

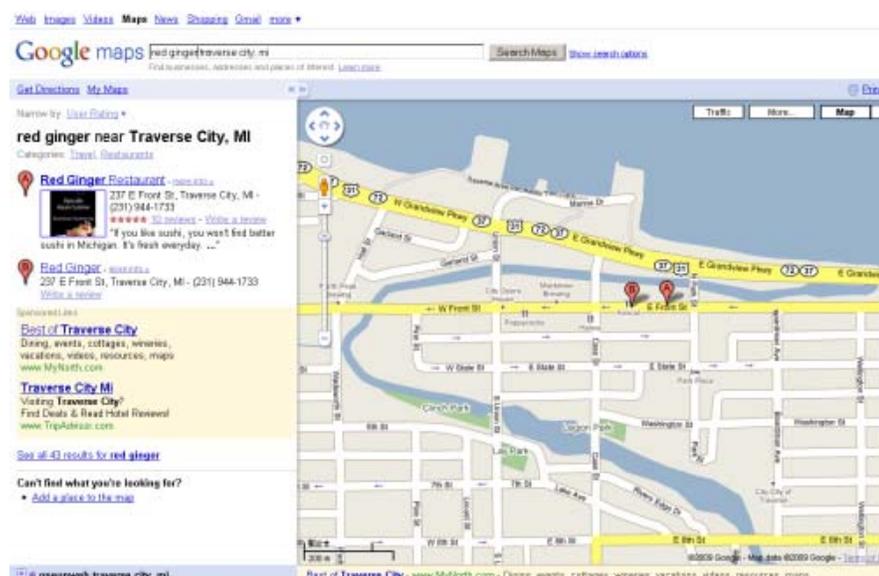
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## Google Place Pages: Local Search is Looking Up!

Posted by Teal on October 15, 2009 at 10:18 am

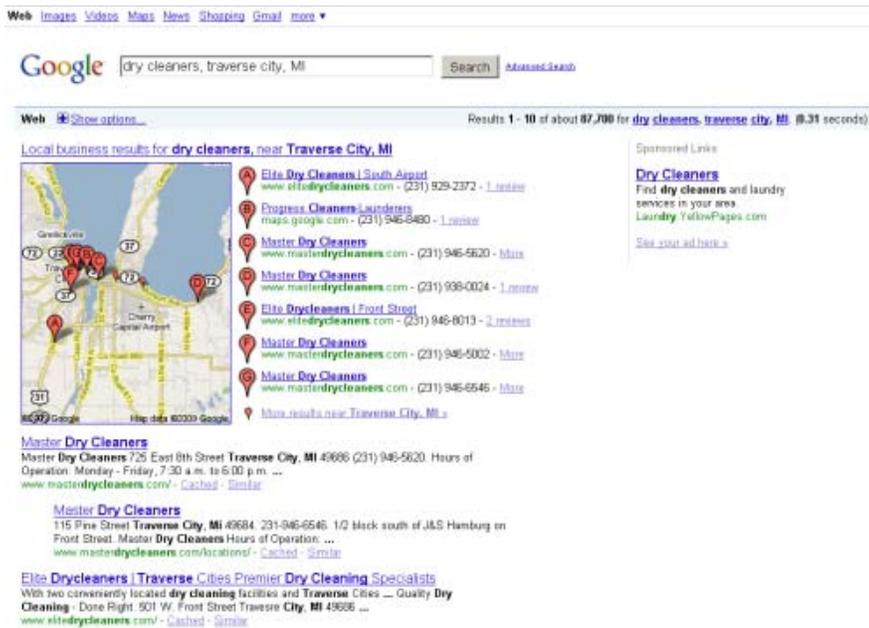
If you're a local business owner or franchisor who depends on foot traffic and local customers, then listen up (I've got good news). Google is making it easier for you than ever to enjoy local visibility—make that good local visibility. With the improvement of their [Local Business Center](#), Google is helping businesses become more “findable” to their customers and offer more helpful information online.

Over the past few weeks, Google has been rolling out Place Pages. An evolution of the original Google Maps and a new rival for Yelp, Place Pages offer local business owners the opportunity to include a wealth of information for potential customers directly through the Local Business Center. Here's an example from one of my favorite restaurants in Traverse City.



The beauty of the new Place Pages is that now, searchers can review all sorts of information right in Google Maps (it's almost like a microsite). Local businesses and franchises can upload photos and include videos and many other types of information. The pages also include online reviews from other sources, nearby locations, directions to the business, etc. It's really a great way to get people interested in your business without clicking through to your actual website (we still recommend having another online presence).

What's even better is that, depending on the keyword the user is searching, Google Maps can get you a top position in the search results. Searchers are getting more reliant on search engines to do some of the work for them, and Google is obliging. For example, a search for the term “dry cleaners city, state” in Google will most certainly return Google Maps results at the very top of the page.



Interestingly, a search for the term “dry cleaners” (no geo-qualifier) will also return results including Google Maps results based on the searcher’s location (IP address). This means service-specific search terms are likely to return Google Maps results, whether they include a geo-qualifier or not.

It’s still not fool proof, but more and more, local search is becoming a critical part of some companies’ digital strategy.

If you’re a small business owner, a franchisor, a regional multi-branch operation, or any company that depends on local visibility, it’s important that the time be taken to optimize on the local level. A lot can be done ([call us](#) if you are stumped), and [Google Maps](#) is a great place to start.

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