



“Why Don’t I Rank For... ?”:

Uncovering the Art of Ranking and Optimization in Search Results

October 11, 2023

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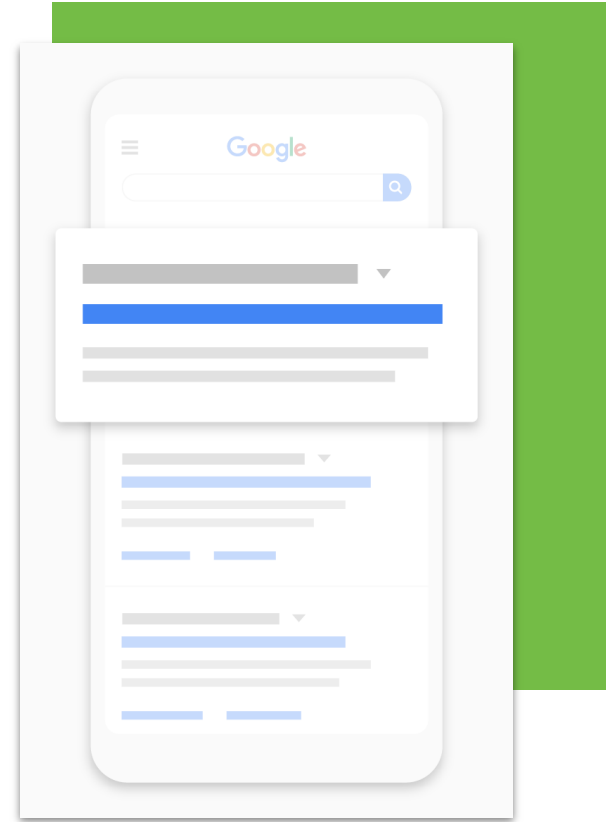
Kaci McBride, of SOCi
Varun Gurunath, of SOCi



What we will cover:

This session will focus on answering the “why’s?” of ranking on Google for your Google Business Profile listings. By the end, you will understand:

- How local search rankings have changed on Google
- What ways users will find you in local search
- The purpose of focusing on local intent
- How to research and gain accurate local ranking data through SOCI





I used to rank for “auto insurance” but I don’t anymore... Why is that?



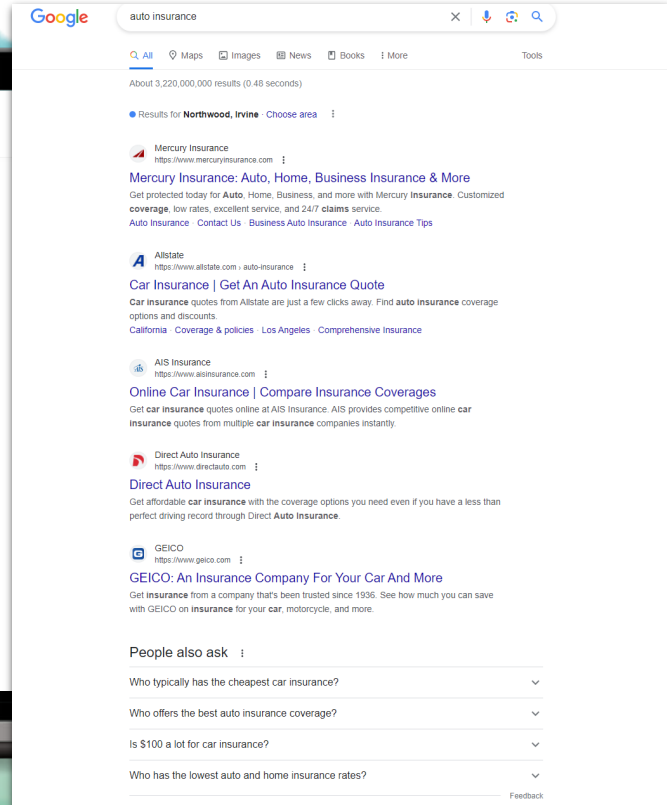
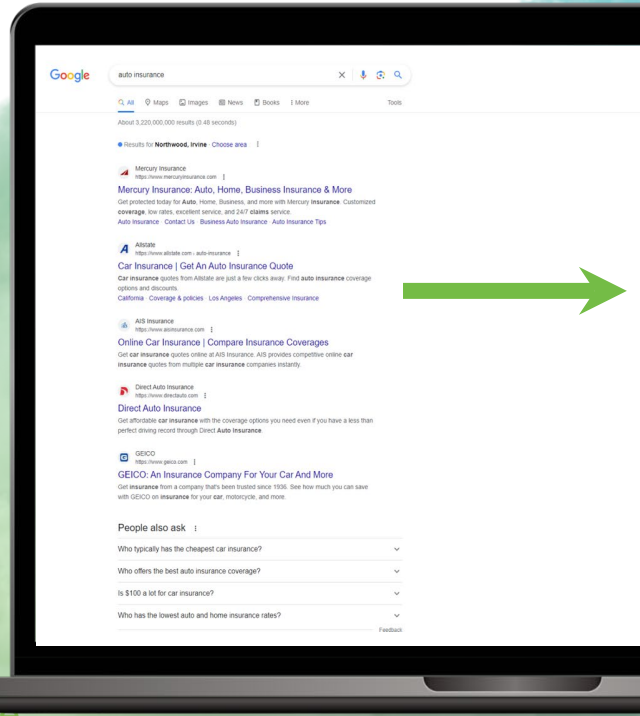
Diminishing Local Packs

Google almost overfed us with local results for every keyword search for years. It did prove useful, but now **we are seeing local pack results for basic, general keywords without local intent omitted or pushed down in the SERP.**



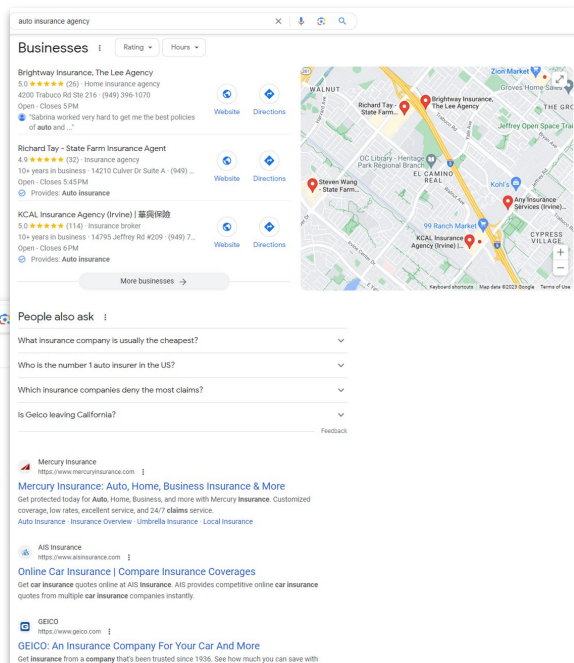
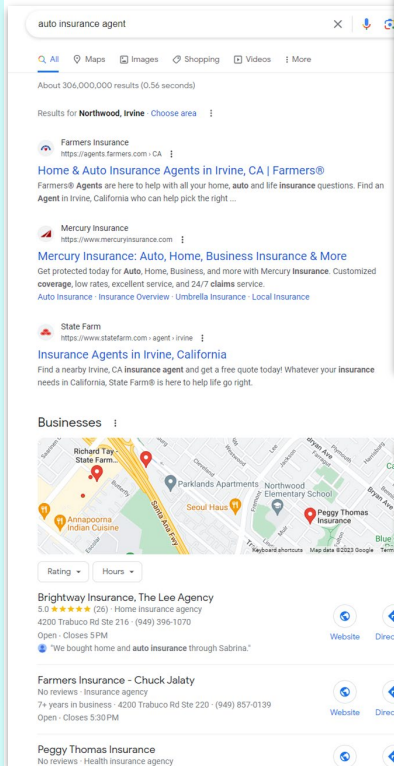
Search Results Have Changed

General keyword searches without local intent



Localized Keyword Search

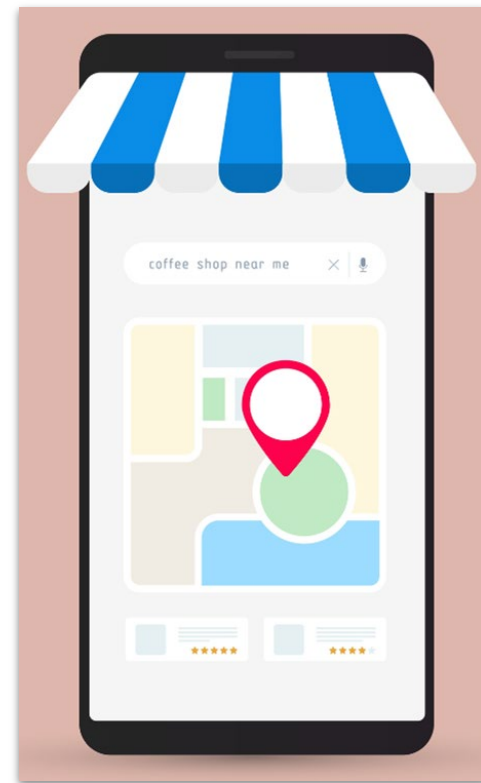
Keywords with more local intent and focus are generating local pack results in the result pages.



How to Help

We're done being basic. It's okay to be extra!

- Basic, general keywords have broad reach but less intent, especially local intent. Tracking the right terms with “near me” or dynamic city or postal code variables can help you navigate what you're actually appearing for and need to care about.
 - Understanding customer intent in keyword tracking can help solidify that your strategies are working, and help you appear for customers that intend to convert and purchase.
 - Do some research and see what results come up. Our team of experts can help you dissect what you see and look at the data to make some strategic suggestions.



“

My apartment complex isn't appearing for “Notre Dame off-campus housing”, but we're in a prime location, so why is that?

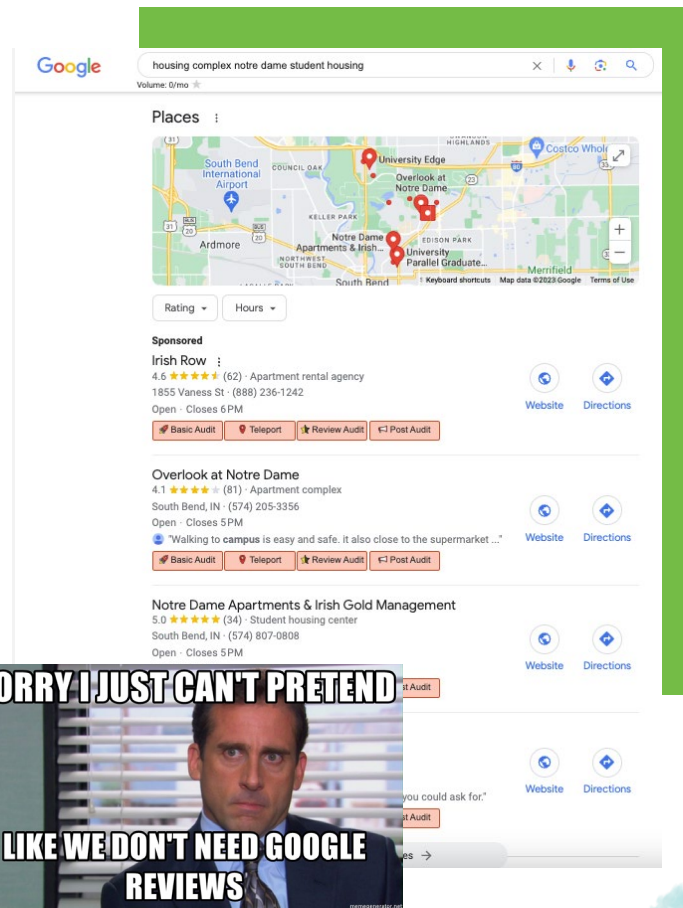
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How's Your Reputation?

Even with the best-located businesses and housing complexes, reputation can skew results drastically.

It's important to make sure your location has a large quantity of reviews, that you're responding to those reviews, and your ratings are 4.0+ on a regular basis to keep your average score high.

You have one of the best star ratings and you still aren't showing up? **Let's talk about what else matters..**



Check your Ranking Factors



1. Is your NAP correct?
2. Do you have unique photos on your locations?
3. Have you ever posted Q&A?
4. What landing page are you linking to? Is it well optimized with unique, local content?

It's a Competitive SERP out there!

Even with all of your best SEO intentions, the only way to stay competitive is to stay fresh.

- Keep pushing all of the optimization strategies, and continue utilizing unique photos and content to be seasonally relevant and set yourself apart from competition.
- Target unique, broad keyword terms to help you stand out. IE
- Instead of “Notre Dame Off-Campus Housing”, which you’ll always try to compete for, try setting yourself apart by optimizing for “**Pet Friendly Off-Campus Housing at Notre Dame**”

“

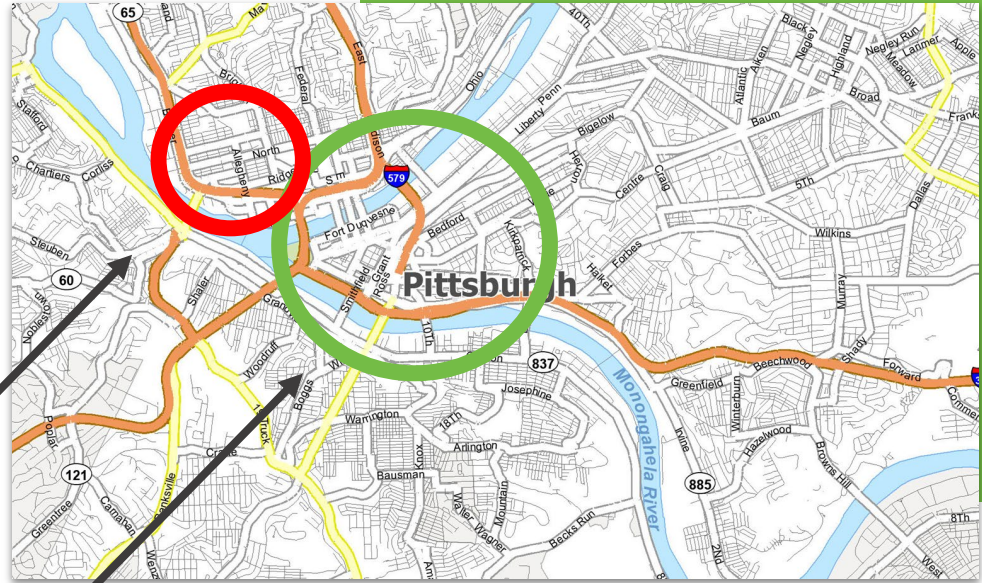
**I'm a service area business (a plumber),
and I can't seem to rank for "Plumber in
Pittsburgh"... Why is that?**

”

Service Area Businesses Face Different Challenges

Is your business located in the same “Pittsburgh” radius as the competition?

Even as a service area business, your address is very relevant to your appearance in search results.



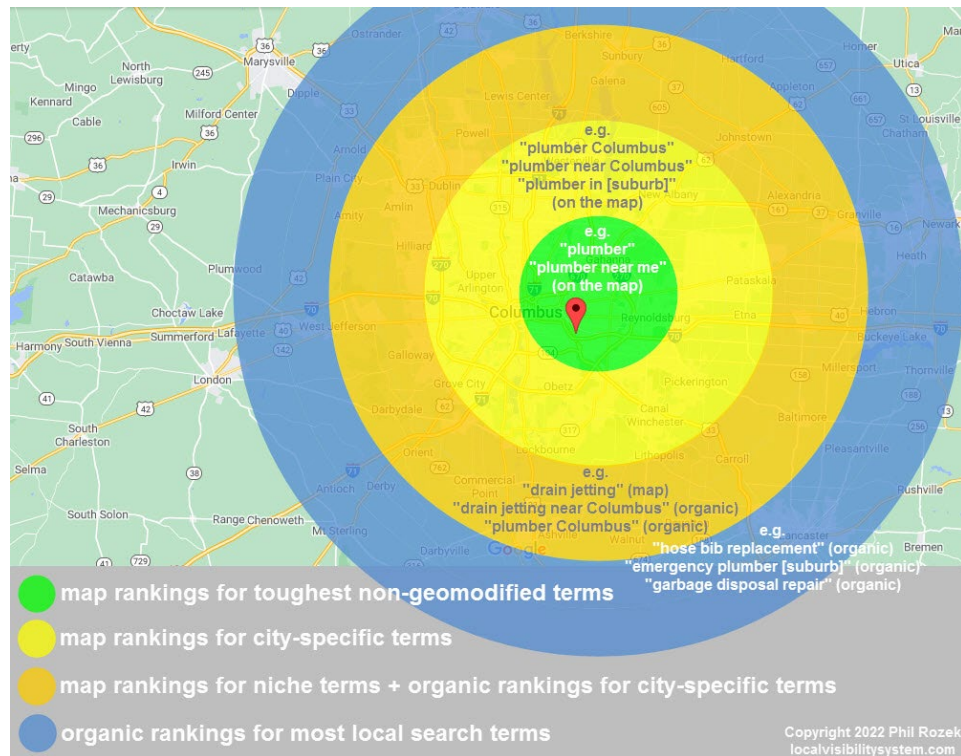
Your Business “location”

Central Pittsburgh

Takeaway for local businesses:

A business that wants to rank for relevant terms within a 40-mile overall radius should recognize that the further one gets from the business location, the harder it is to rank for the most competitive terms.

Because of this, your strategy should be to optimize for competitive terms in order to rank nearby, and niche terms in order to rank further away.



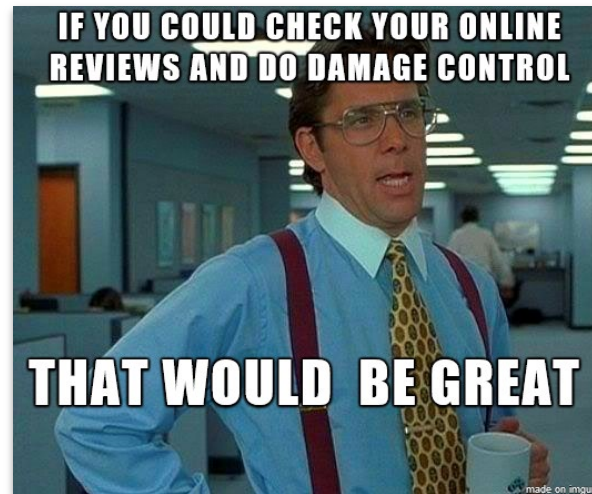
Extra Optimization Tips

Can your Address be visible?

- There's been evidence to suggest that when an address is visible in listings, even if the business is service area in nature, the rankings and performance improves.

Who's your competition? How is their online reputation?

- As discussed earlier, reputation is huge! Keeping your star rating above 4.0 can help you compete for "best" terms in your area.



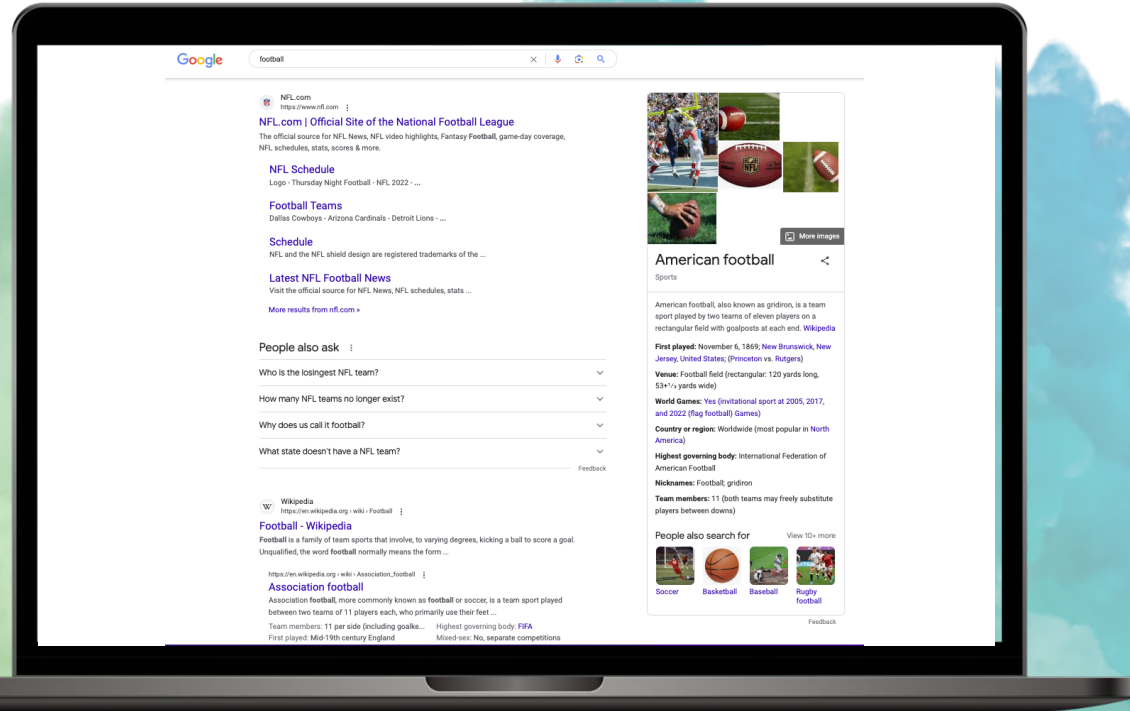
“

I'm a retailer who sells footballs and football equipment, but I don't seem to rank for "football"?

”

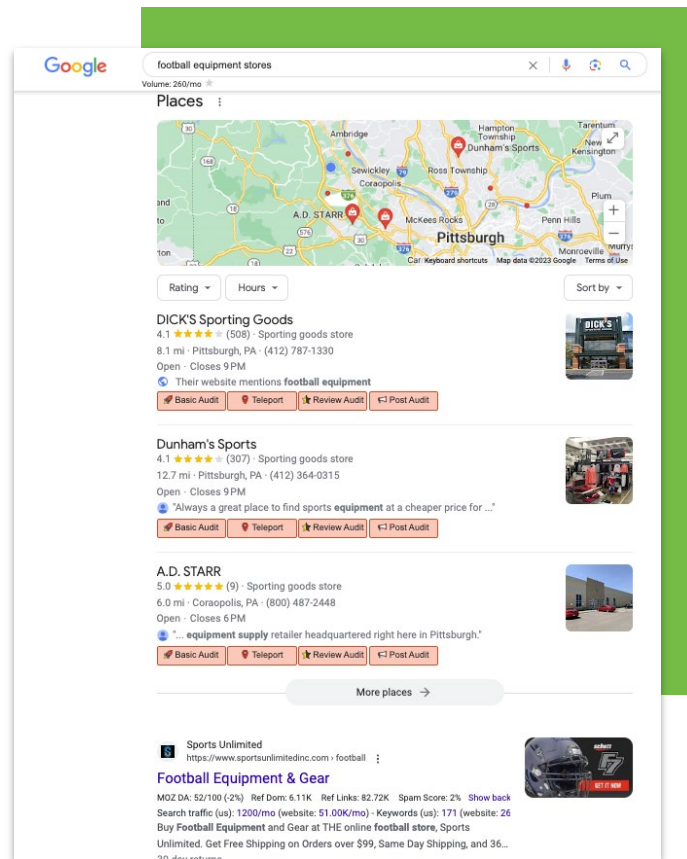
Are you supposed to rank for “Football”?

Google thinks not...



Intent Matters!

Google makes assumptions about the customer's purpose when conducting a search. Not all searches are inherently local (as discussed previously!)



Track Both “Aspirational” and “Achievable” Keyword Terms.

It's fine if you want to track your standings for “Football”, but understand that that is an aspirational term that won't make or break your local performance.

Achievable terms might have less search volume, but they get you the traffic more often than your broad, general terms. Think:

- Football Store
- Football Equipment Near Me
- Where to buy a Football Helmet



I just added pizza to my menu! Why don't I rank for it yet?



Menu items do help, but it isn't the full solution to ensure you rank.

It's great you added pizza to your menu, but there are plenty of other ranking factors that come into effect for appearing for a specific item based search.

Google looks at top ranking factors always. Let's first see what this looks like on the results page now.




Google's Prioritization of Item-Based Search

How results are displayed on the SERP

Google pizza

Places



Rating Pizza Price Hours Sort by

Round Table Pizza
4.4 ★★★★★ (54) · \$\$ · Pizza
0.4 mi · 13925 Yale Ave #135
Closed · Opens 11 AM
Chain eatery with build-your-own pizzas

Northwood Pizza
4.2 ★★★★★ (187) · \$ · Pizza
0.6 mi · 4900 Irvine Blvd Suite 105
Closed · Opens 11 AM
Standby for pies, beer & arcade games


Domino's Pizza
3.1 ★★★★★ (266) · \$ · Pizza
0.7 mi · 14130 Culver Dr
Opens soon · 10 AM
Longtime pizza chain known for delivery

More places →

Pizza Hut
<https://www.pizzahut.com>
Pizza Hut | Delivery & Carryout - No One OutPizzas The Hut!
Discover classic & new menu items, find deals and enjoy seamless ordering for delivery and carryout. No One OutPizzas the Hut®.
[Menu](#) [Deals](#) [Pizza](#) [Pepperoni Pizza](#)

Yelp
<https://www.yelp.com> · Irvine, CA · Restaurants · Pizza
THE BEST 10 Pizza Places in Irvine, CA
Top 10 Best Pizza Near Irvine, California · Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza Store, 3.0 mi · (236 reviews) · Brooklyn's Finest Pizza, 0.7 mi · (37 reviews) · First Class Pizza.

Tripadvisor
<https://www.tripadvisor.com> · Irvine
THE 10 BEST Pizza Places in Irvine (Updated 2023)
Pizza in Irvine · 1. Roma D' Italia, (283), Closed today · 2. Angelina's Pizzeria Napoletana, (59), Open Now · 3. Pieology Pizzeria Spectrum, Irvine, CA, (67).



Pizza

Dish

Pizza is a dish of Italian origin consisting of a usually round, flat base of leavened wheat-based dough topped with tomatoes, cheese, and often various other ingredients, which is then baked at a high temperature, traditionally in a wood-fired oven. [Wikipedia](#)

Origin: Italy

Type of food
What type of food is pizza

Popular or not
Is pizza popular in Italy

Nutrition Facts
Pizza, 14" regular crust
Sources include: USDA

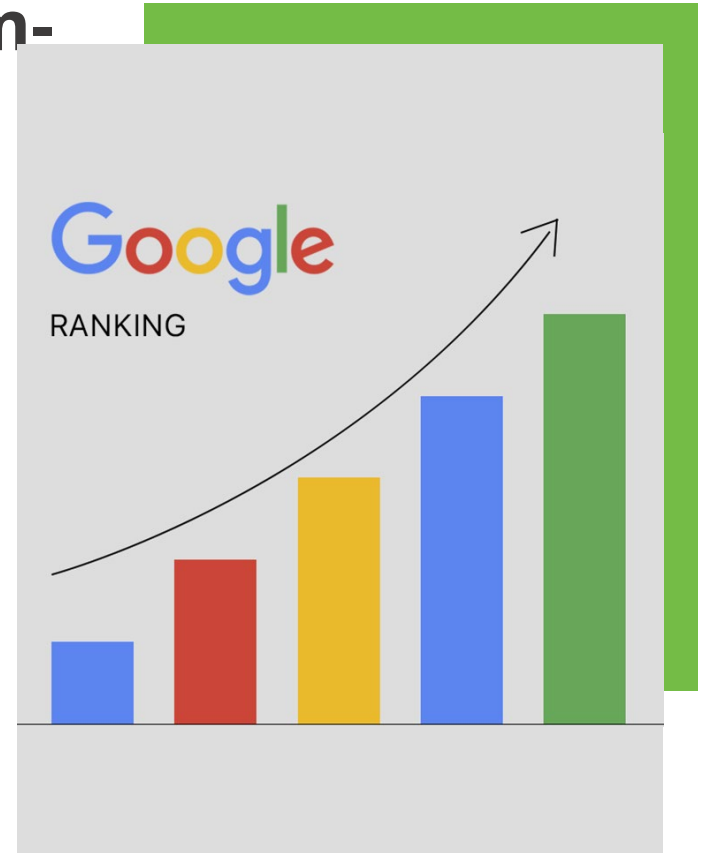
Amount Per 1 slice (107 g)

Calories 285

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 10 g	15%
Saturated fat 4.8 g	24%
Trans fat regulation 0.3 g	
Cholesterol 18 mg	6%
Sodium 640 mg	26%
Potassium 184 mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 36 g	12%
Dietary fiber 2.5 g	10%
Sugar 3.8 g	
Protein 12 g	24%
Vitamin C 2%	Calcium 20%
Iron 15%	Vitamin D 0%
Vitamin B6 5%	Cobalamin 6%

Google ranking factors for item-based searches

- **Categories Matter Most**
 - Add those secondary categories!
 - Google will predominantly look at the category of a location to see it's relevance before running through other ranking factors
 - "Pizza Restaurant" could work as a secondary category if it's on your menu
 - Google also Auto-Filters some category based searches
- **Profile Completeness Reigns Supreme!**
 - Using SOCi, you can see and push out all of the attributes for your category.
 - Make sure to add menu and service links
 - Add photos with the item
- **Crawl before running.**
 - You added the menu item, but do you have the keywords and content on your location pages?
 - Is your menu link easily indexable and crawlable by Google? Can Google understand you have the item?
- **Patience is a virtue.**
 - Ranking takes time. If you're looking to rank for "pizza near me" or other related queries, use our Rankings Tool & GeoRank to see how measure how well you're doing.

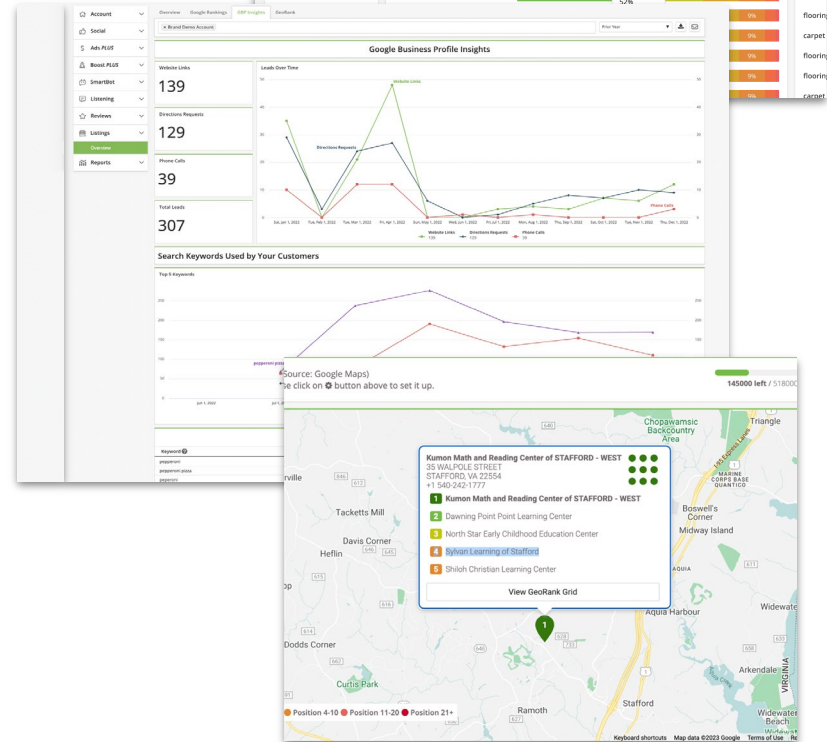
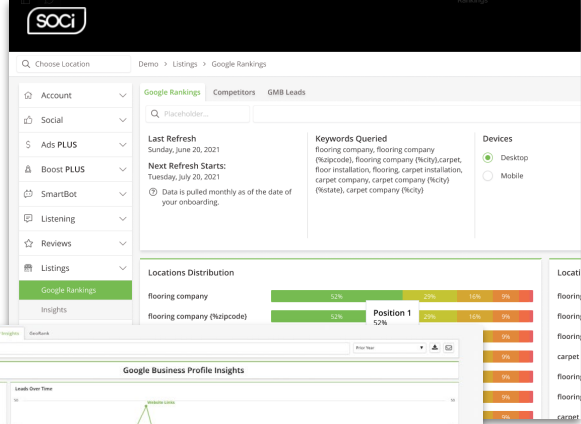


Measuring SEO Success and Opportunities with SOCi

Understanding the “Why” with SOCi

Understanding “why” you may not rank for a term can be a challenging task, but SOCi tools are here to help.

- Google Popular Queries
 - With popular queries, you can understand what your listings are already appearing for, and find new terms you may have not previously known!
- Google Rankings
 - This is the perfect tool to get a bird's eye view of your rankings performance. Make sure you utilize achievable and aspirational keyword terms, and understand that your “rank” isn’t always the first indicator that you’re performing poorly or exceptionally.
- Google Business Profile Insights
 - Once you see rankings, check on your actual performance indicators, and note if your performance has been impacted by your visibility.
- Geo Rank
 - Get prescriptive! With SOCi GeoRank, you can see a boots-on-the-ground perspective of your ranking. This is great for addressing your biggest opportunity regions to get strategic with your approach.





Thank You

Kaci McBride | SOCi

Varun Gurunath | SOCi

Questions?