

Drive Acquisition



From the Ground to the Cloud



The world has gone digital. Mass adoption of mobile devices and Web services has forever changed the marketplace and consumer expectations. But brick-and-mortar still matters, so a strong brand must also inspire in-store purchases.

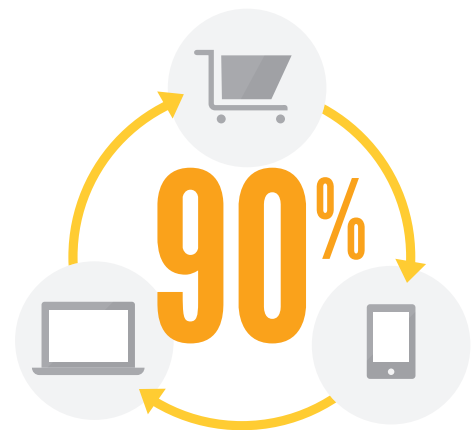


Today's on-the-go customers want options—the ability to connect with your business whenever (and from wherever) is most convenient for them. In fact, 90 percent of consumers say they want a seamless buying experience, no matter which sales channel they choose.

This opens up huge opportunities for innovative businesses to stand out from competitors, and to enrich relationships with current customers by giving them all the data they need to complete their buying journeys.

That means optimizing your Web experience for mobile, creating simple interfaces, designing applications which automatically update themselves, and ensuring frictionless transactions. It also means helping your customers easily get to (and even through) your physical locations — with better store locators, consistent location listings across social networks, mobile apps that entice users to engage in person, and precise indoor mapping.

In this chapter, you will learn how a few agile, innovative companies are turning new ideas into new business—online and in-store.



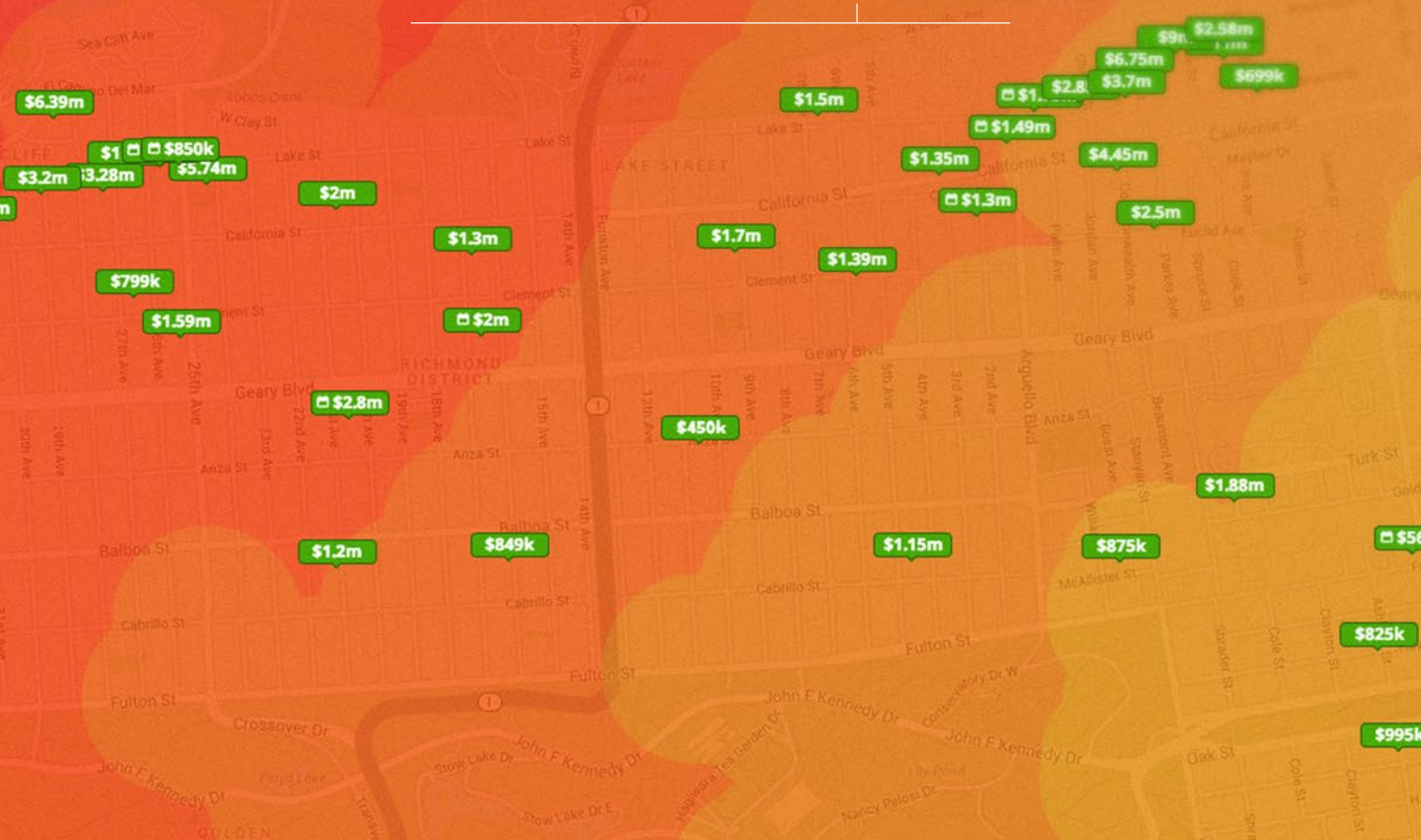
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“The story of innovation has not changed. It has always been a small team of people who have a new idea, typically not understood by those around them and their executives.”

— Eric Schmidt
Chairman, Google

Google



Making People Feel At Home

The real estate industry is changing, thanks to companies like Trulia, which connects buyers with the homes of their dreams and agents who can help them through the process.

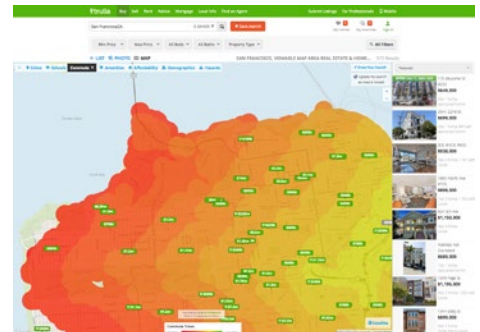
And while the business doesn't exactly have a storefront, its product is brick-and-mortar in the most literal sense. The goal: Get the right prospects in front of the right properties, with maps at the center of it all.

Transforming the Customer Experience with Data

If the aim of branding is to delight and even surprise customers, Trulia is ahead of the game—turning a once time-consuming chore into a new, much-improved customer experience.

Trulia collects all the available data on for-sale homes and displays it on one easy-to-use map, making complex data simple, actionable, and engaging.

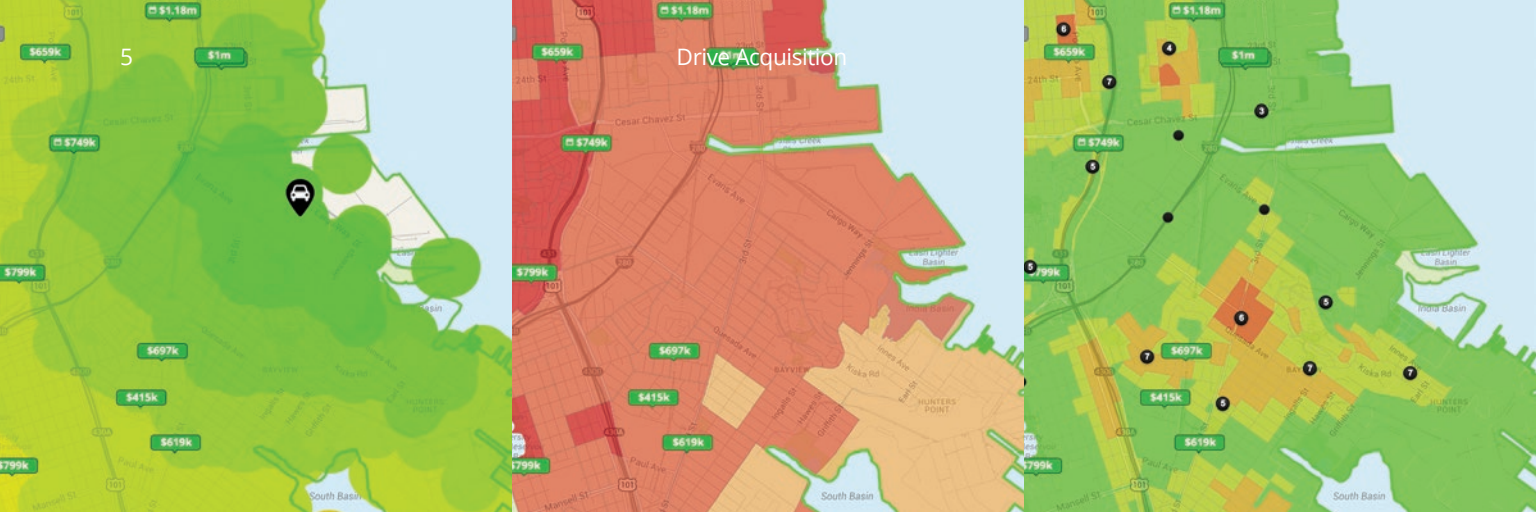
“When people experience one of Trulia’s heatmaps, they can narrow down their search by numerous factors,” says Jeff McConathy, Trulia’s vice president of engineering and consumer services. “On one map, they can learn all about a property and its surrounding area—the school district, crime rates, nearby amenities, and frequency of natural disasters. They can even use Street View to tour the neighborhood. It’s a much easier, more fun way to buy.”



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— Jeff McConathy
Vice President of Engineering & Consumer Services
Trulia





Engaging Buyers Wherever They Are

Last year, Trulia's mobile app usage surpassed its website traffic. But Jeff and his colleagues were not caught unprepared. For the past two years, they've followed a strict "mobile first" policy, optimizing all new offerings for mobile devices and then building the website experience to match.

"One of my favorite customer stories is about a couple out shopping the week before Christmas," Jeff says. "The husband was goofing around with our app on his phone and found a property near the mall that matched what they'd been looking for. There was an open house that day, so they decided to check it out."

The couple fell in love with the home, made an offer the next day, and moved in right after the holidays—a perfect match that might never have happened without the mobile product. "We all get bored and play with our phones," says Jeff. "It's great that we can provide such an engaging and fun mobile experience."

Honing in on Hyper-Local

Trulia's heatmaps also capitalize on two other hot customer-centric trends—hyper-local and relationship marketing.

"Our data science team focuses heavily on user behavior," explains Jeff. "We want users to have the best, most relevant experience possible, so we spend a lot of time analyzing what makes those looking for homes in Mobile, Alabama, distinct from those buying property in Manhattan. Then we make sure the right information gets displayed prominently for new users."

By unlocking the rich insights geo data has to offer, Trulia can customize listings in a way that's not only relevant for each individual home, but also for each prospective homebuyer.

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“ We’re a tech company that happens to dabble in real estate. The technology is what excites me and what’s helped us disrupt the industry. But I don’t want to rest on our laurels. I want to be constantly moving forward with crazy, ridiculous ideas that don’t always pan out, but always get us closer to our end goal—helping people make one of the biggest decisions of their lives. ”

— Jeff McConathy





Drive Innovation with Location

“Approximately 700 of the companies currently on the Fortune 1000 joined the list within the past decade. That’s double the turnover we saw just two decades ago. Why the shakeup? Tech-savvy customers and digital-native startups have changed the competitive landscape.”

—Forrester, *Unleash Your Digital Business*

For the 2+ billion people already online, the Internet of 10 years ago seems archaic. But even bigger changes are on the horizon. Over the next decade, as 5 billion more users come online and 50 billion devices become connected, the pace of innovation will only speed up.

The companies most likely to succeed in this competitive environment are already investing in technology that will help them meet the demands of increasingly-mobile consumers. More and more, they’re looking to location. According to a recent survey by Forrester, 63 percent of businesses are using location data in some way—for Operations (66%), Marketing (65%), IT (63%), and/or Sales (43%).

But leaders across industries recognize that location data and services are critical to success in the Age of the Customer, and they plan to act fast. Just consider the following:

Nearly 60 percent of respondents intend to add location data to customer and/or partner mobile apps within the next 12 to 24 months.

34 percent plan to enrich customer engagement across many channels with location information.

36 percent plan to empower employees with location data in order to drive better customer outcomes.

Simply put: Your competitors are taking location seriously, so don't get left behind. Read on to learn how companies at the forefront of location innovation are enriching customer relationships and driving higher revenues, with the help of maps

Insight

Location, Location, Location



By Ken Hoetmer
Product Manager, Google Maps APIs

Providing a truly seamless customer experience from online to in-store requires knowing where your customers are—not in a corporate stalker sort of way, but in a way that provides users with value and prompts them to share their their location with you.

In 2009, companies came to Google for maps that could live on their websites. Now that mobile devices have reached a level of penetration where you can actually build products and entire businesses around geo data, and now that most customers have wireless devices in their pockets capable of sharing their real-time whereabouts, mapping technology has far more to offer than simply pins on a map.

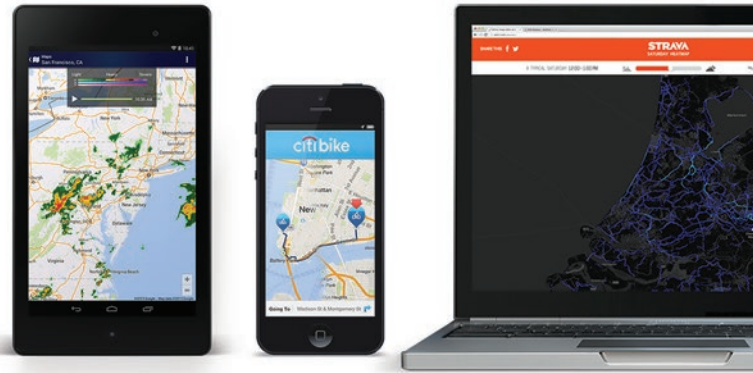
That's why we no longer start with the map. We start with location and build the map to display it.

Delivering the Personal Touch

Knowing exactly where your customers are lets you deliver a customized, hyper-local branding experience—the Holy Grail of sales and marketing.

For example, let's say you're a clothing retailer with a national presence. You wouldn't promote the same items during winter in New York as you would during winter in San Francisco. Sure, you might have captured mailing addresses for some of your prospects, so you can market based on zip code, but what about people who have moved or are traveling?

Better yet, when you have real-time location data for customers, you know when one of them is in close proximity to one of your brick-and-mortar stores, and can entice them to pop in while they're already in the neighborhood.



Just imagine getting this text: "We see you've been looking at new winter coats on our website. We have plenty in your size at our store right around the corner. Buy in the next hour and get 20 percent off."

How convenient!

Putting Your Company on the Map

More than 1 million websites and apps currently rely on Google Maps API in one way or another. Because for hyper-local location to truly be valuable, there must be context — the ability to take the geo data associated with your store and the real-time location of your customers, and do something with that information.

If you're driving and you know the latitude and longitude of your car, the information means nothing if you don't know where you're trying to go. Likewise, knowing where your customers are in relation to your business isn't much good if you can't use that information to engage them with your brand, earn their loyalty, and drive sales.

That's what Google Maps API helps companies do: Put their geo data to work in innovative, monetizable ways.

Insight

3 Things You Should Know About Store Locators



By Dan Weiner
VP, Product, Placeable

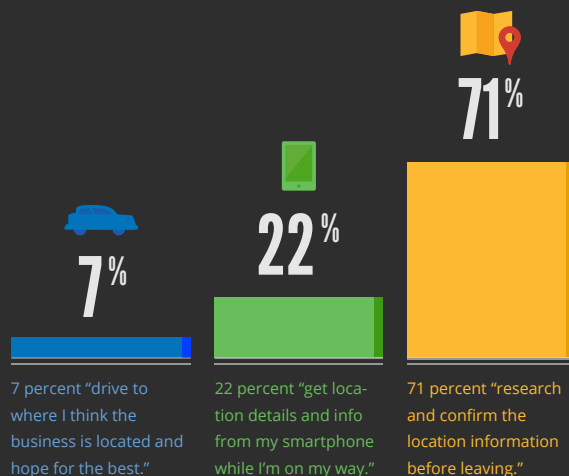
The number of consumers going online to find a local business continues to grow, rising from 80 to 95 percent in just the past two years. With this hyper-local digital trend reshaping business, companies of all shapes and sizes must have a strong Web presence that drives online traffic and drives customers into the store.

Placeable helps businesses across industries drive visibility, traffic, and sales through location marketing. Three lessons we've learned along the way:

1. Inaccurate Locators Will Lose You Money
2. Data Consistency Is Key in Social Media
3. Interactive Locators Turn Clicks Into Sales

Inaccurate Locators Will Lose You Money

Here's the breakdown of how consumers search for business locations when visiting for the first time:



This is why inaccurate or inconsistent store locators are such a big deal, and mobile web usage has upped the stakes even higher. When people are doing searches while in the car or walking around, getting reliable directions and store hours becomes even more important.

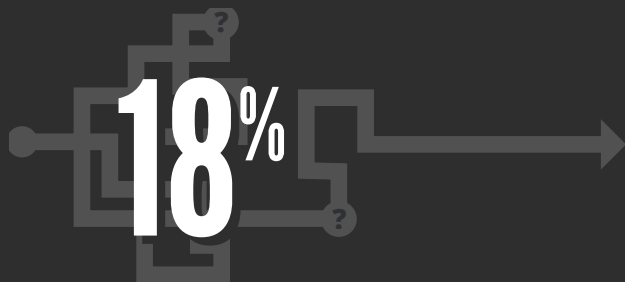
If something funky happens with the geo-code and an address is off (even by a block or two), customers might eventually find you, but only have a frustrating search. Worse yet, Placeable's research shows that if they come across your competitor while looking for your store, you'll often lose them to the option right in front of them.

Data Consistency Is Key in Social Media

It's not enough to ensure your website store locators are accurate. Customers will also hold you responsible for incorrect information on third-party mapping sites and social media pages.

Most social media sites now offer businesses a platform to communicate location-based information to customers — at both a brand and local level. A major restaurant chain, for example, can have its official corporate Google+ or Facebook page, and then individual pages for each location within that overall presence. These local pages, which act almost like mini-locators, provide even greater exposure for your brand. They also create more risk around disseminating incorrect information and make it harder to manage changing information for thousands of locations.

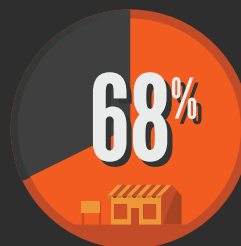
The solution: Tools that let you correct bad location data and push updates to multiple third-party sites at once.



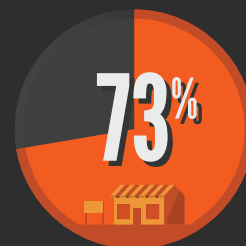
18 percent of directions searches bring users to the wrong destination.

Source: Placeable, 2013

So What?



68 percent say they lose trust in a brand if they get lost driving or walking to a destination because of an incorrect address.



73 percent of consumers say that when a business's online listing shows incorrect information, they lose trust in the brand.

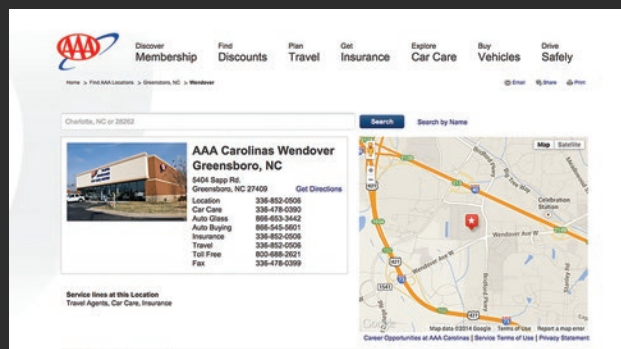
Interactive Locators Turn Clicks Into Sales

Store locators are no longer just a vehicle for getting customers into your store or just a utility that provides an address or phone number. Innovative companies are finding ways to turn those clicks into sales — with tactics such as lead gen, ad targeting, and cross-channel selling.

For example, insurance companies that help customers connect with the nearby agents can use store locators to start the buying process immediately, by connecting visitors with a lead-gen form that says, “You found the agent in your neighborhood; let’s start this interaction online.”

AAA uses store locators not just for lead generation, but also for lead qualification. Heather McBrien, digital marketing manager of AAA Carolinas, explains, “In mid-June, we launched a ‘Get a Quote’ call to action on the locators for our insurance side of the business. This lets us weed out the tire-kickers so that we’re looking at more quality leads, not just a higher quantity of leads. In the first two weeks after launch, this campaign generated about 200 new customers. And we’ve gotten rave reviews from both members and agents.”

Similarly, companies with online shopping options can use store locators to trigger after-hours notifications. For instance, a message saying, “The store is closed right now, but why not complete your purchase online?” can convert customer interest into business before they’ve had time to change their minds or visit a competing store.



Marketing can also use data from store locator visits to increase the effectiveness of local segmentation and ad-targeting, enabling them to engage already-interested customers with more relevant content and offers. Well-optimized locators are also an SEO best practice, driving incremental visibility in search results and traffic to your site by providing search engines with an authoritative, indexable guide to all your locations.

The best strategies for driving results from store locators and location data vary tremendously based on what you’re selling or trying to accomplish. Our innovative clients are coming up with new possibilities every day.

Mapping Out Their Journey

For travel marketers, location data represents an entirely new layer of digital information that can help them understand and engage travelers.

Germany's second largest airline, Air Berlin flies to 171 destinations around the world, transporting more than 31.5 million passengers per year. Getting all these customers where they need to go requires serious manpower—and map-power.

Challenge: In 2006, Air Berlin launched a route map which allowed customers to check existing flight connections and begin booking. But this solution required a great deal of maintenance, didn't offer users much flexibility, and wasn't optimized for mobile with "touch and move" or zoom functions.

Solution: By updating to modern mapping technology, Air Berlin now offers digital users all the functionality needed for an enriched customer experience. More intuitive and simple, the new map can display pulsating destination points, IATA airport codes, and local information — such as weather and time — for specific destinations.

Since the launch in December 2013, map traffic has increased by 50 percent, average time spent on the

site has increased by 25 seconds, and percentage of flights booked via the route map has grown by 40 percent.

"The majority of our customers are already familiar with Google Maps. Because our map is powered by Google Maps API, our customers instantly know how to use it," says Fabian Möschter, e-commerce business development manager at Air Berlin. "In the future, we are even planning to integrate prices into our map."



Gas lines on a terrain map in Google Earth



Put Maps to Work for Your Business

In the new digital age, every company is a digital company, and data is a core asset.

Ensuring your customers have a consistently stellar experience with your brand, across channels, hinges on location-based data—having it and putting it to good use.

Store locators, geo-targeted marketing, indoor mapping, and travel planning are only a few of the innovative ways companies are putting location to work.