

The **SEO**
Juice
May the 14th, 2025



Force-ing the most out of your local SEO.

The SEO Juice

3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH

- 1) Adding Exif metadata to photos uploaded to GBP can improve local ranking.
- 2) Photos inform Google and can open businesses up to additional opportunities for search visibility.
- 3) Google gives preference to new photos and videos in search results.
- 4) Google prefers to highlight your photos over your customer's photos.



The **SEO** Juice



Your
soci
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Market Insights

The SEO Juice

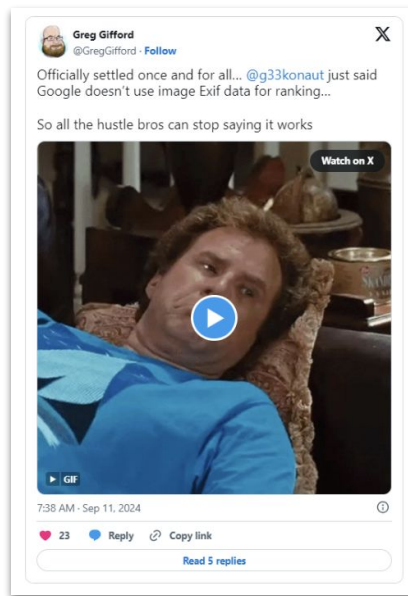
3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH



MYTH

Adding Exif metadata to photos uploaded to GBP can improve local ranking.

Speaking at [SMX Advanced](#) in October, Martin Splitt from the Google Search team re-confirmed that Google Search does not use Exif data for ranking.



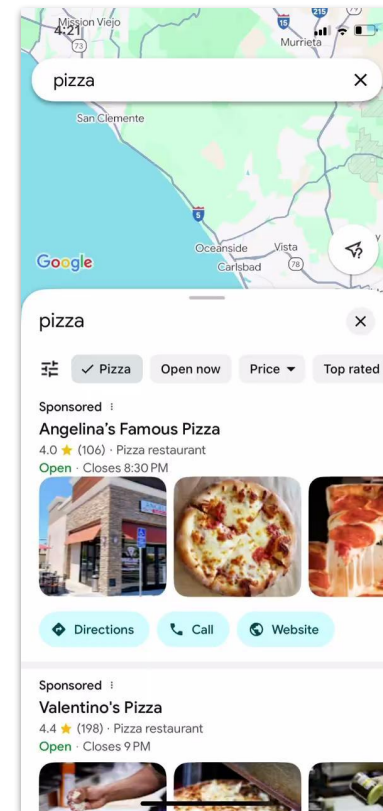
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3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH



True

Photos inform Google and can open businesses up to additional opportunities for search visibility.



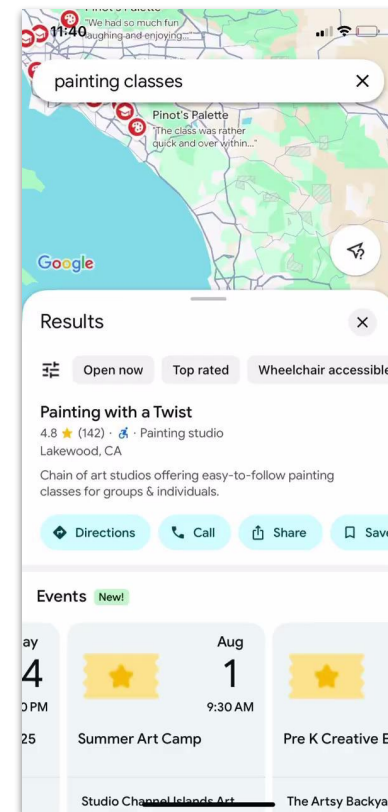
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3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH



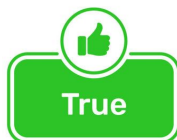
True

Photos inform Google and can open businesses up to additional opportunities for search visibility.

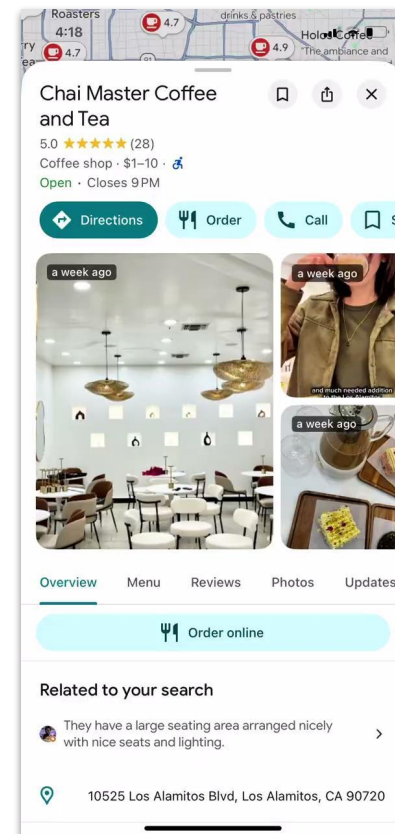


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3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH

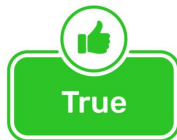


Google gives preference to new photos and videos in search results.



The SEO Juice

3 LOCAL SEO TRUTHS & A MYTH



Google prefers to highlight your photos over your customer's photos.

If the cover photo you select is low-quality or if other sources suggest that it's not the best photo to represent your business, a user-submitted photo may be selected instead.

[Source: Google](#)

The SEO Juice

- **Industry News**
The latest news in Local Search & what it means for you.
- **Is Social a Ranking Factor?**
A Case Study
- **AI Search Spotlight**
How does ChatGPT Conduct Local Search?
- **Industry Search Trends**
Benchmarking Q1 2025
- **Checkbox Optimization**
New Google Categories, Attributes & Features
- **Caught in the Wild**
New features we've spied in Local Search results





TM

Industry News

The latest in Local Search
and what it means for you



Google Manages Reverification Bugs

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES SAFE AGAIN

SOCi has been able to validate through our partnership with Google that most GBP updates are once again safe to make via API or natively in business manager (including additional business categories), and should not require business owners to re-verify the location.

Changes that could still require reverification include:

- Changes to Primary Business Category – except where the category change is similar (i.e. “grocery store” to “discount grocery store”).*
- A business with a storefront changing to one without (i.e. a service area business with no storefront signage).

Takeaway for Businesses:

Make those changes you’ve been holding off on. You no longer have to be worried a change that can improve search visibility will cause reverification headaches.





New Google Feature for Restaurants

WHAT'S HAPPENING

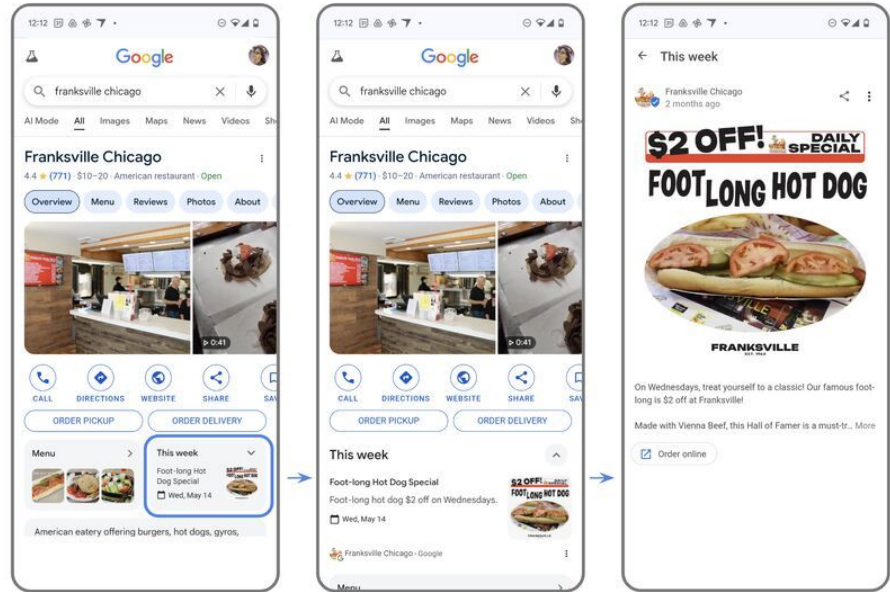


This week Google announced a new way for restaurants and bars to highlight events, deals, and specials prominently at the top of their Google Business Profiles.

What's Happening puts timely updates, like "Today's Special" or "Live Music on Saturday," front and center, driving immediate engagement.

To be eligible to appear in this new space, businesses are encouraged to share events and deals via Google Posts, or by connecting Facebook, Instagram and/ or X profiles to their GBP for automatic syncing.

Initial launch is for single location Food and beverage businesses. Google promises the feature will continue to evolve.



[Source: Google](#)




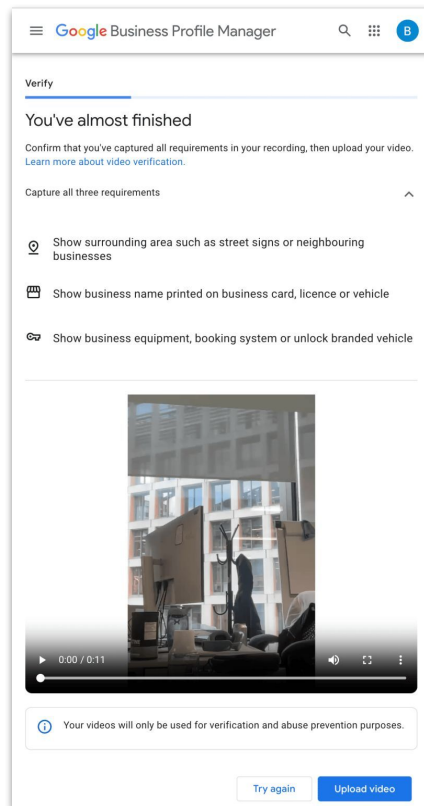
Google Streamlines Video Verification Process with Previews



On April 22nd, Google announced a new feature to help reduce frustrations with the video verification process: **Video Previews!**

Before submitting, you can now review your video to ensure it meets the requirements for successful verification. This new feature is intended to cut down on rejections and reduce the need to re-record.

 For those wondering why video verification is required at all for bulk verified accounts, Google has claimed that bad actors were taking advantage of this status to create listings that would not have otherwise passed Google's guidelines for GBP creation. To address the issue, Google reverted to a one-size-fits-all approach globally.



Is Social a Ranking Factor?

A Case Study



TM



What Google Wants: SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Why this Matters:

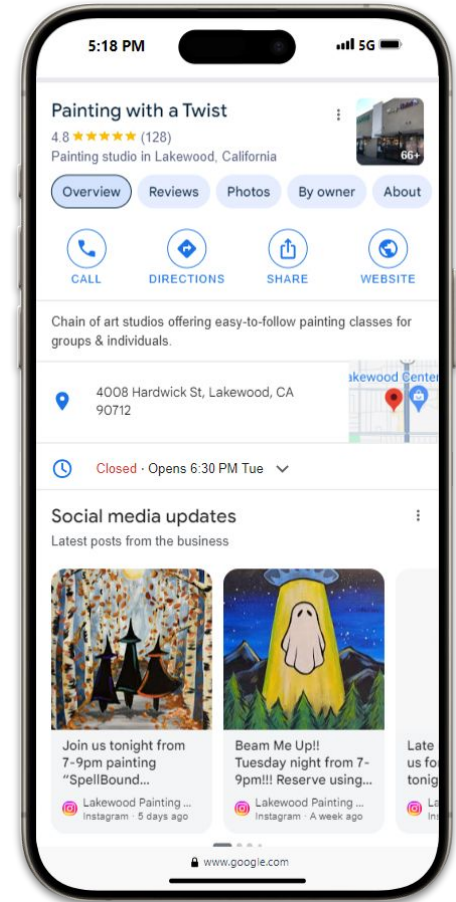
Like reviews, social channels could begin to play a larger role validating a business through customer interaction and feedback.

If Google is asking for businesses to add social links directly, we can infer that Google may use the linked information to validate:

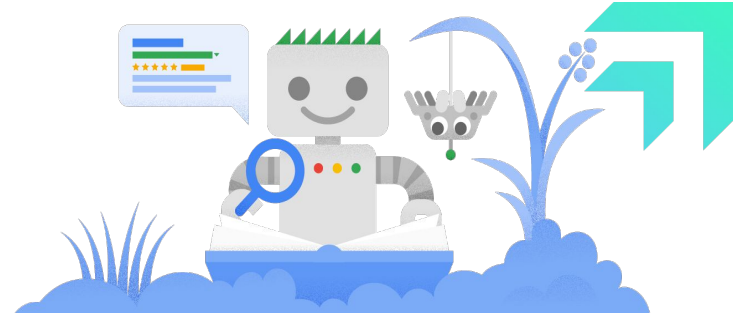
Experience & Expertise (through relevant posts and photos)

Authority (through shares and likes)

Trust (through ratings & followers)



How to Improve Your Local Ranking on Google



Per Google, a combination of these 3 factors helps them determine the best local search results:

Relevance: Relevance refers to how well a local Business Profile matches what someone is searching for. Add complete and detailed business information to help Google better understand your business and match your profile to relevant searches.

Distance: Distance considers how far each potential search result is from the location term used in a search. If a user doesn't specify a location in their search, Google will calculate distance based on what they do know about their location.

Prominence: Prominence is based on information that Google has about a business, from across the web, like links, articles, and directories. Google review count and review score factor into local search ranking. More reviews and positive ratings can improve your business' local ranking. Your position in web results is also a factor, so search engine optimization (SEO) best practices apply.

The Experiment Overview:

TEST OBJECTIVE

Validate that signals from linked and active local social channels improve visibility (search impressions) and engagement (calls, website visits) in local search.

METHODOLOGY

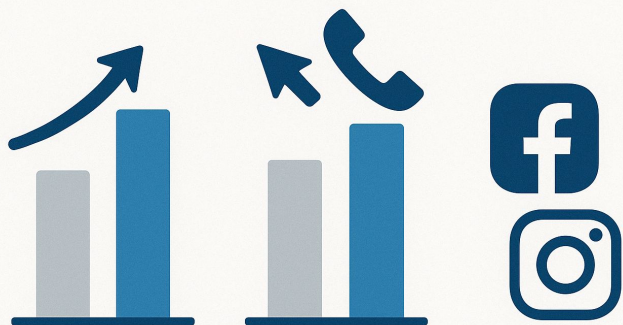
A test group was selected with an average growth rate within 1% of the overall growth rate for all Painting with a Twist locations.

Locations in the test group were identified in November and asked to add links to their local or brand social media profiles.

Instructors in the test group were provided recommendations for improving social engagement during the 3 month test period running from January through March.



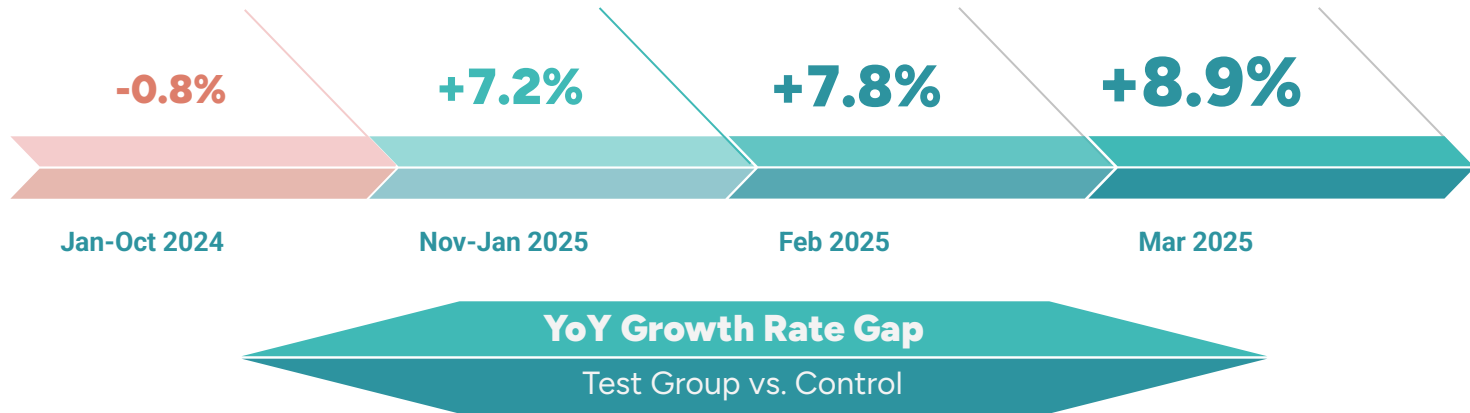
Key Findings:



- Test group's growth rate for search impression outpaced the control group by nearly **9% YoY by the third month.**
- Test group's growth rate for web clicks and phone calls outpaced the control group YoY by **more than 10%.**
- Customer saw an +8% in overall website traffic.
- Customer saw a +14% increase in Google-sourced users.

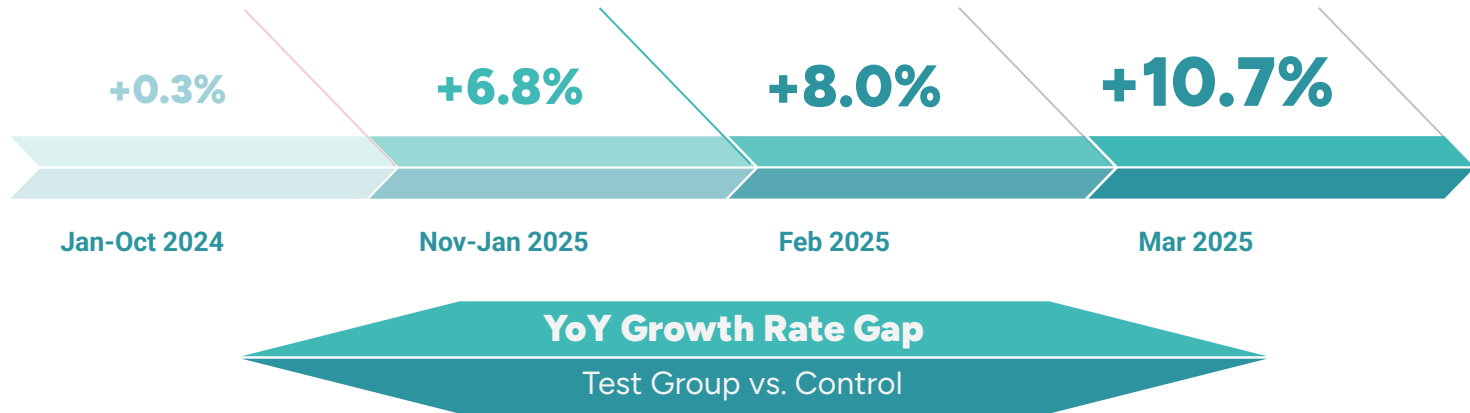
GBP Insights Data

SEARCH IMPRESSIONS



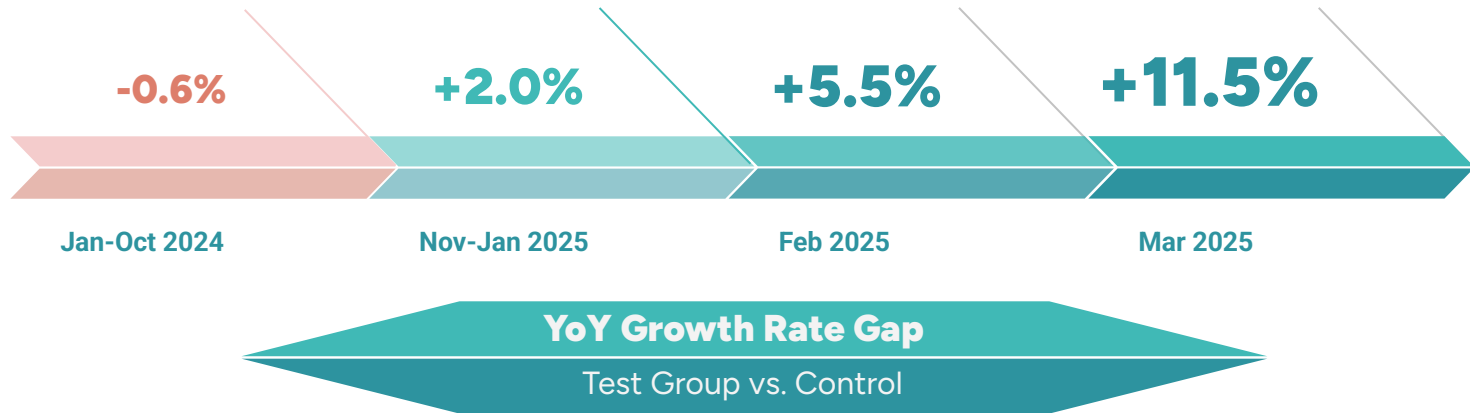
GBP Insights Data

WEB CLICKS



GBP Insights Data

PHONE CALLS



What did the Test Group do Differently?



Test group locations published 61% more Facebook posts.



Test group locations published 59% more Instagram posts.



34% of test locations posted to LinkedIn 330% more than 11% of control locations posting.*



35% of test locations posted to Tik Tok vs. 21% of control locations. Average for all was 1 post per month.*



6% of test locations posted to X 200% more than 4% of control locations posting.*

GBP Social Test

TAKEAWAY FOR BUSINESSES

- Add Social Media URLs to your **Google Business Profiles**.
- For platforms where you do not have a localized profile, links to brand URLs are acceptable per **Google** guidelines.
- Maintain an active social presence across linked accounts.
- Create posts that both inform and prompt engagement.
- **Localize whenever possible.**



Brand Perspective – Painting with a Twist



Skyla Souza



- **Why PWAT Participated in the Test**
 - Local search is one of our biggest traffic drivers
 - Our goal: see if small profile enhancements lead to real business results
 - Social content reflects our brand vibe—**fun, creative, and community-oriented**—and we wanted that energy to show up in search
- **Before vs. After results**
 - Test group saw **+8 percentage points** in overall website traffic
 - **+14 percentage points** in Google-sourced users
 - Bonus: Participating studios saw increased **bookings, not just clicks**

Strategic Impacts for PWaT



Skyla Souza

- Link social profiles for all locations
- Continue to treat **Google Business Profile** as a key social channel
- **Local Search = Brand Showcase, not just a directory**
- Guests get a more robust brand experience before visiting
- Prioritize posting and creating engaging social media content, especially Reels



AI Search Spotlight

How does ChatGPT conduct local searches?

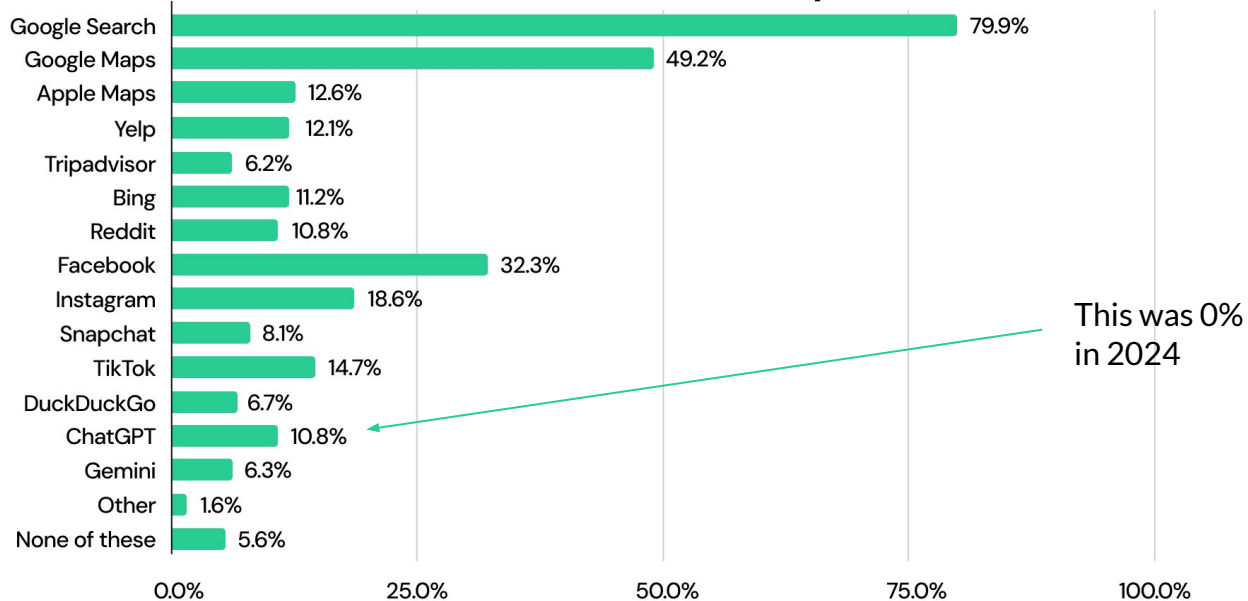


TM

Why should we care about ChatGPT for local?



Which sites or apps have you used to look up information about local businesses in the last 30 days?



ChatGPT is an emerging channel with 400M active users. Younger consumers are leading the way in using ChatGPT for local.



Google knows ChatGPT is its biggest threat ...



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[Search Engine Land](#) » [SEO](#) » [Google Search traffic decline is inevitable, execs say](#)

Google Search traffic decline is inevitable, execs say

Google execs believe Search will lose traffic to Gemini or ChatGPT, and urged urgent Gemini monetization, according to an internal document.

[Danny Goodwin](#) on May 12, 2025 at 3:34 pm | Reading time: 2 minutes



NEWS

So how does ChatGPT search work?



◆ AI Overview

ChatGPT uses Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) technology to search the web. When you ask a question, it doesn't rely on its existing knowledge base, but instead, it accesses the internet in real-time to retrieve information from trusted sources. This information is then used to generate a response that is up-to-date and specific to your query. [🔗](#)

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

RAG Technology:

ChatGPT's web search is powered by RAG. This means it doesn't just pull information from its internal data, but actively searches the web for relevant content. [🔗](#)

Show more 

But ChatGPT ≠ Google



PYMNTS

■ PYMNTS TV Today B2B Retail Fintech Digital Transformation Crypto AI PYMNT

Antitrust Trial Reveals Google Rejected OpenAI Partnership

BY PYMNTS | APRIL 22, 2025



Instead, ChatGPT = Bing ... sort of



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ChatGPT Search makes Microsoft Bing an SEO priority

Here's why Microsoft Bing is about to become your new SEO sidekick in 2025 – and how to make the most of it.

[Jessica Bowman](#) on November 5, 2024 at 2:02 pm | Reading time: 6 minutes



OPINION

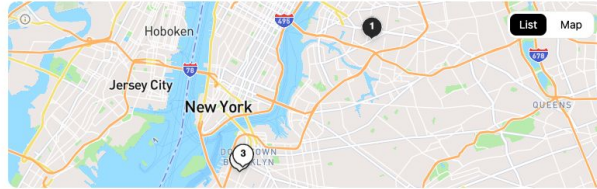
The search landscape just got a little shakeup and it's time to talk about an old friend (or maybe that cousin you rarely check on): Microsoft Bing.

With [ChatGPT Search tapping into Bing's index](#), ignoring it might mean missing a major wave in search.

ChatGPT

Can you recommend dry cleaners in Red Hook, Brooklyn?

Certainly! Here are some reputable dry cleaning services serving Red Hook, Brooklyn:



- The Clean Wash - Laundry & Dry Cleaning Delivery**
 Open now - 4.8 (58 reviews)
 Provides eco-friendly Hydrocarbon dry cleaning using GreenEarth solvents. Offers flexible pickup and drop-off times, with services available 7 days a week from 8 AM to 10 PM.
 thecleanwash.com
 Directions Website Call
- Cobble Hill Cleaners & Laundry**
 Open now until 9:00 PM - Laundry
 Family-owned business operating for three generations, offering eco-friendly dry cleaning and wash-and-fold services. Open 7 days a week with pickup and delivery options.
 Cobble Hill Cleaners & Laundry
 Directions Website Call
- Bridgestone Cleaners**
 Open now until 8:00 PM - Laundry - 2.5 (8 reviews)
 Established in 1983, specializes in eco-friendly dry and wet cleaning, garment care, and wedding gown preservation. Offers pickup and delivery services.
 Bridgestone Cleaners
 Directions Website Call

These services offer a range of options to suit your needs, from eco-friendly cleaning to convenient pickup and delivery. Let me know if you need more details or assistance with booking any of these services!

Three results – that’s it – only one of which is in Bing 🐭	Five results on page one (29 total)
“Cobble Hill Cleaners & Laundry”	“The Cobble Hill Cleaners and Laundry”
Apple-ish map	Bing-ish map
Written descriptions	No descriptions
Click to call button	No button (on desktop)

Bing Places



Dry Cleaners Red Hook Brooklyn

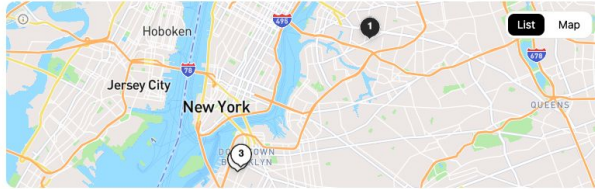
- The Cobble Hill Cleaners and Laundry**
 2.9/5 (105) - Dry cleaning
 226 Court St, Cobble Hill - (718) 522-0001
 Open - Closes 8 PM
 WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- Atlantic Dry Cleaners**
 Dry cleaning
 64 Bond St, Brooklyn - (718) 576-3247
 Open - Closes 6:30 PM
 WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- LA Cleaners&Tailor**
 4.4/5 (7) - Dry cleaning
 130 Union St Ste A, Brooklyn - (718) 852-0966
 Open - Closes 7 PM
 WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- 4th Avenue Cleaners**
 61 4th Ave, Brooklyn - (718) 230-5300
 Open - Closes 6 PM
 WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- Golden Bridge Cleaners**
 2.6/5 (30) - Dry cleaning
 149 Front St, Brooklyn - (718) 802-0555
 Open - Closes 6 PM
 WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

[See more results >](#)

ChatGPT

Can you recommend dry cleaners in Red Hook, Brooklyn?

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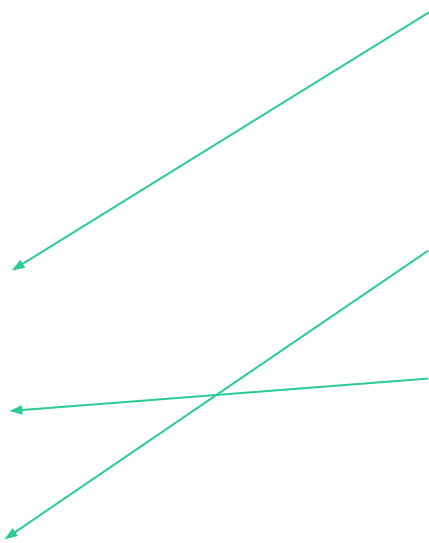
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Directions Website Call

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Bing Web Results



- thecleanwash.com**
https://www.thecleanwash.com > laundry-near-me > ny > brooklyn
The Clean Wash - red-hook-11231 - brooklyn Laundry
Schedule Your Dry Cleaning Pickup Today. Let The Clean Wash handle your dry cleaning in the Red Hook. Experience convenience, quality, and eco-friendly service.
The Clean Wash Dry Cleanin... **The Clean Wash Dry Cleaner...**
The Clean Wash Dry Cleaning Pickup & ... The Clean Wash is your reliable dry ...
[See results only from thecleanwash.com](#)
- Yelp**
https://www.yelp.com > search
The Best 10 Dry Cleaning near Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY - Yelp
Best Dry Cleaning in Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY - Brooklyn Cleaner & Tailor, K Laundromat, Clean N Green Laundry, One Stop Services - Atelier Victor, Evada Cleaners, Boerum Hill Dry ...
- cobblehilldrycleaners.com**
https://cobblehilldrycleaners.com
Welcome to Cobble Hill Cleaners & Laundry - Dry ...
Dry Cleaning pick up & delivery Brooklyn, Park Slope, Red Hook, Dumbo, Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Heights, Greenwood Heights, Fort Greene and of course Cobble Hill.
- thecleaners.io**
https://www.thecleaners.io > clean-dry-cleaners > ny > brooklyn
The Cleaners IO Clean Dry Cleaners - Expert Dry Cleaning Services ...
The Cleaners IO Clean Dry Cleaners in Red Hook, Brooklyn - red-hook-11231 provide reliable, high-quality dry cleaning services to keep your clothes looking fresh.
- thecleanwash.com**
https://www.thecleanwash.com > dry-cleaning-pickup...
The Clean Wash Dry Cleaning Pickup & Delivery - Get Your Dry ...
The Clean Wash Dry Cleaning Pickup & Delivery in Red Hook, Brooklyn - red-hook-11231 offers convenient door-to-door service for all your dry cleaning needs.



So what's going on?



how does chatgpt conduct local searches



All Videos Images Short videos News Forums Shopping : More

Tools

◆ AI Overview

Learn more

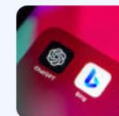
ChatGPT leverages Microsoft Bing for local search results, but it doesn't directly use Bing's local listings or Bing Places data. Instead, **it conducts a Bing search for the query, gathers a selection of the top web results, and then uses its own ranking and organizing logic to present more useful results.** This approach allows ChatGPT to provide a more conversational and tailored response to local search queries compared to traditional search engines.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Bing as the Foundation:

Show more

How does ChatGPT conduct local searches?



May 2, 2025 — ChatGPT now delivers stronger local search results using Bing data. ... ChatGP...

Search Engine Land

Omar Kattan عمر قطان's Post - LinkedIn

8 days ago — Ever wonder how ChatGPT handles local search queries? A new piece by Damian Rollison offers some eye...

LinkedIn · Omar Kattan

More detail ...



Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Bing as the Foundation:

ChatGPT's local search capabilities are built upon Bing's search index, which provides a vast amount of web data. [🔗](#)

Initial Bing Search:

When you perform a local search query in ChatGPT, it initiates a Bing search for that query. [🔗](#)

Result Selection and Ranking:

ChatGPT doesn't just display the results directly from Bing. It selects a set of top results from the Bing search, typically around 20-30, and then applies its own criteria to rank and organize those results. [🔗](#)

No Direct Bing Places Access:

Unlike Bing, which displays detailed business profiles through Bing Places, ChatGPT doesn't access this data directly. It relies on the initial web results from Bing and its own logic to identify relevant options. [🔗](#)

Conversational Approach:

ChatGPT aims to provide a more conversational and user-friendly experience, making it easier to understand and find what you're looking for. [🔗](#)

Other Sources:

While Bing is central, ChatGPT may also pull data from other sources for local queries, including Google Search and Google Maps, according to one source. [🔗](#)

In other words ...



Gather Bing Results

ChatGPT uses RAG to query the Bing web index using terms like “best dry cleaners in Red Hook, Brooklyn,” gathering 20-30 top results

Select Candidate Results

ChatGPT uses a selection process to choose the best results which includes:

- Is the site behind a paywall?
- Does the site have structured data?
- Does the site have relevant/useful data?
- Does the site have authority?

Display Results

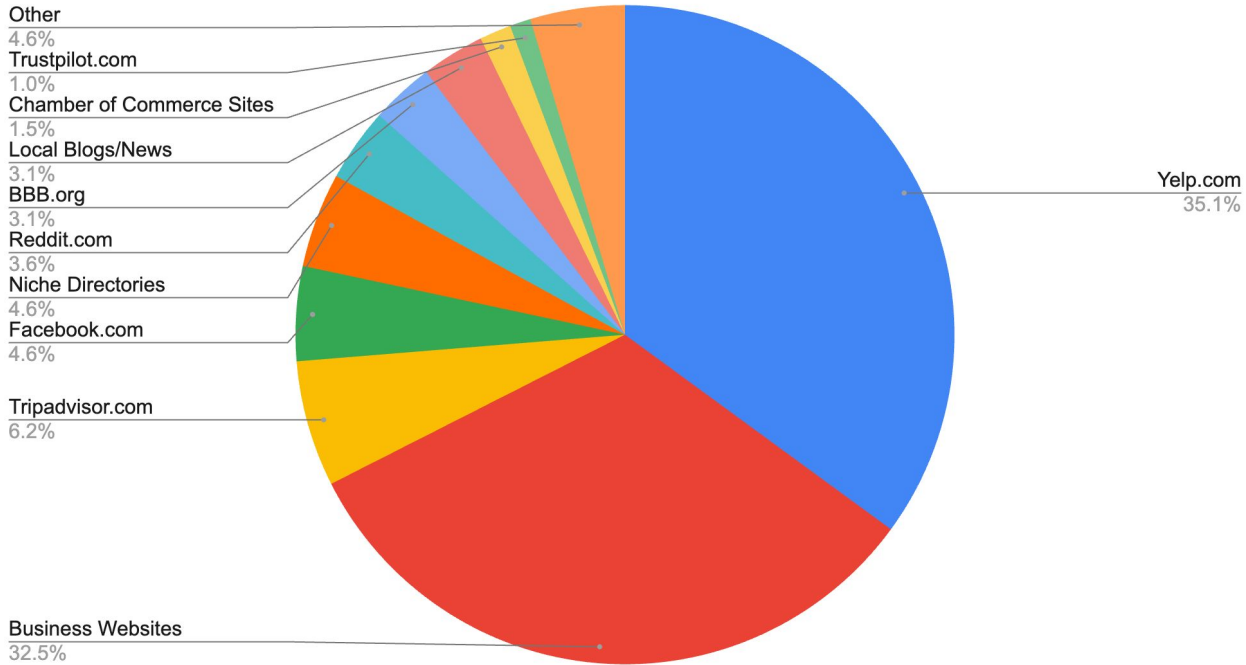
ChatGPT’s front end creates a map and local tiles (sometimes) and the LLM populates them with data from the selected web results, possibly including:

- Contact info
- Photos
- Ratings & review counts
- AI-composed description of the business
- Action buttons (call, website, directions)

Top local sources for ChatGPT



ChatGPT's Local Sources



What can you do to optimize for local searches on ChatGPT?



- Check out how your listings appear in ChatGPT results *and* in Bing web results
- Optimize the best sources where possible: your website, Yelp, TripAdvisor, Facebook, etc.
- Publish helpful content that reflects your expertise
- Claim and optimize your Bing Places listing (counterintuitive, but may increase likelihood of your website ranking)
- Earn links from local directories and press



Industry Search Trends

Benchmarking Q1 2025



TM

Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025



Summary: Map Impressions for both Yesway and Allsup are outpacing Industry average in year-over-year growth for Q1 2025. Brands are underperforming in leads.



Map Impressions



GBP Actions



Convenience Stores

+3.5%

+19.7%

Conclusion: While both brands are more visible in local search results, they are not being chosen as often by searchers.

A Look Into Q1

What happened in Search?



Industries:

- Retail
- Food & Beverage
- Automotive Services
- Convenience Stores
- Insurance
- Financial Services
- Property
- Car Washes
- Service Area Businesses

Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025 YoY



All

YoY

-18.8%

Map Impressions

PoP

+6.1%

-12.7%

Search Impressions

+0.4%

+2.3%

Leads

+3.8%



Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025 YoY



Retail

YoY		PoP
-29.9%	Map Impressions	-22.4%
-8.5%	Search Impressions	-24.5%
+4.1%	Leads	-15.1%
+5.8%	Directions	-11.9%

Food & Beverage

YoY		PoP
-12.0%	Map Impressions	+2.6%
-33.1%	Search Impressions	-3.4%
-10.7%	Leads	-3.8%
-4.7%	Directions	-0.2%

Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025 YoY



Property Management

YoY		PoP
-0.9%	Map Impressions	+10.8%
+6.5%	Search Impressions	+25.2%
+4.0%	Leads	-19.8%
+7.1%	Web Click	-33.7%

Home Services

YoY		PoP
+24.7%	Map Impressions	+2.6%
-5.8%	Search Impressions	+2.5%
-12.7%	Leads	-2.8%
-16.4%	Web Click	+3.3%

Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025 YoY



Financial Services

YoY		PoP
-41.3%	Map Impressions	-31.8%
-13.0%	Search Impressions	-8.9%
-19.9%	Leads	-16.2%
-24.7%	Web Click	-23.5%

Insurance Services

YoY		PoP
+45.7%	Map Impressions	-6.6%
-14.8%	Search Impressions	+14.7%
-13.3%	Leads	+4.2%
+10.4%	Web Click	+18.7%

Industry Search Trends

GBP Performance for Q1 2025 YoY



Education Services

YoY		PoP
-8.8%	Map Impressions	-1.7%
-1.0%	Search Impressions	-4.2%
-1.3%	Leads	+0.4%
-11.1%	Web Click	-5.1%

Healthcare

YoY		PoP
+14.2%	Map Impressions	+3.4%
-3.7%	Search Impressions	+7.1%
-6.9%	Leads	+6.2%
+1.5%	Web Click	+10.8%



Checkbox Optimization

New GBP Categories, Attributes & More...



New GBP Categories



Beauty:

—
Esthetics service



Food & Beverage:

—
Bartending service



New^(ish) GBP Attributes

Hair Salons / Barbers

Offerings

Beverages



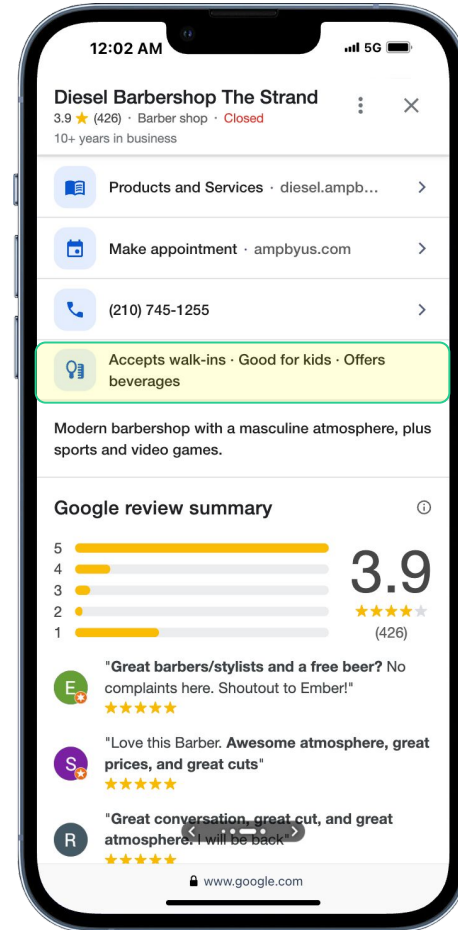
Yes



No



Unsure





Caught in the Wild

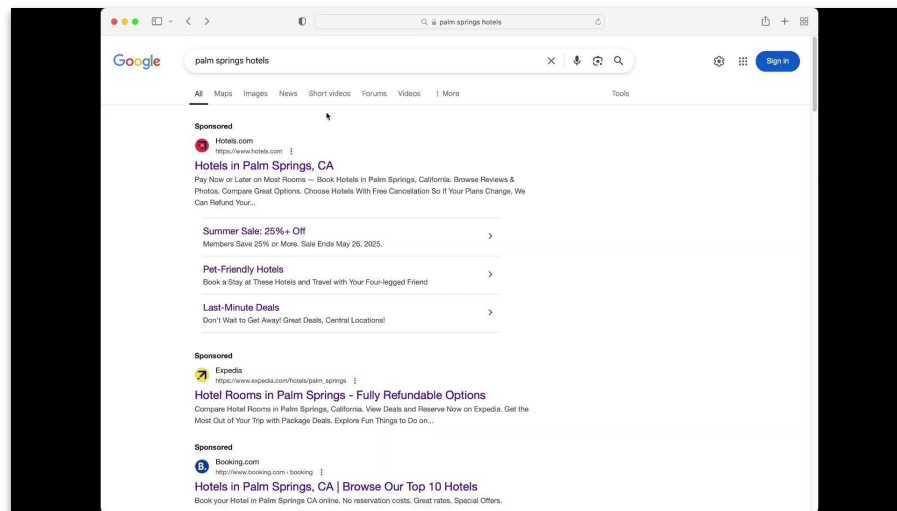
New features we've spied
in Local Search results



Caught in the Wild ...

Additional **3-Packs** for hotel searches appearing in results on desktop.

Travel finder results are different even though the query remains the same.

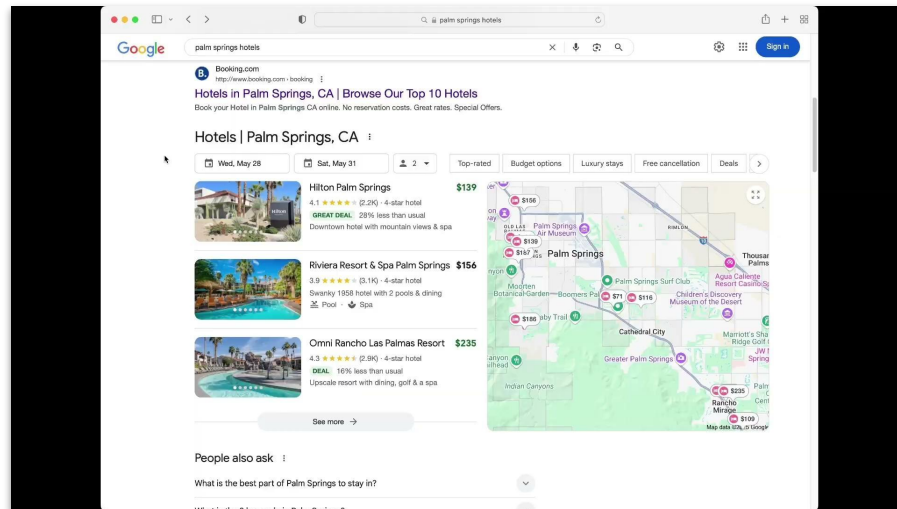




Caught in the Wild ...

Additional **3-Packs** for hotel searches appearing in results on desktop.

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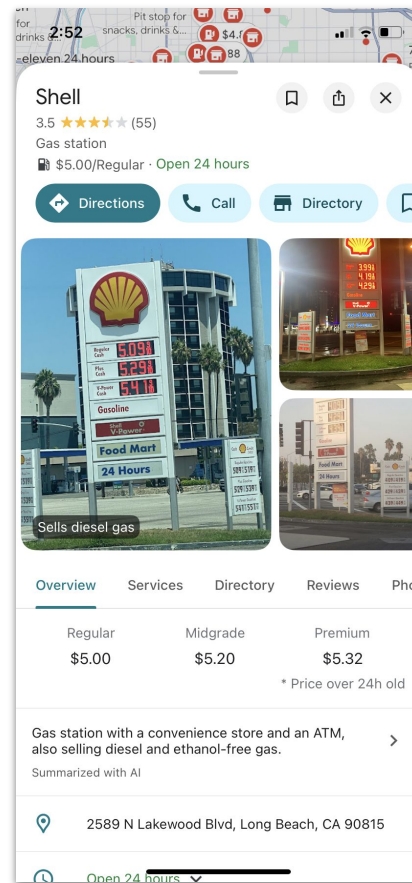




Caught in the Wild ...

Attributes may be paired with related images and highlighted in the image carousel on profiles in Google Maps.

Highlighted attributes appear to take one of the three spots typically occupied by reviews.

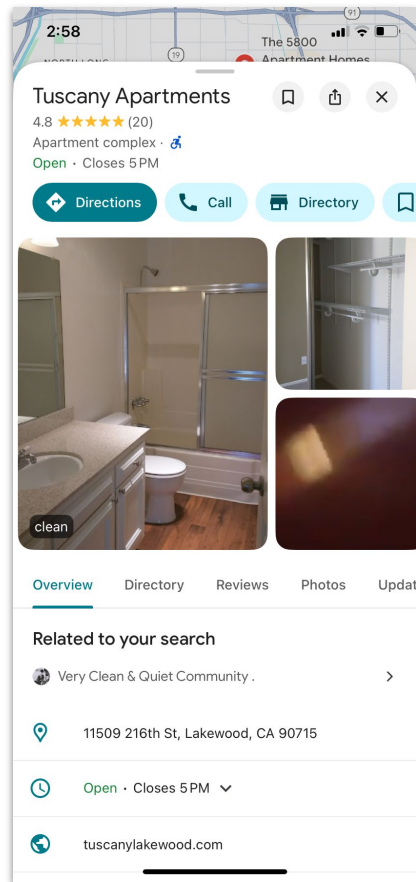




Caught in the Wild ...

Place Topics may also be paired with related images and highlighted in the image carousel on profiles in Google Maps.

Highlighted Place Topics appear to take one of the three spots typically occupied by reviews and Attributes.

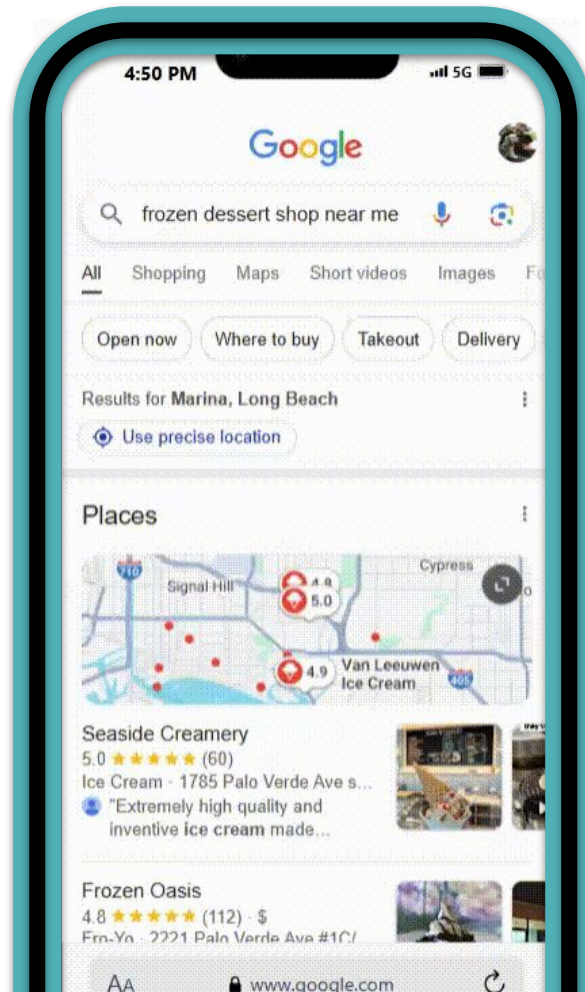




Caught in the Wild...

Mike broke Google again...

Nearby offers and events carousel
and a **Nearby events and deals**
6-pack.



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Q&A

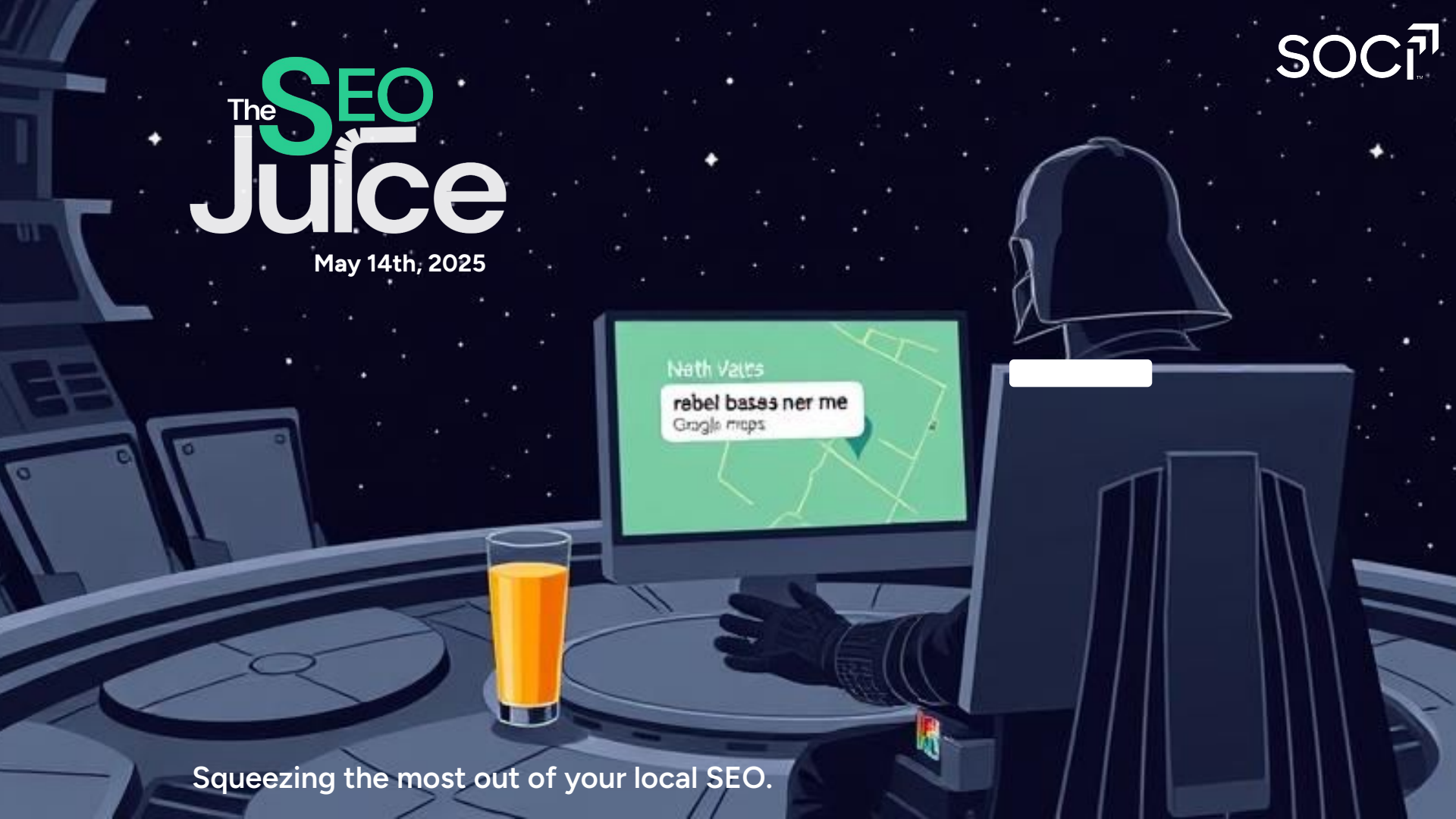


Thanks for Joining!

See you next month!

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