yodle®

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# TOP 5 REASONS

## YOUR COMPETITORS ATTRACT MORE CUSTOMERS ONLINE

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### AND HOW YOU CAN CHANGE IT.

# The Problem:
## Competitors Are Taking Your Potential Customer

Have you ever performed an online search for the product or service your business provides? Sure you have, and so do consumers. In fact, the vast majority of consumers (over 80% actually) go online to search for local products and services like the ones you offer - and that's a lot! So, knowing the opportunities that being found online will bring must make it really disappointing when, instead of seeing your own business there at the top of search sites, you find that pesky competitor from down the road. Guess who your potential customers are finding when they perform a similar search? Here's a hint: not you.

But alas, all is not lost. It's not too late to change things for your business – and that's what this guide is all about: understanding why you're currently losing online and how you can turn things around. However, before we get started it's important that you have a certain baseline understanding of search engines. So without further ado…

# Getting Started:
## The anatomy of the Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

When a person searches for a local product or service on a search engine like Google, Yahoo!, or Bing there are typically three sections on the SERP that show up: (1) 'Ads' (also known as "paid search" or "sponsored listings"), (2) the "free" listings in the center of the page (called 'organic' or 'natural' listings), and (3) the map listings. Here – this will help:
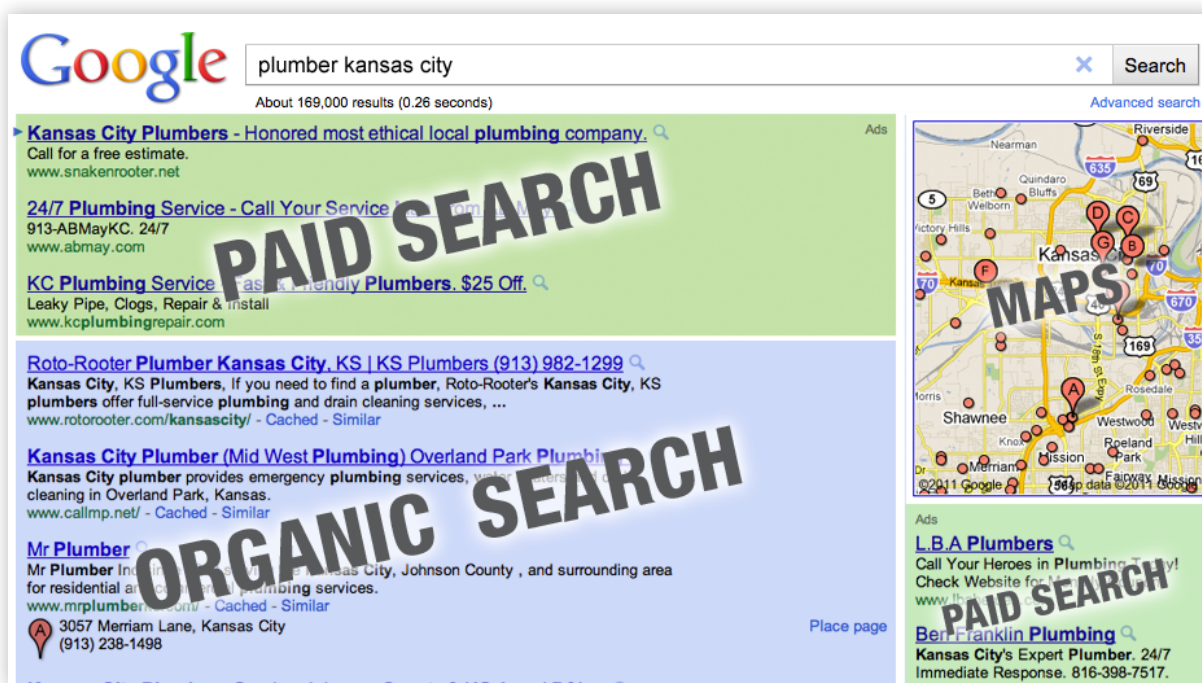


It's estimated that in any given month there are over 3 billion online searches which are local in nature – consumers looking for relevant services in specific locations. Given this enormous number, it's no mystery why search engines, and by extension the three main sections of the SERP (ads, organic, and maps), hold the key to a strong online presence and ultimately more new customers. We'll be touching on each of these sections and more as we discuss *The Top 5 Reasons Your Competitors Attract More Customers Online.*

**So let's dive in!**

# Reason #1:

## Your competitors invest in paid search.

Paid search advertising is one of the quickest ways to get in front of potential customers. After you set up your campaign, select what keyword searches you want to show up for, and write your compelling ad copy. High placement on the search engine can be just a click away. In fact, for most searches relevant to your business, paid search listings will be at the top of the SERP above all organic results. While paid search listings typically only get 25% of all clicks, studies suggest that people who do click on paid search ads are far more likely to buy (and buy soon) than people who click on organic listings.

If you aren't showing up when a search is performed for the services your business provides, those pesky competitors who are showing up are winning that business. Additionally, with paid search advertising you have a ton of control as to what you tell potential customers about your business, when you show your ads, and where your ads are shown. These three aspects of paid search help you ensure that you are generating the most qualified traffic to your site – traffic with the potential to turn into real sales. Bottom line, if you're not using paid search for your business, you could be missing out on a BIG opportunity.



## So change it!

Consider investing the time, money, and resources into the creation of a strong paid search campaign. Through investing in paid search you will be able to showcase yourself to the huge group of people looking for your services in your area.  To get started you can work directly with search engines like Google or Bing, or choose an online marketing partner like Yodle (shameless plug) who can set up and manage your campaigns directly for you.

# Reason #2:
## Your competitors have optimized their online map presence.

The "map" sections of search engines have become increasingly important as search engine companies realize how much local information consumers search for online. In turn, these companies have beefed up the size and prominence of these sections on their sites. With that said, how does placement in these important sections work? Here are the basics:

**In order to show up for map listings, businesses:**

**1.** Claim the map page and create relevant keyword content on the local listing. This helps search engines view a business's local listings page as credible, and therefore more worthy of incorporating into that search engine's "map" section.

   **Here's where you can claim and edit your business's local listings page for each of the three major search engines:**

   **Google Places** - www.google.com/places
   **Yahoo! Local Listings** - www.listings.local.yahoo.com
   **Bing** - www.bing.com/businessportal

**2.** Ensure information is accurate and consistent across Internet directories and Internet Yellow Pages (IYP) sites. This serves to further verify the existence of your business and provide correct information to people across the internet that are looking for your services.
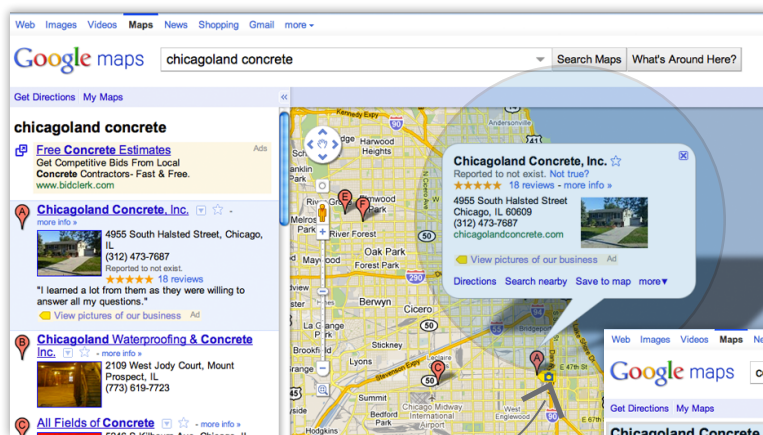


**Your fully beefed up Places Page**

**Maps Listings**
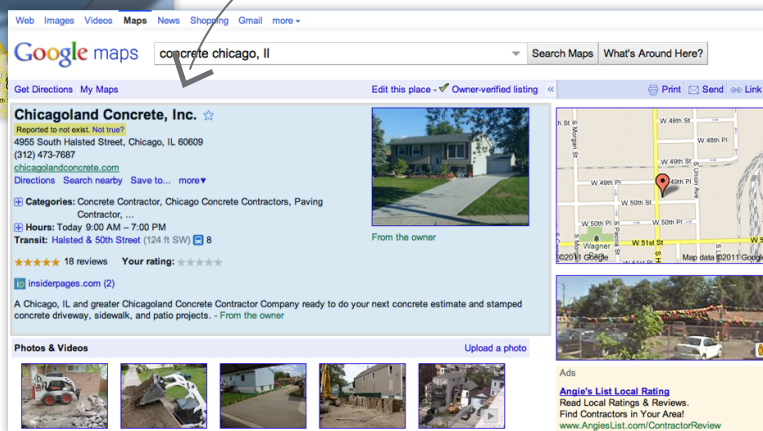
## So change it!

Claim your map profiles on the major search engines and add content to your profile pages including keyword rich descriptions and photos. Once completed, go ahead and do some research to determine where your contact information is currently listed online and if it's accurate. One way to get started with this process is to perform a simple search of your company name on a search engine. From here you will want to ensure that each listing is accurate and that you are listed on all of the major website directories (like citysearch.com, yellowpages.com, superpages.com, cityslick.com, localbusinessusa.com, etc.).

# Reason #3:
## Your competitor's website was designed with organic placement in mind.

"Organic" search results refer to those listings on a SERP that are not paid. Instead, they are organized by the search engines according to what they deem are most relevant to a particular search.

The question is how do search engines determine that one website is more relevant than the next (and therefore how do you improve your placement)? In an ideal world, the search engines would be able to employ an army of people to read and sift through websites to determine which ones are the most relevant for a particular search. However, with millions and millions of websites out there, and an infinite number of potential searches, using people really isn't feasible.

Instead the search engines use something called a "bot" to read through the backend coding of sites on the Internet and determine what sites are most relevant. One of the main things these bots—which lack the nuance and smarts of people—look at is the content on a particular site. In the case of a bot though, the "content" of your site is not just the visible text on your website, it's also the content in the code of your site called "tags." For example: all things being equal, a site that covers bankruptcy attorneys in Austin, TX (and uses the words "bankruptcy", "attorney", "Austin", and "Texas") has a greater probability of higher placement in searches that also use those words than a site that covers criminal defense in Dubuque, IA (one caveat here is that technical problems and a bad site structure can confuse those bots and put a major cramp in your rankings regardless of the words you use).

So what's the moral of the story? Basically, when your website is created, it's important to not just think of how it reads and looks to humans, but also how it looks to those "bots." If you don't do this, you may have a great looking website, but unfortunately few people will actually see it.

**Good Meta Tags**

```
<title>Texas DWI Law Attorneys: Houston DWI Defense, Drunk
Driving</title>

<meta name="Description" content="J. Gary Trichter, Texas DWI
law attorneys handling criminal offenses involving driving
while intoxicated (DWI), driving under the influence (DUI),
boating while intoxicated (BWI) and administrative license
revocation (ALR)">

<meta name="Keywords" content="texas dwi law attorney, texas
dwi lawyers, dwi in texas, dwi attorney, texas lawyer, dwi
lawyer, dwi defense, dui lawyer, texas dui attorney, texas
drunk driving, dui, houston criminal lawyer, houston at-
torney, houston defense lawyer, drunk driving, drunk drving
defense, drunk driving lawyer, houston criminal attorney, j.
gary trichter, gary trichter and associates">

<meta name="robots" content="all" />
<meta name=aesop content=interactive>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="author" CONTENT="LawInfo.com">
<meta name="GOOGLEBOT" content="INDEX, FOLLOW">
<META HTTP-EQUIV="distribution" CONTENT="Global">
<meta http-equiv="resource-type" content="document">
<META name="robots" content="index,follow">
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-Type" CONTENT="text/html;
charset=ISO-8859-1">
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/JavaScript"
src="http://www.texasdwilaw.com/remotefiles/remote_javas-
cript.js"></script>
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/JavaScript"
src="http://www.texasdwilaw.com/texas-dwi-law-attorneys.
js"></script>
```
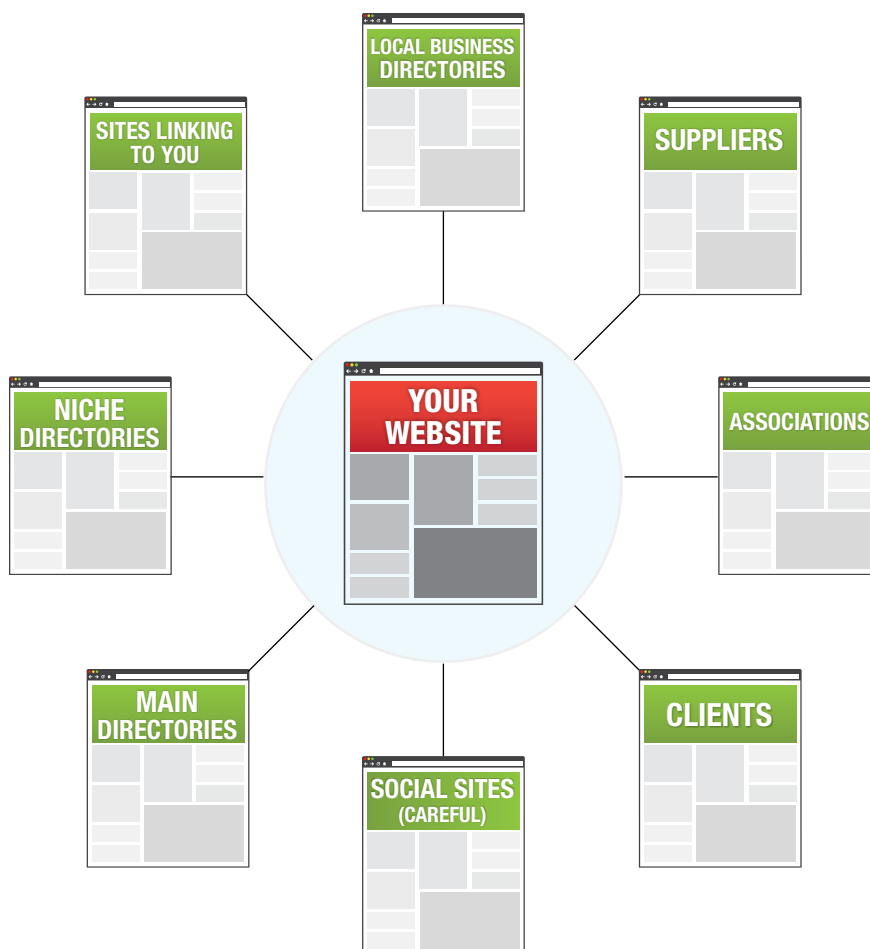
### So change it!

If you build your own website, make sure to research organic implications and best practices. If you choose a provider, make sure they understand the broad range of Search Engine Optimization practices necessary to build a site that will be found.

# Reason #4:
## Your competitors get links from other reputable sites.

Content, keywords, and coding aren't the only pieces of the organic puzzle. Those search engine bots we talked about in Reason #3 also try to assess a site's usefulness, authority, and level of trust. After all, there may be a lot of websites covering plumbers in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, but which one should be ranked first, second, third? Basically search engines try to determine rank by the number and trustworthiness of other sites that point to your site with a link. Think of it this way: would you trust someone more who came to sell you something if they had 100 recommendations versus no recommendations at all? Of course you'd be more apt to trust the person with recommendations. Furthermore, what if one of those recommendations was *The New York Times*? The same idea hold true for search engine bots and websites: the greater the number, and the stronger the recommendations (a.k.a. links), the better.

So what does this mean? In order to get ahead in the crowded online space, it is important that a website align with other trusted sites. This strategy, if done correctly, should be ongoing and will take time and energy – but the payoff comes with consistently higher placement and more qualified leads to your site.

LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORIES

SITES LINKING TO YOU

SUPPLIERS

NICHE DIRECTORIES

YOUR WEBSITE

ASSOCIATIONS

MAIN DIRECTORIES

SOCIAL SITES (CAREFUL)

CLIENTS

### So change it!
Invest time into researching reputable sites that are aligned to your specific business. Then create a strategy that will enable you to ask for links from these types of sites on an ongoing basis. Your strategy should be sustainable and include a significant amount of time allocated to research.

# Reason #5:

## Your competitors are attracting customers through other sites too.

If you had to pick a single place to promote your business's website online, the search engines are it. But, you don't have to pick a single place (in fact, you shouldn't!). There are a host of other sites that are also extremely valuable to your business. Many of these sites you've heard of – from yellowpages.com or superpages.com to Citysearch, Yelp, and others. Just remember, if you don't make sure that consumers searching on those sites find you, they will find your competitors.

**Yellow Pages** | **Citysearch** | **yelp** | **Kudzu**

**and many more!**

### So change it!

Investigate which Internet Yellow Pages (IYP) or directory sites are most relevant for your business and consider advertising on them. In many cases these sites also offer free profile claiming similar to map listings on search engines.

# The Good News:
## It can be done!

Everything we talked about seems like a lot of work, right? It can be, but growing your business online is critical! Local online marketing has many components that can be used to grow your business. To be successful it is important to dedicate the time, energy, and resources into a sustainable strategy and then measure the return on your investment. The five tips we shared give you an actionable plan for your own online marketing program. It will take time and dedication.

**If you go at it alone, just remember:**

**1.** Invest in paid search.

**2.** Optimize your online map presence.

**3.** Design your website with organic placement in mind.

**4.** Get links from other reputable sites.

**5.** Attract customers through Internet Yellow Pages, online directories, and local sites.

Shameless plug

## Yodle can help you with the heavy lifting.

We know that your time and energy are valuable and may be more profitably spent managing the operations of your business — which is why we have invested a significant amount of our time and money in technology that generates qualified leads. To do this, we leverage our vast experience in website creation, link building, online directories, map listings and paid search in order to help you successfully grow your business.

# Yodle is a leader in Local Online Marketing.
## A team of experts at Yodle is waiting to help you get your business found online.

Call now to schedule a free consultation
# 888-299-2196