

WEBINAR

Race to the Top: The Crucial Google Ranking Factors Your Cannabis SEO Strategy Must Include

Webinar Preview & Audio Available at:

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/cannabis-seo-strategy/>

Slide 1	Race to the Top: The Crucial Google Ranking Factors Your Cannabis SEO Strategy Must Include Outrank the Competition and Drive Traffic to Your Store
Slide 2	Today, we'll be covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why Local SEO is so important• The top ranking factors to help get you the top spots• How to implement a proven SEO strategy fast
Slide 3	My name is Eduardo Silva. I'm the VP of Sales here at Foottraffik, and I'm really excited to be sharing this information with you today.



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Foottraffik is a digital advertising and analytics agency. We've been in business for over five years now, exclusively focused on dispensaries and delivery services within North America. We're really excited to be helping advance our industry forward.

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A couple of housekeeping items before we get started.

If you have your cell phones on you, please put them facing down on your desk or mute them. We are going to be covering a lot of information in a very short window of time and it helps to retain focus.

Familiarize yourself with the Zoom interface. If you haven't become a master at Zoom yet, if you go to the bottom of your screen there is a Q&A button. We do have moderators with us today that will be addressing questions throughout the webinar.

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Let's do a quick overview of the basics.

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, which is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results.

Organic search traffic is unpaid traffic that comes from Google.

When customers want to find a dispensary near them, they turn to search—and Google, in particular. And if you



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want to show up in those search results, then it's crucial that you have a robust SEO strategy and a team to implement it.

Otherwise, searchers will go right to your competition. Why? Because they'll be easier to find.

SEO is all about findability. It shows that your website is relevant for particular keywords. For us, that may be "Boston dispensary," "Detroit provisioning center," or "Sacramento marijuana delivery."

Optimizing your site around these keywords makes it more likely that people who are looking for your services will find you and shop with you.

When you have a good SEO strategy, two things will happen.

One, you'll show up higher in search results, and two, you'll get more organic traffic.

When you rank better in Google, it helps create brand trust and authority. People automatically equate high rankings with quality, and your ranking will rub off on your brand.

Plus, because searchers rarely look past the first page of results, your higher ranking will lead to more organic traffic.

In fact, the top three results of a search tend to get 75% of all organic traffic. The lower you are on the search results, the less traffic you'll get.

Now, organic traffic is one of the most dependable sources of web traffic and revenue for many businesses.



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And it's not just any web traffic. Thanks to your optimization, it will be relevant, high-quality traffic. These are people who are already interested in what you're selling and want to buy from you.

Not every click will lead to sales, but many of them will. If you want to capture those potential customers, then you need to create a local SEO strategy that helps you dominate the market.

Local SEO is similar to what I just talked about, however, the focus is geographically centered around the area your dispensary serves.

If your dispensary is in LA, you don't need to show up when someone is looking for a dispensary near them in San Diego. It's vital that you show up, though, when someone in LA is trying to find a place to shop.

So how is this different from regular SEO? Well, the ranking factors for local SEO are a bit different. While all the regular SEO factors like keyword optimization, backlinks, page speed, and mobile responsiveness still matter, there are other signals that Google looks for when deciding how to rank sites.

Now Google doesn't disclose how its algorithm works. Instead, we have to rely on testing sites and sharing best practices to see what impacts rankings. Sites like Moz and Brightlocal can also help us understand local SEO ranking factors. Though I want to mention that while those sites offer a variety of services, they don't really work with dispensaries and aren't aware of the various challenges



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that cannabis companies face.

Since Foottraffik has only worked with cannabis companies since we started offering SEO services over 5 years ago, we've found ways to surmount common challenges to help our clients get noticed and rank well.

We want to do the same for you, so lets jump into our overview of the most crucial local ranking factors so that you can see everything that goes into a winning local SEO strategy. These are the factors you'll want to focus on to get into the local pack, which is the box of suggested nearby businesses on local searches.

The number one local SEO ranking factor that you need to concern yourself with is Google My Business.

If you haven't claimed your free profile, you need to do it the moment this webinar is over. This is the most critical factor for getting found and driving traffic to your store or website.

Now, this makes sense right? If someone is running a search on Google—and most people are—then of course Google is going to look at the information they themselves collect on businesses and rely on that first.

When creating your GMB profile, make sure to use the actual name of your dispensary and then follow it by the word dispensary. For example, Rise would be Rise Dispensary. Do not add in the name of your city or try to stuff your name with keywords.

Make sure that your name, address, and phone number



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are correct and that they are the same as they appear on your website.

You should also create a description of your location that includes relevant keywords, the types of products you carry, and anything that helps set your dispensary apart.

Enter accurate business hours and keep them updated. This is especially crucial right now with COVID. You want people to know when you are open and how they can get your products.

If you are only offering curbside pickup right now, mention that in your description so that potential customers know to order ahead. Don't forget about the holidays and special events.

If your hours ever change — even temporarily — make sure to update your listing. Not only is this a best practice for Google, but it's also an important business practice.

Google also allows you to post pictures to your GMB listing. Pictures help you tell a story about your dispensary. And, of course, customers enjoy being able to check out a dispensary before they visit so make sure to upload some photos that help show off your location.

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The second most important factor for getting into the local pack is your reviews.

Last week, we focused on reviews and reputation management in our webinar. You can find it at [foottraffik.me/webinars](https://www.foottraffik.me/webinars).



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Ultimately, Google wants to send people to the websites that best match their search intent. Part of this is ensuring they have a positive experience there. To do this, they rely on what others have said.

To rank well on Google, you'll want to get at least one new review a day and score a 4.7-star average.

Fewer stars will result in fewer sales. Customers take reviews into account when making a purchase, so this isn't just about SEO. It helps you on two fronts.

Because we're talking about SEO, Google reviews are the most valuable. While other reviews are helpful when customers are shopping around, when it comes to SEO, Google is King.

To get reviews, you'll want to make sure your budtenders are asking your customers for them after a positive experience. You can also create flyers with a QR code to place in bags or re-engage customers with SMS to ask for a Google review.

In terms of reputation management, you should check your reviews regularly and respond to both positive and negative reviews.

If you don't have a reputation management system in place, it's time to implement one. This includes regularly checking your reviews and responding to both positive and negative reviews. And yes, we can help! Just schedule a call at [foottraffik.me/call](https://www.foottraffik.me/call).



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Factor number three: On-Page Optimization.

On-page ranking factors can have a big impact on your page's ability to rank.

When it comes to local SEO, many marketers mistakenly overlook developing a content strategy. That's a huge missed opportunity. Developing a content marketing strategy that targets your local keywords can be surprisingly beneficial.

Unique, high-quality local content will attract inbound links, boosting your rankings in the process. And it will differentiate your dispensary from your competition.

Keywords should appear in both headings and content, and your content should be relevant to the keywords you're using.

For cannabis, you can create content around your products, the plant, your local area, and more, and remain relevant for crucial search terms. This helps improve your site authority and shows Google that you know what you're talking about.

For example, if you go to our website, you'll see pages for each of our services, and then you'll also find that many of our blog posts relate to our services or to clients' interests.

There are a few different types of content you can create. Of course, you have your webpages, like your location page that clearly shows where your dispensary is and should be optimized for your city or neighborhood. You can also create pillar pages and blog posts to help increase your authority and strengthen the likelihood that your site will rank for those keywords.



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All content on your website should have title tags, alt tags, and meta-descriptions.

URLs should be structured so they follow a hierarchy, including category and title, and are easy to understand.

Content should contain internal links to other relevant content and external links to useful content.

Factor number 4 is links. This is also known as scoring backlinks or doing link building.

Creating a link building strategy will help showcase the relevance and authority of your website.

According to WhiteSpark, link signals account for about 31% of organic ranking factors and 15% of Google's local pack ranking factors, so you can't ignore it.

When people link to your site, they're essentially endorsing you. Those links help to build site authority. They tell Google that people like your content and that it's relevant.

The best way to get backlinks is to create good content that people want to share via social or on their own blog posts. By showcasing your knowledge of the industry and of cannabis in general, you can create content that people want to link to. You can also guest post on relevant sites to help build your links as well.

Another way to get links to your site is by ensuring you're listed in directories like Yelp, Weedmaps, and Leafly and by speaking or presenting at cannabis events and



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conferences.

The quality of the links matters, of course. While you want many links, they should be from relevant sites or individuals as their domain authority helps increase the value of the link. Plus, the text that they use to link to you, known as the anchor text, should be relevant to the content that's being linked to.

Since Google's inception, link signals have been the foundation of Google's algorithm. Creating and executing a link-building strategy should play a key role in your SEO strategy.

Factor number 5 for getting into the local pack is behavioral signals.

Google considers how your customers and prospective customers interact with your site. These are behavioral signals that clue Google into whether your site is meeting searchers' needs. They can also be known as UX signals.

To improve your site's behavioral signals, there are six metrics you should pay attention to.

1. Click-through rate: This is the frequency with which people click your link in search compared to competitors. The more people clicking through, the more relevant your page appears to search engines.

2. Bounce rate: This is how often people arrive at your page from the search results and leave immediately. A high bounce rate indicates that your content isn't relevant, resulting in a lower ranking.



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3. Time on page: The time that a visitor spends on a page after clicking on its listing on a SERP and before coming back to search results. If people browse your site and find value, they will stay for longer. Images, content quality, and page organization are instrumental in helping users consume more content.

4. Mobile clicks-to-call: Google interprets a call from the mobile search results page to be a clear signal of relevance. According to research by Google, more than 40% of mobile searchers use click-to-call.

5. Directions to business clicks: Search engines figure that if people travel to your business right after finding it in search, the business must be trustworthy.

So how can you affect these signals?

By creating content that your target audience wants to read, you can keep people on your page longer. Make sure to provide content in an accessible format and make it easy to skim.

Also, with a logical site hierarchy, you can make it easier for people to find the pages they want. Ultimately, you want your site to be user-friendly so that people enjoy using it and come back time and time again.

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Factor number 6 is citations.

Citations are verified listings of your dispensary on online sites including cannabis directories, local directories, review sites, social media, or other businesses.



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There are hundreds of sites that your dispensary can be listed on. Thanks to syndication, you don't have to manually enter your information on every one of these sites. Plus, we can do this for you.

It's important that your name, address, and phone number are consistent across the board. The more times Google "crawls" your information, the better it is for your SEO. However, listings with inconsistent info can negatively impact your SEO.

In addition to citation consistency, you'll want to make sure that your citations are relevant. For example, if your dispensary is listed on local business directory sites, travel sites, or cannabis directories, these are all relevant to your business and will give you a boost with Google. However, listings on irrelevant sites won't do anything to boost your SEO. And if they're considered spammy sites, they could negatively affect your SEO.

The authority of the site can also impact you. Trusted, high-quality, high-authority sites will benefit your SEO far more than low-quality, low-authority sites. Sites like Leafly, Weedmaps, Yelp, local newspapers, reputable local directories all have high-authority and will benefit your SEO efforts.

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Factor number 7 when it comes to ranking in the local pack is personalization.

Personalization refers largely to factors beyond your control. For example, a user's browsing history, location, and cookies all influence how you may rank.



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Let's say a consumer does a search on their iPhone for "cannabis dispensary near me," and they're a block away from your dispensary. The chances that your dispensary will rank high improve greatly compared to a consumer located 20 miles away who searches on "dispensary near me."

You can control other personalization factors. For example, Google values sites that are secure, mobile-friendly, and load quickly. These are part of the user experience and Google wants its users to have a good experience. So if you're lacking in any of these areas, your SEO will be negatively affected.

It seems like everyone is on social media these days, and Google has definitely noticed. Social signals may not help much with ranking in the local pack, but they can help with organic search so I wanted to mention them.

Currently, social signals like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter engagement don't play a huge role in your rankings. However, that doesn't mean you should ignore it.

Your performance on social media provides social proof, to both Google and potential customers. Plus, if you do social media well, you're going to attract more customers.

Here are the key social signals you should monitor:

- Engagement rate: How many views, likes, comments, retweets, you're getting.
- Mentions: How often are people mentioning your



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dispensary.

- Number of reviews: How many reviews do you have on social media sites like Facebook.
- Company bio: Is your dispensary bio complete on all social media sites.

Knowing these factors is one thing, implementing changes to impact your rankings is another.

So how can you quickly improve your SEO strategy?

The first part of our process helps us establish our strategy to boost our clients' rankings. We run an SEO audit on the website and also do keyword research to determine how a site should be optimized. From there, we move on to the site itself. Depending on the results of the audit, we either optimize the existing site or create a new site for our clients that is highly optimized right from the start.

Next, we start work on off-site factors like Google My Business, link building, and citations.

Throughout this process, we're constantly measuring the effectiveness of our efforts and adjusting the strategy as necessary to ensure the best possible results. This isn't a fast process. It's iterative and the improvements happen over time. You'll start seeing improved results and more sales as we continue in the cycle of optimization.

Everyone wants to get to the top of Google, it's valuable real estate, but not many people want to do the hard work to get there. Those top three results get 75 percent



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of the clicks. By creating a robust SEO strategy, you can start moving your website up the rankings and get more customers to your site.

At Foottraffik, SEO is in our blood. It's the first service we offered, and it's one that continues to drive sales for our clients. In fact, our SEO provides our customers with the greatest return on investment in comparison to all of their other digital marketing strategies.

Of course, we all want to know when we can start seeing the returns on our investments. And let's be clear—SEO is an investment. And just like any other investment, it takes some time to mature.

During the first 45 days, it's all about that initial optimization and building a site. We want to build trust and authority so that Google views your site as a reliable source of information and points searchers to it.

Between 3 to 6 months, you can start seeing improvements to your rankings. We offer reporting and are constantly measuring our efforts so that we can make adjustments as necessary and continue to improve or maintain your rankings.

Once you've hit the six-month mark, you can more easily start seeing the results of our SEO efforts. We will continue to focus on growth and capturing more the market to increase your sales while working on capturing more relevant keywords.

Now, SEO is not set-it-and-forget-it. When you stop



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investing in SEO, you'll still get organic traffic, but it will lessen over time. Plus, you'll be more susceptible to page rank drops when there's an algorithm update.

We know that Google is planning an update early 2021 and have already begun boosting our clients' websites so that they won't face any surprises once Google switches things up.

Don't let this algorithm change mess with your revenue. Make sure you have a robust SEO strategy in place to monitor ranking changes and protect your website.

I do want to mention that if you want fast results, you should combine Google Ads with your SEO. That way, while you're building authority and increasing your ranking, you're also driving traffic to your website by securing that top ad spot.

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Too many dispensaries don't realize that SEO is crucial for getting found by potential customers. To help you get started with this valuable service, we're offering a special deal for the rest of the month.

Schedule a call now at foottraffik.me/call to get \$200 off your first month of SEO! Not only will you help make your website easier to find, but our SEO strategies also make your website more user-friendly. It's truly win-win.

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Questions?



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How long does it take to see results?

It will take 3 months to see the results of the SEO campaign.

What are the most important channels to focus on?

Google is king, focus solely on this search engine for the largest market share and opportunities to win new business.

How do you measure the success of your SEO strategy?

What is the average return on ad spend?

The average return is \$10 per \$1 investment in SEO. In addition, SEO delivers 70% of their online orders.

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Thanks so much for joining us today.

Also, for sticking with us, you've qualified for your free yeti.

Let's get your shipping information and get one of those to you quickly. Schedule a call at [foottraffik.me/call](https://www.foottraffik.me/call)



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