

Using Location-Based Web Services to Amplify Your Mobile Marketing

Today, 97% of consumers use the web to search for local businesses – many of these on their mobile devices while they are on the move. If your business doesn't have a profile or page on the most common location portals, you are leaving money on the table for your competitors. Even if you have a mobile website, that doesn't guarantee you'll be a top result on a local search for businesses of your type in your area.

But, by enrolling yourself on the most popular location services, you will enable consumers to find your business and more effectively rival your local competition, expand your customer base and increase revenues as more consumers discover your establishment.

A recent survey by TNS found that 66% of mobile users want to use location-based features such as check-ins, mobile maps and local business searches. The survey said that of this 66%, only 19% are already using location-based services, but this number is on the rise and now is your chance to get your small business on the mobile web map.

It will only take a couple of minutes to get your business listed on each of these sites. Your business may already be listed because you probably have a land-line that triggered a listing, but it will only have basic information such as your business name, number and perhaps address, but it won't have critical information and be location optimized so customers can find you.

Here are the top services you should create a profile on for your small business – be sure to include all the information consumers need to find you – and activate all options that will enable mobile web searchers to find you easily.

- YP.com – This link will take you to an “Improve Your Listing” page where you enter your business number. From there, click to go to the Business Representative page. From there, you can enter hours, website, social media links and more.
- Yelp.com – This link takes you to the page where you can register your small business for free to be displayed on this popular location-based site where consumers love to check-in (i.e. log their visit) and review your business.
- GooglePlaces.com – This link will take you to a page to create a profile for your business on Google's free local platform. There are a number of special features you can use to bring more attention to your business and get found.
- foursquare.com – This link takes you to the foursquare for business portal where you can set up a profile, called “Claiming your Venue.” Foursquare is a popular location-based social site where consumers can check-in and chat about what they're doing at your establishment.
- Facebook Places – This link will take you to Facebook's location services home page. From there, click on “Claiming a Page for Your Business” to get started. The mega-popular social media site is now expanding into check-ins to allow users to share where they are.

- Loopt – This site works a little differently because business owners can't maintain their profiles directly with Loopt – instead, Loopt pulls profiles from CitySearch.com (which is fee based) and Bing.com (which is free.)

You should be able to update your profiles on all of these sites within an hour or two and should begin to see an immediate uptick in business as consumers browsing the mobile web for local businesses can more easily find you.

As a final thought, be sure to post information on both your mobile website and in your establishment encouraging people to “Like” you on Facebook and check-in on foursquare and other check-in services. You can even offer a discount or other incentive to encourage them to do so – as you start to get more check-ins, more traffic will follow as you establish credible social proof for your business.