



The Restaurant Owner's Guide to SEO

5 steps to getting your restaurant to rank higher in Google

How do you keep your business thriving, season after season, year after year?

Ask any thriving restaurant (or food truck) owner, and they'll tell you: Figure out how to attract a steady stream of **new** customers to try (and fall in love) with your restaurant, and you'll stick around for the long haul.

So how do you turn on that faucet of new customers, flowing through your doors?

The key is to make it easy for those new customers to find you — because you can be sure they're searching. Is your restaurant coming up their quest to discover someplace new to dine?

That's where search engine optimization (SEO) comes in. It's a series of "best practices" to ensure your restaurant's website and online presence is seen by customers when they search for relevant key terms from within your local area.

Our team of experts at [Restaurant Engine](#) have put together this guide to de-mystify the process of optimizing your restaurant's web presence for search engines like Google and others. So let's get to it!

First, What Not To Do...

Unfortunately, we see too many restaurants who still use outdated techniques that can actually have a negative impact on their ability to rank highly in Google. Let's shed light on these, so that you don't make the same mistake!

- **DON'T: Use Flash**

Flash was a popular web design tool back in the nineties, because it allowed for slick-looking animations and movement on a web page. Today, it's a big "No No". Why? Search engines like Google can't read your content if it's contained inside a Flash website. And if Google can't read your site, then it can't index it properly in their search results.



- **DON'T: Ignore Mobile**

Mobile is more important than ever these days. Most people searching on Google aren't doing it from their home computer. They're doing it from their smartphones, when they're out on town, searching for a new restaurant to try. If your site isn't optimized for viewing on mobile, you won't be found. Period.

- **DON'T: Let your site go stale**

Too often the tendency when it comes to your website is "set it and forget it". Don't do that! A site that is frequently refreshed with new content — whether it's menu updates, new photos, events, announcements, etc. — will rank higher in search results than one that hasn't been updated in years.

5 Steps to Higher Rankings in Google

1. It starts with your website

You can't rank highly in Google if your website has a poor design, and fails to use standard "best practices". These days, that means:

- Clean, user-friendly design is best.
- Avoid using Flash. Today's industry-standard best practice for coding a website is HTML5.
- Optimize the keywords in the title and meta description tags. These should be highly relevant to your restaurant, cuisine, and local city or region.
- Include properly coded Schema tags on key information such as your address, phone, and opening hours.

Now, I know these things can sound like technical mumbo-jumbo to most. If you've hire a web designer, just ask them if these are in line with what they do for you.

Of course, if your site is designed by [Restaurant Engine](#), we've always got you covered on all SEO best-practices :)



2. Mobile Optimization

You probably already know that customers are using their smartphones more than ever to find you online. So having a strong mobile-optimized website is a no-brainer.

But did you know that mobile-optimization can also help to improve your ranking in Google search results?

Yep. Especially if your site is designed using the industry-standard best practice: *Responsive Web Design*. Basically that means you have a single website, which scales and adapts to fit any screensize and any mobile device.

Why is this better for Google? Well a single, responsive, website is more easily found and indexed by Google. If you have two separate “mobile” and “desktop” versions of your site, this confuses search engines, making it hard to index your business properly.

3. Set up Your Google+ Business Page

Google recently released a platform which helps it list local businesses. That platform is Google+.

Well, it also goes by the name “Google My Business”, and was previously known as “Google Places”. But essentially it’s all the same thing. So if you’ve registered on Google Places or have previously setup your Google+ Business page, then you’re all set.

But if you haven’t done this yet, here’s what we recommend you do:

1. Go to google.com/business
2. Sign into your google account (it’s the same as your Gmail account if you have one). If you’ve never created a google account before, now’s the time!
3. Follow the steps to locate your business on the map.
4. Follow instructions to verify your location. You’ll have the option to do this by receiving a phone call or a postcard in the mail.

You’ll end up with an official Google+ profile for your business. You’ll want to make sure all of your information is accurate and up-to-date, including your restaurant name, address, phone number, etc.



4. Connect Google+ To Your Website

Now that you've created your Google+ Business Page, the next step is to properly connect it to your website. This helps Google "connect the dots" so your website and your listing in Google are associated with one another.

This is basically a 2-step process:

1. Edit the "About" section of your Google+ profile and add a link pointing to your website.
2. Add a bit of code to your website to create a link (with the proper rel="publisher" tagging attached), which points from your website to your Google+ profile. That code should look something like this:

```
<link href="https://plus.google.com/+YourRestaurant" rel="publisher" />
```

Now, again, you might need to hire your web developer to add this code properly on your website. Or, if you're on [Restaurant Engine](#), we handle this for you :)

5. Optimize Local Directory Listings

This next step will really go a long way to super-charge your ranking in search engines.

You know all of those directory sites where your restaurant is listed? Yelp, Yellopages, UrbanSpoon, along with your local directories?

It's very important that your information — your restaurant name, street address, phone number, etc. — is listed in exactly the same format on each of these sites.

When I say format, I mean everything: The spelling, punctuation, capitilization, even whether or not you use parentheses around the area code in your phone number! Yep - these details matter.

Google (and other search engines) look to these directory sites as signals to verify the accuracy of your restaurant's information. So do yourself a favor and get these in line.

You can use a tool like Moz Local: moz.com/local. Their free service will let you search for your restaurant and identify all of the inconsistencies across all of those directory sites. You can then log into each and update your info accordingly. Or their paid service lets you update all of them all in one place.



6. (Bonus) Get Great Reviews

Bonus! Here's one more tip to help your restaurant rank highly in Google search results.

Ratings and reviews matter more than ever before. Google actually collects all of the reviews you receive across various websites like Yelp and elsewhere, and displays an aggregate rating of your restaurant, right in the search results.

This is kinda scary, I know. But see this as an opportunity! The more reviews you receive, and the more positive reviews you get, the better you'll appear to searchers!

There's no way to "game the system" here. Whatever tools are out there to do so, Google will crack down on (if they haven't already). So we always recommend you stick to age-old principles:

- Serve great food
- Deliver outstanding service
- Give guests an amazing experience
- Encourage them to leave you a positive review!

Next Steps...

Whew! That's a lot of info! Well, I hope you found it helpful.

Now it's time to take action. All of the steps above can be done in a matter of weeks by doing them yourself or hiring a web developer. That can get pricy, fast.

So I want to introduce you to our service, [Restaurant Engine](#).

We specialize in helping restaurants and food trucks get a professionally designed website, the easy way. Your site is 100% optimized for search and mobile devices. Our expert web designers will have your new site up and running within a week, and we're at your call whenever you need us (no paying by the hour here!).

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