

# Franchises reap the rewards of tech-enabled local marketing strategies

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*Technology-enabled local marketing strategies help leading franchises grow at a rate three times faster than competitors.*

One of the great challenges facing franchise businesses is to maintain their group brand identity while enabling local marketing strategies at branch level. Those that do, grow at a rate of about three times than that of their competitors.

[A recent study](#) of 167 leading global franchises by the Local Search Association (LSA) and SOCi showed those that adopted technology-enabled local marketing strategies, saw average sales growth of 12.8% ahead of businesses that didn't.

At the forefront of providing these local marketing services is Social Places, a growing martech (marketing technology) company based in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Says director, Ashleigh Wainstein: "We introduce businesses to the concept of local strategy. We set up their social media and map listings and then manage and aggregate the reviews from these listings into a single dashboard. These reviews – typically there are many – can then be responded to at scale with a personal touch. This is especially important when there is an issue because of the viral nature of social media and keeping track manually is difficult.

"Our locally developed technology also allows individual franchisees or branches to choose their messaging for their relevant target audiences on social media channels.

"At the same time, brands are able to approve content and remain in control of their intellectual property. Lastly, we put out targeted geo-located advertising around each of these stores with their custom messaging to drive foot traffic and bookings."

Some of the local brands that have adopted local strategies using Social Places software include Spur Group, McDonald's, Virgin Active, Pep, Ackermans, Ocean Basket, Kauai, Midas and Mica Hardware. Other candidates for the technology are companies in the financial services and telecommunications sectors.

More than 80% of Spur Steak Ranches' franchisees manage their own Facebook pages where they provide local communities with content relevant to them.

Says Spur Group marketing manager, Danielle Kruger: "Local marketing is an integral part of our overall marketing strategy. We have seen our maps listings pages such as Facebook, Google Maps, Tripadvisor and Zomato increase impressions and actions over 50% on average year-on-year as a result.

"Our review scores continue to increase across these platforms on average 0.2 stars out of 5 per year and this past year we saw greater impressions and actions from our stores' local pages than from our main brand page."

Social Places' Wainstein says the main benefit of a decentralised approach is the ability to create a truly local presence through localised content and conversations.

"Connecting with customers on a more personal level creates brand authenticity and establishes business locations as an important part of the community. There is a growing trend of consumers opting to 'shop local' and this strategy allows franchises to tap into that market, with our software as the enabler," she says.

The software includes GoListings, GoReview, GoSocial, Go Ads and Go Bookings:

- **GoListings** - Research from Nectafy shows 88% of searches for local businesses on mobile devices result in either a call or a visit to the business within 24 hours. These “calls” or navigation requests through local map pages or GPS devices can be seen as a true return on investment. Brands are moving away from vanity metrics such as impressions or clicks, and moving towards results which show a greater correlation between sales or driving feet into their stores;
- **GoReview** - Reviews are the single biggest influence on consumer purchase decisions (LSA, 2018). A report from BrightLocal indicates 78% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Social Places aggregated more than 1 million reviews in the last year – double the number the year before. Companies are able to make intelligent business decisions, per location, based on this data which is presented to them as consolidated reports on a single screen;
- **GoSocial** - Brands and their franchisees can no longer rely on “top-down” brand marketing from a corporate presence to engage local consumers. They must have a localised social marketing strategy. GoSocial manages companies’ social media content for multi-location franchises with Facebook Content Auditing, Post scheduling and social reporting.
- **Go Ads** - Location-based advertising that gets your business more calls, more navigations and more feet walking into your store.
- **Go Bookings** - Easily manage your bookings from a centralised dashboard with Website Widgets, Queue Manager and Brand and Store Level Reporting.

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#### **Social Places**

Social Places is a MarTech company that specialises in location-based marketing and reputation management for multi-location and/or franchised brands.

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