The Implementation of SEO for Local Businesses – an Analyses of Event Locations in Berlin

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of the internet has made search engines an integral part of online navigation. Google, the dominant player in this arena, holds substantial influence over user preferences (Rabe 2023). Securing a high ranking on Google's search results is a coveted advantage for companies, especially regarding the high competition (Erlhofer 2023). This paper delves into the realm of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), specifically tailored to the unique needs of event locations in Berlin. Despite the critical role of SEO in online marketing, there is a noticeable gap in research focusing on its application for the business of event locations (Setiawan et al. 2022, Wiedmann 2018, Zanger and Drengner 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the paramount importance of a robust online presence for event locations. The shift to online and hybrid formats during the crisis underscored the significance of having a well-optimized website (Madray 2020, Zanger 2022). Even post-pandemic, the prevalence of online and hybrid events persists, necessitating effective online marketing strategies. Traditional offline advertising methods are limited in their reach, making online marketing, particularly SEO, a vital component for event locations to attract both local and international audiences (Werner et al. 2022, Zanger 2023).

Understanding Google's ranking algorithm is fundamental to effective SEO. The algorithm considers over 200 components which are not specifically communicated directly by the company (Alpar et al. 2015). These can be broadly categorized into on-page and off-page factors. On-page factors involve content relevance, user-friendliness, and adherence to Google's "Core Web Vitals." Off-page factors, such as backlinks from reputable sources, contribute to a website's credibility. Personalization, incorporating user data and behavior, further refines search results (Erlhofer 2023). Basically Google uses the self-developed E-E-A-T principle (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) when assessing the quality of a website (Google 2023).

The study employs a three-step approach: website selection, SEO scorecard preparation, and result evaluation with SEO experts. The websites of event locations in Berlin used were filtered via the online directory "Eventinc", whereby the selected filter criteria

guarantee comparability of the websites. The self-developed SEO scorecard, incorporating key on-page and off-page factors, is used for evaluation. Experts from the field of SEO and event locations provide insights through interviews, shedding light on the causes of inadequate SEO implementation and the perceived relevance of SEO compared to other marketing elements. The analysis of 33 event location websites in Berlin reveals a suboptimal implementation of SEO practices. The majority have a very poor to mediocre result, indicating room for improvement. The Google Business Profile emerges as the best-optimized area, while the internal link structure lags. Common errors include improper keyword usage, a lack of breadcrumbs, and formatting issues in headlines. The consensus among the experts is that a lack of focus on the topic and a shortage of personnel resources contribute to poor SEO implementation (Franke 2023, Raaf 2023, Riechert 2023).

Despite the acknowledged importance of SEO in digital marketing, event locations in Berlin exhibit a trend of insufficient implementation. A lot of different factors, especially the prioritization of other marketing elements, contribute to this gap. Recommendations for better implementation include a collaborative approach between developers and SEO experts during website design, prioritizing SEO as a core marketing element, and increasing knowledge of the powerful tool in the companies (Franke 2023, Raaf 2023, Riechert 2023). The findings provide valuable insights for event locations and other businesses aiming to enhance their online visibility and engagement. Further research avenues could explore a broader scope, considering national or global analyses and delving into additional SEO criteria and tools. The study serves as a call to action for event locations to embrace SEO as a key driver of online success in the evolving digital area.

Keywords

SEO Eventlocations, Online Marketing Eventlocations, SEO Local Businesses, Local SEO

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Presented at

The Art and Science of Managing Performance" symposium, held on February 29th 2024, co-organized by Ascencia Center for Applied Business & Management Research (CABMR - France) and Gisma University for Applied Sciences (Germany), in collaboration with the Association for University Business & Economic Research (AUBER, United States).

Hosting institution

Ascencia Business School, Collège de Paris, International Campus, Paris - La Défense.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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