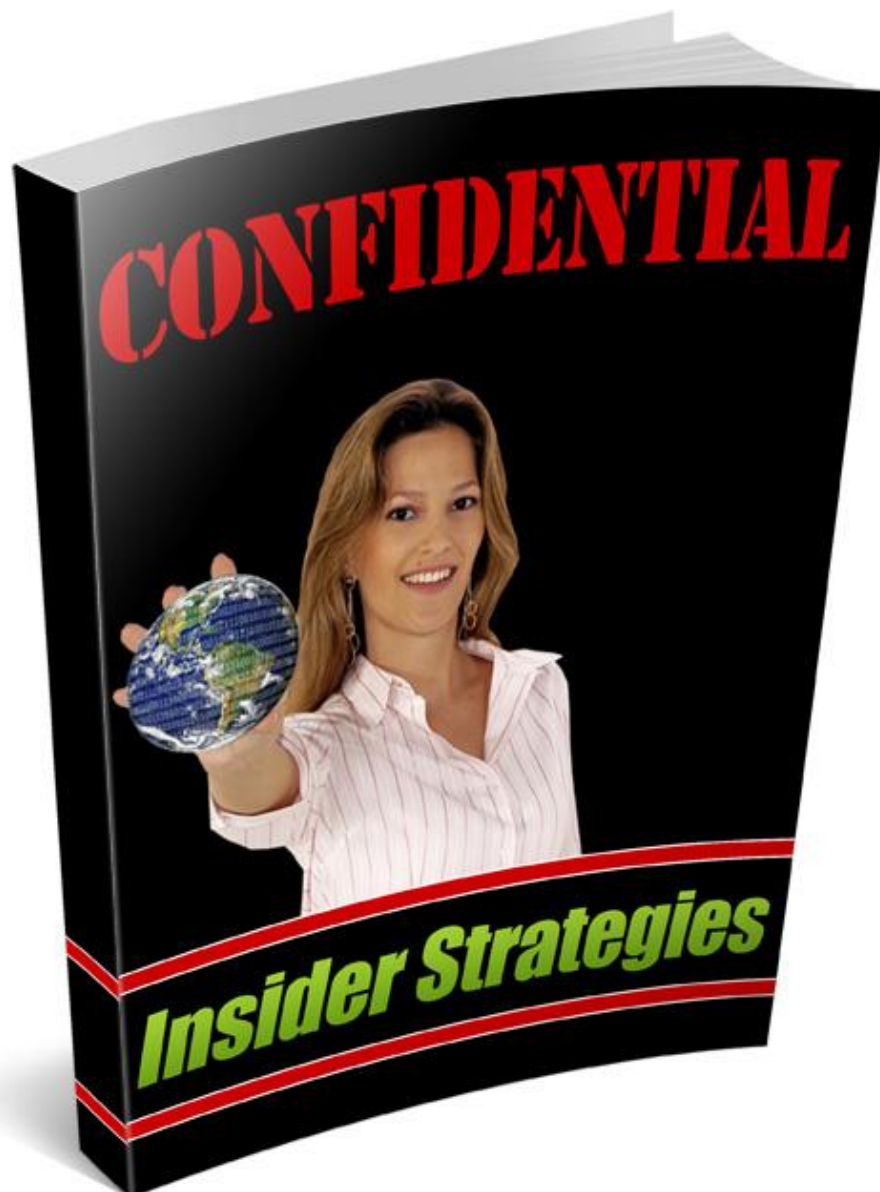# Confidential "Insiders Report"
Web Marketing Tips
For Local Businesses

by Arfa Saira Iqbal

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Introduction

As a fellow business owner, you already know that marketing is important for business growth and in today's climate that's especially true.

More and more, your prospects are turning to the Internet to locate businesses in their own backyard. In fact, according to a Piper Jaffray 2008 research paper, 30 percent of all search engine queries contain a city, state or zip code.

With approximately 2.6 billion local searches performed each month, the Internet has now surpassed print Yellow Pages and newspapers as a primary source for local consumer service information and that trend is on the rise.

The popularity of web-enabled phones (like the iPhone) will only add to these numbers as 27 percent of all mobile searches are for local information.

It's for this reason that I wrote "Internet Marketing Tips For Local Business Owners." To give you a clear understanding of what "Internet Marketing" is and why it's something you should care about.

To your success,

Arfa Saira Iqbal

What Is Internet Marketing Anyway?

The term, "Internet Marketing," can be somewhat hard to define as many firms use this term rather loosely. So, instead of attempting to give you an "all-inclusive" definition, I'll just tell you what it means to me and my firm.

To us, Internet Marketing means to simply market your business via the internet. This could include helping you to build a website for your business, helping you get more traffic to the one you already have or helping you leverage other "web properties" (like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).

There are literally hundreds of different ways that a local business might benefit from an increase in internet exposure but most local businesses will get best results from a small handful of these (see sections to follow).

Don't Have A Website? You Still Have Options...

While we would strongly recommend that you build a website for your business, there are some great ways to get "internet exposure" without one.

In our experience, two of the best (and fastest) ways to get in front of your targeted audience is either by creating a custom Facebook Fanpage for your business or by taking advantage of the "local business listings" being offered by Google, Yahoo! And Bing.

First, I'll cover Facebook Fanpages. The graphic below shows you a portion of the custom "Fanpage" used by the Toyota company.
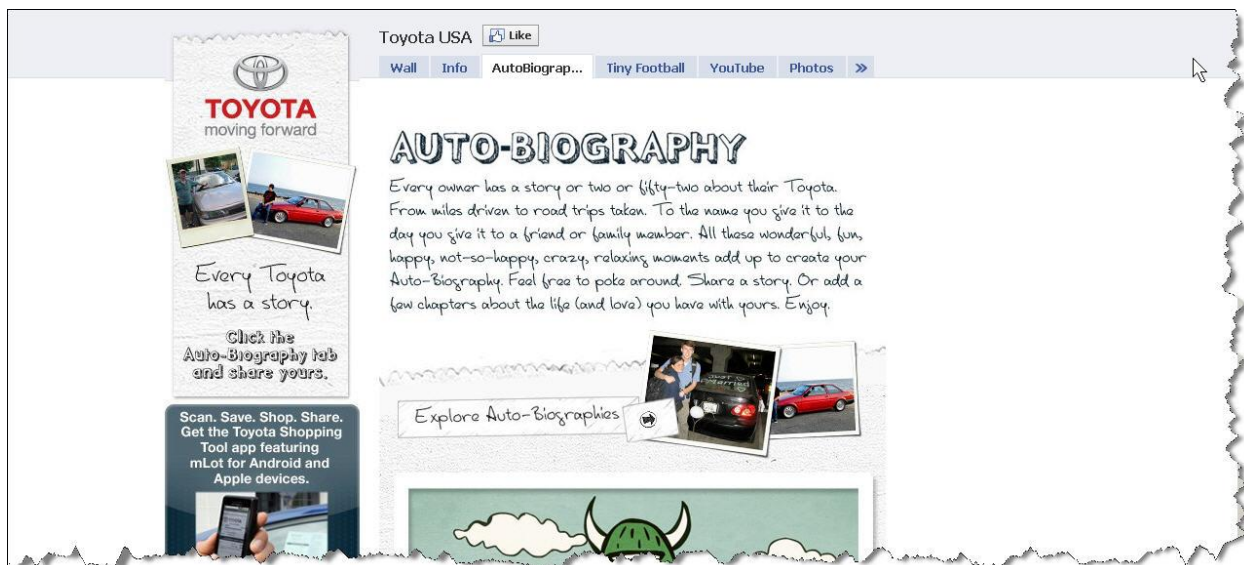
If you already have a fanpage for your business, you'll notice that this one has a number of features not found in the default layout.

Facebook allows businesses to customize their fanpages in a number of ways and doing so is a great idea!

You can add custom graphics to build your brand, videos that excite your visitors and deliver your message in a fresh, new way or even add the ability to capture email leads direct from your fanpage!

As Facebook is now getting as much (and in some cases more) internet traffic to its site, there has never been a better time to harness the power of Facebook!

Besides Facebook, you can also get exposure (and new business) direct from Google, Yahoo! and Bing. Each offers the ability to build a "local business listing" for your business even if you don't have a website!

Each works a little bit differently but they are pretty similar. You start by going to the respective search engine and filling out their online forms. Once you are done, you submit the form and then go through their verification process.

It may take a few weeks for your listing to appear but in time, it will. The biggest trick to the whole process is knowing how to optimize your listings such that they will appear on the first page for terms meaningful to your business.
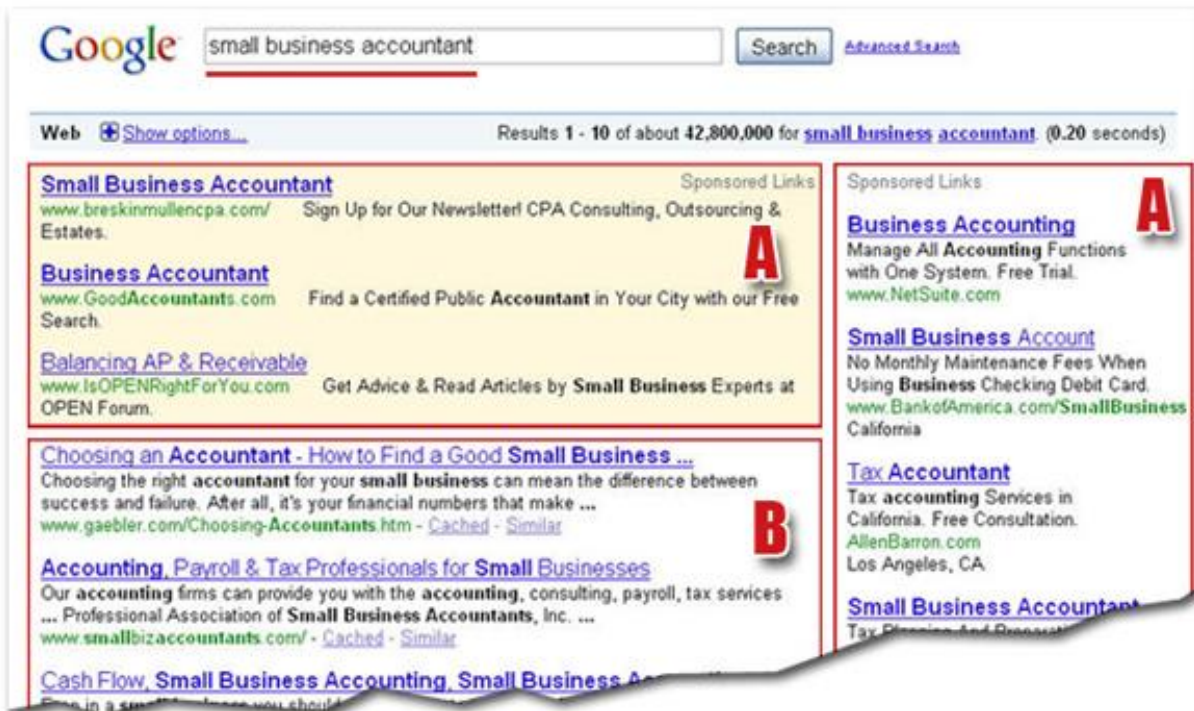
Here is an screen-shot graphic of the "local business results" for the term, "pizza restaurant los angeles" on Google.com

Note: The "Local Business Results" (next to the large map image) won't always be right at the top of the search results page but they often are.
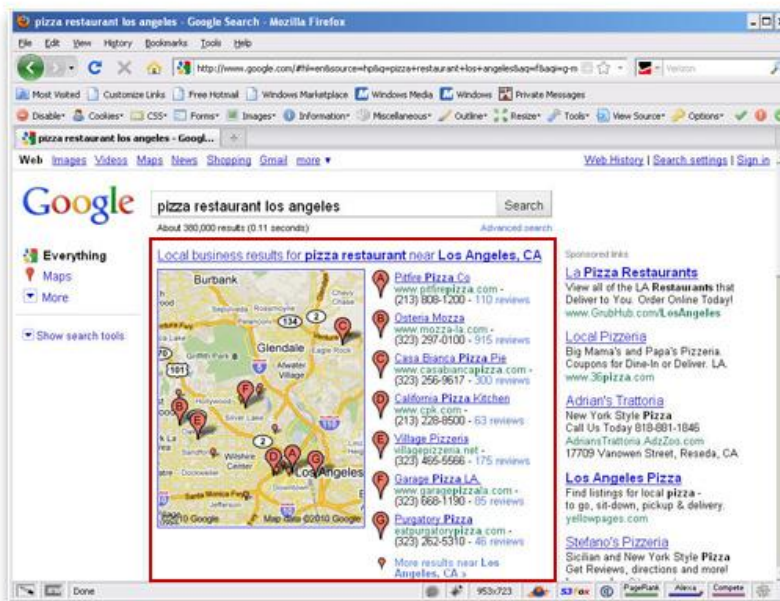
Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Basics:

If you have a website, you are likely interested in getting more website traffic. While there are a variety of ways to increase website traffic (like buying Paid Advertising, Social Media Marketing, etc.) most local businesses could benefit by having their websites optimized better for the search engines.

Search Engine Optimization (aka SEO or Search Engine Marketing) is the process of getting one's website ranked high in the search engines (with a primary emphasis on Google as they get the "lions-share" of search activity).

As nearly all search engines sell "Sponsored Ad Space," it is important to note that SEO is designed to help improve your "organic rankings" (aka the placement you get for free).

In the example, above, I've done a search using Google.com for the term, "small business accountant." The areas denoted by the letter, "A," are "Sponsored Links" and are therefore not affected by Search Engine Optimization. They are what are referred to as "Pay-per-click" ads (aka PPC). The businesses you see

listed are paying Google a pre-defined amount for every "click" (i.e. visitor) they receive.

The area denoted by the letter, "B," is the start of the "organic search engine listings" and this area IS controlled by search engine optimization techniques.

While there is nothing wrong with buying Pay-per-click ads, and it is something I recommend you consider, it is very important that your website/web pages rank well in the organic search engine listings as this can bring you lots of qualified website traffic completely free of charge.

There are two main aspects to search engine optimization. The first is referred to as "on-page SEO tactics" and the second, "off-page SEO tactics."

In the next section, we'll discuss the basics of "on-page" search engine optimization.

On-page SEO Tactics

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/
<html lang="en-US">
<head>
<title>Walmart.com: Save money. Live better.</title>
<meta name="Description" content="Shop Walmart Online for Low Prices on Top Br
">
<meta name="Keywords" content="Walmart, Walmart.com, Books, Fitness, Equipment
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
<!-- RSS link tags -->
<!-- canonical url -->
<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.walmart.com/"/>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global.css" rel="stylesheet" type=
<!--[if lt IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie6.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<!--[if IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie7.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<meta name="verify-v1" content="eG8Lf3uOH7c1EaP5caxTDaJP2XGU+l2EOhq+FzzKud4="
<meta name="y_key" content="3fb23d43bbb2352f" />
<meta name="msvalidate.01" content="BOAA8C6FAC5A61951
<script type="text/javascript" language="
```

On-page SEO is primarily technical in nature and needs to be applied to every page of your website. Websites are not optimized as a whole but rather one page at a time (but with a global perspective of what is trying to be achieved).

I'm not going to go into great detail as to what is specifically done to each page but I am going to give you a good overall understanding.

Basically, your on-page SEO should accomplish three main objectives:

- Your website's code (illustrated by the code from Walmart.com above) should be well-coded. By this, I mean that it should be easily read and understood by search engines.

- Each page of your website should be built around "intelligent keyword phrases" that are likely to draw targeted visitors to your page/site.

- Your site's design should be attractive and your content found useful to visitors so as to encourage them to stay as long as possible on your site.

One on-page SEO tactic that isn't even widely discussed it what is called "Visitor Experience Optimization." (aka VEO)

Google (and other search engines) have the ability to track how long the average visitor stays on your website and gives added benefit to sites that have a longer than average "visitor duration."

It stands to reason, right?

If the majority of your website visitors hit the "BACK" button after being on your site for only three seconds, it could be assumed that they either didn't like what they saw or they didn't find something they felt was relevant to what they were searching for.

However, if your visitors stay on your site for 1-3 minutes (or more), the search engines will give you a boost in the search engine rankings as your visitors have "spoken." They obviously have liked something about your site long enough to hang around and therefore, your site is believed to contain "valuable" content.

This is one of the reasons that it's wise to consider adding an "involvement device" to your website. This could include getting your visitor to sign-up for your company newsletter (to receive a coupon or other free gift), adding video to your website or simply allowing them to comment on the content you've posted.

All three options help your visitors connect with you in a more personal way than just having the ability to read your website's content and can help you bring you more business in addition to helping your site rank better in the search engines.

Off-page SEO Tactics
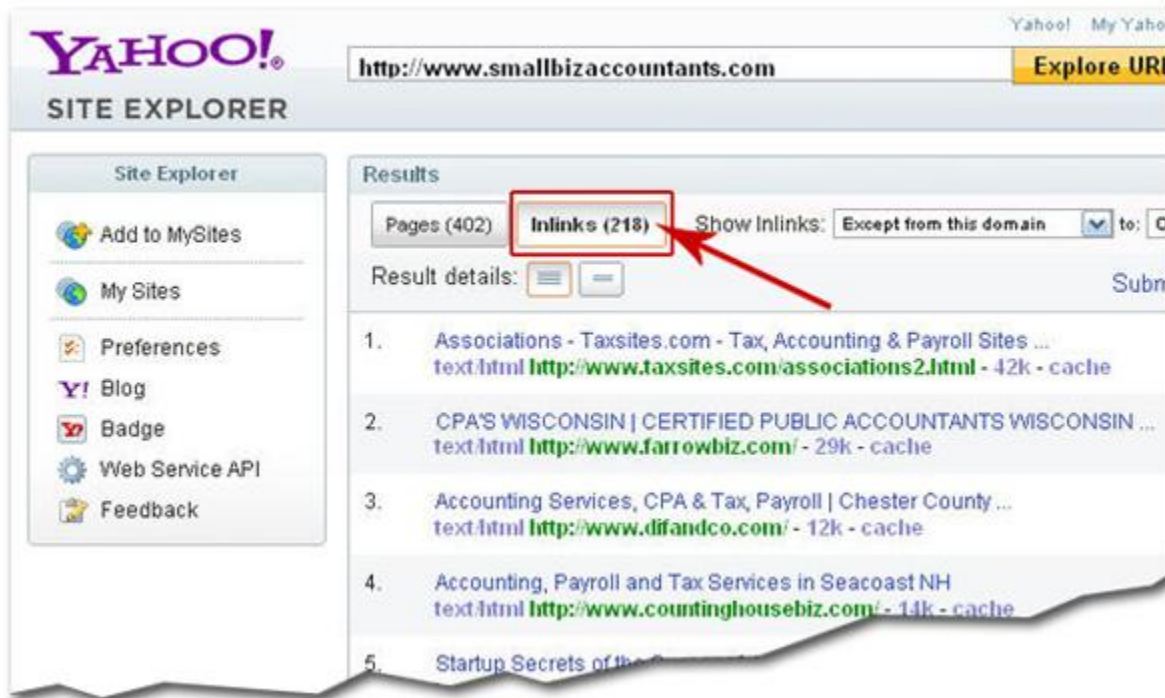
There are a number of "off-page SEO tactics" but the most important one is how many links your site has "pointing at it" from other websites/pages across the internet.

If you'd like to get a general idea of how many links the search engines have found for your site, do this...

1. Go to Yahoo.com and enter the following into the search box: link:www.yourdomain.com (replacing "yourdomain.com" with your actual domain name).

2. Click the button to conduct your search.

3. This will take you to the "Yahoo Site Explorer" as shown above. Once on this page, select "Except from this domain" from the "Show Inlinks" drop-down menu so Yahoo will only show you the links it found from the other sites that are linking to you.

The more links your site has, the better.

This is because each link can be thought of as a "vote" for your site. The search engines figure that if others like your site well enough to link to it, then it probably contains valuable information.

This is why we use Article Marketing, Web 2.0 Strategies and a variety of other techniques to continually build links for our clients.

Traffic Generation Strategies

Even the most attractive of websites is useless without visitors and that's why we utilize many different traffic generation strategies on behalf of our clients. We do our best to help you dominate the search engine results in an effort to bring you targeted traffic that is meaningful to your business.

Just a few of these strategies include...

- Search Engine Optimization (both on-page and off)

- Article Marketing

- Press Releases

- Blogging/RSS Feed Syndication

- Social Bookmarking

- Utilizing "Web 2.0" properties (like Facebook.com, Twitter.com etc.)

- Video Marketing (like YouTube.com, Viddler.com, etc.)

- Online Classifieds (like Craigslist.org, Kijiji.com, etc.)

- And a whole lot more!

Whether you are looking to make direct sales from your website, build leads or encourage your visitors to stop by your store or office, we can develop a traffic generation strategy to meet your objectives.

Where Do We Go From Here?

If you're ready to build a solid online presence and attract new business, we'd love to discuss your individual needs.

To get started, give us a call on: 07736280038 or visit:
www.arfawrites.com and complete our online form to request an appointment.

We'll set an appointment at a time that's convenient for you (typically 30 minutes in length) to learn more about your business and tell you how we can help.

About The Author

Arfa Saira Iqbal is the founder of Freelance Writing Services which specializes in helping local businesses build a meaningful online and offline presence.

Arfa is a professionally trained direct response copywriter and commercial freelance writer. She writes for local businesses and has clients from all over the UK and the USA.

She works in conjunction with:
- A graphic designer and printer to offer complete solutions from initial copy to final print version
- A proofreader
- A web developer to create lead generation websites for local businesses
- An SEO consultant to improve Google rankings and online presence

Arfa consults with businesses on how to develop and market their business to improve customer retention and increase their leads and sales. She writes high-impact marketing materials such as corporate brochures, newsletters, promotional material and just about anything that requires the use of a skilled writer.

Arfa specializes in sales letters, autoresponders (email campaigns) and other forms of copy to increase sales and conversions.

When not marketing a local business, she enjoys spending time with her family and cooking delicious food!

You can contact her via email at info@arfawrites.com