you're paying for the override. But Moz Local hits the main data aggregators and Yext only hits the 60-something sites that it's on; so they're two totally different tools.

Participant: A client of mine runs a hotel near Heathrow Airport (UK). They want to rank higher than the hotels that are on airport site. I've told them this is virtually impossible because there's too much competition that's closer to the searcher - assuming the searcher is someone with a mobile phone at the airport. Do you agree or am I missing an opportunity here?

Greg Gifford:

I would think I wouldn't worry so much about people being on a mobile phone at the airport, searching for a hotel because how often do you fly into a city and not book your hotel till you get there (because you're doing a mobile search)? You're going to book a hotel before you go on your trip, unless potentially maybe there's a weather problem and you're stuck at the airport; then maybe you might search?

The vast majority of people booking those hotels are going to be booking it beforehand, when they're booking their trip; so that's when they're going to be looking for "Heathrow Airport Hotel" or "hotel near Heathrow" or something like that. So the same kind of thing, if they're near Heathrow and they just need to make sure that they optimize for the fact that they're near Heathrow, and they should be in good hands.

Casey Markee: I know call tracking is a hot topic in local SEO, let's talk about that. I know there's a fine line between how much data I can track versus causing NAP inconsistency issues, with an 800 number. Is there a special pro tip on that? Do you have any thoughts on that? Is there a specific call tracking favorite you'd



recommend, as an example?

Greg Gifford:

The one thing I mentioned earlier, if you feel like you really want to do call tracking... just make sure that when you're doing call tracking, you use a call tracking provider that satisfies three requirements:

#1 - that you can get a local area code tracking number;

#2 - you need to pay extra for that tracking number, so that you own the number... because if you decide that you want to leave that call tracking provider and either stop doing it or move to a different provider... you want to be able to port that number and take it with you. So if you're not paying extra for a number that you own, as soon as you leave... now you've got to get a whole new number and you have to go redo all the citation work that you've done. So really important that you own that number and then;

#3 - that they let you just use that signal number everywhere, because most people (when they're doing call tracking) have that bank of numbers so they just muck up all the data. When you're doing call tracking and you're talking about local, you can use the single number everywhere and then most of the time, the customers are already going to naturally tell you where they're calling from ("I saw your number and I'm calling you because I saw your number here") or it's very easy to train your staff to tell people ask that question or get that point across on the call.

Because then that information shows up in the transcript of the call and if it's in the transcript, then it can get into your reporting and you can still get your attribution for where the calls came from without using different phone numbers.

Casey Markee: If you could direct everyone on the call to focus on one specific area for local SEO improvement, what would it be?

Greg Gifford:

On-site content is always the biggest detriment to local search. It's very rare that I ever come across a website that's very truly got great content that's well optimized for local. More than anything else, it doesn't matter if you do all the link building, citation, review, and all the social work if your website sucks. So make sure your content is stellar and that you've got everything optimized to the nth degree.

Participant: We used the physical address but no post card

Crystal Cook - SearchEngineNews:

Here's the link to Google My Business Support... click verification...

<https://support.google.com/business/contactflow?hl=en>

Participant: Beacons? -- please clarify

Casey Markee:

<http://www.slideshare.net/CaseyMarkeeMBA/beyond-seo-wearables-beacons-hyperlocal-marketing>

Crystal Cook - SearchEngineNews:

Check out Casey's presentation on Beacons in the MP4 column (right hand side):

<https://www.searchengineneeds.com/se-news/mastermind/>



Casey Markee: Love me some "Teen Wolf!"
Participant: Where's the Woody Allen?
Casey Markee: HAHAHAHA....Hard not to laugh at that folks.
Casey Markee: Checks in the mail Greg.
Mary Bowling: great info, as usual, Greg!
Participant: Thanks Greg.
Participant: excellent!!!!!!
Participant: : AAAAAAA!
Participant: great class! much appreciated
Participant: AAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!
Participant: Magic ... thank you!!
Participant: Super presentation!
Participant: AAAAAAAAAAA!!
Participant: Great presentation Greg!! Detailed, specific, thorough! :)
Participant: Got it thank you
Participant: thanks - got it!
Participant: Thanks Greg
Participant: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!
Participant: very good... Thank you!
Participant: AAA!!!
Participant: AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Great presentation. Many thanks!
Participant: Really great....! AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Participant: Wonderful presentation! AAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Participant: thank you Crystal!
Participant: thanks for beacon info.