THE RETAIL JEWELER

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HOW YOU CAN BUILD A SOLID ONLINE PRESENCE AND BE "THE" LOCAL JEWELER!

By Matthew A Perosi

"Getting online" was once as easy as setting up a website. Now, however, simply having a website might not be enough to establish a solid online presence. Website success comes when you account for what customers are looking for, and how they are looking for it. You don't need fancy programming on your website, but you do need information people can find and read easily.

Most of what you publish online about your jewelry store is found through search engines. According to my own measurements, 94.5% of all traffic to a jewelry store's website will come from search engines. Compare this number to the 74% average across all industries announced in July 2011 by COM Score and Local Search Association. Suffice it to say, your jewelry buyers are primarily finding you through search engines.

In February 2012, Google announced changes to their search results which gave greater importance to the town or city name that is associated with your website. Their search results also rely less on the information from Google Places.

Overall, these Google changes and the measured 94.5% of visitors from searches give you an incredible local advantage over strictly e-tail jewelers, and jewelers outside your town. For those located in a major city, Google is showing a wider radius of results so users have more options.

The local advantage that you have comes by simply listing your address in the footer of every page of your website. I know some jewelers only list their physical store address on their contact page, or their directions page. This seems to make perfect logical sense until you consider how Google relates data together. Google reads every page of your site and figures out ways to relate one piece of information to another. As far as Google is concerned, it will not associate jewelry with your address based only on your contact page.

Google simply needs more than 1 or 2 pages with your address on it to truly understand how to connect you to local search. With your store's physical address and telephone number in the footer of every page Google has plenty of chances to properly associate all your engagement rings, all your yellow gold wedding bands, and all your jewelry repair services with your address.

Another suggestion for improving your standing as a local jeweler is to have content on your website which relates to your local community. Write a few blog entries about local established proposal locations and local banquet halls. This will help gain additional local search queries.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention Facebook as a source for local online marketing, but truthfully, it's not. My own measurements show that Facebook only accounts for about 3% of all jewelry store website traffic. Facebook might be a way to build fans, but there's not much solid data to show fans will ever buy your jewelry. It seems better suited for branding rather than immediate sales.

Another recent metric I measured shows that currently 10% of all jewelry website visitors are using smartphones. For added website success you need a dedicated mobile website. Even though a smartphone will allow for two finger pinch-zooming to read a standard website, your customers will have a far greater appreciation for a mobile website they can control with a single thumb.

Google is connecting local people to local stores. One of your easiest local marketing tools is a website with a blog.

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Matthew Perosi is the Founder of the Jeweler Website Advisory Group (jWAG), a research team devoted to reporting how jewelers can use websites, mobile technology, and marketing trends to further personal and jewelry store goals. A library of articles, videos, and an archive of jWAG daily email "Nuggets" is freely available at www.jwag.biz. Matthew invites your feedback at matt@jwag.biz.