

Local vs global SEO – what's the difference?

Improving your Google SEO rating is important for growth and to maintain your authority within your sector. However, the rapidly changing SEO sphere and keyword matches make it hard to know how specific or generalised you should be with your keyword research.

Having a pragmatic approach to your digital marketing and SEO strategy allows you to adapt to these updates and have ongoing search engine optimisation. However, it's important to gain a deeper understanding of two important types of search engine optimisation to enable you to really hone in on your target audience and drive traffic to your website organically.

What is local SEO?

Local SEO, as the name suggests, focuses on local keywords. This means targeting specific geo-targeted keywords and phrases that are unique to them. Forming a local SEO strategy might include creating listings on Google Places and Google My Business, as well as local listings, directories and yellow papers. Local SEO also incorporates customer reviews, so it is important to factor these into your plan.

Local SEO is best for businesses with bricks and mortar stores, adapting your keywords to specific locations. This strategy works even better if your business

is the only one in that area providing that specific service or product. Play on your USPs and location to build a loyal local audience and grow your brand awareness.

What is global SEO?

Global SEO, also called international SEO or what we broadly refer to as 'normal SEO', means more generalised targeting of anyone using search engines. This uses broad keywords and places you against many more competitors. This means it can be harder to rank without doing thorough keyword research.

Global SEO is great for companies that aren't restricted to one or limited location(s). As with local SEO, having something that marks you out as different can really help to get you noticed. Finding keywords that suit your business that is specific, but not too niche will help here.

For a US market, somewhere between local and global falls national SEO. This focuses solely on improving the rankings of a particular website within the confines of the United States, rather than internationally.

Deciding when to use local or global SEO

Local and global SEO can both be used together in your keyword strategy, although how you measure their success and what content you focus on will be very different. Similarly, they can be used separately depending on the size of your business and your goals.

For example, a small business looking to expand slowly and within a specific location should keep its SEO efforts local. Build authority in the local market and direct foot traffic to your physical store or office.

Once you have established yourself, or you want to increase your product range or begin to offer your services internationally, you'll be ready to implement a global keyword strategy.

Businesses that are not tied to one location and are already utilising global SEO shouldn't necessarily neglect local SEO. Focus some time on looking at who your audience currently is, who your target audience is, and where they might be. You can use this data to help create some local campaigns that work with specific keywords for that area.

The importance of a great web presence

Why is SEO important? Search engine optimisation is important as a way to direct traffic to your website and be visible to potential customers. However, it's not only about the keywords you are ranking for – it's also about how you use them.

A good web presence isn't just about keywords, it's about where these then direct traffic too. Consider what pages are being landed on, and if there is a clear message or call to action. A well structured website should provide knowledgeable information on each page to make sure it is ranked for relevant search terms.

Understanding the difference between local and global SEO will help you to know how and when to incorporate them. Look at where you want to target and who your target audience is. What keywords do you currently work with, and are there any that you could be using?

Doing keyword research and analysing the existing data you have – as well as looking at your current SEO strategy – will help to inform your approach to local and global keyword use. Building up your rank and authority with local or global keywords will mean creating relevant pages and content that help to draw people in organically and effectively.

Working with an agency to conduct keyword research or help you transition from local to global, or vice versa, can give you a greater insight into how to successfully apply and combine local and global SEO in your business.

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