

THE IMPORTANCE OF
LOCAL CITATIONS
FOR YOUR BUSINESS



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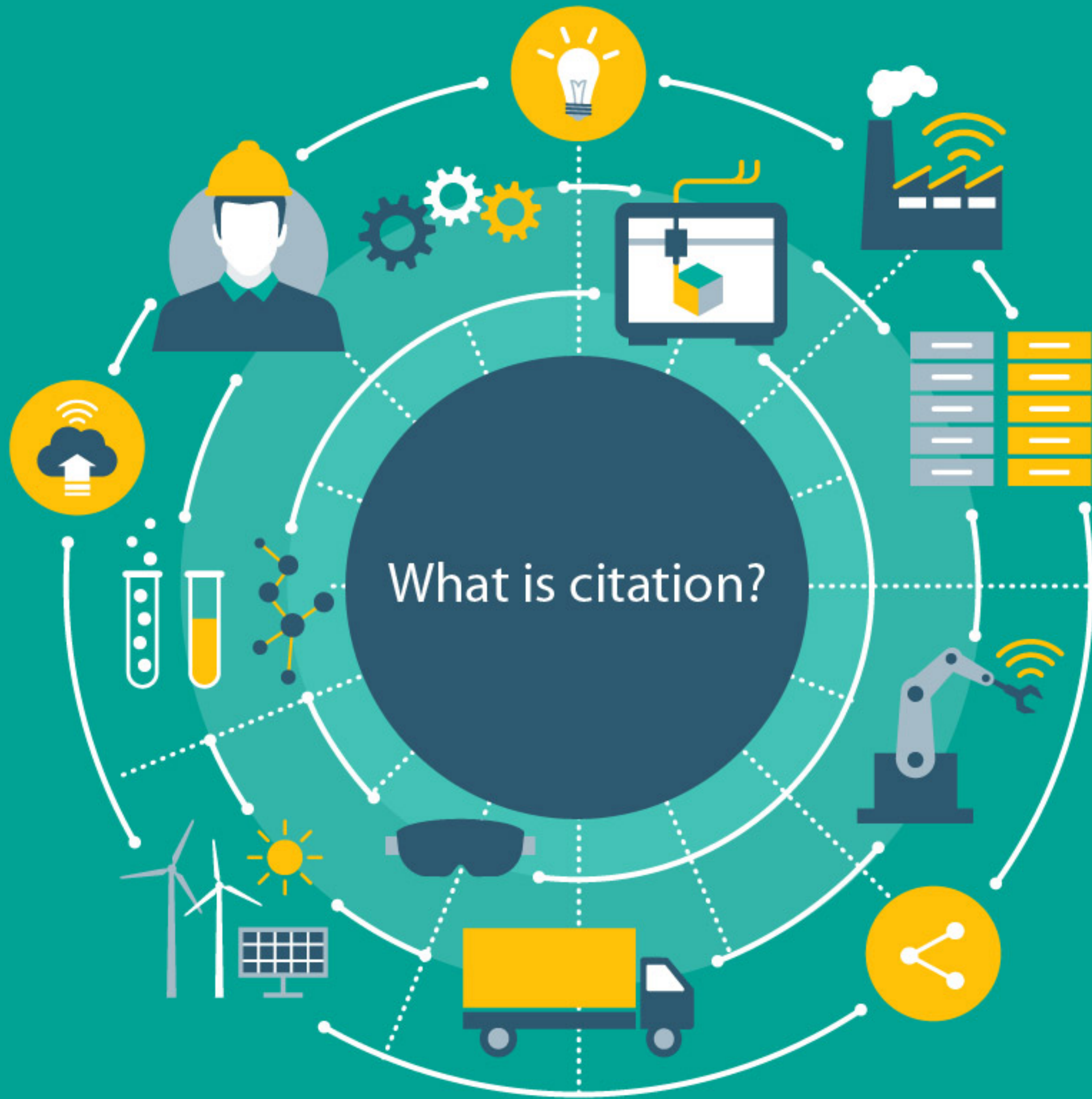


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What is citation?

You have a business, but the Internet does not know about it. To save yourself from being left behind, you need to learn about local citation.

Citation is nothing but mentioning your business to people on the web. It can be in different forms that are created with combinations of your practice name, business phone number and address with postal code and website link.

A typical citation is comprised of your NAP, i.e. it includes your practice/business Name, Address and Phone number. The information in citations can be presented vertically or horizontally. A partial citation is one that does not include a complete NAP.

Remember, your NAP should be exactly the same as on your Google My Business page or your website. Here, the website link is not mandatory. A citation holds the same value even without a link.

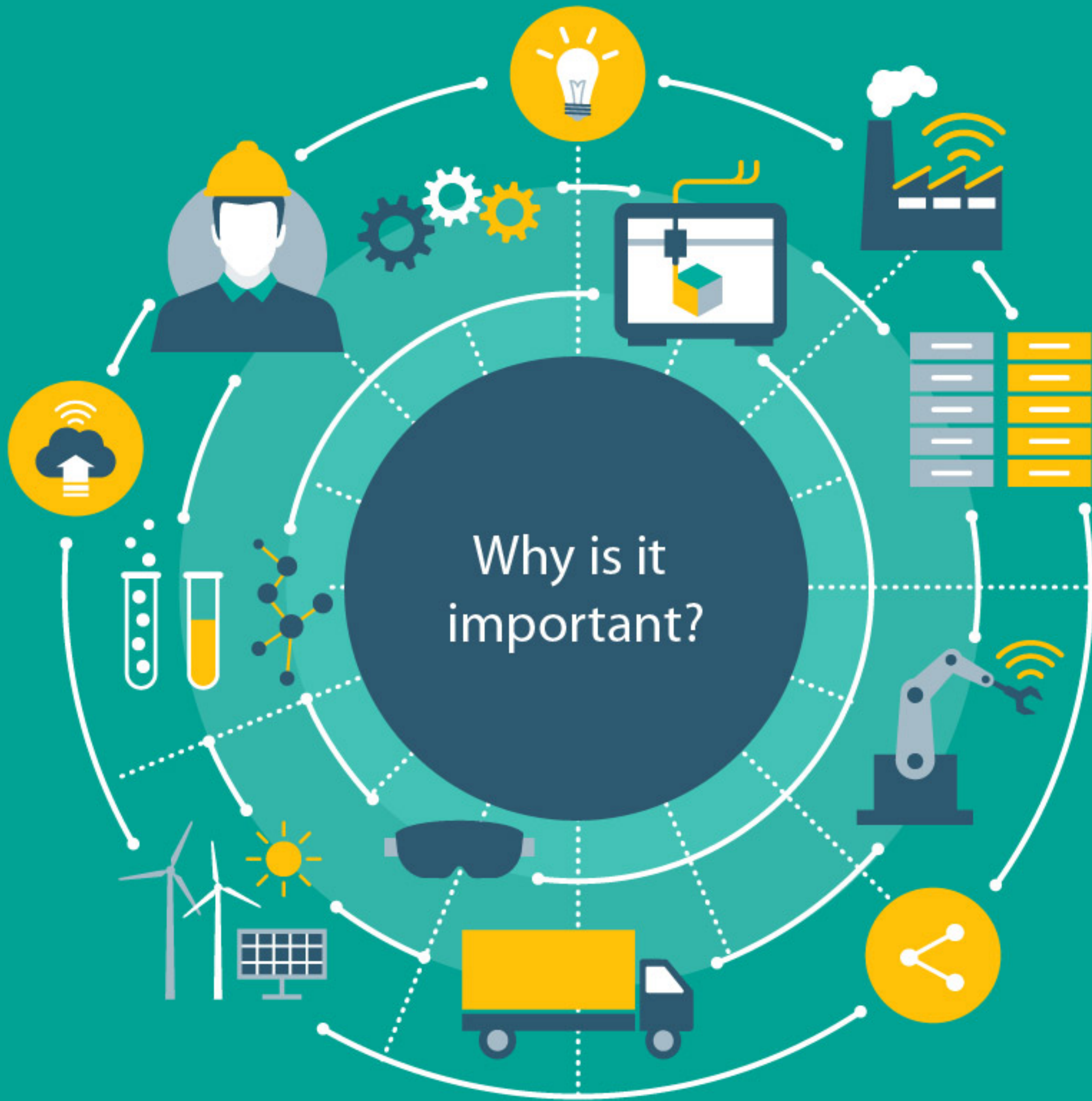


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Why is it important?

In terms of SEO, citation helps you achieve a higher ranking in local search results. With this, Google identifies the presence of your business and evaluates its online authority. Google also offers credit for including NAP info. Citations help Google decide the order of ranking in local search results. The more mentions you have for your practice on websites related to location or practice-related topics, the higher you will rank in Google search. For SEO, local citation comes even before a website or a social media profile page.

Also, the details of citation are used for verification in local business listings. So any falsified detail can question your reliability and affect the search results. The need for citation can be mostly classified in three points:



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Why is it important?

Trust: The appearance on Google search and local ranking is highly influenced by the presence on the web, i.e. mentioning your practice on local websites is the declaration of your practice's legitimacy.

Importance: Of the top factors influencing [local search ranking](#), citation holds approximately 13%. This is sure to make your business more popular.

Marketing tool: It informs a larger crowd about your services, and people can find you online through multiple ways, and you are likely to be contacted by more people.



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Why is it important?

To gain advantage from local citations, you first need to set up, claim and optimize the Google+ Local Business Page.

Other citation sources include:

- Press releases
- Articles and guest post bylines
- Question and answer sites
- Image and video descriptions
- Profile pages
- Forum signatures



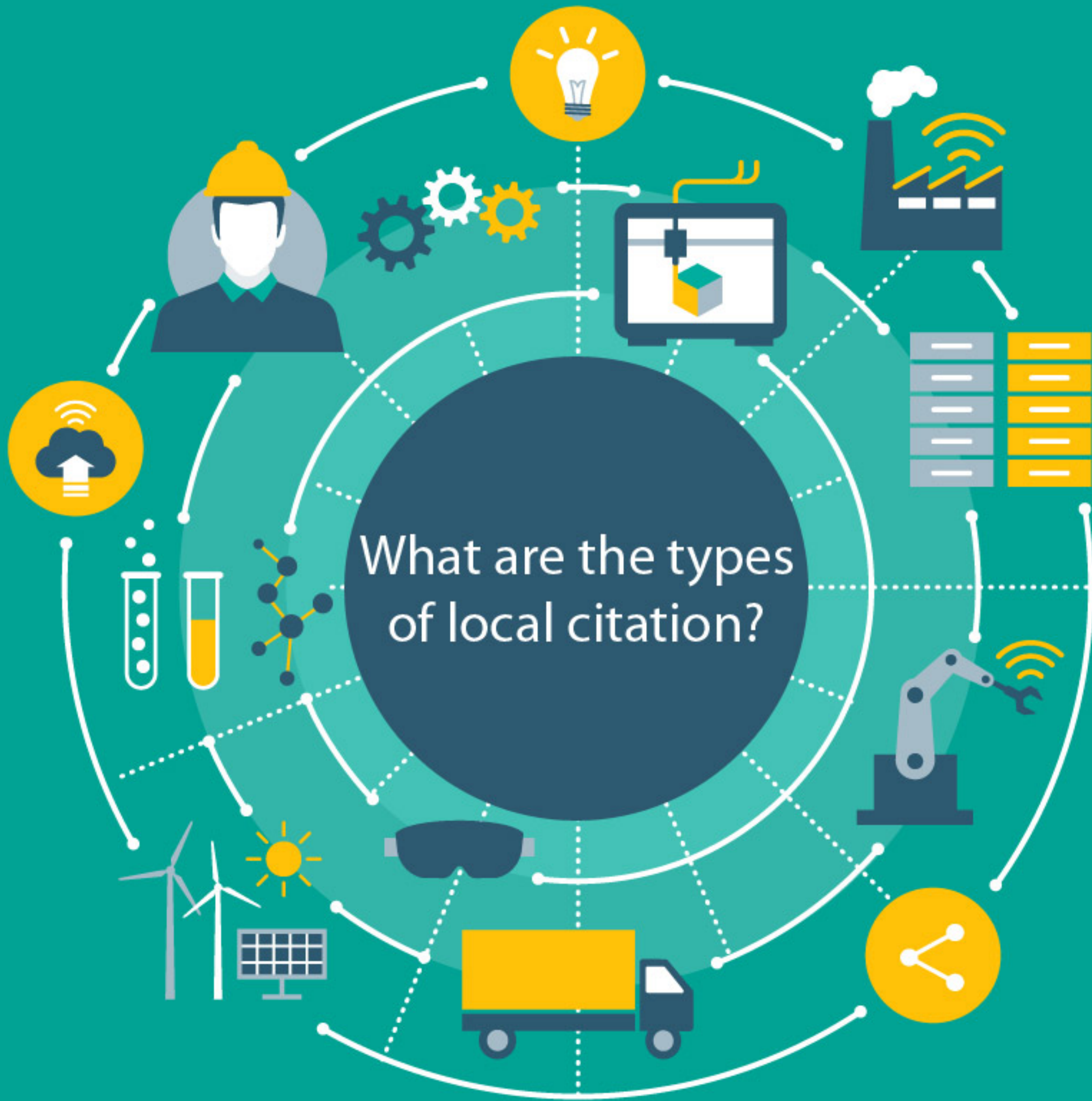
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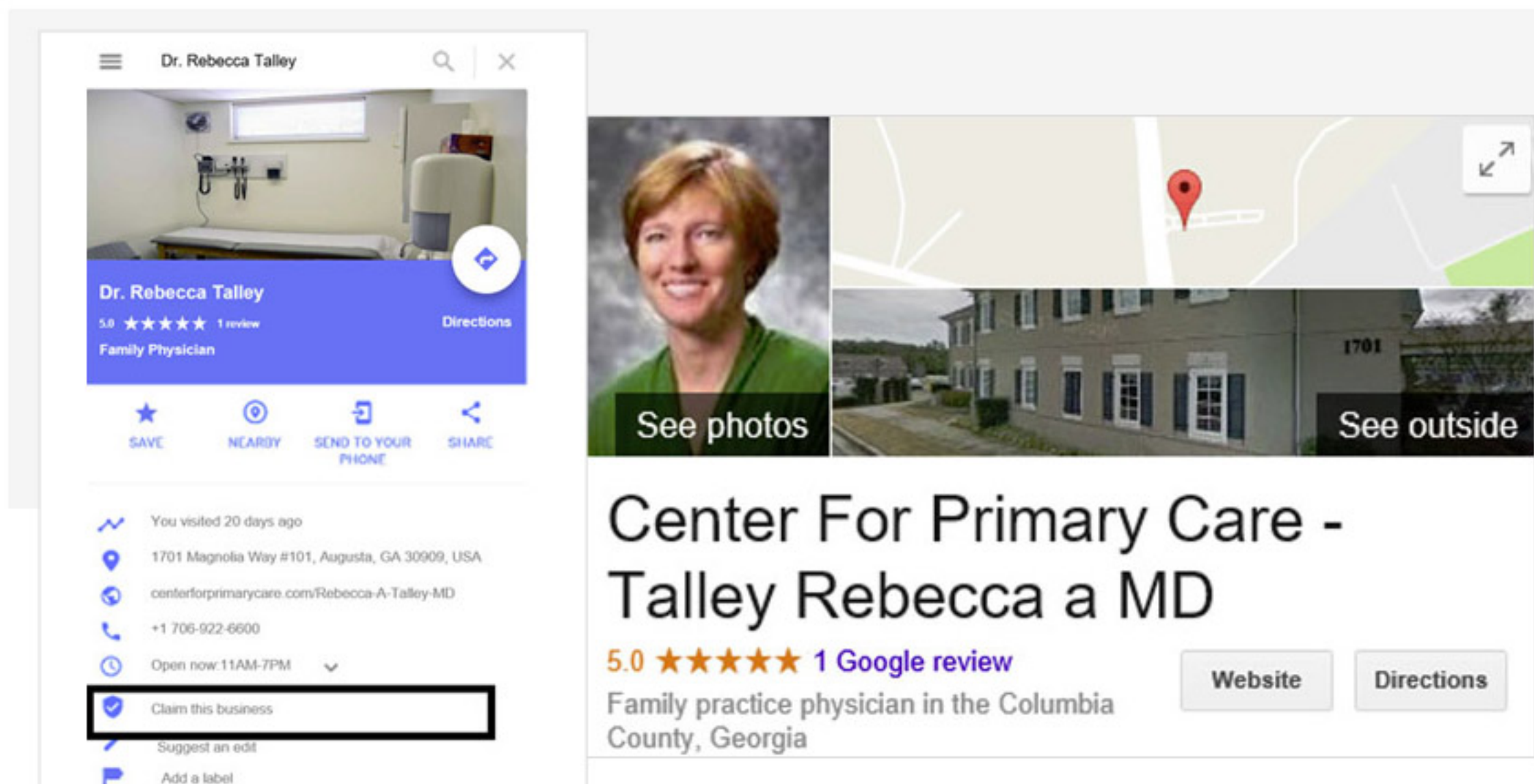




What are the types of local citation?

Local citation is classified into two types: structured and unstructured citation. Let's understand them in detail.

Structured citation: This means getting your services on a business listing directory. Structured citation sites are business listing directories where you submit your NAP to get a citation. Some structured citation sites include Yellow Pages, Yelp, Facebook, etc.



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What are the types of local citation?

Unstructured citation: This is posting your NAP on any local site, apart from the business listing site. Wikipedia, blog sites and book/newspaper sites, etc. are unstructured citation sites.

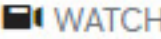
You can select any format for your citation but need to maintain consistency.

The oysters aren't as cheap after 5 p.m. (50 to 75 cents off), but some good deals are available if you steer away from the mainstream favorites. Effingham Inlet oysters from British Columbia, plump and briny, are the best deal. Also good: sweet and musky Barron Point and some creamy Eagle Rock oysters.

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Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call at +1 706-
922-6600 to schedule appointment

Tan Vinh: 206-515-5656 or tvinh@seattletimes.com

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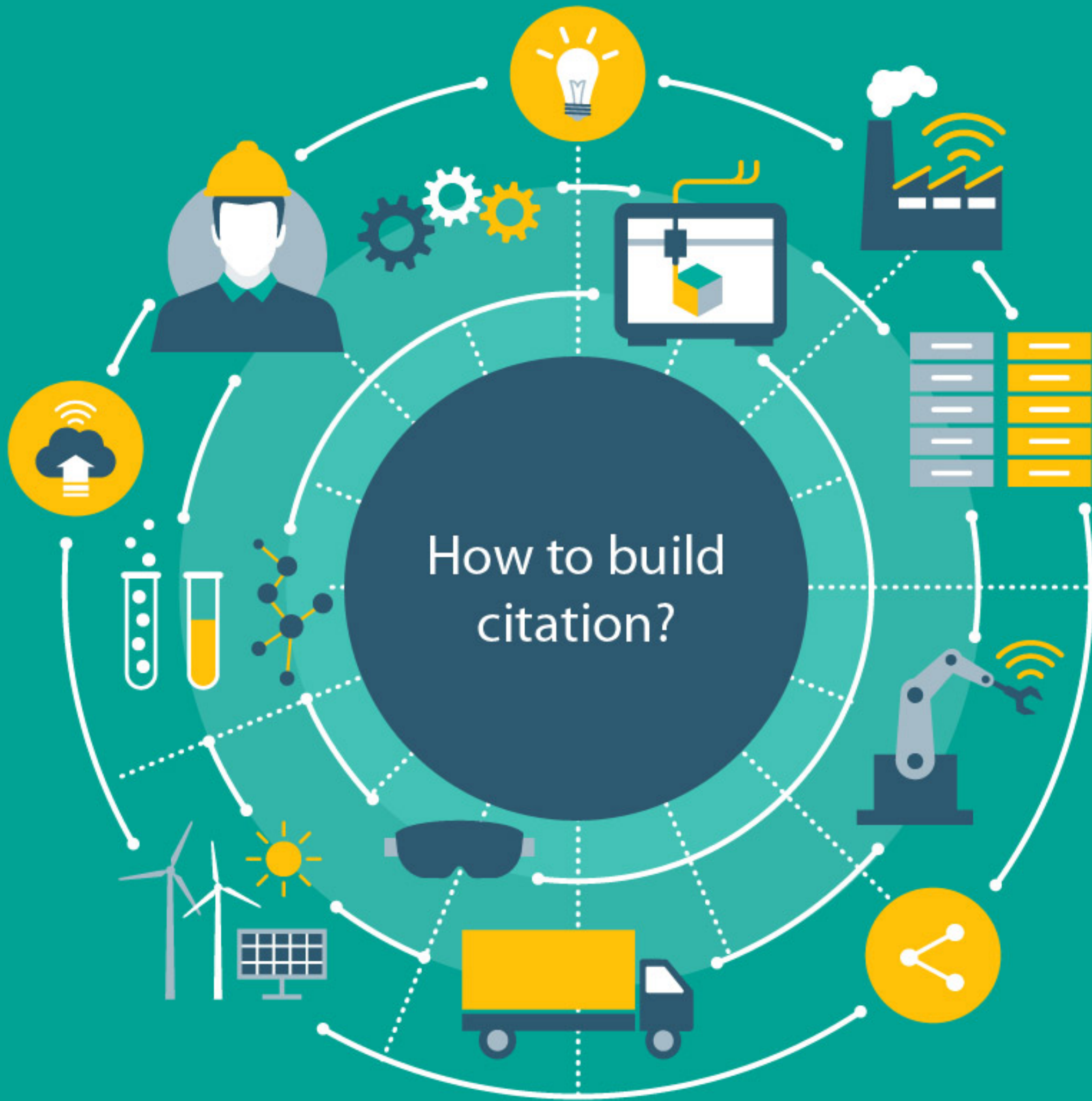
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How to build citation?

When building a citation, remember that it should be considered trustworthy by Google and patients. It is the hardest but best way to get your practice recognized locally.

For this, you need to remember consistency is the key. On all business listing websites and other local sites, you should have only one and accurate NAP information. Subsequently, you need to update all inconsistent citations. Also, use the company domain name in your email ID for listing purposes instead of a generic Gmail ID for generating trust.

Citation is not dependent on links. An accurate NAP of your business is sufficient to give prominence through Google. Business listings do have links, but link building always grows your business.

How inconsistency occurs:



Physical location of your business is changed

Local phone number is changed



Different trade or business name is used

Different NAP stated on different site



Work delegated to inexperienced employee



How to build citation?

Link building via a blog and Google Analytics is a good thing to focus on. Blog link building helps you improve social engagement and create social signals. And with Google Analytics, you can find the top referring city for local link building. When uploading content to any site, stick to the rules stated by that particular site.

Search your local competition to know where they cited themselves. Just type the business name and a local number of the competitors in a Google search box and plan your citation accordingly.

Upload maximum details related to your practice on a Google My Business page or related sites. Give a detailed description of your services, upload photographs, mention your office hours, etc.

What's the effect of inconsistency?



Damaged online visibility

Unrecognized citations not credited by Google

Google



Dropped local ranking

Unexpected creation of duplicate local pages



Poor impact on website credibility



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How to find local citation sources

First search for sites where you can cite your practice, such as Google My Business, Bing Places, Apple Maps, Facebook, Yelp, Yellow Pages, D&B, MapQuest, etc. You can check the top 50 sites for local citation [here](#).

The second step is to look for citation based on your practice, i.e. cardiologist and city where you operate.

The third step is to find your competitors' citations. You just need to enter business information of your competitors in search and learn about their citation sources.





How to manage citation?

Since you need to generate citation on numerous sites, it will surely be tough to remember and revisit them. To keep yourself free from the hassle of remembering and tracking citations, prepare worksheets.

Collect and place your accurate NAP information on a Google Doc. This saves time lost in rewriting and maintains consistency across the board. You can make and use a citation building template.

The third step is to find your competitors' citations. You just need to enter business information of your competitor in search and learn about their citation sources.

Note the login credentials of each site and save the file with date to track the most-recent sheet.

Citation Site	Login username	Login password	Status	Link	Service details	About me/ description

Save this sheet and additional info such as list of services, descriptions, details about you on your Google drive to save yourself from rewriting and memorizing. Creating a sheet will help in eliminating duplication.



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Quick tips to manage citation

- Try to do listings on your own instead of delegating it to a third party, for sites that you need to perform some steps personally, such as Yellowpages, ExpressUpdate, CityGrid etc. And, when taking help from a third party for generating a citation, use your domain email account instead of Gmail.
- Make the extra effort of finding a trusted agency or doing the task of citation on your own instead of handing it over to an inexperienced party to work on it. Mistakes made by them will affect your business later.
- Always double-check your NAP details, especially the ZIP code, before creating a citation. In the case of violation of rules according to [Google's guidelines](#), you will be required to redo your citation work. Minor formatting variations might be seen when comparing two sites, but these are unavoidable and do not affect Google rankings. Be conscious when using autofill tools such as Chrome Autofill, LastPass, etc.
- Quality matters, so instead of just creating new citations, first fix the ones listed earlier. Since some sites feed the business information to other sites, it is necessary to have correct citations everywhere. Also, first get your citation on more-important sites and popular sites then move toward the smaller or less popular sites.



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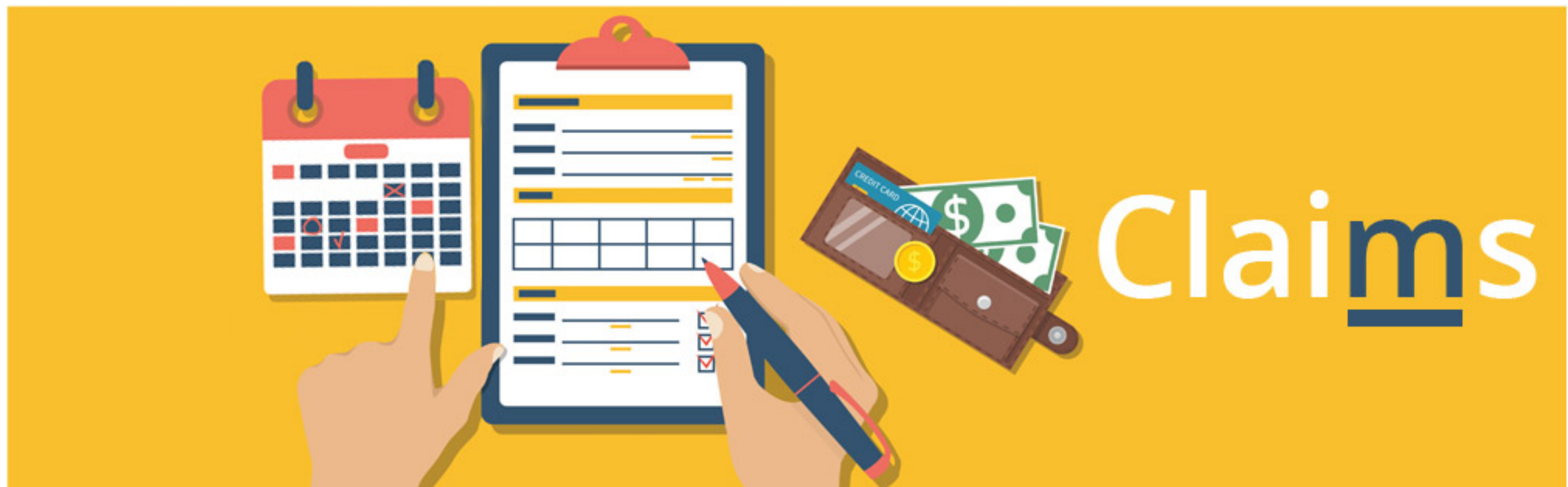
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Quick tips to manage citation

- Go beyond free listings. Consider paid listings on influential sites to compete with your better-ranking competitors.
- Check for duplicate listings and get them removed as soon as possible. Click [here](#) to learn more about duplicate GMB listings and how to deal with them. In the case of a toll-free number, there are changes such as someone might be using your fax number as the main phone number.
- There could be changes when your incorrect NAP has been claimed by a third party/individual. Claim it and fix it. If you are unable to claim it, either create a new listing with correct details and get the earlier entry removed or request fixing by sending feedback as a non-business owner. Don't take claims lightly. This gives you an opportunity to add info/description to your listing and make changes whenever required.



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Quick tips to manage citation

- Do smart search by using the first or last name of your practice instead of the full name to check the robustness of your site's search feature.
- For better Google+ Local rankings, select all categories on the site that you find relevant to your business. This will also enhance your visibility online.
- Google+ Local listing does not allow use of forwarding URL. Keep the Google listing and citation URL different. And don't do all citations in a single go. Since listing on sites takes some time, don't worry about your speed of creating citations, it won't affect your ranking.
- Be extra-conscious with your passwords. They should be a minimum of 8 characters and a combination of alphabet and numbers.
- Last but not least, don't forget to audit your citations every few months.



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Conclusion

Auditing, submitting local citation listings is a tedious task, but tremendously important for your practice.

As aforesaid, maintain a list and submit your citations accordingly and grow your online presence. A good online presence will offer a strong online reputation. myPracticeReputation offer free assessment of your online reputation and ways to deal with negative reviews.

To wrap up, remember citation is all about genuine details and consistency. Any mistake can ruin your business and demolish your online reputation



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