

where2get▶it[®]

LOCAL SEARCH FOR NATIONAL BRANDS™

Consumer Buying Process



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Consumer behaviors have forever changed. Are you marketing *at* your customer or are you making your brand available using the medium of *your consumers' choice*? The lines between Offline & Online marketing are blurring. Today's successful marketer's master the use of both Online and Offline stimulus to drive online search behavior which in turn comes full circle to drive offline purchases.

Marketers need to understand the answers to these questions in order to turn online traffic into foot traffic inside their local stores. What tools are consumers using to initiate the search for local locations? What are they looking for? And how do they expect to buy? Let's start by defining the Search. Find. Buy. paradigm.

SEARCH – What tools are consumers using to initiate the search for local locations?

The economy may be slowing, but search activity and spending keeps growing. The increase in spending is a direct result of shifting marketing dollars from traditional offline tactics because search provides for better "local" targeting as well as better tracking on your ROI. According to Nielsen, there are now over one billion local searches performed every month! About 80 percent of these online searchers research online and purchase offline within a 10 to 20 mile radius.

Long gone are the days of searching through a printed yellow pages phone book. The preferred method of search these days is the Internet, with mobile coming second when consumers are out and about:

- Web
 - Major search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN)
 - Local search engines (Google Maps, Yahoo Local, MSN Live)
 - Internet Yellow Pages (YellowPages, Citysearch, Superpages)
- Website
 - Corporate website
 - Mobile website
 - Local websites
- Mobile Devices
 - Cell phones
 - Smart phones
 - GPS
 - In-Car navigation
 - Portable navigation

Web - Most people think of major search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN when they think of search, but there are multiple ways to get found. Consumers can start their search on a major search engine and end up on a local search engine like Google Maps, Yahoo Local, or even a yellow page directory site like YellowPages.com, Superpages, or Citysearch. Some consumers actually prefer using a directory or browse type of search, clicking on categories, versus typing something in. For example: clicking on Restaurant and then on Mexican versus typing in Mexican restaurant. Regardless, you need to make sure all of your locations are submitted to major search engines, local search engines and Internet Yellow Pages (IYPs).

Website - Locator functionality is one of the top decision-making tools consumers use when visiting a corporate website. Local listing results are usually displayed on a map showing the user where each location is, in relation to where they are. The user should also be able to get driving directions without leaving your website.

Mobile Devices – Mobile screens are the latest tool for marketers seeking to win over customers (the third screen versus PC or TV). In fact, there are now more mobile phones than there are PCs! According to GfK 3Q08 research there are now over 267 million mobile phones in the US, with over 78 million people using mobile web and over 160 million people using SMS Text Messaging. That makes the adoption rate for mobile search around 89 percent! Even global positioning systems (GPS) are becoming standard in most mid- to high-end cars and 10 percent of US households own portable navigation devices, according to GPS World. It's important to make sure that all of your listings are accurate, complete and consistent.

FIND – What are they looking for?

Consumers are looking for location specifics like phone numbers, addresses and driving directions.

Examples include: If they want to have a dinner party at a restaurant they may be searching for information on banquet rooms. If they are on a road trip they may want to know if there's RV parking. If stopping for coffee they may want WiFi. Or if they want to purchase an item, they may want to know the credit cards accepted, if it's in stock and the hours of operation.

- Services
- Products
- Locations
- Maps
- Directions
- Local specific details
 - Menus
 - Facility amenities; banquet rooms, RV parking, WiFi
 - Coupons / Special offers
 - Events
 - Hours
 - Credit cards accepted
 - Videos/TV commercials
 - Inventory / In-Stock

BUY – How do they prefer to buy?

As mentioned earlier, about 80 percent of people search online and purchase offline, but you should make sure that you can handle the 20 percent that want to purchase online if your products/services can support it.

- Local
- Online