



How small businesses feel about SEO in 2019.

An up-close look at Hello Yellow! poll results.





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What matters to you.



From your thoughts on social influencers, to how easy it is to make changes to your website, the Hello Yellow! monthly e-newsletter poll covers a range of digital marketing topics that matter to small business.

The poll has delivered great engagement from our readers, so each quarter we'll be exploring poll topics and more.

This quarter, we're diving into one of the hot topics for small businesses in Australia: search engine optimisation (SEO).

From your poll responses, it's clear that appearing in Google search is important for most small businesses. But we get it – SEO comes with a host of questions and challenges.

This report looks at how you're using search engine optimisation, the challenges you face, tips to help build your SEO, and a look at the latest trends.

Let's dive in.



Keyword opportunity.

“We need to expand our business and attract the right customers that suit our business structure.”

**– Carpet cleaning business owner,
South Tasmania**

While the majority of poll respondents feature keywords on their website, almost a third of poll respondents have yet to incorporate keywords into website content.

This means 29% of you are missing out on potential opportunities to attract the right customers and expand your business.

Think about how you get information of any kind.

Whether you need a mechanic or want to try out a new brekky spot, chances are you'll run a Google search using a keyword (“best mechanics in Brisbane” or “top 10 cafes in Melbourne”). If you do it, your customers do too – and if your website isn't optimised for keywords, it's a lot harder to effectively reach the right customers at the right time.

Poll.

Do you feature keywords on your website page?

YES: 71%

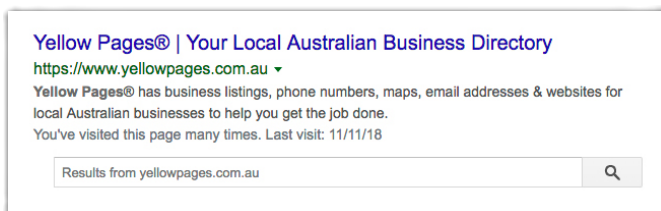
NO: 29%



If you don't feature keywords on your website...

...it's time to start! These simple tips will help with keyword research and integration for your business:

- Use research to figure out which relevant keywords your customers are using. You can do this via free tools like Google's [Keyword Planner](#) or [Ubersuggest](#).
- Incorporate these keywords naturally throughout your website content. It's important it doesn't look spammy, as search engines penalise websites who do this.
- Make sure you have a keyword-focused page title and meta description – this is the title and description that appears in Google results when you do a search. Most website builders allow you to customise this in a 'website SEO' tab. If you're using Wordpress, you can access this using the Yoast plugin.



An example of optimised metadata.

It's estimated Google processes approximately 70,000 search queries per second. That adds up to 5.8 billion searches per day, and 2 trillion per year.¹

If you do feature keywords on your website...

...that's great! Next, here's how to make your keywords work harder for your business:

- **Include long tail keywords in your planning.**
These are keywords that contain three or four phrases (or even more). Long tail keywords are easier to rank for because they're more specific to a location or specialised services that a business offers. For example, instead of "carpet cleaner", a long tail option could be "professional carpet cleaning tasmania".
- **Use keywords in your headings and format headings with header tags in order of importance.**
 - <H1> is your main heading and should contain your page's target keyword.
 - <H2> is a subheading and should contain keywords that are relevant to your <H1> tag
 - <H3> is for subheadings underneath your H2, or pull-out points.

Related: [Your SEO content checklist](#).

1. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/google-search-statistics>



Local matters.

“We are a small independent business that is up against the big stores (and their powerful pricing). There is a definite niche for our business within our local area, with our customer service – how do we get out to the right customers?”

– Specialist printer cartridge retail owner, Sutherland Shire

We hear you loud and clear. Almost every one of poll respondents believes local area marketing boosts your business. Whether you're a local florist, a family-owned law firm, or a tradie, your local community is an important source of revenue.

While your current local area marketing efforts might include offline campaigns, such as letterbox drops, partnerships with community groups or organisations and the like, local search is also vital to help put your business on the map in your area, especially when you're up against the big guns.

More customers are looking online to find what they want offline.

In the past two years alone, there's been a 500% increase in “near me” searches on Google (yes, you read that number correctly!). If you want to get out to the right customers at the right time, local SEO matters.

Poll.

Does local area marketing boost your business?

YES: 98%

NO: 2%

Tips to appear in local search.

Claim your [Google My Business](#) page. This provides Google with essential information about your business, including your address, contact details, and business category, so you show up when users conduct relevant searches in the area.

Get a [Yellow Online](#) listing. Listing a consistent business name, physical address and phone number on Australia's largest business directory is a critical ranking factor for local searches on Google³. On top of this, it's an extra source of traffic (and customers!) for your website. In fact you can click through to sign up for free listing on Yellow Online right [here](#).

Include local keywords in your planning.

With more customers searching for things “near me” or in a specific location, it's important to include these keywords throughout your website. For example: instead of “our expert lawyers are here to help” write “our expert lawyers in Wollongong are here to help”.

Related: [eBook: Stand out from the crowd with location marketing](#).

2. <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/near-me-searches>

3. <https://moz.com/local-search-ranking-factors>



SEO trends in 2019.

"We are a small company in the trade, aiming to grow in an extremely competitive market. Our team of technicians and admin staff have got all the knowledge and experience it takes to perform the tasks at hand, but we lack the necessary tools or knowledge to stand out and reach our target market base more effectively."

– TV aerial installation business owner, Brisbane, Caboolture and Sunshine Coast

Over two-thirds of poll respondents say it's important to be on the first page of a Google search. This comes as no surprise. After all, [75% of searchers](#) never look past the first page of results.

To help you get ahead in an extremely competitive market, here are some of the latest SEO trends.

Voice search is on the rise.

By 2020, half of all searches⁴ are predicted to be voice searches, which is a game-changer for SEO. The way people type in a search term and the way they say it is completely different.

Poll.

Is it important for your business to be on the first page of a Google search?

YES: 68%

NO: 32%

Rather than succinct and short keyword searches, voice search keywords are longer and more conversational: think "Who is the best TV aerial installer in Brisbane?" as opposed to "TV aerial installation Brisbane". Google also favours short and concise answers to these questions, rather than lengthy blog posts. The typical length of a voice search result is just 29 words⁵.

These keywords can be challenging to incorporate into your website, so you'll have to get creative. One of the ways to include voice search keywords is by having an FAQs section on relevant pages, where the keyword is included as a question. Another idea is creating blog content where you interview clients and use voice search keywords as part of the question.

4. <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/just-say-it-future-search-voice-personal-digital-assistants/1392459>

5. <https://backlinko.com/voice-search-seo-study>

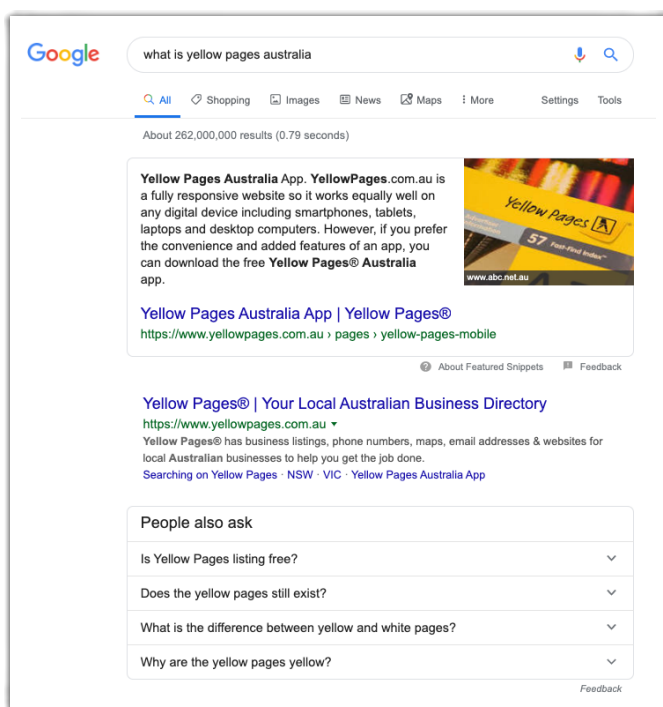


SEO trends in 2019.

Featured snippets are important.

Ranking first is important, but position #1 isn't the only spot you should aim for. Featured snippets – either in the form of paragraph text, video snippets or list/table snippets – are a valuable source of traffic.

They generally look like this:



While they've been around for a while, they're popping up more than ever. **A third of all searches** now return a featured snippet, and the number of featured snippets has **increased 328%** in less than five years. This also goes hand-in-hand with voice search: the first snippet is generally what Google Assistant will read out to answer your question.



What does this mean for you?

Firstly, on-site SEO is your best shot of appearing in featured snippets. On-site SEO refers to all the SEO actions you do on your site to improve your ranking, such as optimising content for keywords or creating posts for your blog. This is different from off-site SEO, which includes building links back to your website on other websites and business directories.

Optimising your content structure by creating list-form content (such as 'X ways to fix a leaking tap') also help improve your chances of appearing in featured snippets.



SEO trends in 2019.



E-A-T for content.

Unfortunately, this isn't a food-related acronym (sorry!). E-A-T stands for [Expertise, Authority and Trustworthiness](#).

In the past couple of years, these three factors have become increasingly important for Google when evaluating the quality of content and ranking it. However, it now extends beyond content into the realm of authorship. Essentially Google wants to know: who are you, and why should people listen to you?

This means as a business owner, you need to be building up your own profile and brand, as well as your business'. If you're creating blog content, each post should be accompanied either with an author box, an author profile,

or an [author schema markup](#) in your structured data. This last part requires a bit of technical know-how, so if you want to use schema markup on your website, we'd recommend enlisting the help of our SEO experts.

Finally, having a strong professional social media presence, such as on Twitter and LinkedIn, also helps. This is because Google looks at the authority of an author associated with a post. If your social media profile has a lot of followers and your posts are frequently shared, Google views you as more credible on that subject and will push your content higher in search results.

Related: [How to optimise your site for voice search in 2019](#).



What does it look like on mobile?

"We are young family owned small business looking to grow into the future, but we are caught behind the times and are now looking at marketing to expand our business to help our customers."

– **Construction company owner, Wollongong and Illawarra**

We love our phones. In fact, 88% of the population owning a smartphone⁶. We use them every day for every task, so it's great to see that almost all of you believe it's important to have a mobile-friendly website.

But is your website doing enough to reach customers searching on the small screen?

As we move into 2020, building a great mobile experience is more important than ever if you want your website to be discovered by customers online.

Poll.

Is it important to have a website that is mobile phone friendly?

YES: 91%

NO: 9%

⁶. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6422909>



Essential facts about mobile.



27.4% of purchases in Australia were made on mobile devices in 2018. **Up 28.8% year on year**⁷



53% of consumers will leave a mobile site that takes longer than 3 seconds to load⁸



On average, **84% of Australian consumers** do pre-purchase research online using their smartphone⁸

If this wasn't enough, Google has a mobile-first approach, predominantly using the mobile version of your website to answer user searches.

How to check if your web design is optimised for mobile.

- Use Google's [mobile-friendly test](#) to see how they rank the mobile friendliness of your website.
- Check [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#) to see how your site stacks up.
- Get your free [Digital Check Up Report](#) at yellow.com.au

Mobile searches and transactions are growing at a phenomenal rate. If you're looking to upgrade your website design for mobile, now's the right time to do it.

7. https://auspost.com.au/content/dam/auspost_corp/media/documents/inside-australian-online-shopping-e-commerce-report.pdf

8. <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-aunz/advertising-channels/mobile/masters-mobile-2018-australia-new-zealand/>



How SEO has made a difference.

“Keep your internet exposure updated with news and special offers...(and) work with a proven team to ensure you have the best SEO for your advertising budget.”

– Bright Self Storage, Ferntree Gully, VIC

For Bright Self Storage, a family-owned storage unit company in Ferntree Gully, SEO is crucial to reach customers in the local area.

With more competitors entering the market and 80% of customers living in a 5km radius, ranking on the first page of Google has a huge impact on their business.

“Historically most people want a store close to where they live or near where they will be living, so having a strong local marketing presence is extremely important,” says Rick Colasacco, Site Manager. “Being on the first page gives us the edge when trying to secure new customers.”

Prior to working with Yellow’s team, Bright Self Storage had only taken minimal actions to improve their SEO, including developing a mobile-friendly website. They needed help getting more bang for their SEO advertising buck. When choosing who to work with, Bright Self Storage said it was an easy decision. With a long-established relationship, Rick trusted Yellow’s team to get the job done.

The biggest change that Yellow and Bright Self Storage made was to incorporate location-based keywords throughout the website. “We are concentrating on enhancing our local marketing by targeting suburbs in our vicinity that we see potential customers for our business,” says Rick.



The Yellow team also worked with Bright Self Storage to optimise their website in line with the latest on-site SEO best practices through tasks like optimising on-site landing page copy and blog article production.

Just four months into implementing their SEO campaign with Yellow, we’re excited to share that Bright Self Storage have already seen a huge improvement to their website traffic and SEO.

68% of their website traffic now comes organically from Google’s search results, with the majority of this traffic (80%) being new visitors. Ultimately, what’s important is that Bright Self Storage are also getting tangible business results from their SEO campaign.

“By improving our SEO, we’ve benefited from increased awareness of our facility and business offerings, and increased enquiry traffic which gives us the opportunity to make a sale,” says Rick.

When asked what advice he’d give to other locally-owned businesses looking to improve their SEO, Rick says it’s important to keep things fresh and choose the right partner for the best SEO results.



Tool-Kit resources.

"We are a couple of old tradies working in our business but not working on our business as well."

– Signage company owner, Yarra

While most of poll respondents say SEO is on your radar, it's not always easy to turn theory into practice. For more tips on improving your website's SEO, take a look at these Yellow resources:

- [SEO boosting backlinks – the what, the why, and how to get them for free.](#) This post looks at link building, with tips to help you get more links back to your website in an affordable way.
- [eBook: Location Marketing.](#) Our free eBook explores how you can stand out from the crowd and connect with your customers using local search.
- [Your SEO content checklist.](#) Want to know if your website plays by Google's current rules? This checklist will help you optimise your content for SEO.



While there are plenty of SEO practices that you can implement yourself, there's also some technical aspects that you may need help with. From link building to fresh content, Yellow's team of experts can take care of this for you. For details click for a [call back](#), visit our [website](#) or call [1800 661 850](#).