

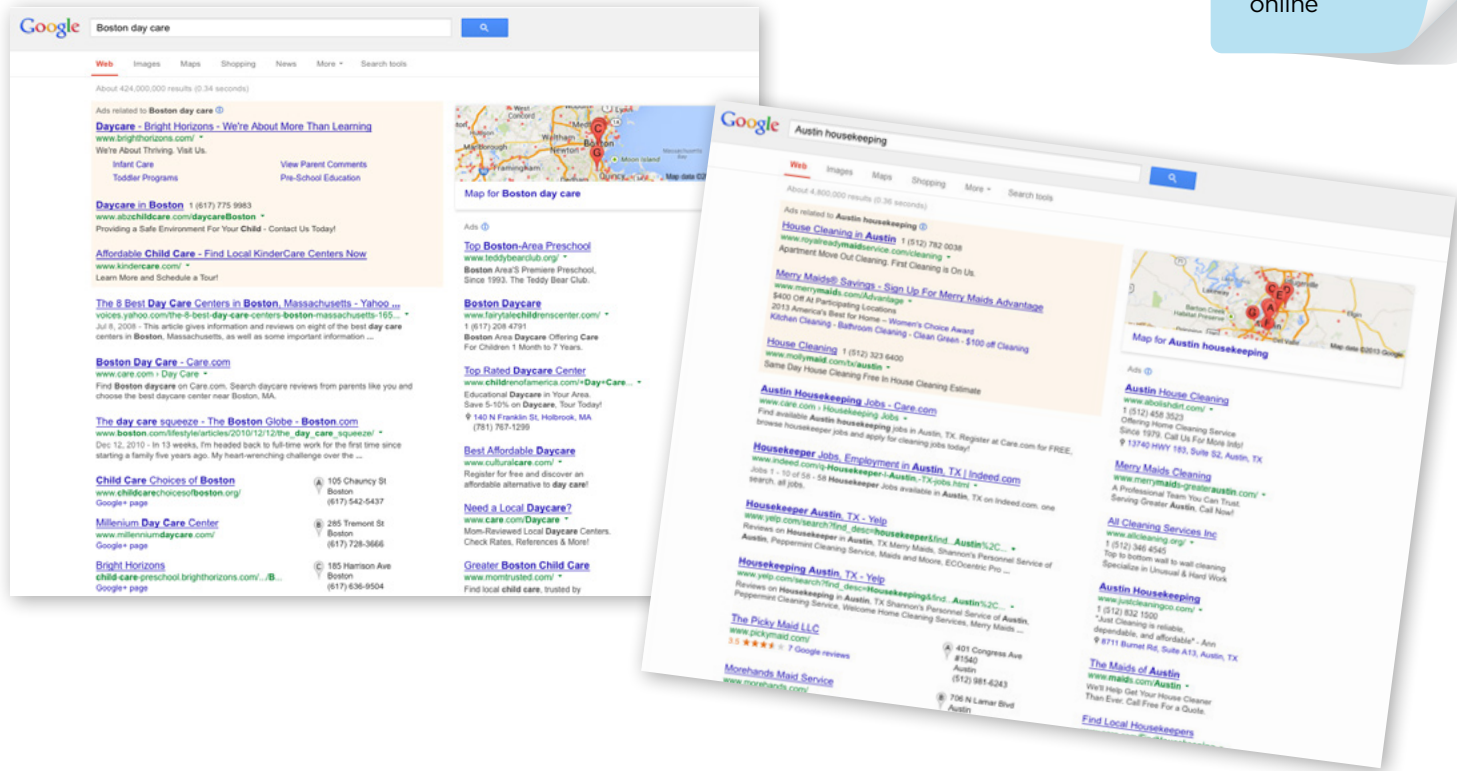


A 5-step guide for marketing your care business.

Maximize your online presence

In today's world, finding a business that fits your needs is usually just a few keystrokes away. In fact, **85% of consumers have searched for local businesses online within the past year.**¹ But when you're the business and you want people to find you, it's a little trickier. Now families, especially moms, are doing a great deal of online research when looking for care services.

85%
of consumers have searched for local businesses online



Every day, there are thousands of searches performed in Google that relate to care services²—searches like “Boston day care” or “Austin housekeeping”. Whether you run a childcare center, senior care, housekeeping or pet care business, you want to be sure to shine through the clutter.

Your online presence—from your website to your online listings—is an essential business and marketing tool. The following guidebook includes 5 steps you should take to get the most from your online presence, and connect more effectively with families looking for your service.

1 Search Engine Land, Local Consumer Review Survey, 2012
2 Google AdWords, Keyword Planner

Help families find you in 5 easy steps.

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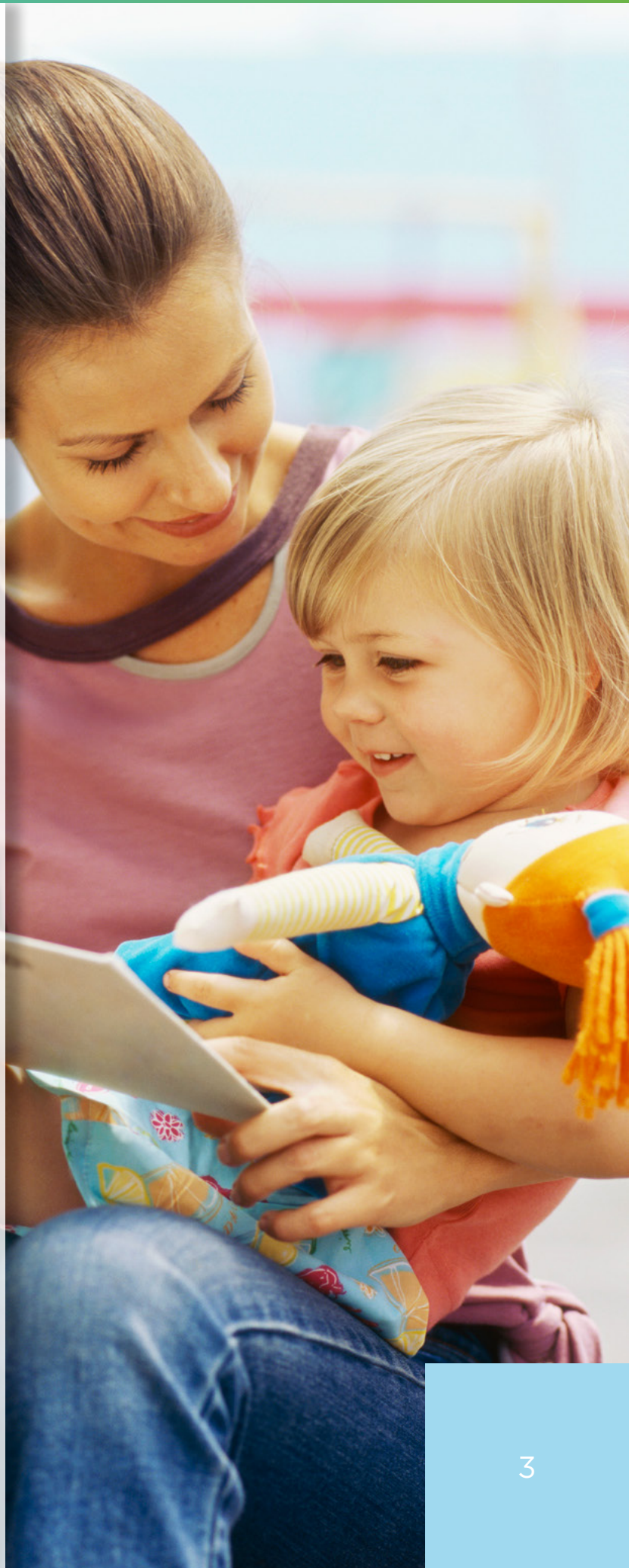
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No matter what online method you use, you want it to reflect the core of your business and your commitment to your customers.



Step 1:

Create a unique business description

Your business is different from any other, so you want your online presence to reflect that. Whether families see your business description on your website, or on Facebook, Google or Care.com, their first introduction to you should catch their attention right away. 70% of people who search for businesses online will conduct a local search to find an offline business,³ meaning, they initially search for the kind of business they want in the city in which they live.

Think of your online presence as your virtual storefront, and customers as window shoppers. To best position your services through your business description, do the following:

- Clearly display your name, address and contact information in the headline
- Explain exactly what your business can do for potential customers
- Convince your audience why your business is unique

Taking a few extra minutes to polish up your profile can bring in new customers. Here's how to do it:

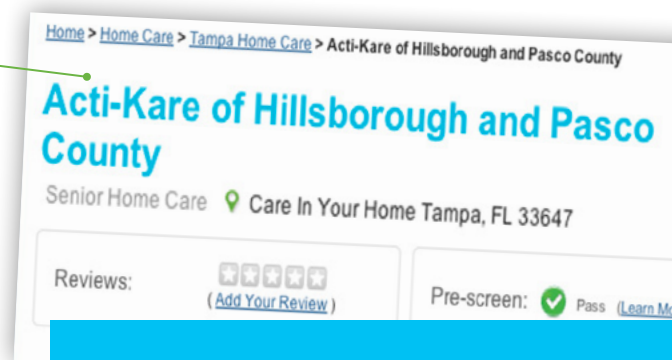
Capture attention with clear headlines

Establishing who and where you are right away is crucial to engaging new customers. In your business description headline, you should prominently display your business name, neighborhood or town, and how customers can reach you.

If you don't have a formal business name, you can simply use your name and the city you serve. Clearly listing your name, address and contact information reduces customers' confusion, so they know exactly what they are looking at. Confused visitors will just click off the page.

70%

of people who search for businesses online will conduct a local search to find an offline business



“ At Acti-Kare we recognize the value of every part of your family. We are committed to becoming the nation's premier provider of Family In-Home Care. We demonstrate this by providing outstanding service. We understand that it's not just spending time with you or your family member that counts. It's spending quality time...”

~ Acti-Kare Care.com profile

³ Search Engine Land, Local Consumer Review Survey, 2012

Include the essentials

Customers who search for companies online want information quickly. They don't have a lot of time, and they don't want to dig for your contact information, hours or your prices. **Studies have found that the business address and phone number remain the primary pieces of information consumers seek when they perform a local search.**⁴ However, half of small businesses never update their listings online⁵—giving you the opportunity to capture the interest they are losing out on.

What essential details should you include?

- Year your business started
- Payment you accept (cash, credit, check, PayPal)
- License or certification information
- Current hours of operation, including holidays and weekends
- Prices/Promotions



Use unique content

The description of your business is what is going to make you stand out from the competition, so make it as clear and as detailed as possible. This will increase the chances that you will show up when potential consumers are using search engines to research care services. Studies show that consumers use search engines more than any other online activity, but 58% don't even look past the first page of search results.⁶ Thus, getting to the top of results is key and the way to do it is with strong, unique content. Even Google says, **“one of the most important steps in improving your site's ranking in Google search results is to ensure that it contains plenty of rich information.”**⁷

“ All of Fetch! Pet Care's experienced sitters are background checked, bonded, and insured pet lovers. We provide you with peace of mind in knowing you are leaving your pet and home in the most capable, loving hands. ”

- Fetch! Care.com profile

4 Localeze/15 miles, “Local Search Usage Study,” conducted by comScore, 2012

5 Search Engine Land, Survey: Half Of Small Businesses Never Update Their Listings Online, 2013

6 Google BabyCenter OTX Moms Survey, “The Four Truths About Moms and Search,” November 2009

7 Google Webmaster Tools, “Little or No Original Content,” 2013

To help you build the perfect profile, we put together a few simple tips:

Keep it short

Think of how you might explain your business to a customer and start with that. You want to be short and to the point. And make sure you proofread it. Grammatical or spelling errors turn people off!



Stand out

For starters, sing your own praises! Are you accredited by a professional organization? Have you won awards for your services? Are you on a “best of” list? These accolades will likely impress potential customers and hook them into reading more about your business.



Show how you're different

Tell people what makes you so good at what you do. People want to know your background, and that you are an expert in whatever service you provide. Why did you get into the business? Do you offer extended hours, expert staff or a structured curriculum? Are you known as the dog whisperer in your neighborhood? All of these things are important to potential customers.



Get personal

You can be professional and still connect with families emotionally. This is incredibly important for those looking for care for their families, home or pets. They want to hear your story, and it will help families understand why you are the best fit for their loved ones.



Be descriptive

It may sound simple, but using keywords in your description will make a difference in how many views you get. Make sure you include keywords that you believe families are using when searching online for the services you offer.



Step 2: Use photos that resonate

Logos and photographs tell others all about your business with just a glance—much faster than any words. Even if your content is excellent, it won't help your business if no one sticks around to read it. In a recent poll, 60% of consumers said they were more likely to give more consideration to and/or contact a business whose business listings contained images.⁸

You don't need to be a professional photographer, but when including photos on your website, Care.com profile or Facebook page, be sure images are clear and descriptive. Here are some tips on how to pull a viewer in:

60%

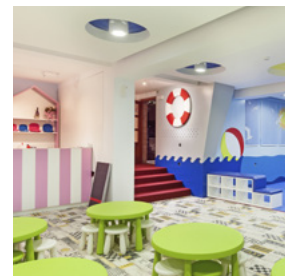
of consumers said they were more likely to give more consideration to and/or contact a business whose listings contained images.

What kinds of pictures are best?

- Ones that show you in action—caring for happy kids, helping seniors or grooming pets
- Pictures of your staff/team
- Images of your clean and organized facility or the supplies you may use
- A professional-looking headshot wearing plain, neat clothes

What should you avoid?

- Casual images not related to your business, like a picture of you on vacation, for example
- Pictures of you with too much jewelry or makeup or anything that makes it hard to see your face
- Pictures of you in super-casual clothes like torn shorts or a low-cut shirt
- Avoid “selfies”—have someone snap a quick photo of you instead. Think yearbook-style photo!
- Anything that doesn't make you look trustworthy or experienced



⁸ Bright Local Survey Results, posted on Bright Local blog by Myles Anderson, April 12, 2011

Step 3: Start the conversation

Your online presence is a great tool to bring families to your site, but that's just the beginning. *An essential step is beginning an authentic, personal conversation with families who are interested in your services.* Communicating online isn't much different from how you might talk to people in person, but it takes some getting used to.

When people look for services online, they want you to be approachable and considerate. They want to know how you can help them, not the person in the next town. Your response can show them that you can make their lives easier! Here are a few things to remember when communicating with families online:

“Communication works for those who work at it.”

~ John Powell

Be prompt

When someone sends you a request, answer them as quickly as possible and at least within 24 hours. They are trying to decide if you are dependable and answering their inquiries quickly shows you are.

Be professional

Any time you communicate with customers online, you should use a professional writing style. Don't abbreviate like you were writing a text and make sure you address the customer by name. You don't have to be very formal, but a "Hi Jane" is a nice way to start. Make sure your spelling is error free and that you use correct punctuation. Messy language and a too-casual style can make a customer look somewhere else.

Be authentic

When you reply to a job post, take a few extra minutes and customize your reply to each family's specific needs. Tell them about any relevant experience you have and why it would make you such a great fit with their family. Tell the family looking for care for their triplets how you worked with multiples in your last job. A Great Dane owner wants to hear how you have experience walking large dogs. This takes a little extra time, but the business it brings in will make it worthwhile.

On Care.com, businesses are able to reply to families who post jobs looking for caregivers. Here are a few examples of how you might reply to a job posting:

The posting: Searching for overnight care for my 80-year-old dad who needs help with some activities of daily living.

Your reply: Dear Dave, I saw your posting and thought you might want to know my experience and how I could help. For 5 years, I worked with 3 families offering occasional overnight respite care for their loved ones. Check out their reviews on my profile and see if we would make a good fit.



The posting: Need help caring for 1-year-old twins in my home or yours.

Your reply: Dear Sandy, I saw your posting about caring for your twins. I have been caring for 4-year-old twins at my in-home daycare since they were infants. We offer loving care to two other children during the day and especially enjoy the unique bond twins bring to the day! Please check out my profile and if you want to chat further, please message me.



The posting: Looking for someone to walk my 80-lb dog during the day. He 's big but very gentle.

Your reply: Dear Sarah, I saw your dog walker posting for your big dog. I want you to know I am especially familiar with caring for big dogs as my own dog is a 90-pound lab. I know how to handle big dogs on a leash and know how much happier big dogs are when they are walked regularly.



The posting: Searching for the magic fairy of housecleaning to keep my house sparkling.

Your reply: Dear Ben, You wished and the fairy appeared! I have been keeping houses clean and shiny for five years and know my experience and references will help keep your house as clean as you want without the time and effort! I think clean houses are restful, so let me worry about the work and you can come home to a relaxing environment.



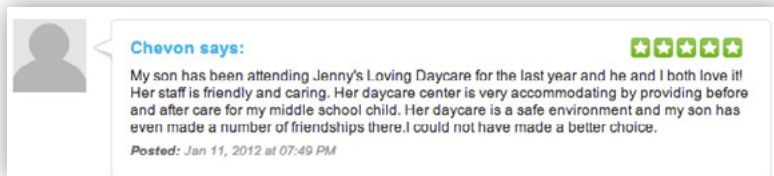
Families appreciate when you make the extra effort to show them why you are a good candidate for their job. Always make a good impression—one that shows you have thought about how you would be able to help them.

Step 4: Get customers to give you great reviews

71%

of online consumers
read reviews before
making a purchase.

When you book a trip, do you check out what others say about the hotel? Do you like to try out new restaurants based on the good words of other customers? Anyone looking for your service is going to want to hear others sing your praises!



Reviews are one of the most important ways you can build trust with potential customers and make your business stand out. They help people understand how your business can help them and why you would be the best provider for their family. According to Forrester Research, 71 percent of online consumers read reviews before making a purchase.⁹

1. If you have a website, make sure you have a section for feedback, and link to where customers can review your services on other reputable websites.
2. Print out review forms or cards that can be handed out to customers. Make sure to include links to where customers can review you.
3. Use an email template to ask your current customers and families to write a review. A typical review is only a few sentences and will give potential customers an idea of why others like you.



Dear <First Name>,

We recently became part of the Care.com community. Their mission is to help families find the care resources they need by connecting them with trustworthy, high quality care-related service companies like ours.

We have found online reviews to be a wonderful way of introducing new customers to our services. And we can't think of a better person to review us than you, one of our most valued, loyal customers.

Your review can be short and sweet - it should only take a few minutes. You can review my business on Care.com at: www.care.com/DailyDaycare-Boston

Thank you for your continued support of my business.

Best Regards,
<Your Name>
<Your Company>
<Your Business Address & Phone Number>

⁹ Dex One Blog, How to Ask for Reviews and Attract Customers, June 8, 2012

Step 5:

Use sharing to your advantage

You can become an online force by using all the tools at your disposal to increase your presence. Social media is great for communication, but it's also an excellent business tool. You may not be a Facebook user and you may not even know a tweet from an email, but your customers probably do!

Social media sites offer easy and often free options for more families to hear about and find your business. All the likes, shares and tweets you get for your business show that others approve of you and your services. The best part is, you can bring social media to you! Social media no longer lives only on Facebook or Twitter. Now, families can like pages of your website, or even profile pages on Care.com or LinkedIn. **The key is to ask friends, families and customers to spread the word.**



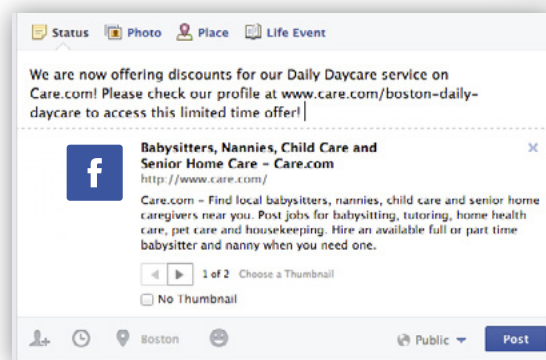
Here's how:

- Share your profiles with friends, family and customers and request that they 'like' your page
- If you have a Facebook page or Twitter account, request that people share, tweet and like your comments when you post
- Print business cards or hand-outs that include links to important profiles and social pages—give these to customers in person!

Each time a customer likes your profile or tweets it out, it puts your profile in front of that many more people. Those people in turn, will hear of your business or check it out, increasing your potential customer base enormously. Asking people to share or like your profile is a solid marketing strategy.



On Twitter saying,
“Please retweet”
gets 4x more retweets than
not asking!¹⁰



10 New Facebook Data Proves Social CTAs Lead to More Comments, Likes & Shares [INFOGRAPHIC] 2012

Watch Your Business Grow!

With little time or money, you can bring in lots of business with a strong and professional online presence. You don't have to pay a professional to get you started—all it takes is a little attention to detail and learning how to use all the tools at your disposal through online sites like Care.com or social media sites.

Your polished and professional online presence, complete with great photos and full of all the information your customers want and need, can boost your business by introducing you to more people in a shorter amount of time than just about any other marketing plan.



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