

# How Can You Get

## #1 Ranking on Google?

By Matthew A. Perosi



It astounds me that people still offer first place Google ranking service. Ironically, as I chose this topic and sat down to write about it, I received a phone call from a “Local Ranking” company, or so the Caller ID claimed. The recording guaranteed a higher local ranking for my business if I spoke to a “Certified Google Specialist,” and paid them to perform search engine optimization (SEO) on my website.

Google’s organic search ranking policy has always stated: “no one can guarantee a #1 ranking,” and “beware of SEOs that claim to guarantee ranking, or allege a ‘special relationship’ with Google.” Yet for some reason, the entire world once believed that #1 ranking magic could be conjured up by simply hiring an SEO agency. After all, Internet wizards work for those agencies, right?

I’m not sure where this fallacy originated, but it is not true. In fact, as Google matures, it’s more likely that you will never appear as number one for any search query unless you have a preexisting relationship with the person searching. That’s because of Personalized Search Results. Google has ways to create a personalized search experience based on your previous search history and based on the people and businesses you are connected with through Google+, Twitter, and public Facebook information.

Stores in highly competitive areas, like New York City’s diamond district, have to work extra hard to appear in the first page of search results. Much of that hard work should include content creation, social engagement, and any other online activity that will establish a connection to potential clients without detracting from sales.

Years ago, other search engines like Lycos, Infoseek, and Yahoo, offered paid organic ranking service, but that was never an option in Google. Some people also believe you can pay for first place positioning in Google AdWords, but that’s not true either because those results are personalized based



on longitude and latitude of the person searching. AdWords positions also change based on the fluctuating number of people bidding each day.

Yelp and the various Yellow Pages properties still offer paid number one listings; however, you are only paying for first place ranking in your town or county. Paying for top listing on those sites does not help your Google ranking either.

In 2014, a lot of SEO companies started offering legitimate optimization services to help improve local ranking. These services typically involve fine-tuning all of the web directories that have your company information on it, like Yelp and Yellow Pages, but also Google+ Local.

Of course, now I’m starting to receive phone calls and emails from agencies offering top ranking within the Google+ Local pack. The “Local pack” is that list of businesses appearing in Google results when you are looking to shop locally. It’s triggered when your query includes town names and phrases like “near me.”

Once again, it is a complete fallacy that you could pay for a service to achieve first place of the +Local pack listing. Steer clear of any company that offers such service as they are just preying on your naiveté of the process.

I have performed website reviews for more than 100 retailers. During my reviews, I analyze how search results appear for the store and their competitors. The top +Local pack ranking is usually awarded to the stores with good reviews and accurate information in their Google+ Local description. I have yet to see any stores with "over-optimized" descriptions appearing in the +Local pack.



Your store description is considered to be over-optimization when it's more than 100 words and includes a lot of bold and underlining. Those bold and underlined techniques are outdated SEO methods that need to be avoided. You'll have better success with short descriptions that include your unique selling proposition.



Achieving high ranking has more to do with paying attention to your customers and posting information to the web so they can find it when they need it. You have to do a lot of things right in order to appear in search results, but you also have to make sure that you don't do anything wrong, even the slightest bit wrong.



Some stores have already tried too hard to achieve top ranking and their over-optimization created a negative effect. This often happens when a smarmy SEO agency has successfully preyed upon you.



If the strategies and agencies you've tried are not producing the local ranking you desire, then perhaps it's time to try something completely new and ignore what you think you know about optimization.

To answer this feature's title question, you can only achieve #1 ranking by doing everything right, and a good SEO agency can help you with that process. However, paying someone who offers #1 ranking is a fool's errand, and completely wrong.



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Matthew Perosi reports the latest Internet trends and methods that are most relevant to the jewelry industry in his 5-day per week newsletter, available through [jwag.biz](http://jwag.biz). Tap into the more than 1,100 free newsletters to guide you towards better usage of websites, social, and mobile. Matthew invites your feedback and questions at [matt@jwag.biz](mailto:matt@jwag.biz) or 973.413.8211. Many questions from TRJ readers have turned into great newsletter topics.

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