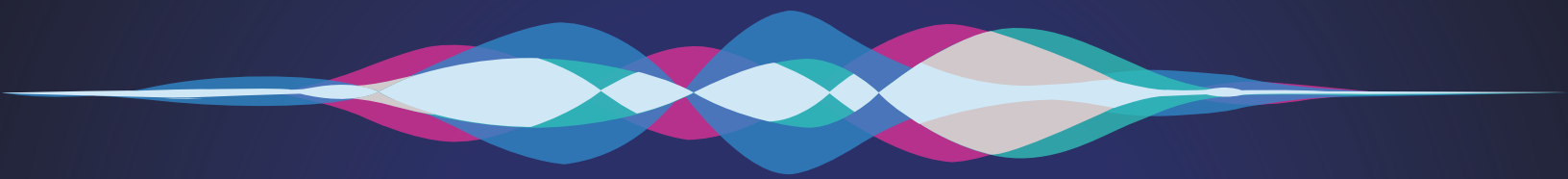# Hey Siri...can you see me now?

MileStone

How to get Google Home, Siri, and Alexa to talk about your content.

Advancements in artificial intelligence and "anywhere" computing are changing consumer behaviors

Introduction

Consumers have new and compelling means of discovering information. Voice search, intelligent agents, "screen less" devices like Amazon Echo and Google Home are creating a brave new world for location-based businesses. How do you make sure that you stay "top of mind"? When being "the answer" is more critical than ever, what strategies do you need to stay ahead of the competition?

Driven by advancements in technology, changing consumer behaviour is altering the nature of search. An increasing reliance on non-computing devices, most significantly mobile, is creating a new breed of consumer that does not "search" for information but instead is seeks "answers". The new consumer no longer sees "going online" as an activity, they instead transition seamlessly devices in search of answers.

This "future of search" has arrived in the form of instant-answer based information, driven by mobile devices and non-computing platforms, powered by "Intelligent Assistants" (Siri, Alexa, Google Answers). These Intelligent Assistants provide users with "answers" rather than websites. In this increasingly "intelligent" and complex digital landscape, how does a location-based business thrive? Is search still relevant? How do you get noticed?

It all begins with a single question: **Can Siri talk to your web site?**

Highlights:

- Consumers no longer see "online" as a unique activity, mobile devices have made it a seamless part of their existence, "the web" is no longer a destination, but a tool

- Users are turning to non-computing devices to solve specific pain points. Intent-driven pain points are known as "micro moments"

- Speech recognition and the rise of intelligent agents (Siri, Alexa, Google Assistant) are quickly gaining traction with consumers of all ages

- Search, as it has evolved, is more relevant than ever, because consumers now want answers to questions, and finding a "link" and "researching" a web site is a secondary activity

- Leading businesses are responding by deploying enabling technologies like Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) and structured data to deliver a seamless device agnostic experience

MileStone

Your customer left the computer at home

People live across multiple screens and multiple, often screen-less, devices – and whether they are online or offline has become secondary – it is the experience that matters. In 2015, Google announced that mobile searches had surpassed desktop searches for the first time. Affordable "intelligent" devices and low-cost data plans have driven the rapid adoption of smartphones and "intelligent devices" across the world. ComScore estimates that in the United States alone more than 79% of consumers own a smartphone—a staggering 198 million users.

And, Google found that 65% of smartphone users leverage multiple devices for the same search, with only 2% of first-time visitors completing a purchase on that first visit. The multi-device journey is also increasingly blurring the line between the on-line and off-line worlds, with 50% of mobile browsers visiting a store within a day of their original search.

65%

of smartphone users leverage multiple devices

2%
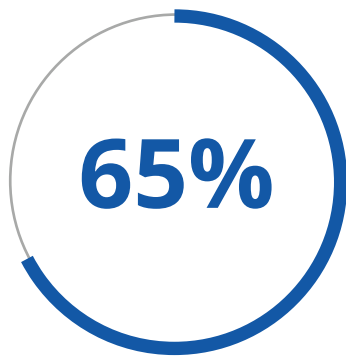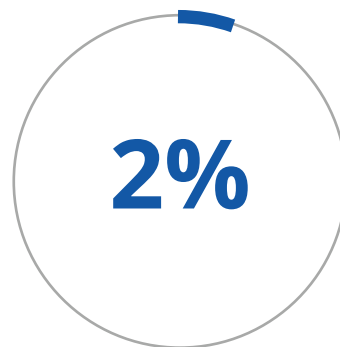
*of first-time visitors complete a purchase*

50%

of Mobile visitors visit a store within a day

Milestone

Micro moments: answers based on need… not just links

Search has evolved—and is now more critical and specialized than ever. Consumers are finding what they need through mobile devices and intelligent agents. Google research found 4 out of 5 consumers use search engines in highly specific ways, centered not around information, but around activities.These new patterns are known as "Micro Moments"and represent a radical departure in how consumers seek information and purchase goods and services: they now rely on local searches, maps, click-to-call or reading reviews. Google found that 84% of consumers use search engines on their desktop or tablet and 88% use their smartphone to initiate an intent-driven micro moment.
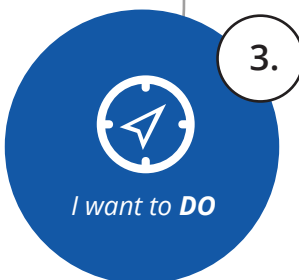
Micro moments can be divided into 4 major categories:

1.

I want to KNOW
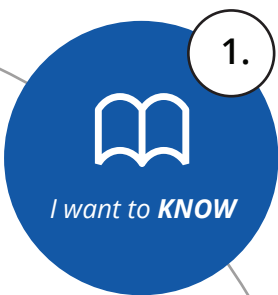
Consumers are seeking answers to their questions; for example, **"does hotel Nikko in San Francisco have a pool?"**

2.

I want to GO

Users in these situations are looking for address or location of a business such as **"Where is the hotel Nikko in San Francisco?"**

3.

I want to DO

Users are looking for things to do near their location; **places to eat or visit**

4.

I want to BUY
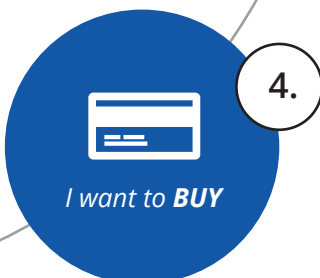
Consumers are looking to **make a purchase,** even if the final purchase will not be made on their mobile device

MileStone

# Personal assistants—where's the screen?

How do you click on a link when a device speaks to you? The past few years have seen the rapid advancement of intelligent agents, technologies like Google Assistant, Siri, Cortana and Amazon Alexa power a voice activated means of getting direct answers to user inquires without visiting a website. These systems leverage the power of machine learning and artificial intelligence to recognize speech and to, mine information from websites.

The website mining is achieved by leveraging schema markups – topical tags that inform the search agents of relevant information available on a given site, like the address of a business. The real-time interaction between these devices and consumers allows consumers to have answers versus a link to visit a website.

**Google
Assistant**

**Apple
Siri**

**Microsoft
Cortana**

**Amazon
Alexa**

MileStone
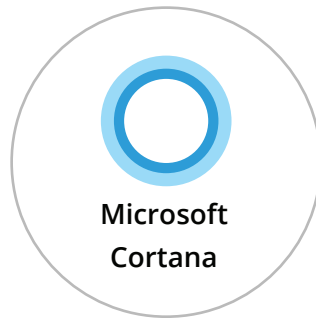
Apps, the untapped opportunity

The customer journey is not just device independent, it is also no longer browser-based. In fact, when users leave their desktops -, they also tend to leave their browsers behind. According to ComScore, Facebook, YouTube, Google Maps, Google Search, and Messenger are the most frequently used apps for US smartphone users. In addition, when using a smartphone, a consumer is much more likely to use a dedicated app than a browser to access services and social networks.

As a business, you need to think multi-device, multi-location, and multi-channel. Is your address information accurately reflected in purpose specific apps, like Facebook and Yelp? When consumers open a travel app, will they have the right phone number? Hours of operation? The variables involved for the modern business have expanded exponentially.

Behaviors have changed - evolve or move aside

To keep up with the shift in consumer behavior, search engines have also evolved to provide a more accurate, satisfying experience. 20% of Google searches are voice-based, as consumers now "ask" for information instead of typing questions. Apple's Siri intelligent agent now receives more than 1 billion requests per week To provide an optimal user experience, Google's search engine updates have also evolved; from penalizing duplicate content or keyword stuffing, to an evolved user experience that now focuses on conversational content using schemas and social links.

This continued focus on a human to machine interaction is critical for mobile. In fact, Google has already indicated that it will begin indexing mobile pages before desktop ones as it increasingly caters to a mobile-first consumer. Another critical mobile usability factor is page download speed, Amazon Inc. found that an extra 100 milliseconds in page speed results to a 1% loss in sales – potentially hundreds of millions for a retailer that large.

MileStone

"Okay Google, find hotels near chicago"

"OK Google"

20% of Google searches are voice-based

"Hey Siri, find hotels near chicago"

1 billion requests per week received on Siri

The Optimal Search experience today focuses on five key factors:

- **Page Speed:** Faster sites mean more conversions, a 1 second delay in page load time leads to a 7% drop in conversions

- **Image search:** Images can highlight product, services, and the overall experience. 60% of consumers will consider a local result if it includes images

- **Schema Tags and Markups:** These are descriptive tags that wrap the content on your website to inform search engines what the content is about (like your name, address, phone number). It is code that acts as a dictionary for your website

- **Content:** 50% of consumers are influenced by fresh content, it has a positive impact on consumers buying preferences

- **A Faster Mobile Site:** Technologies such as Accelerated Mobile Pages are providing a faster mobile experience and download speed

MileStone

Getting ahead of the technology

Accelerated mobile
pages (AMP)

AMP is the future face of mobile, a framework created by Google to deliver faster webpages to mobile devices. AMP is a direct result of Google's focus on improving the mobile experience by making it faster and more user friendly. Google prioritizes AMP websites and highlights them as AMP compatible by displaying a lightning bolt symbol in search engine results. Business owners can benefit from AMP in two important ways:

- Because Google is prioritizing AMP, AMP-compatible sites will achieve better search rankings

- Increasing user engagement and conversion by lowering your download time. The average mobile website can take as much as 22 seconds to load, versus only 0.7 seconds for AMP sites

Think answers
not just links

As consumers seek a more personal, more human experience, search engines are evolving into answer engines. Links are no longer the top priority for your consumers. Google wants to assist your customers by leveraging content from your website and transforming it into answers presented through the search engine result pages (SERP). The trend of the "answer" approach will continue to grow as users increasingly rely on voice-activated devices. Providing the content that powers these answers can be accomplished by researching and creating valuable content that is properly "tagged" in topics using structured data. Tagging topics like business phone number, address, URL, name, location coordinates helps Google understand your business better. Structured data (also known as schema) are a key differentiator, using and leveraging structured data is critical to success.

Milestone

Elements that impact your
search engine rankings

Search engine rankings are impacted by several factors and are categorized into the following major categories:

- **Social:** Reviews on important channels such as Google+ or TripAdvisor along with social signals from networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are regarded as beneficial for a business. Google understands consumers pay a lot of attention to social signals and reviews, thus rewarding businesses actively working to maintain presence on such channels

- **Site Technology:** Your website platform is the foundation to deliver the best performance possible from your eCommerce efforts. For example, Google wants page load times to be as low as possible to give users the information they desire, deployment of AMP pages will help to deliver a faster mobile experience. Similarly, integrating schemas within the platform will allow search engines to understand the content on the site better. Also, meta tags will aid in deliver the pages better to the users

- **On and Off Page Content:** On page content-, must be focused and well researched to deliver accurate, yet unique, information about the business. Google penalizes any pages which are stuffed with keywords, at the same time it rewards pages with natural language. For off page content, make sure your business is consistently and accurately listed across the web. Having a consistent URL, Name, Phone, Address (UNAP) will allow users find your business across all type of sites such Yelp, Google or 3rd party sites

- **Backlinks:** Local and industry specific backlinks that signals the search engines help build your authority in the search ecosystem. A large footprint of good backlinks has a huge impact on your website rankings on SERP'-s

MileStone

Moving beyond
the browser

Your business information is automatically loaded in multiple digital locations (Social networks, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram etc.) Over 178 million people in the US use social networks, and not having a presence makes it difficult at best, impossible at worst, for consumers to reach you. Additionally, with nearly 87% of mobile time being spent in apps – often dedicated social media apps – not having a presence on social media translates into not being present 87% of the time. Maps are also a critical part of managing your business information. Google Maps has about 95 million monthly users and Apple generates over 5 billion requests on Apple Maps every week. Ensuring these sources are accurately representing your business is no longer "interesting," it is now critical to your success.

Your strategy

How do you prepare for a device-agnostic world? How do you make sure your business is ready for the next phase of the digital revolution? Here are some quick tips:

Don't think website … think technology PLUS website

Questions power the new world, and you can control the answers. Focus your content towards information that users want from your business, the search engines will reward this content.

Make sure it is your website and not your competitor's – that powers answers supplied by intelligent agents by developing pages that answer frequently asked questions. Deploy schema markups to guide search engines through your content and the frequently asked questions.

Enhance your local presence on any device

Be everywhere, having a website is not enough, make sure to have presence on major social channels, on Maps, local industry specific websites and review sites such as TripAdvisor and across the entire digital domain.

Go back to basics and ensure your basic business data (UNAP) is accurate and consistent across the local listings digital ecosystem.

MileStone

Think mobile first

Less is more when it comes to mobile, give consumers a minimalist experience that loads fast and give them the information they need quickly. Focus on products and services and not on the bells and whistles of design.

Focus on micro-moments. At the *know* stage users are looking for information, at the *go* stage users may be looking for directions, at the *do* stage they may be curious about what to do in the area, and at the *buy* stage goal is simple: make a purchase. Target the content of your site to each of these stages.

Move beyond "mobile friendly" with AMP pages that will make your mobile experience lighting fast and will help users get to what they want quickly and with minimal clicks.
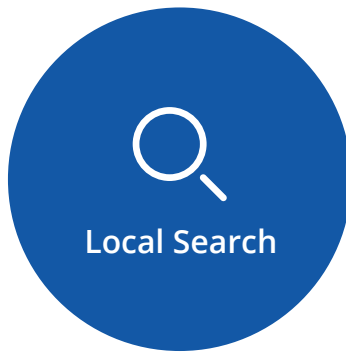
Offer a pleasant multi-device experience

All this talk of technology should not detract from a core goal of any web strategy: An attractive, responsive site that adapts to users' needs across devices: desktop, tablet, mobile. Consider the hierarchy of elements for each device types. Desktop and tablets can deliver a much higher content experience where as mobile is more about acting such as click to call or book now buttons. Make sure page navigations are easy and does not require users to spend unnecessary time finding information.

Call to actions should be easily clickable with fingers to deliver a good conversion experience.

MileStone

How can Milestone help?

A pioneer in the industry with more than 19 years of experience, Milestone, provides innovative digital marketing solutions. Our Digital Presence Cloud provides sophisticated, powerful tools to help you create amazing content, engage audiences, and analyze your efforts. We offer full-service options that include website design, social media marketing and dynamic SEO strategies delivering enhanced visibility, engagement, and ROI. Our Digital Presence Cloud is now AMP compatible, allowing clients to build and manage their AMP sites.

Website

Local Search

Paid Marketing

Social Media

Reviews

Analytics

To learn more, visit us at http://www.milestoneinternet.com or call us at 1-866-615-2516.

MileStone