

GUIDE

3 Secrets to Supercharging Your Multi-Location Business Online

What You Need to Know



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What Every Modern Marketing Team Should Be Aware Of

Marketing, as always, is evolving.

From print ads to TV and radio; from static websites to inbound marketing; every iteration is aimed at creating a more personalized buying experience for customers. Technology has been the driving (and enabling) force behind all of this, and nothing has quite turned the world of business upside down like the Internet has.



To really optimize your online presence, you need to understand that the customer journey has changed how multi-location businesses need to operate—particularly when it comes to local search.

PSA: Your website is no longer the most important part of your online presence.

Your website is still a key component of your online presence. But if you want to maximize traffic, then you need to reach people at their *highest point of intent*. The highest point of intent refers to when a prospect isn't just shopping around but is actually trying to decide on where to make a purchase.

And that decision is made online.

In this guide, we're going to explore what you need (beyond your basic website) to be their #1 choice.

1. Exist Everywhere, (Almost) Effortlessly

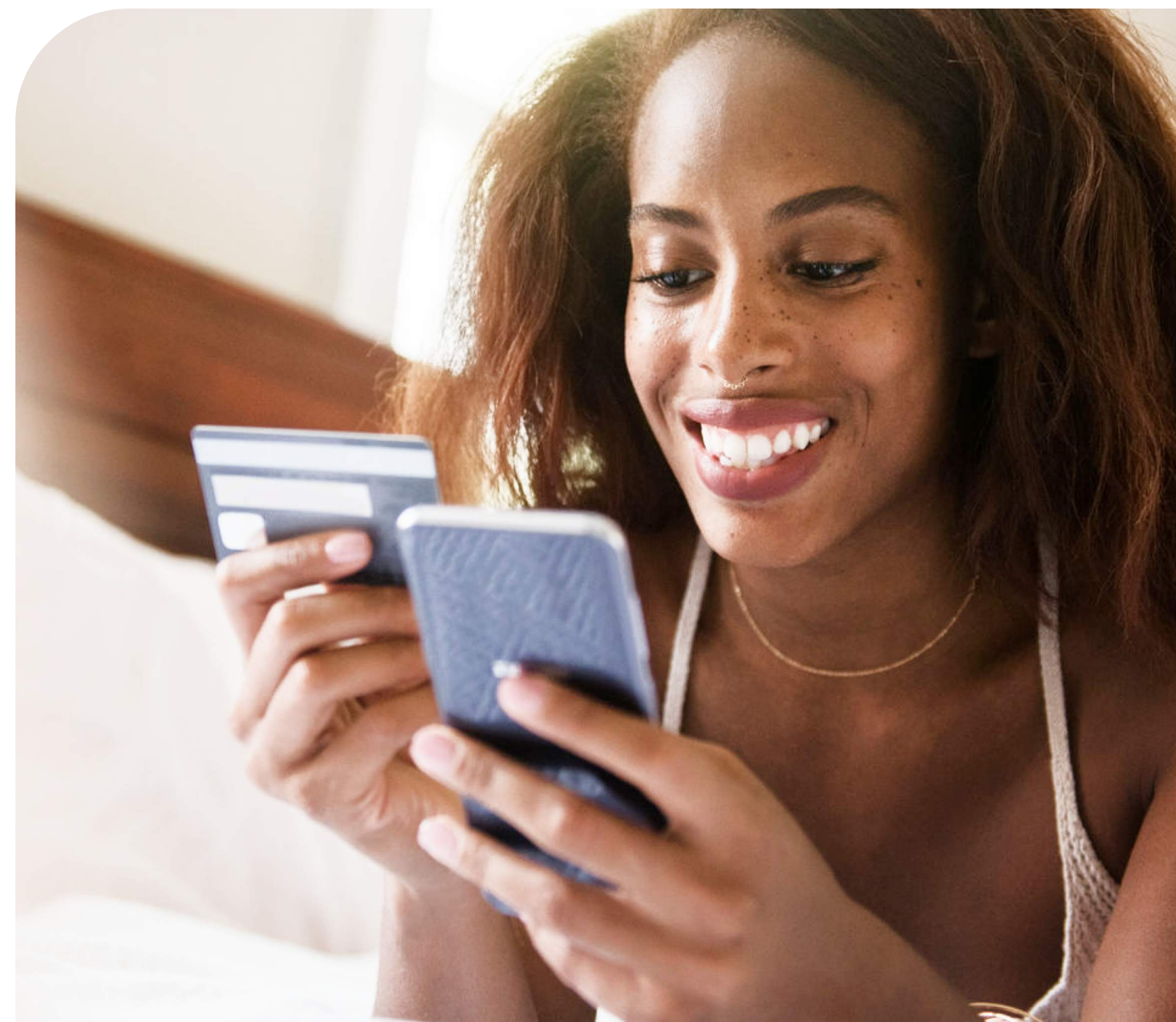
Your website is still the digital face of your business, but think of it as a face in a very crowded space. While you still want it to be presentable, what you really want is to be positioned directly in front of customers when they're at their *highest point of intent*.

Think about what you do when you're inevitably going to make a purchase:

- You know you've got a date on Friday night...*Italian restaurant near me*
- You're on a business trip and forgot toothpaste...*toothpaste Austin, TX*
- Kid's sweet sixteen is coming up...*car dealership near me*

It's at these moments, when people have made up their minds to make a purchase and are looking for the best (and nearest) solution, that you have an opportunity.

In these kinds of situations, the only way to be seen is to rank in local search. And the only way to rank in local search is to allocate more resources to third-party profiles.



Pro Tip

Make local search your #1 priority; Make it easy with software that automatically enhances your local SEO.

Third-party profiles refers to online business directories such as Yelp or Google My Business. However, there are hundreds of platforms like these. When it comes to ranking in Google's "snack pack" (those top three results with the map that appear before the organic results) the trick is to be listed on as many platforms as possible, with identical information.

By identical, we mean that your name/address/phone number (the holy triad known as NAP) is exactly the same on each of these.

But how many business owners or marketing managers have the time to create and log into hundreds of accounts? Approximately zero. Getting listed on dozens of platforms will take hundreds of hours—and that doesn't include the time it takes to adjust a changed address or edit a new number, for example. Or the lengths you have to go through in order to keep track of all your login info.



The good news: You don't have to live in spreadsheets. The alternative is "automatic SEO." With the right tool, you can log into a single hub and control all your profiles from there.

Sounds easy?

That's because it is.

When you have a lot to manage—whether that's humans, assets, facilities, minions, etc.—the most effective thing you can do is simplify. Being able to do things at *scale* will save you significant time and manpower.

The same concept applies to your website. If you manage multiple locations, it's important that you are able to make changes at scale. That means finding a tool that allows you to instantly deploy location pages with the same site architecture (and underlying data schema—see chapter 2) for potentially thousands of locations.

You should be able to easily tweak locations' respective NAP, pin drops, and store hours. Ideally, this tool would even sync with those third-party platforms, giving you even more of a local SEO boost.

If you could ensure all your locations were branded consistently online and optimized for SEO at the touch of a button...wouldn't you?

Automatic SEO tools allow you to be seen for who you are, by the right customers at the right time.

50% of consumers who performed a local search on their smartphone visited a store within 24 hours.

Forbes

2. Optimize for Voice

If you look at the search trends for “**near me**”, you can see that local searches have increased significantly in the past five years. We also know that the majority of queries conducted through a voice assistant are in search of a local solution.

That’s why it’s the perfect time to start optimizing for voice. Year over year, we’re seeing an increase in the number of local searches being conducted with a voice assistant.

In fact, **ComScore** predicts that by the year 2020, 50% of all online searches will be conducted with voice search. **Gartner** estimates that 30% of all browsing sessions will include voice by 2020. In other words, voice search is coming. So, the best time to get in is right now, before everyone else does.

And considering it’s not too difficult—and it can be somewhat automated—why wait?

Deploying a site with structured data (or schema markup) makes it easier to be found via voice search. Structured data is HTML code that underlies your site and makes it easier for search engines to understand your content.



Pro Tip

Automatic structured data will improve both traditional SEO and your likelihood of being found via voice search.

I.e., Google sends little “crawler” bots to do reconnaissance all over the web. When they crawl your site, they’re looking to identify who you are and what you do. The more quickly a crawler can figure that out, the better you will rank—and the more accurately you’ll be associated with keywords. Structured data basically provides a “Cliffnotes” version of your website.

Make it easy for Google and Google will make it easier for you.

It’s as simple as handing them the answers. The right answers. Businesses are often surprised to find that Google doesn’t have them indexed for the right keywords. That prevents the right people from being able to find you.

Structured data is a great solution for this, because it helps you be discovered via traditional search and voice search. With the right data in place, you can be featured in the rich snippets that appear at the top of the Search Engine Results Pages. These are known to drive traffic and increase click-throughs, as well as help you appear in voice search results.

All things considered, optimizing for voice search isn’t too different from optimizing for text local search. It mostly involves putting the right information in the right places for both customers and Google.

Mobile voice-related searches are 3X more likely to be local-based than text-related searches.

Search Engine Watch

3. Manage How Customers Talk to & About You

The internet never sleeps. That's why customers have come to expect easy accessibility. They want things when they want them, whether that's answers or overnight shipping.

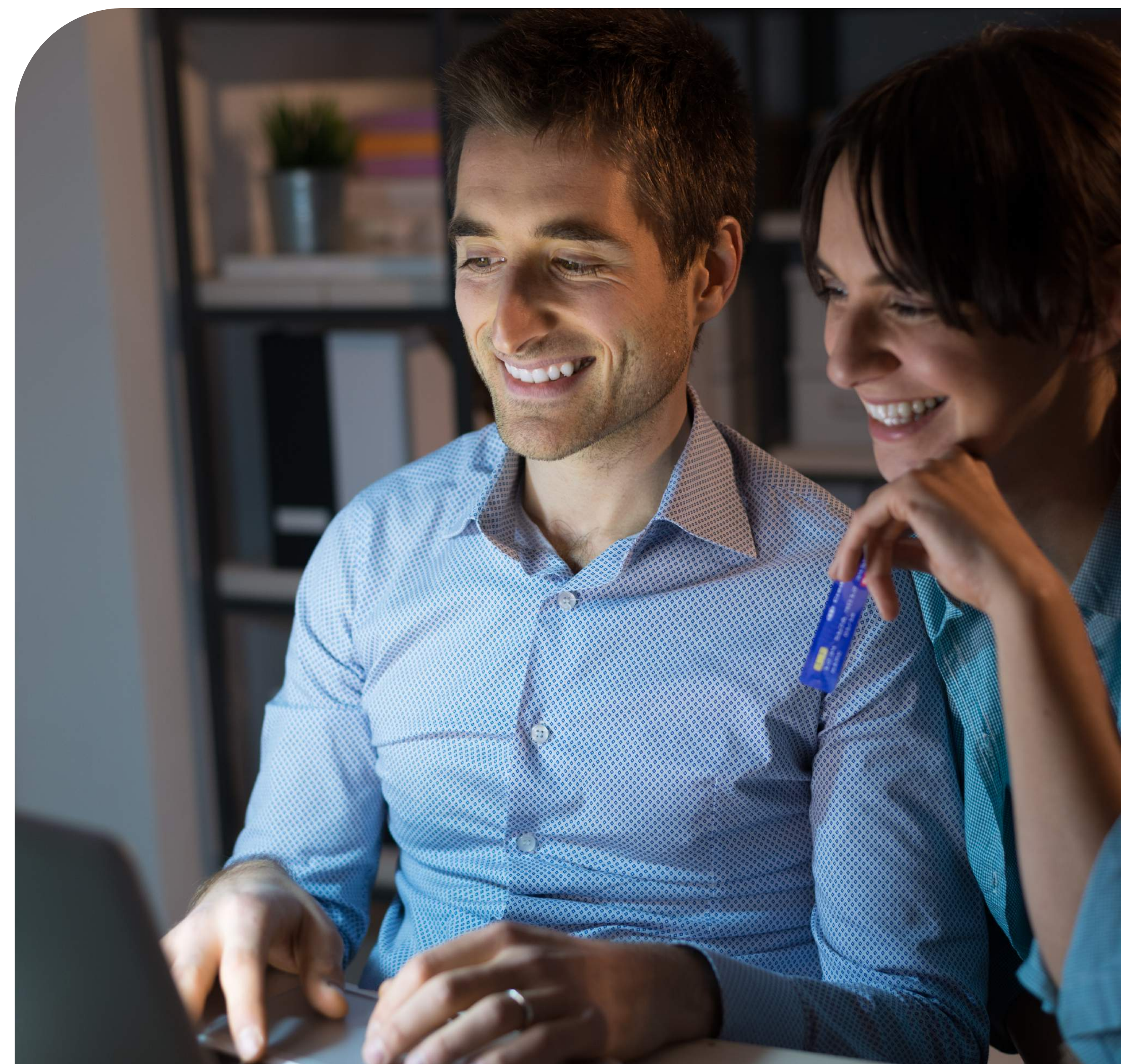
As a result, leading companies all offer messaging as a channel for their customers. The more channels you offer, the broader a net you're casting: Some customers will reach out to you over Facebook, others over a website chat, and still others over your third-party profiles like Google My Business.

Especially if you're managing multiple locations, all this communication can be difficult to keep up with.

Having a single hub for all communication channels makes this far more manageable. This platform should be able to hook up with your Google My Business profile and other important platforms, allowing customers to reach out to you directly through text.

Ideally, it would empower users at both the headquarters-level and on-site general managers at a location basis.

Customers like it when you're available. They like to talk to you.



Pro Tip

Choose software that allows you to access data at both the master admin/corporate level, as well as an on-location level.

And they like to talk *about you*, which is why it's also important that you're also able to manage reviews at both the corporate and on-site levels.

Did you know that **84%** of potential customers trust online reviews as much as they trust their friends? In other words, your online audience will make purchasing decisions based off of reviews. A reputation management tool will help you solicit reviews from customers, but even more importantly, it will empower you to monitor your brand.

With a reputation management tool, you can be alerted across your entire digital ecosystem in real-time (at both the corporate and local levels, depending on how you choose to implement it).

This is critical when you're being flooded with thousands of reviews from across all of your locations and multiple review platforms. Having a single hub where you can manage all of this will save you considerable time and energy. The alternatives are to (1) try to manage this manually, or (2) let customers run wild with reviews.

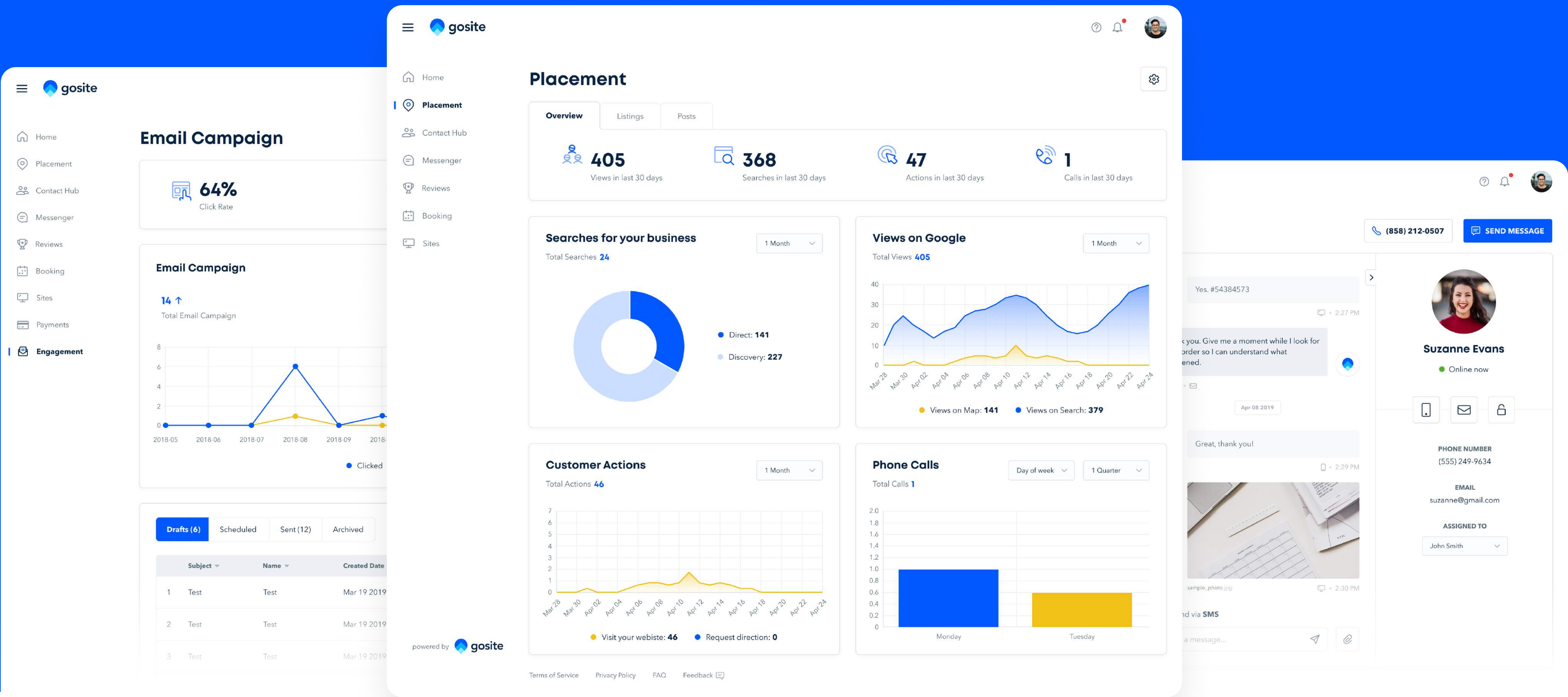
If you try to manage thousands of reviews manually, across multiple review platforms, you're bound to miss important customer concerns (and compliments!). Having review management software means you don't miss a thing.

If you don't do any kind of reputation management, you'll have no control over how you appear online. A good review management software will allow you to filter out any damaging reviews and address customer concerns more privately.

Over 70% of prospects will change their perspective of a brand based on online reviews.

Bazaarvoice

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