

Cheat-Sheet Summary of Local U Advanced Virtual Presentation (Nov 2, 2022): Tanking Local Rankings? How to Turn Them Around If They've Gone Down

Principles:

1. Don't try to understand everything. Form a rough theory, think of what might confirm it, test it out, and always have one more thing in your back pocket to try.
2. Focus analysis and fact-finding on Google Search Console (GSC) data.
3. Keep clear logs of work. Record-keeping makes troubleshooting WAY easier.
4. Waiting is valuable. Don't always make a change right away, or make changes at all.

Troubleshooting techniques

1. Make certain your GSC installation isn't broken. Easy explanation of flat-lined search traffic / impressions.
2. Identify which specific pages dropped: go to GSC > Performance > Pages. Some pages are probably doing fine; no need to reevaluate the whole site. Fallen pages may correspond to Google Business Profile (GBP) / Maps drops, too.
3. Filter out your impressions and clicks for your big brand-name and educational terms: go to GSC > Performance > Queries > "+" [to create filter].
4. Test your theory on an unrelated business, less-important location, or side hustle, if you can.
5. For GBP / Maps drops, try using your homepage as the landing page URL (if you're not already).
6. For competitive analysis following a GBP / Maps drop, compare your landing page URL to your top-ranked competitors'. What does each do on that one page that you're not doing?
7. Check in your building and very nearby for competitors in the same industry as yours. If they're showing up and you aren't, you probably haven't "messed up": just keep hammering at the basics of your SEO strategy.
8. Look nearby for any new GBP spammers, and let the "suggest an edit" spam reports fly.
9. Consider showing your street address on your GBP page.
10. Consider a rebrand, especially if your name is generic and competitors' names also are generic.
11. Spread out your GBP pages, if they're mashed together in a small part of your service area.
12. Create "practitioner" or "department" GBP pages (when applicable). Focus each on a given specialty, and create and use a well-optimized "bio" or "department" landing page for each.
13. Sprinkle high-priority search terms that dropped onto relevant pages that still rank fine.
14. Load up the homepage with content on high-priority services (or products, treatments, practice areas, etc.) and with a detailed service area. Assume (for a moment) that your subpages will not rank.
15. Make sure no title tags or significant chunks of content have been wiped out or cut down significantly.
16. Look for good inbound links you've lost and resurrect them if you can. Ahrefs helps here.
17. Go HEAVY on internal links on all pages you care about and especially on top priorities.
18. For pages that rank modestly for the same term(s) keep one and 301-redirect the other to it.

Further reading:

1. [Local Search Rankings Dropped? Follow These 10 Most-Useful Troubleshooting SOPs](#)
2. [Top 10 Ways Local Business Owners Botch the All-Important Homepage, and How You Can Get Yours Right](#)
3. [How Can You Tell a Competitor Does Effective Local SEO?](#)
4. [Odd Relationships in Local Search](#)
5. [Thin Local Rankings: Why and How to Think Thick, Not High](#)
6. [Local SEO Fairy Tale: No Problems = Good Rankings](#)
7. [One-Time Work vs. Ongoing Work in Local SEO](#)