Rule Your Rankings

Strategic On-Page SEO Guidelines to Boost Rankings FAST!

[Presented by: Moon Hussain, Marie Ysais]
It was precisely the moment I sat down on the laptop when I realized my FB messenger was going off the chainzzz. Y'all! It was lit! Marie Ysais lighting my shiiiiiiiiz up:

"Sup Homie Marie?!

"Ummm, I'm on hour 2 of this consult for [] agency, burn my damn eyes out."

"What's wrong, Cowgirl? I know consults aren't as FUN as riding your horsy or playing with cowbells..."

"MOON! Geez... I meant... yes, this helps us keep on our toes and all, but 80% of these marketing agencies are making the SAME damn mistakes!"

And you know what?
She was right!
Abso-freakin'-lutely... RIGHT!
In the last 20 consults we have collectively done, most of them are doing the exact same thing: sloppy so-called "on-site" SEO.
Now, we can talk about theory all day long, but I have a 17.5-year-old cat with no patience, Marie needs to cook chili underneath the stars like the cowgirl that she is, and I? I need to plan my next trip to Hawaii.

So, instead of discussing 4,800 on-site factors that nobody will ever read, we are going to talk about the most important on-site factors that people in local SEO just get plain ol' wrong. Let's get started, fool!

Why is On-Site SEO Important for Local SEO Sites?

Why is red tomato sauce important in chili? Why does Superman wear a cape? Why do cats never stink? Why aren't dogs afforded the same luxury? Why are ducks mean and chase kids?

Maaaan, I wish my genius brain would calm down... I could go on and on.

Look: it is common in the SEO industry to gloss over what's right in front of us. In the last ~5 years, PBNs, guest posts, whatever you want to call it (same thing, by the way, until proven guilty due to sloppy sloppy SEO!), really took a foothold.

But no matter which route you take with link placement, it ALWAYS gets abused. Five years ago, a thin site with 10 pages could easily get ranked
using GSA and God knows automated tools & sloppy “PBNs“ were the way to go. Only if I had a bit less analysis paralysis...

Google's algorithm caught on, we all choked on our pizzas, and the industry kept evolving.

It wasn't until a year ago that I personally discovered that whilst I was buying powerful links (and using my own PBN), things were either a hit or a miss. Don't you love the mystery that is the search engines?!

But hey, that's when I decided to start actually experimenting with some on-site factors. Marie had a similar experience. When you have clients that are fast becoming impatient? You better start playing around like Marie, with cowbells and everything.

We've both played with quite a lot of on-site factors and bring our own strategies to the table, customized to each client specifically, because hey, each niche, each city is different. You can literally use the same strategies on two similar websites in the same niche and city and get different results.

While everyone gets excited about links (and hey, I do too! I LOVE Links, etc!), it has become super important to get your on-site game ON. We have easily gotten our clients some serious jumps to page 1 and top rankings by tweaking the obvious on-site factors we have included here.

If you can learn to experiment with all of these factors, you will look like a rockstar to your clients. The magic is in the layering of all these factors!

We are proud to present our on-site guide Rule Your Rankings: Strategic On-Page SEO To Boost Your Rankings FAST!
Peanut Buttah, Jelleh Tiiiime!

If you went, 'wtffff?!', that's exactly what I was looking for, lulz. By now, you just may be wondering, “who is this uniquely hilarious, surely, probably a super gorgeous woman, and my God, the brains behind this one! By Golly!” Before I introduce myself, let's learn who Marie is (my guess about her being a cowgirl is about to be confirmed...):

My name is Marie and most of you already know me really well but you probably don’t know much about my background. I started in SEO about 10 years ago when I needed an SEO firm to take control of my website growth for my App Development Company. I actually hired and fired 3 large SEO firms before deciding I would learn SEO in my spare time.

Ten years later, I own a boutique SEO consulting firm in Texas. I also consult with local and international SEO Firms as an SEO Strategist. I am known for moving “stuck sites” and saving clients before they leave.

My background also consists of a Bachelor of Business with a minor in Management. My background in business has helped me stay ahead of the competition. In my spare time, I test SEO tactics using multiple on-page strategies, links and more. Google is constantly changing and we should be changing with her.

Contrary to popular belief, all Texans do not ride a horse to work!
It's about time I properly introduce myself: My name is Moon and I grew up playing Duck Hunt, Mario Bros., & am the type of nerd who stood in line for every major console release.

I loved gaming so much that I actually ended up earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science with a minor in Game Programming.

Let's get something straight: I hated programming but little did I know the competitive edge it would give me. I started off working for a hosting company before I got hired as a programmer for a local school district on the East Coast.

The job wasn't for me (I'm being super polite here). In that time, I learned about SEO & California: one of three biggest loves of my life! (After my cat, duh!)

In all seriousness, having a programming background gave me more understanding and appreciation of algorithms & how things work. I haven't programmed in years, so do NOT ask me what I've programmed lately. I learned a LOT of theory and the languages I learned include C, C++, Java, & more.

Also, I think cats are the best things that happened to the internet.

And, yes! We have discovered... we get along like peanut buttah & jelleh & merging our on-site strategies has been a win-win for our clients in the local SEO scene!
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Let's Cut the Bull $h!ZzLeZ, Dawg!

As mentioned earlier, me and Marie have created this quick set of guidelines not as a “complete” on-site guide. *Hold a minute, what in hell did you just say?!*

Look: this labor of love highlights only the most common on-page factors that we have found missing on our clients' sites.

As **deceitfully simple** as all of this looks, the magic is in experimenting with these factors, layering them on, and always testing and tweaking.

While we realize that these factors aren't “sexy”, truth is, these are the ones folks just aren't paying attention to. Roll up your sleeves, and let's get down and dirty! Awesome to have you aboard!

Before we get to the nitty gritty, keep in mind, the on-site factors mentioned in these pages are responsible for these dramatic rankings improvements time and time again:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Google Rank</th>
<th>Yahoo Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are tons more, but you're here to learn about the why and how, so grab your best cheese and coffee, Kid, and scroll down:
On-Site Factor #1: Keyword Mapping

Before you do anything, map out your keywords. Sure, this may sound... lame, but executing on-site strategy is like building the foundation of a house. Before you ever get to that step, you must have a blueprint.

You can use a fancy mind map or plain old excel; it doesn’t even matter but what does matter is mapping out your keywords for each targeted page.

Identify the pages you want to rank. Usually, in local you rank the Homepage and a few interior pages depending on your niche and multiple location pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Pages to Rank</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homepage</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Page</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Page</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Page</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Page</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Post Or any Page You Need to Rank</td>
<td>Keyword 1, Keyword 2, Keyword 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are basic barebones targeted pages and keywords. You want to be able to expand on this map as the campaign runs because you should be creating more and more value to your client.

Map out the basic keywords and pages to get started and to make sure you don’t send the wrong keywords to the wrong pages (happens all the time!)
You can add as many targeted pages to rank and you expand on your keywords as you work on the campaign. This is just an example to get the idea of mapping out the pages with corresponding keywords.

Let's put this into perspective: if you were to hire a company to build your house and then discovered they started building the walls without a blueprint sketched out... how pissed would you be?

So, why is this any different? Be like the lionesses on the hunt. It's never a scattershot strategy. Plan ahead!

**On-Site SEO Factor #2: Meta Title: Keyword + City – Brand Name**

a. Pick the keyword that drives the most traffic for the Meta Title of the page you want to rank. For the sake of using an example effectively throughout, let's pretend you determine that “Air Conditioning” receives the most searches.

b. Depending on the traffic you can have City + Keyword or Keyword + City. Each case is different but Keyword + City (State Abbreviation) – Brand Name is used most often.

**Example:** “Austin Air Conditioning & Heating Specialists – Stan’s Heating and Air Conditioning”

If they added the State abbreviation or the State name, they would also capture long tail traffic.
c. It is important to have the Keyword and the City at the beginning of the Meta Title. You do not want Brand in front of the Title! (a lot of agencies do this)

- **Example 1:** “Air Conditioning Austin TX & Heating Specialists – Stan’s Heating and Air Conditioning
- **Example 2:** “Air Conditioning Austin Texas & Heating Specialists – Stan’s Heating and Air Conditioning”
- **Example 3:** “Austin TX Air Conditioning & Heating Specialists – Stan’s Heating and Air Conditioning”

*Example 3: Looks more un-natural to me and I prefer the first two choices.*

Depending on the amount of characters and the company name, you can manage two keywords plus Company name in the title.

*If the Company Name has keywords in the company name, only use the method with one Keyword in the meta title.*

*Never count the company name in the Character Limit for Meta Title.*

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**On-Site SEO Factor #3: Meta Description**

This is a good place to have your main keyword or variations of your keyword with your city. It is important for the searcher to see the keywords Bolded in the SERPS.
a. The second most important factor is the CTR. You always want to give the searcher a reason to click on your client’s website.

Example: Austin’s Most Trusted Air Conditioning and Heating Experts Since 1954. For Residential and Commercial AC repair and service, call…..”

CTR is a whole other topic of itself and this guide doesn’t focus on CTR. The basic CTR tips and tricks are usually enough for most local client industries.

BTW: The site used in these examples are not client sites.

On-Site Factor #4: Content

You want at least 500 – 800 words on the page you want to rank in local. You don’t have to overdo it and go for 2,000 words unless that is the norm in that industry. For local, 500 – 800 will do just fine in most cases.

The “blend in” factor is best for overall content. More than the length, it's all about how you apply other on-site factors to it (using key phrases, header tags, inter-linking, etc.)
On-Site Factor #5: Header Tags h1/h2/h3

Make sure you have the main keyword(s) + City in an H tag as naturally as possible.

**Example:** “Austin Air Conditioning & Heating Specialists” or “Top Rated Air Condition & Heating Specialist in Austin”

This is perfectly done. H2 and H3 tags are showing more weight in Google than H1 tags at the moment, probably because SEO people misused the H1 tag. You don’t want to overdo it but you want to make sure your H2 and or H3 tags mention variations of your keywords or Long-tail. Typically, 1-2 Heading tags is about all you need in local.

Check your source code of the website. You want to be sure you have 1 H1 tag and a few H2 tags followed by your H3 Tags. Most WordPress templates will overuse the H tags for random items that have nothing to do with your keywords like “Call Us Now” or “Click Here”. You want to use this space to highlight your keywords and remain in full control of all of your H tags.

Don’t waste your H tags with bad web design. Tell your web designer to update the website and to use the CSS and styling instead of depending on the H tags.

*Currently I am using H2 and H3 Tags and I no longer focus on H1 Tags. Use what works best for you. There isn’t just one way to do all things! For example, if 3 h tags are being used on a page, Moon will use key phrase variations on 2 of them and leave one totally unoptimized. You*
have to experiment and “play by ear”, depending on your niche & city competitiveness.

**On-Site Factor #6: Main Keyword Usage**

If possible, have the main keyword + city in the main content *at least once*. You don’t want to overdo this and add your keyword phrases 8 times but you should *at least use it once*.

You might be surprised how many people never have their main keyword + city in their actual main content. Make it look as natural as you can and don’t stuff your keywords. Take your time and have a well thought out approach.

**On-Site Factor #7: Keyword Density**

Check *top 3 websites* in your client’s niche for their top keyword that is similar to your domain. *Don’t check an exact match domain unless your client has an exact match domain*. By checking 3 similar domains for keyword density, you are checking to see what Google already likes for your keywords.

a. Take the top 3 sites keyword density and only use that as a *guideline* for keyword density. Off-page SEO is also taken into account here so sometimes you won’t be able to get your density as high as your competitors so this is only a loose guide!
b. Look at Single words such as: Painting but also check Keyword combinations such as: Painting San Diego.

c. Take the highest density and the lowest density and place your keyword density in the middle of the two as a baseline.

**Note:** *Keyword Density can be updated more than once to find the perfect combination for each website.* You never want to overdo the density but if you do, you can always lower it. Moon likes to start off with the average, never high, and tweak it higher... kind of like, you never want to offer cat treats to your cat all at once. *For God's sake, they always overdose!!!*

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**On-Site Factor #8: Images**

Name images using LSI and long-tail keywords. You can also add EXIF (GPS) information as you are already doing but I have stopped adding EXIF to my images about six months ago. (I just don’t see enough of a boost).

**Example:**


*These are just examples of different ways to name file images. Basically, you want them to follow in your same theme and just add relevance to your content. If you love LSI, you can also add*
LSI just don’t add all keywords at once!

On-Site Factor #9: Image ALT Tags

Leave Blank or Informative information about the image or even add the brand name. Do not place keywords or city name in ALT tags. If you fully optimize all of your other content mentioned above, you won’t need to optimize alt tags at all. Alt tags have a very weak to no ranking signal in Google.

Moon's Note: This is a bit conflicting for both of us, but, this only means that there are more than one ways for a cat to hunt its prey. I like to play with image alt tags. I name the images relevant to key phrases and then, fill in image alt tags with long tail variations of the key phrase. It all depends on how optimized the other on-site factors are!

On-Site Factor #10: SILO Structure

A Silo is just a way to interlock your pages and help pass link juice throughout the website. However, what most people miss is the fact that Google uses the anchor text in your SILO to describe what your website is all about.

Basic SILO Structure has all of us passing link juice to all of the pages and this is great but, if you apply a basic SILO and then tweak it, you will boost your rankings.
There are a million ways to create a SILO and Marie & I use various strategies depending on what's going on with the client's site. You need to be strategic about how you do your interlinking.

Link Back to your homepage (targeted page) from inner pages and from some posts using your main keywords and long tail keywords from the main content.

**Example:** Inner Page/Post:

http://www.stansac.com/hvac/

*Stan’s Air Conditioning* (hyper-links to the Homepage) is a well-respected HVAC company

*Notice the keyword is actually in their Brand Name.*

- In your anchor text on the pages/posts back to the targeted page include main keyword + city as your anchor text at least once.
- Set up a handful of posts and or inner pages that only link back to the homepage using keywords and long tail keywords.
- You still want to do your normal Silo that connects all of the pages but you want to sprinkle in the tips above. This just helps you boost rankings to the targeted pages.
- Don’t get all crazy and link every single page or post back to your targeted pages with keywords only.
- When deciding which pages or posts to SILO back to your targeted pages, choose pages or posts that talk about your topic and will look natural.

**Example:** If you have a client that is a painter, you would use terms such as: Top Rated Painters, The Best Painting Company in (city) to interlock your pages.
This process can be repeated over and over to strengthen your rankings and this can be applied to any targeted page you need to rank.

Make sure you use your keyword + city at least once. Use a well-rounded variety of anchor text but you can be more aggressive than off-page anchor text.

Important: Keep Notes and track your changes with on-page factors. If you make changes and you see rankings go down after a few weeks, you can begin to tweak individual factors and make your rankings go up. Each website, niche and city are different so track your changes and don’t be afraid to experiment.

Ending Notes

Hopefully, by now, you have as good a caffeine buzz as you do the will to master local SEO for yourself and for your clients.

Marie & I can be found answering questions and sharing new content at our Facebook group, Rule Your Rankings. Join us here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1459837360810463/

We realize, our on-site SEO goes against the agenda of many folks, but we are not against building links at all! We are simply advocating that you take care of your on-site factors first and then delve into link building to maximize on both ends. Just buying links doesn't cut it anymore!
Let us remind you of the fact that we have achieved great ranking boosts by applying and tweaking the aforementioned on-site factors. Of course, there are many, many more, but by implementing these, most websites in the local SEO scene will see a fast boost in rankings.

Well, it's about time we get back to our own SEO experiments (plenty of cool stuff coming out in the FB Rule Your Rankings group). Now, we must let Marie get ready to hunt bears and squirrels while I pour my 4th mug of coffee and convince the cat that I didn't finish his serving of Manchego cheese. Now, go forth SEO and....

Rule Your Rankings!