SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION · BIRCHWOOD DIGITAL, IN OUR OWN MARKET

We ranked an agency site #1 in Buffalo on a deliberately terrible domain name, and it held for three years.

To settle the exact-match-domain myth, we ranked jewelghost.com, a name with nothing to do with marketing, at #1 for our most important local keywords. It stayed there from 2017 to 2020 with virtually no ongoing link building.

#1	6 mo	3 yrs	#1 & #2
for our main Buffalo keywords	to reach the top	held with almost no new links	current positions, and climbing

CLIENT	Birchwood Digital (our own experiment)	MARKET	Buffalo, NY
CAMPAIGN	Search engine optimization	TIMEFRAME	Six months to #1
RESULT	#1 for the primary local keywords, 2017 through 2020; now #1 and #2	CHANNELS	Google organic search, Google Business Profile

THE SITUATION

A case study inside a case study.

A persistent myth in SEO says you need a keyword in your domain name to rank well. We wanted to disprove it publicly, so we chose the least helpful name we could: jewelghost.com, for a search engine optimization agency in Buffalo.

If that site could reach #1 for competitive local marketing keywords, the argument was over.

WHAT WE DID

Everything but the domain name.

01 **Technical and on-page.** A clean, fast site with the right structure, titles, and content for the target keywords.

02 **Local authority.** Google Business Profile, citations, and genuine customer reviews; several of those reviews are still visible on the jewelghost.com profile today, thanking us for work completed in 2017.

03 **Front-loaded links.** An initial off-site program, then deliberately almost nothing, to test how durable the rankings were without maintenance.

04 **Watch and wait.** Three years of rank tracking to see whether the myth held up.

RESULTS

#1 in Buffalo, on a domain about ghosts.

Jewelghost.com reached #1 for our main Buffalo keywords within six months and held that position through 2020 with virtually no ongoing link building. Today the same keywords sit at #1 and #2 for Birchwood, with more on the way.

The screenshots below show the search results from the original experiment and the same searches today.

2017

Launch

Jewelghost.com built and optimized; reviews collected.

MONTH 6

#1

Top position for the main Buffalo keywords.

2017–2020

Held

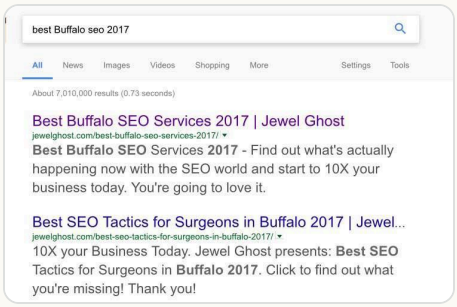
Rankings intact with virtually no ongoing link building.

TODAY

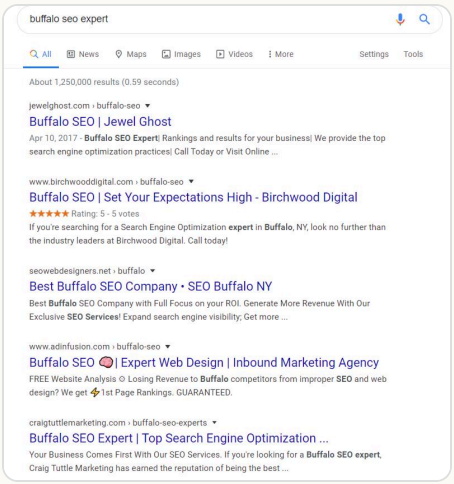
#1 and #2

Birchwood holds the top two positions.

Three searches, three #1s. "Buffalo SEO," "Buffalo SEO expert," and "best Buffalo SEO 2017," with jewelghost.com first in each.



"best Buffalo SEO 2017." Jewelghost.com holding #1 and #2.



"buffalo seo expert," today. Jewelghost.com at #1 and birchwooddigital.com at #2.

WHAT THIS PROVES

Rankings come from structure, relevance, and authority, not from the name on the door. If we can do it for jewelghost.com, we can do it for your business under its own name.

Screenshots are taken from Google Search Console, Google Analytics, and our rank tracker. Client-identifying details are redacted.

Want results like these?

Every campaign above started with a free thirty-minute call. Bring us your budget and your market; we will tell you honestly what it buys.

(716) 249-1742 · birchwooddigital.com/contact