Local Ranking Factors in 2019

Outline

1) The difference types of search results
    a) The 3 pack
    b) Map listings
    c) Knowledge graph
    d) Organic search
2) Ranking factors
    a) Proximity
    b) Keywords in business name
    c) Category choice
    d) Reviews
    e) Business credibility
    f) Website signals
    g) Social media signals
    h) Personalization

Google Result Types - Mobile

The reason that almost all of the following examples will be of mobile phones is because **we are living in a mobile first world**.

In **March of 2019 79%** of the visits to the Sport Clips store websites were done **on mobile** phones.

That **doesn't** even **count** the mobile users who looked at your **Google My Business (GMB)** information and either **checked-in** online or got **directions** to your stores without ever visiting your website.
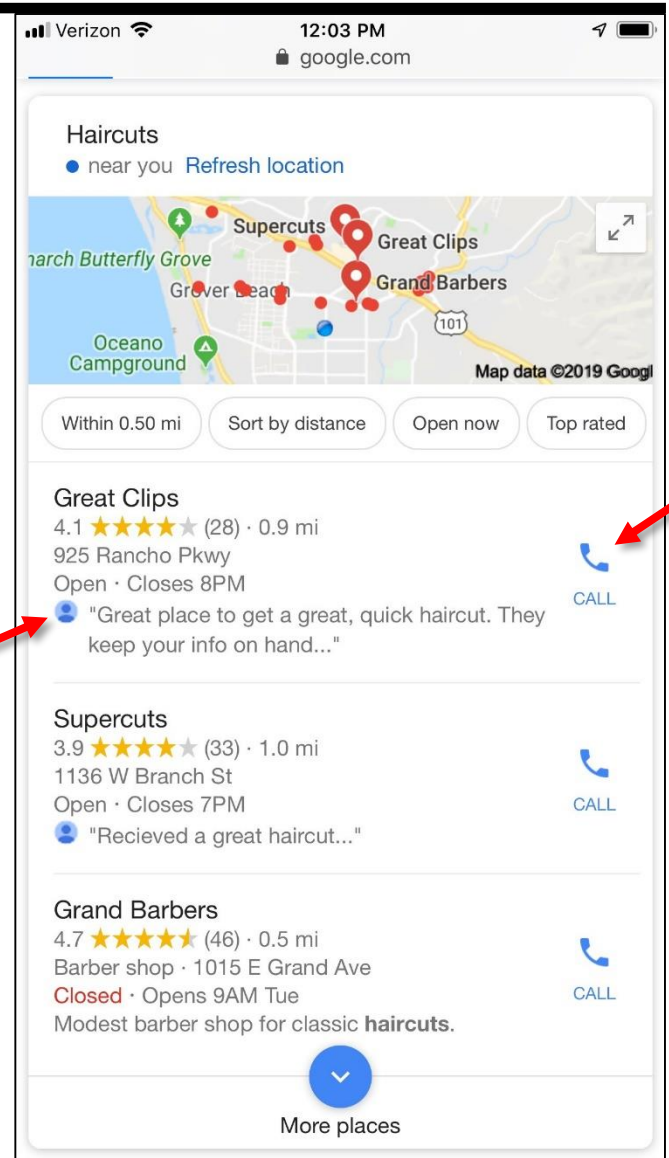
Google Result Types – 3 Pack

The Google search results that are seen on the right are the **most common** type of **search results for local businesses** like Sport Clips stores. This result is known as the **3 pack**. The 3 pack generally resides **above** all **other search** results and includes a list of the **top 3 local business results** and a detailed **map** with business location **pins**.

The 3 pack **currently** has the following features:

- The business **names**

- **Reviews average**, **total number** and a **snippet**

- **Distance to** the store

- **Click-to-call** button

- The business **address**

- Store **hours**

When the Digital Services team speaks about **local rankings**, this is the type of the result is the kind that we are most often referencing.

SportClips HAIRCUTS

Google Result Types – 3 Pack

This result is a **3 pack** result with a **Google Ad above** the 3 local **non-paid** results.

We will be **creating a webinar** specifically about **Google Ads** and how to get them in the **3 pack** and **map** results **very soon**.
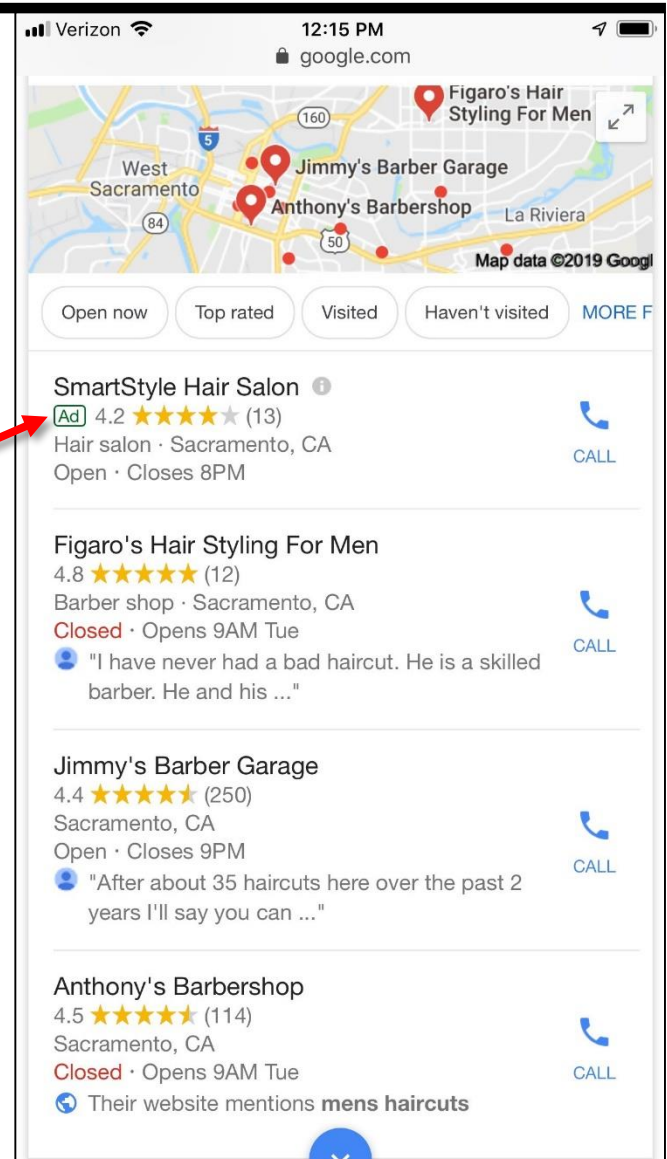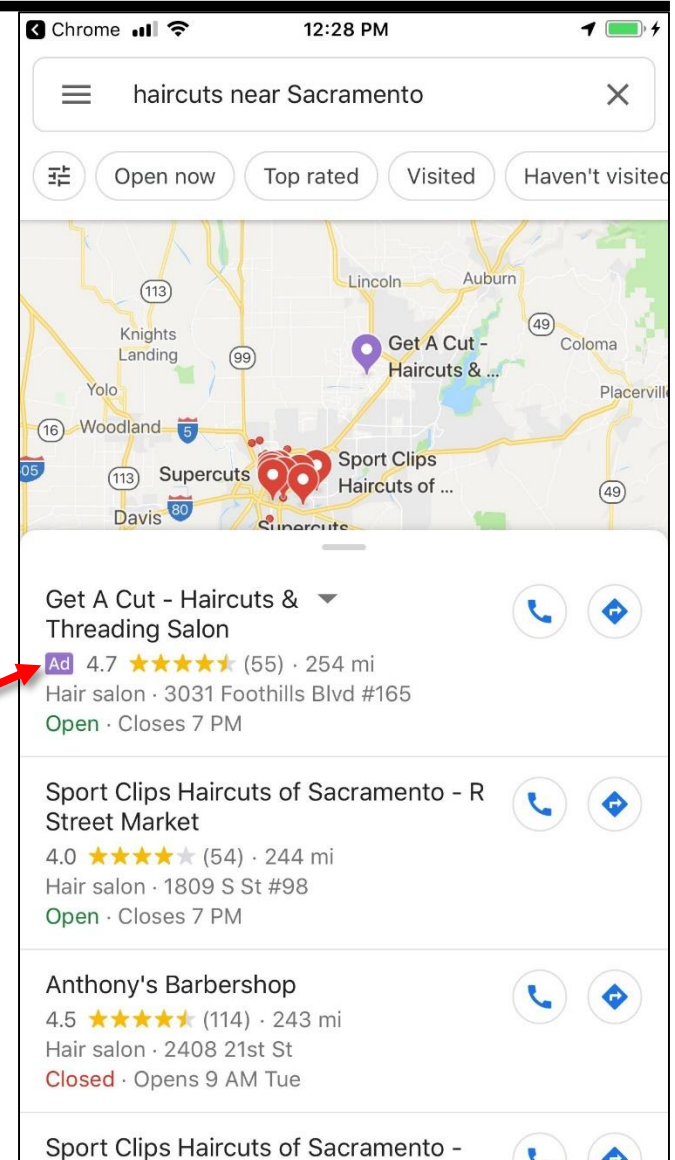
The screenshot on the right shows search results for **Google Maps**. If you hear a reference to the **Local Finder,** it's essentially just Google Map results.

You'll notice that this looks very close to the 3 pack results, but a **few differences**.

- There are **more than 3** results

  - On **mobile** it can be **infinite scrolling**

- There is **no review snippet** in the Maps results

- There is a **click-for-directions** on the Maps results

- The **ads** are a **different color**

This is the other form of **local ranking** that the Digital Services team would be talking about.

◀ Chrome 📶 🔋   12:28 PM   ◀ 🔋 ⚡

≡   haircuts near Sacramento   ✕

⇄ Open now   Top rated   Visited   Haven't visited

Get A Cut - Haircuts & Threading Salon ▾
Ad 4.7 ★★★★⯪ (55) · 254 mi
Hair salon · 3031 Foothills Blvd #165
Open · Closes 7 PM

Sport Clips Haircuts of Sacramento - R Street Market
4.0 ★★★★☆ (54) · 244 mi
Hair salon · 1809 S St #98
Open · Closes 7 PM

Anthony's Barbershop
4.5 ★★★★⯪ (114) · 243 mi
Hair salon · 2408 21st St
Closed · Opens 9 AM Tue

Sport Clips Haircuts of Sacramento -

Google Result Types – Knowledge Panel

On the right is Google's **Knowledge Panel** which has a collection of your **business data** controlled in **Google My Business** and data Google has found elsewhere on **3rd party websites** on the internet.
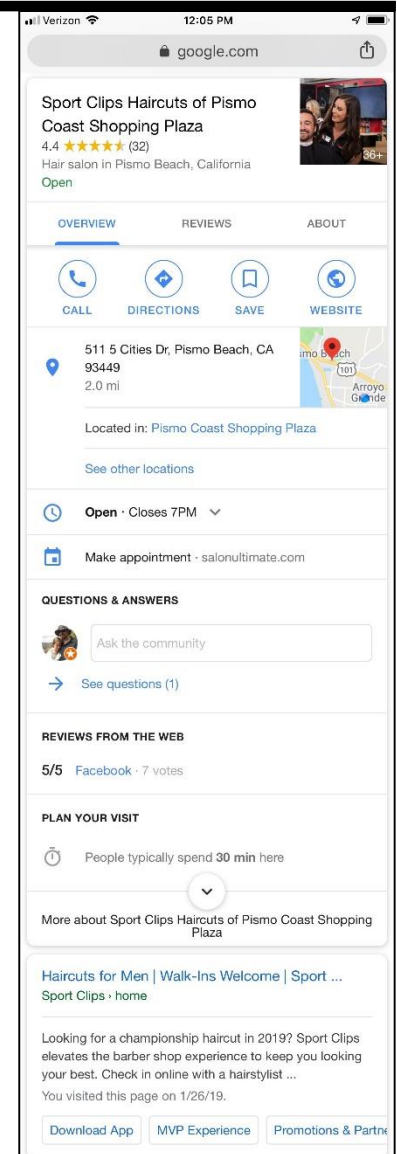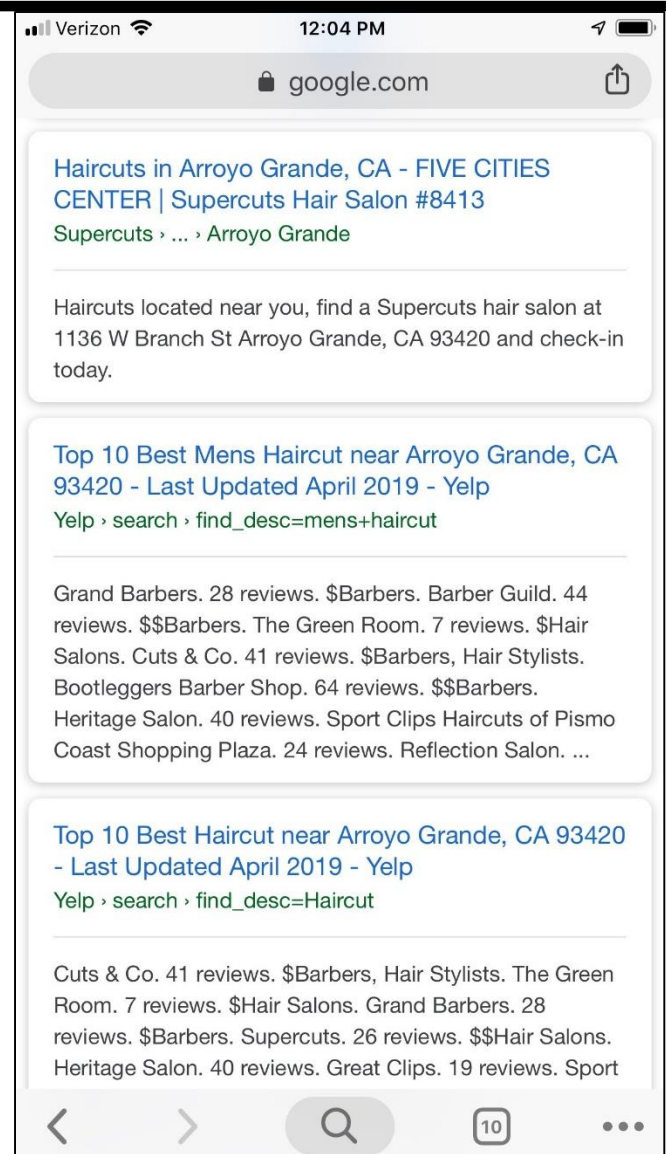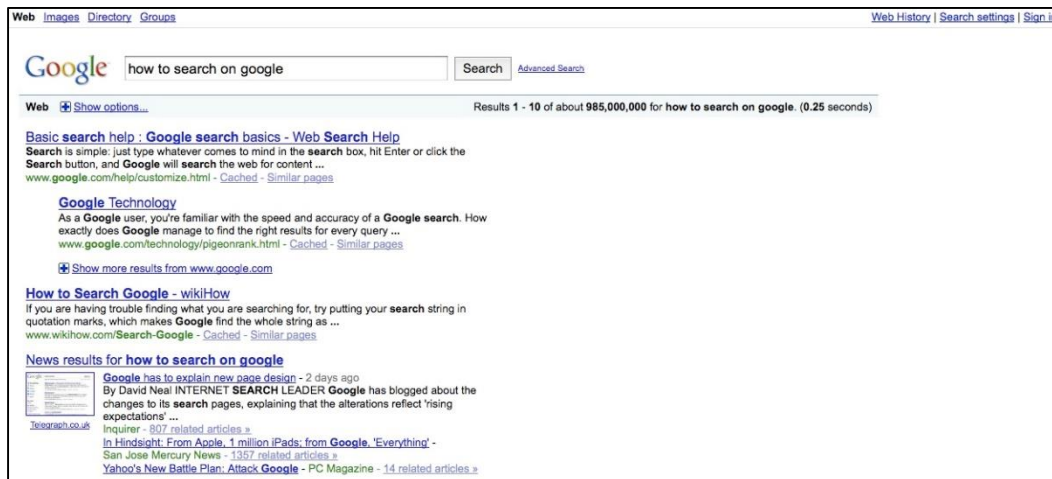
Google Result Types – Organic Results

**Organic search results** are the old type of results that Google has always shown since its inception.

With the addition of **local results**, the **Knowledge Panel**, **Featured Snippets** and **Rich Answer Boxes** organic search results are **being seen less and less** and their **click-through rates** have **plummeted** over the past few years.

We will **not** be discussing typical **SEO** methods **for organic search** results today.

Google Result Types – Organic Google Ads

The screenshot on the right shows an **organic search** result with a **Google Ads** result that the **Sport Clips head office is paying for** appearing **above** the **Knowledge Panel and** above the regular **organic** search listings.
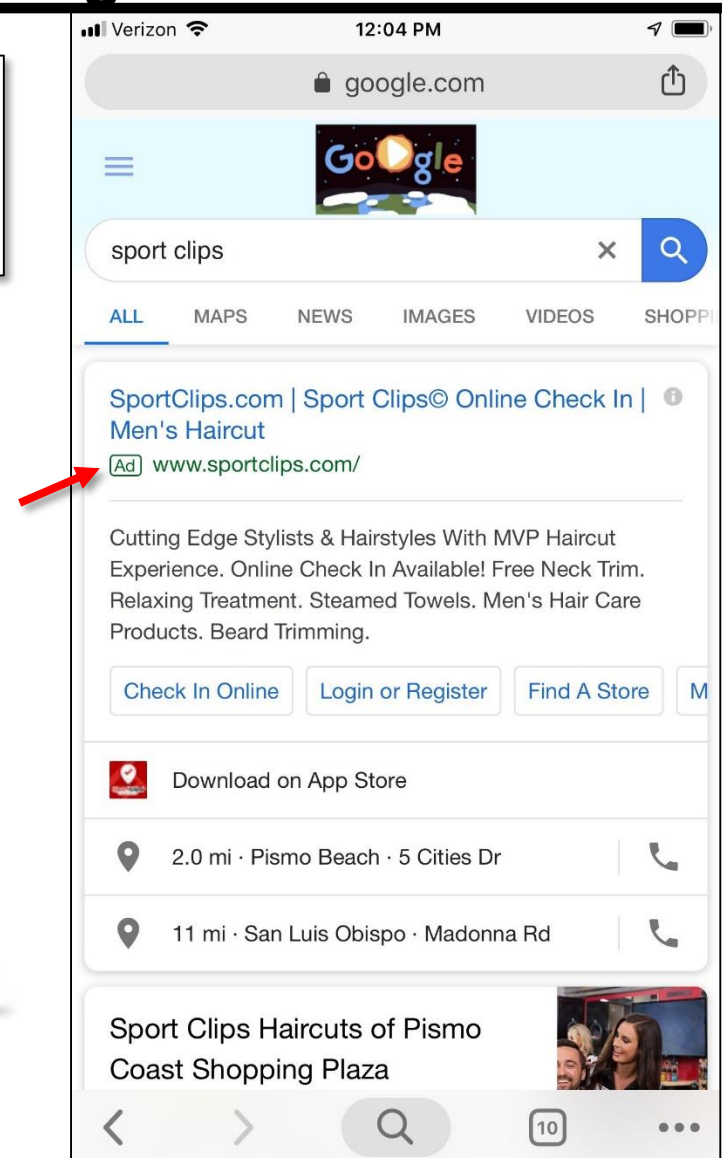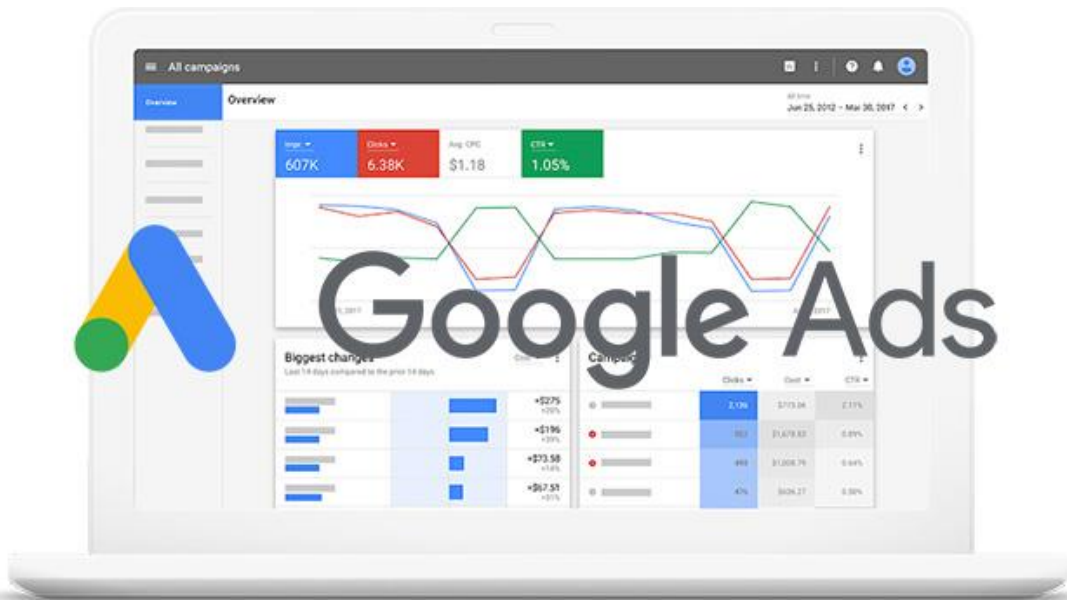
Google Result Types – Image Search

The screenshot on the right shows **an image search result**.

I just had to add this page because **Chad couldn't be here, but I know he doesn't want you to forget about him**.

Follow Chad at:

Facebook
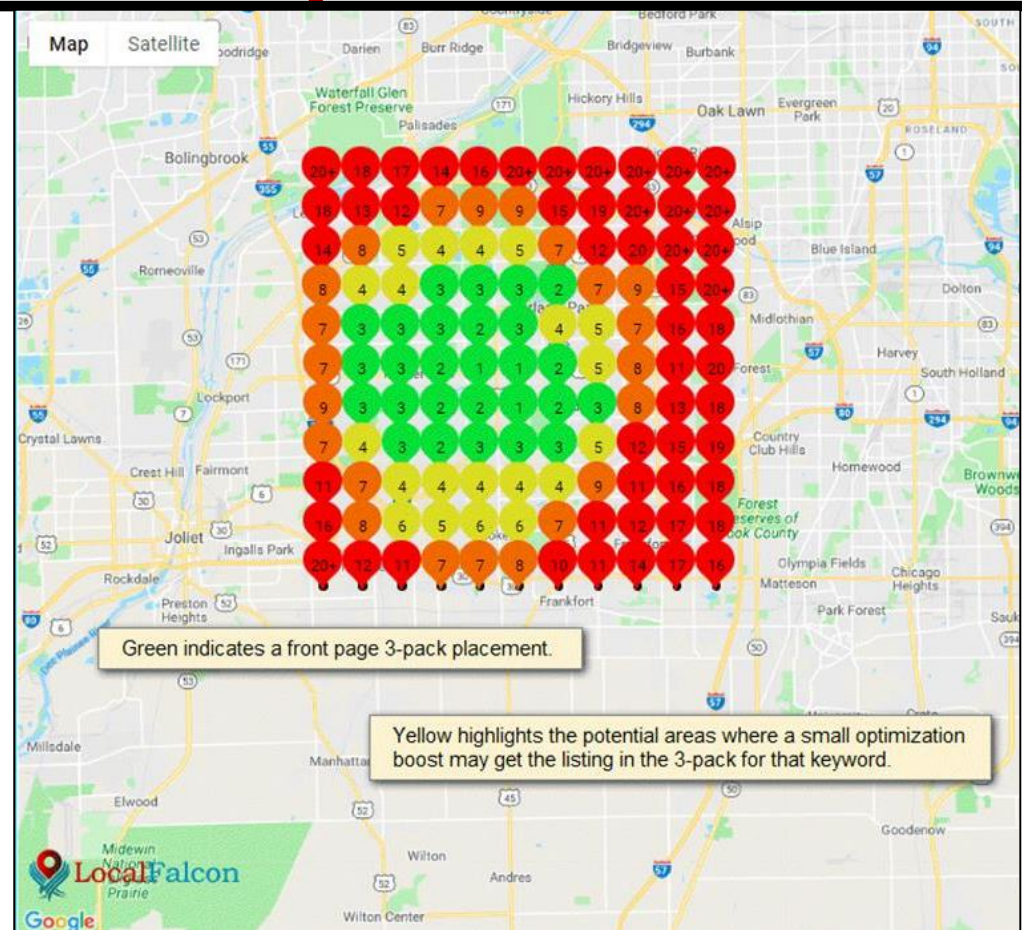* Chad Jordan

Instagram
* calfresh

Local Ranking Factors – Proximity

The top local search ranking factor in 2019 is **proximity**. That means that businesses that are **closest to the** searching **user** normally beats out all of their competitors.

Doesn't that suck? Because there's **nothing we can do to game the system**.

The image on the right shows how a business in a very **competitive market** place **loses rankings** the **further** away that **the searcher is** from **the business**. This business has **ranking drops** with **each city block** the user gets away from where their business is physically located.

Green indicates a front page 3-pack placement.

Yellow highlights the potential areas where a small optimization boost may get the listing in the 3-pack for that keyword.

Local Ranking Factors – **Proximity**

There are a couple of reasons for proximity to be the top ranking factor.

1) Like we already stated **it cannot be gamed**. Your physical location can't be manipulated, **your store is where it is**. Google likes that.

2) This is **what user's want**. They want close. Google watches user habits when building their algorithms and what they have discovered out that **users are willing to sacrifice some brand loyalty for convenience**. So Google gives the users what they want.
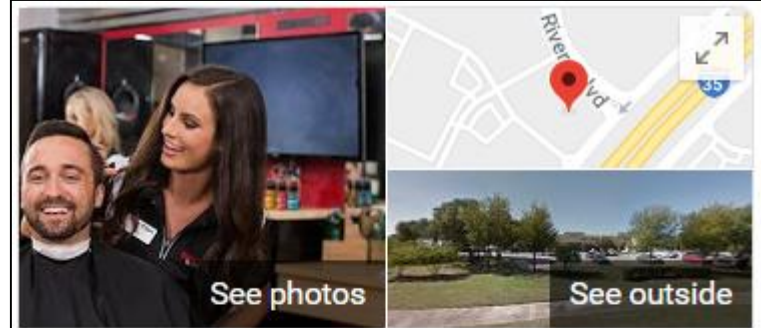
![SportClips Haircuts logo]

Local Ranking Factors – Keywords in the business name

Have you ever wondered why the term '**haircuts**' is in your **Google My Business'** listing name?

This is why.

Even though **Google claims** that **keywords** in a business name have **no ranking benefit**, every **local SEO expert** on the planet **disagrees**.

But there are rules around this, so **you cannot** just **add additional keywords** to your business' name in Google My Business. Doing so would **jeopardize your listing**. The **Digital Services** team has **got you covered** on this.

Sport Clips Haircuts of Georgetown

| Website | Directions | Save |

4.5 ★★★★★ 162 Google reviews

Hair salon in Georgetown, Texas

Address: St. 150, 1103 Rivery Blvd Building 1, Georgetown, TX 78628

Hours: Open · Closes 8PM ▾

Phone: (512) 863-2800

Appointments: salonultimate.com

Suggest an edit · Manage this listing ⍰

**Know this place?** Answer quick questions

Local Ranking Factors – Category choice

A store's **business categories** should **match** **keywords** that are most related to **your business**.

If your category **doesn't match** what your business actually does, **Google doesn't** want to **send business** your way.

You might not be a barber, but the **keywords related to barbers are relevant** to your business which is why we have selected this category.

There are **specific categories** that are **available** and again, the **Digital Services team has you covered** on this one too.
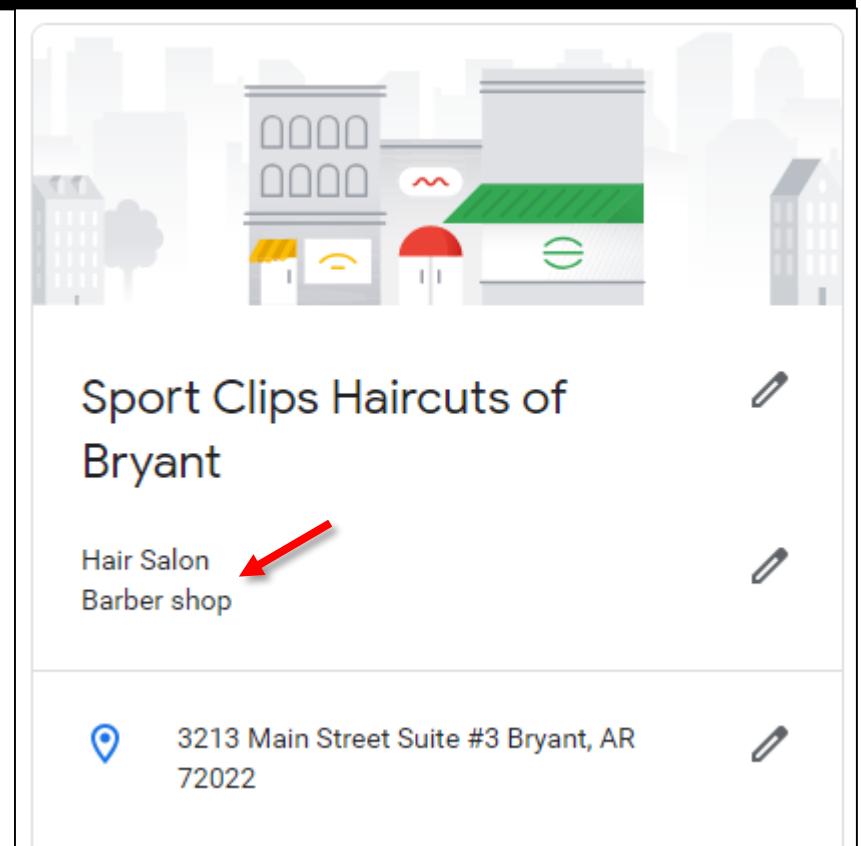
Local Ranking Factors – Reviews

We could do a whole webinar on reviews. In fact we've already done **12 webinars** **on** **reviews**. So I'm not going to dive in deep here. Go check out the other webinars on the Webinar video archive [page](#).

But as a reminder:

- **Ask** happy **customers** to **review** you

- Get reviews at **Yelp** & **Facebook** **too** because Google uses reviews on **3ʳᵈ party websites** when factoring a business' local ranking

- **Respond** to your reviews, especially the negative ones in a **positive** **way**

Bonus tip:

Keywords found in customer reviews build business keyword relevancy of your listing. So if you get reviews that include the term 'beard trims', your business could show up more when people search specifically for beard trims.

Local Ranking Factors – Business credibility

Business **credibility** is a little more nebulous than the previous factors but basically means **is Google confident** that **your business** is a **real** business and serving customers **in your community**. That **trust** is built on the **following factors**.

- Is your **Google My Business information** completely **filled out** and is it **accurate**

- Does your **Google My Business** information **match other directories** like Yellow Pages and InfoUSA

- Is your **brand well known**

- Is your brand **associated** with the **local community** that **you are serving** (**sponsorships** or **service club** mentions)

The Digital Services team takes care of your external business listings, but it's **up to the local store** to **participate** in their **community**.

Local Ranking Factors – Website Signals

Website signals are things **on** or about **your website** that Google looks at to **gain confidence** that your business is **trustworthy** of showing in their local results.

A study by Spark Toro showed that **91% of mobile users** that search for a local business find the information that they need **without clicking** into **a website**. This makes your **local search ranking** & **Google My Business** page **extremely important** which led a leading local SEO to say the following in early 2019:

"We should start thinking of **local business websites** more and more as a **data source for Google** and less and less as a consumer destination." – David Mihm

SportClips
HAIRCUTS

SPORT CLIPS HAIRCUTS OF RIVER HILL

12186 Clarksville Pike Suite #17 Clarksville, Maryland 21029

☎ (667) 240-2908

✓ CHECK IN ONLINE

📍 GET DIRECTIONS

PAUSE

Check In Online Now Available

DOWNLOAD APP

< ○ ● ● ● ● >

# Local Ranking Factors – Website Signals

Website signals include:

- Does your **business information on your website** (including business name) **match the business information** in **GMB** & other **online** business **directories**

- Is the your **content** on your website **inline** with the **GMB categories** (Hair Salon & Barbershop)

- Is your website **working correctly**, properly structured and **legible** to make it **easy to use** for visitors

- Are other people **linking to your website** from authoritative domains

- Does your business have **testimonials** that show the value you offer customers

- Does your website list and describe the **services** that **your store offers**

The Digital Services team has ensured that the basics are covered, but **additional content** from a local perspective **adds value** and **is recommended**.

Site Checkup score:

86
out of 100
0   100
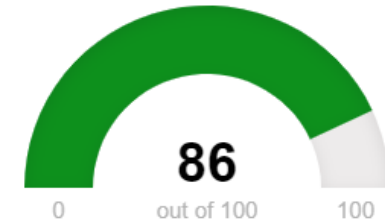
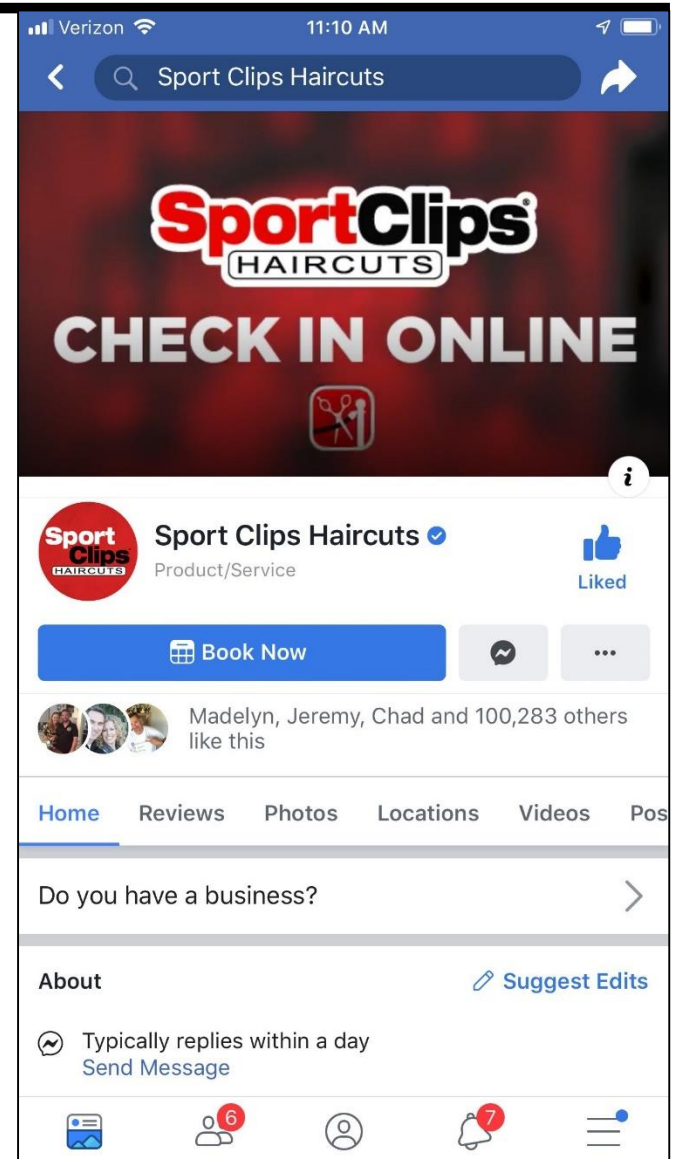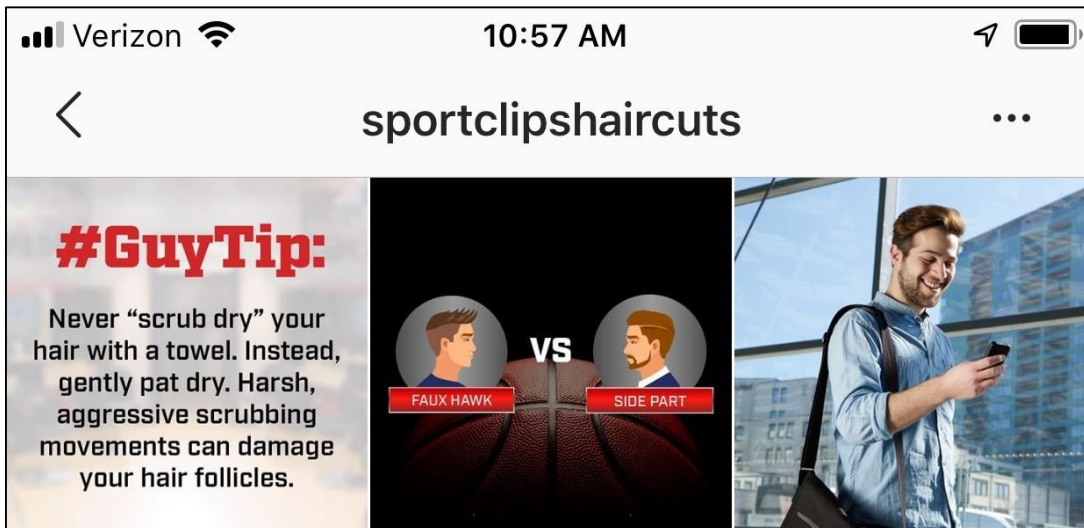■ Passed Checks ■ Failed Checks ■ Warnings

40

6

2
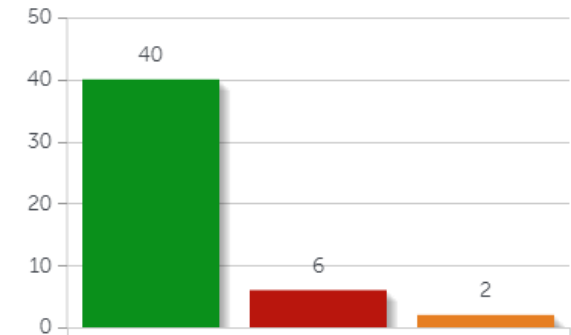
Keywords Cloud Test ⑦

ⓘ available baldrick barbershop boys careers check clarksville clips connect content contests conversation date difference directions download email enjoy entertaining experience extra fashionable father friday good google gotten hair haircut haircuts hairstyles help hero hill home hours innings join know latest learn like local locations main maryland military

Local Ranking Factors – Social Signals

Google looks to **social media** to detect **mentions** about a **business' brand**. Are there people **talking about your local business** and do those conversations have a **positive or negative sentiment**.

This ranking factor is fairly low on the ranking list and it is hard to see **detectable ranking changes without** a very **significant increase in** your business **mentions**.

Local Ranking Factors – Personalization

Google will **tell you** that **they do not personalize searches** because that was too creepy, yet in local search results **as seen above** you can see that **Google does** indeed show **different users different local search results**.

Local Ranking Factors – Personalization

I hear from **team leaders asking** me **why** they **cannot locate** **their business** in a local search result for their keywords or just the 'Sport Clips' brand name itself.

I ask team leaders if they **search for their own business** a lot.

They say yes.

Then I ask them if they **click through to their listings**, get **directions** or **click-to-call** when they do find their listings; and they say **no**.

Well, Google might be thinking, 'hey, I've supplied this person with this specific business result many times and **they are not interacting with it**. I think **I'll stop showing this business** listing to this person.'

Now granted personalization is **not a huge impact** in ranking, but it is part of the search results recipe, so **understand that the results that you are seeing might not be the same results that your potential customers are seeing**.
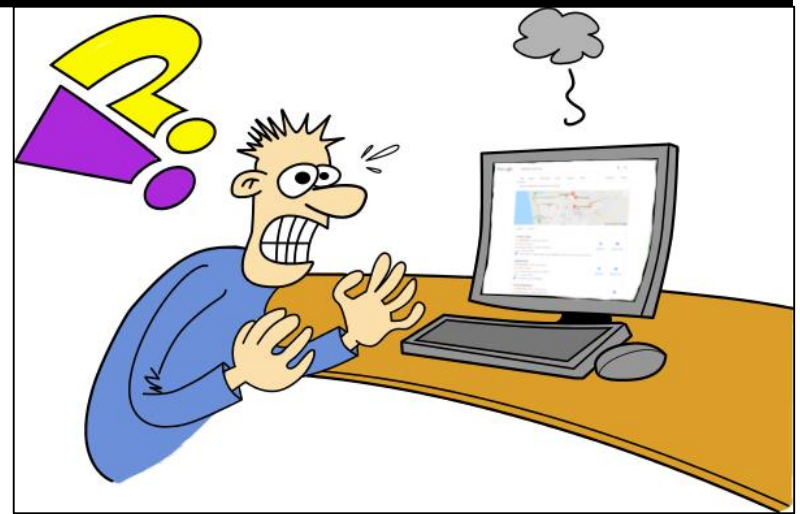
Recap

So to recap, here are the local ranking factors:

1) Local ranking factors
    1) Proximity
    2) Keywords in business name
    3) Category choice
    4) Reviews
    5) Business credibility
    6) Website signals
    7) Social media signals
    8) Personalization

And try as you might, **due to personalization & user proximity you cannot always have the number one ranking in local search** because the user's specific location and browser history impacts the business results that they see.

There is **no free way to guarantee** being on **the top** of a **local search result**, the only way to do that is through a **paid Google Ads campaign**.