

GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY WANT, MORE OF WHAT YOU HAVE!

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AND START WATCHING YOUR FOOT TRAFFIC INCREASE



# Guide to foursquare™ For Clients



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# Mobile Apps Land

get mobilized

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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## **What is Foursquare?**

Foursquare solves the problem of connecting social media to direct traffic. It is a local lead generation tool.

The goal is to get people to explore and incentivize them to do so. It is a social city guide where people check into their location to unlock badges. Not only useful in building a connection between the place and the people, it also is a great tool to reward loyal customers to give them the power to spread your word.

By using Foursquare as a regular user, you are telling your friends where you are by checking in to a business venue. By doing this you can also collect points, badges, prizes and rewards from the businesses and the app on their mobile phone.

No longer do you have to try to spend more than your competition to get new customers. With traditional marketing methods, the more you spend, the more customers in theory will come to your business and spend money. While true, the return on investment can be negative and sink your business. With a tool like Foursquare at your disposal you can outsmart and out market your competitors in the local market.

Whether you are a small café with 3 employees or a large retail store with 30, social media tools such as Foursquare allow businesses to outsmart the competition. Dying off are the old advertising methods in which you had to try to outspend your competition. No matter the size of your business, you can increase sales, customers, loyalty and frequency using social media while slashing your advertising budget.

*“People use foursquare to “check-in”, which is a way of telling us your whereabouts. When you check-in someplace, we’ll tell your friends where they can find you and recommend places to go & things to do nearby. People check-in at all kind of places – cafes, bars, restaurants, parks, homes, offices.”*

*“You’ll find that as your friends use foursquare to check-in, you’ll start learning more about the places they frequent. Not only is it a great way to meet up with nearby friends, but you’ll also start to learn about their favorite spots and the new places they discover.” From Foursquare.com*

## **For Business Owners**

Foursquare has been garnering a lot of action and as a business owner it is time to pay attention. It is a mix of social networks with real life gaming mixed in all done on a free downloadable smartphone application. Think of Twitter, Facebook, Yelp and Google Place mixed together in a super cocktail and you have foursquare. They have been adding 100,000 users a week and passed the 2 million user-mark this past July, 2010.

Users check into places when they arrive and can offer tips to other users to get the most out of the business. Primarily focused on restaurants, bars and nightclubs in the beginning, more and more categories such as retail stores and salons can add their business locations, called venues and benefit from this app. These geosocial apps that allow people to refer your business to friends hold tremendous value and bring the type of business to your door that can't be bought with traditional marketing.

The opportunities to promote your business are endless on this site.

### **More Check-Ins → More Exposure → More Traffic → More Sales**

Offering of specials and check-in discounts is offered for free. This encourages users to visit your venue. You can offer free drinks for Birthdays and daily specials for your most active users. Coupon marketing is currently offered for free through your Foursquare venue page.

Will Foursquare provide the ROI you need? In short, yes! It is free, it is generating tons of buzz, the target audience is the hardest to market to, i.e. young, affluent, disposable income, tech savvy. The best part may be that since the ability to claim your business is so new on foursquare, the chance that your competition has started already is close to ZERO. So take action on this now, it takes less than 5 minutes and start creating new loyalty and possibly swiping some customers from the other guy.

## **How to Claim Your Business's Foursquare Venue**

Even if you don't plan to really use Foursquare, you should take the time to make sure your business is listed correctly. Having a Foursquare business listing today is similar to having one in Google Places or Yahoo Local. Being there simply allows you to be found. You'll also get some added search engine visibility as Google Places is now indexing Foursquare business profiles and the pages tend to rank pretty well. We're also seeing Foursquare shouts count as citations for local businesses. The combination of these will deliver a great search engine ranking boost.

To claim your Foursquare venue you need to sign up on their website as a user and create an individual profile. A photo must be uploaded to your profile page and business logos aren't allowed just yet.

Perform a search for your business. Chances are Foursquare already pulled your data and added your business. If not, select “add things” up top of the navigation menu.

1) Select “add a venue”, and type your business name.

## Add Venue

Please make sure you've read our [style guide](#) before saving your changes.

Name:

Address:

Cross Street:

Notes:  then add  Essex

City, State/Country, Postal Code:

Phone:

Twitter: @

This is a private venue that should only be viewable to me and my friends. (coming soon! but feel free to mark as "private" until we go live with this)



2) Add your address. Use common abbreviations like St, Ave, and Rd. Add your state in CAPS- NY

### Example:

155 Main St  
Ithaca, NY 14850

3) Add the phone and business Twitter extension. Twitter is required but it will increase your exposure and potential on the site.

4) Like Google Places, add related keywords or tags to the listing. HOT TIP: Add your City/State as a tag. It helps when people are searching using their phones and nearby deals.

5) The listing is now complete. You should download the app to your phone (Palm Pre, iPhone, Blackberry or Android). If you don't have a smart phone, an employee is sure to have one. Check in on the app and you will be the 'Mayor' of your business.

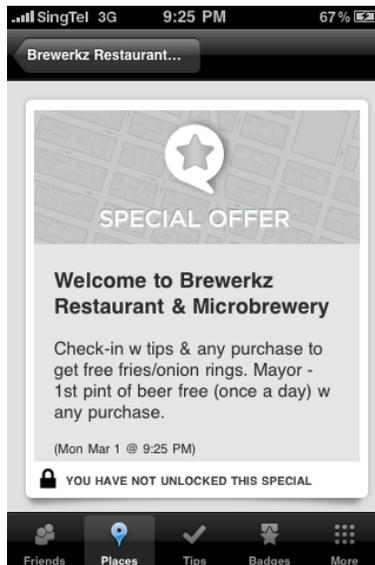
Foursquare also has window clings and decals you can order free from their business resource section on their site. Order some up and check-ins will increase up to 25% to 35% over businesses who don't display and let customers know they are active on Foursquare.

## **Add Your Special Offer**

To add a Foursquare special to your business, simply click on the link on the right hand side of the [Foursquare for Business](#) page. By making it official on Foursquare, your offer will appear in the Specials Nearby box that pops up when someone checks into a business near yours. This, obviously, can become very powerful. Someone is far more likely to stop into your store for a free coffee when they're in the area than when they're sitting in their office or at home. Foursquare gives you a way to easily target the people who are hanging out in your neighborhood (and perhaps near a competitor!).

## **Types of Offers**

- Any time offers given to every user on every check-in.
- One time offer given to users on their first check-in.
- Loyalty rewards given out after a certain number of check-ins.
- Mayor Specials given to the user with the most check-ins.



The simplest way to start offering rewards is for the first check-in and rewards for the mayor each month. Users will love playing the game to become mayor and it will attract customers if your mayor offer is strong. Restaurants also like to give small rewards such as chips and salsa when users check-in and send a tweet out to their followers about your restaurant.

Also, make your specials unique to your Foursquare users. There is nothing worse than the letdown after you realize everyone gets half price off of appetizers from 4 to 6 pm, not just Foursquare users.

## **Badges**

Users are incentivized to check in not only for discounts, rewards and hopes of becoming the mayor of a venue one day but also to earn badges.

Small businesses currently use standard badges that users can unlock by completing the requirements.

Here are some of the most common of the now **over 200** badges available to users:



**NEWBIE**

Awarded for your first check in.



**ADVENTURER**

Check in to 10 different venues.



**SUPERSTAR**

Check in to 50 different venues.



**BENDER**

Check in 4 nights in a row.



**LOCAL**

Check in at the same place 3x in a week.



**PIZZAIOLO**

Check in to 20 different pizza places.



**SWARM**

Check in a spot with 50+ people.



**MAYOR**

Have the most check-ins at a venue over 30 days

## Interesting Foursquare Apps

Foursquare has recently [redesigned their application directory](#) so it's easy to find all sorts of readily available tools to use. Take a look when you have time, it's a great place to find ideas for taking your promotions to the next level. I picked out a couple of the most popular apps below.

[Snacksquare.com](http://Snacksquare.com)



Perfect for restaurants that take advantage of local coupon and discount sites. [Snacksquare](#) lets you find all the latest and greatest food and snack deals that are closest to you. This app not only provides a method of free marketing for businesses, it provides useful money saving device right at the tip of the consumer's fingers.

[4Squareoffers.com](http://4Squareoffers.com)

[4squareoffers.com](http://4squareoffers.com) lets users search for deals on any type of product, not just food. Venues will automatically get their check-in offers pulled as long as you're marketing properly on Foursquare. Great to check what your competition is up to on their Foursquare offer.

### **Creating To-Do and a Tips List**

You can create a To-Do list for users with items that can be fun, a little out of the box or even totally embarrassing. Customers who finish your to-do list on Foursquare can be rewarded. This helps show the creative and fun side of your venue and will let customers know your business sells fun.

Tips lists give you a little self promotion. Tell your customers about your favorite menu items or helpful design tips with your products. Don't pretend you are an anonymous user on the site, let them know you are the owner or a staff member.

If they are truly helpful tips and you aren't misleading your customers, they will be welcomed with open arms. Adding your own tips first will encourage other customers to leave tips and make your venue page come alive.

## ADD TIP / TO DO! ... or add a new venue?

I did this and it was awesome... ▾

Where: modern italian

Tip:

200

Like this: Go to Ace Bar and break 500 in skeeball. Reward yourself with a Miller High Life

Like this: Go to Royale Burgers. Skip the burger and get the chicken sandwich and a pork slap. Ask for special sauce.

URL:

 (optional)

Add!

### **Pull Customers from Your Local Competition**

The feature that I really love is the ability to pull in customers from your competitors in the local area. When someone checks into a venue, and your venue is nearby with Special Promotions activated, the user will be shown the offer. This presents the obvious opportunity to grab new customers.

### **Educate Your Staff**

It's great to see small business owners getting onboard with social media sites and tools. They often missing key in these tools and new promotions is rolling out the programs to your staff. It is embarrassing to the staff and customer when someone walks in and tries to redeem a social media offer that no one has any clues about. It is much different then presenting a paper coupon. There is a learning curve that must be addressed.

This has occurred to me more than a few times. Even after talking to the manager in one case did I finally receive my offer. One business I frequent had engaged users writing tips for other users and the owner had never heard of Foursquare when I talked to her about it.

### **Educate Your Customers**

After your employees are behind your new promotion it's time to educate your customers. Post a sign at the checkout, let your Facebook fans and Twitter followers know, integrate it into your other advertising and order the window clings Foursquare provides businesses.

People that use Foursquare are already heavy social media users. Twitter users especially because the two tools work together so nicely. Foursquare does have a wider appeal than Twitter because even if it is not linked to Twitter, you can still reap the rewards and play the game by checking in. Converting your customers to Foursquare users will accomplish a few things: it will create a sense of community, it will reinforce loyalty and people will become apostles to your business by leaving tips about your business.

## **Watch Out For Being Your Own Mayor**

It is not a good incentive to your customers to come to your venue to check-in if the Mayor is the marketing manager, the owner, the owner's spouse or an employee. The chances of ousting a Mayor that works at a venue are much smaller. This goes back to my previous point about accessibility. They need not stop checking in. There is a simple way on the Foursquare website to give up your mayorship.

Login to Foursquare, view your Mayorships on the lower right and then click the X. You will be prompted that you are about to give up your Mayorship.

## **Analytics and Tracking**

There are free analytics for participating venues now as well – see who was there, who hasn't been there and more.

If you don't plan on running offers and communicating with your customers through Foursquare you should still look at the analytics once a week at least.

- What are customers talking about?
- What tips are they leaving for other users?
- What are their likes or dislikes?
- What is the general sentiment of their comments and tips?

When scrolling through the tips you will notice opportunities for improvement. If you see customers asking for more specials at lunch you may want to consider that. If others are talking about people hogging up your tables will on the internet, you may want to implement a time limit during peak hours. These comments give you a look into your customer's minds which was previously unavailable. Use these to your advantage.

Business analytics have been added to help you learn how customers were interacting with their businesses and to make a snap to engage back. The analytics page ties specific actions from your customers and you can now learn how to market directly to them with high response rates.

Here's currently a chart they provide on their website describing the business analytic features:

## Real-time venue stats

Once you claim your venue on foursquare, you'll be able to check real time stats about your venue, including:

- most recent visitors
- most frequent visitors
- the time of day people check in
- total number of unique visitors
- histogram of check-ins per day
- gender breakdown of customers
- portion of foursquare check-ins broadcast to Twitter and Facebook
- ... and more coming soon!



Check out the customers that checked in to your business. Thank them on your Twitter stream and Facebook wall. In most cases people will really appreciate the person thank you and respond in turn. Use this conversation to drive loyalty and create apostles for your business. If anyone leaves a tip also take the time to thank them and respond. Tips left by your customers is valuable feedback you can use to constantly improve.

Here is an example of Blush nightclub in Las Vegas following up with their customers after the weekend check-in. This takes minutes to do but creates loyalty and word-of-mouth advertising that is hard to buy.

**@rovingfork @bethebutterfly**  
**@Elvie0716 @512cat How was Blush for everyone who checked in this weekend?**

11:55 AM Apr 12th via TweetDeck

 **BlushNightclub**  
Blush Nightclub

**Other Geosocial Sites**

- 1) **Gowalla.com** The main location-based social competitor to Foursquare, but despite being founded in 2007, it has only attracted a quarter as many users as Foursquare. Gowalla also allows users to check in at local establishments, but is more framed around an idea of “social gaming.” The network allows users to discover, capture, and share places and events with friends through a slick user interface that is one of its key differentiator. 350,000 users estimated. Learn more here: <http://www.gowalla.com/>
- 2) **Brightkite.com** From their site, “We would love to help your bar, cafe, coffee shop, or business reach out to the local community through local promotions. We’ll let nearby Brightkite folk know your business gives them preferential treatment, and that they should stop in for a visit.” Similar to Foursquare and also free to sign up your business. Learn more here: [http://brightkite.com/pages/bk\\_ad\\_local\\_promos.html](http://brightkite.com/pages/bk_ad_local_promos.html)
- 3) **Whrrl.com** Whrrl is an iPhone and mobile application that lets people explore their cities in a completely new way, discovering new places to go and specific things to do. This allows you – a local business participating in this program – to give nearby Whrrl users a special incentive to visit your establishment. What’s more, Whrrl can tell you how many times a customer has frequented your venue, and even if they are a regular. Many businesses use this program to reward their most loyal customers with extras and special discounts. Similar to Foursquare and also free to sign up your business. Learn more here: <http://faq.whrrl.com/merchants/>
- 4) **Yelp** They added a check-in feature to its iPhone app in January and Android app in June and could quickly become a force. Businesses have been able to set up "special offers" for free on Yelp for about two years, which are displayed to both its 33 million Web users and 2 million mobile users. Learn more here: <http://www.yelp.com/business>

## Conclusion

You now have an easy tool to interact with and leverage Foursquare in a way that is useful to them. Just because it’s new doesn’t mean it has to be confusing. Now I’m sure you’re sweating a little from the amount of new work I just created in your life, but don’t worry. Eventually the marketing will go viral within your local market, and you will be well positioned above your competition.

For a small company with a limited marketing budget, the services are attractive because they're free or cheap, require minimal time and effort, and appeal to loyal consumers who favor local businesses over big, cookie-cutter chains.

Visit <http://foursquare.com/businesses/> to see examples of other businesses using the app to drive sales and customer engagement. Foursquare is free to use, takes minutes

to set up and literally no learning curve compared to Twitter or Facebook. The return on your investment is measureable compared to mass media methods.

The Foursquare train isn't slowing down any time soon and has already dipped into Alexa's top 1000 websites. I hope all of you learned something from this and take it and apply it to your business. If you're looking for help in your local search marketing you can of course get in touch with me. We can kick start you local search marketing efforts with a bang.

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