

15 Sites for Promoting Your Local Business

Want to get your name out to locals and visitors alike? Take advantage of these online marketing sites and watch your business grow.

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The advertising of the future is going online--and going local. This hot trend is growing rapidly and shows no signs of letting up. In fact, according to a report by Borrell Associates, local online advertising is expected to grow by 31 percent this year, hitting \$7.7 billion. The report also predicts local paid search will skyrocket by 86 percent this year, up to \$1.8 billion. Local e-mail marketing will experience growth of about 54 percent, reaching \$233 million.

There's no question that consumers are using the internet to navigate their way to local brick-and-mortar retailers. A recent study by ROI Research Inc. and Performics shows that online searches influence 20 to 30 percent of purchases made at retail locations--and that number is only increasing. More and more sites, like Local.com, are making their presence known by competing against major search engines like Google and Yahoo!. So study up, plan your budget and get in on the online advertising game.

1. **Website:** Google AdWords

How It Will Help You: AdWords helps you target local online customers by setting your pay-per-click ads to appear only when people search a particular city, state or region. There's no minimum spending requirement--your daily budget is up to you.

2. **Website:** Yahoo! Local Listings

How It Will Help You: Local Listings will promote your business to customers looking for information in Yahoo! Local. Choose from three different plans (one is free) to meet your company's needs.

3. **Website:** CitySearch

How It Will Help You: CitySearch offers online advertising tools to easily open your account, manage your daily results and receive ad placement on MSN, Yahoo!, Google and Ask.com. Similar to the idea of pay-per-click advertising, CitySearch offers two paid plans, "Web Connect" and "Call Connect."

4. **Website:** Ask.com's AskCity

How It Will Help You: Ask.com recently launched AskCity, a new local search application that's a one-stop destination for making plans. In one screen, consumers can map a route, make dinner reservations, purchase movie tickets and e-mail plans to others. Pricing for advertising on Ask.com varies.

5. **Website:** AOL's CityGuide

How It Will Help You: AOL's CityGuide specializes in providing local entertainment information to AOL service members. Advertising with AOL allows marketers to target consumers specifically by lifestyle and market.

6. **Website:** Craigslist

How It Will Help You: Craigslist gets an estimated 10 million unique visitors per day. With an online classified ad format organized by region or city, Craigslist connects buyers and sellers in more than 300 communities; for the most part, posting on the site is free.

7. **Website:** MerchantCircle.com

How It Will Help You: This free site offers a local business listing service that allows you to better manage your online reputation and become more visible in search engine results.

8. **Website:** Dotster

How It Will Help You: Dotster is a web domain registration and hosting company offering a local web advertising package called "Local Site Promotion." You set your monthly budget and Dotster will make your ad visible on all the major search engines.

9. **Website:** Local.com

How It Will Help You: Advertising on Local.com will give you access to their 10 million-plus monthly customers. Choose from a free basic listing or pay-per-click options.

10. **Website:** Froogle Local

How It Will Help You: Google's shopping search engine allows users to search for specific products by location. It's a great way for users to find retail stores regardless of whether you use e-commerce.

11. **Website:** ReachLocal

How It Will Help You: This site provides a central location for businesses to set-up, maintain and track local search advertising campaigns. Pricing varies.

12. **Website:** RegisterLocal

How It Will Help You: RegisterLocal is a service, costing \$199.95 per year, that allows you to create a master profile they submit to search engines and directories on your behalf.

13. **Website:** TrueLocal

How It Will Help You: This local search engine features full-text searching and offers advertising opportunities for businesses. Currently indexing more than 13 million local businesses, TrueLocal starts at just \$1 per month.

14. **Website:** YellowPages.com

How It Will Help You: YellowPages.com is a large online local directory site featuring city guides and advertising solutions. Basic listings are free.

15. **Website:** Web.com's MyEzClicks program

How It Will Help You: MyEzClicks lists your business on more than 30 major search engines, including Google, Yahoo! and MSN for a monthly fee.