

# Case Study – Montreal 2019

If you are a business owner in Montreal, you have most likely been exposed to, enquired or thought about creating a Google Street View Virtual Tour. However, a critical question that presumably causes you to doubt the credibility of a virtual tour is, how does it help direct in-store traffic? This vital question is made even more confusing by deciding whether to implement other SEO-boosting domains like Facebook/Instagram ads or AdWords.

In truth, with the right skillset, most SEO-boosting domains are suitable for almost any business. Unfortunately, the incorrect implementation of advertisement tools or dealing with the wrong company can end up worse than a dollar invested in a pamphlet or bench ad.

At 3D marX we strive to prove with this case study that a virtual tour is an essential tool, an advertisement/SEO-boosting product that every local business should possess. It is extremely easy to market; it involves a one-time cost, and it will deliver because it produces two types of visibility.

## **It Benefits Your Local SEO It Increases Your Website Traffic**

A low investment, highly effective virtual tour covers your in-store and website traffic allowing you to explore other interesting strategies to help expand your business in the future. This case study is divided into three clear sections so you can comprehensively understand the value of a virtual tour.

### **Part 1: Local SEO impact**

### **Part 2: Customer interaction and User Experience**

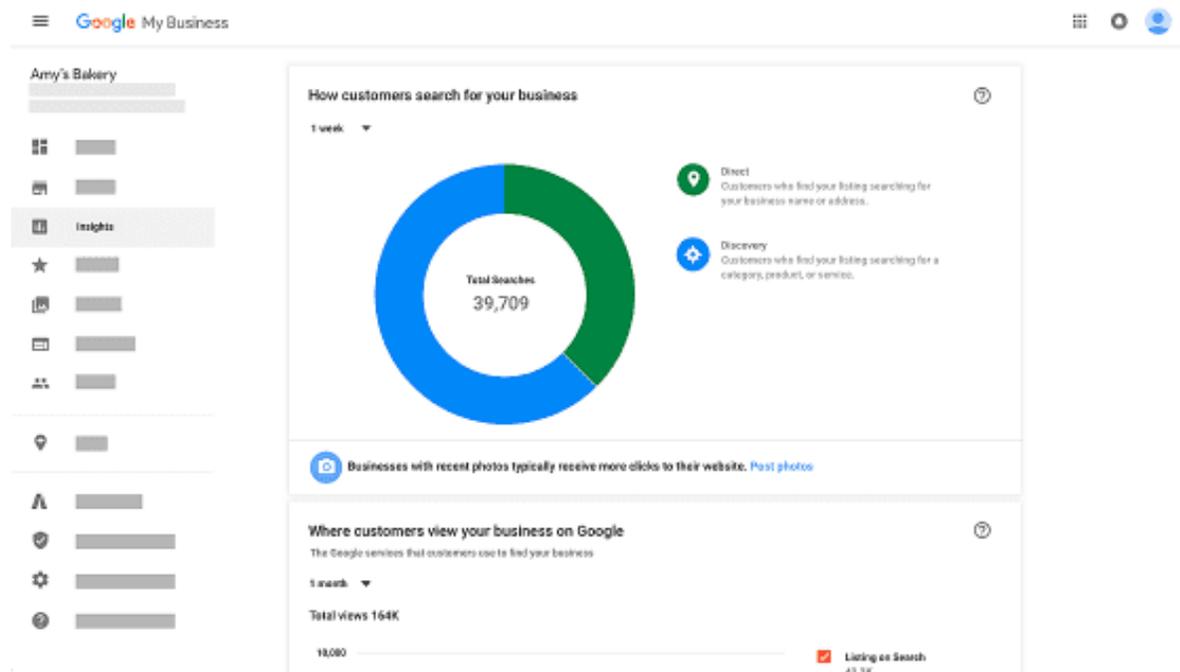
### **Part 3: Organic In-store Visibility**

Statistics that you see in this article is from our database. GO 360 Canada (a 3D marX sister company in Montreal) had a total of 412 clients in 2018. After combining client data, we ended up with some fantastic online view stats. Throughout this case study, you will also see data courtesy of Google and HubSpot. We currently do not have the structure to provide comprehensive statistics regarding the in-store experience and the offline behaviour of consumers; third-party analytics used to explain how the impact of virtual tours is beneficial.

## Part 1: The influence of a virtual tour on Local SEO

Local SEO is usually a misunderstood element of the online visibility world for local Businesses. Most owners do not see the importance of investing in an excellent Local SEO strategy because the results of SEO are not always black and white. It usually takes a minimum of 3 months to see actual results, and most people that do not control their Google My Business listing are not aware that they can track the results of their Local SEO campaign.

Google My Business (GMB) has its version of Google Analytics. By having access to this type of data, any business would see the value of local SEO, in-fact they would see how much in-store traffic they generate with their current listing.



By taking this tool and by creating a profile for some of our clients, we were able to collect enough data to prove our point. **Google Street View virtual tours affect your local SEO.**

Here is why there is no clear statement from Google or any other big data company that proves the actual SEO value of street view tours.

On the other hand, HubSpot, MOZ, and Google helped us understand that the value that it provides is mostly indirect but still relevant. Here are some stats that help explain what we are stating. In 2018, MOZ created a blog post about the top 8 criteria that affect your Local SEO. From this list, behavioural signals and social signals led us to realise that there is, in fact, a correlation between the ability to find you easily via local search and the implementation of your tour on Google Street View.

## Behavioural Signals

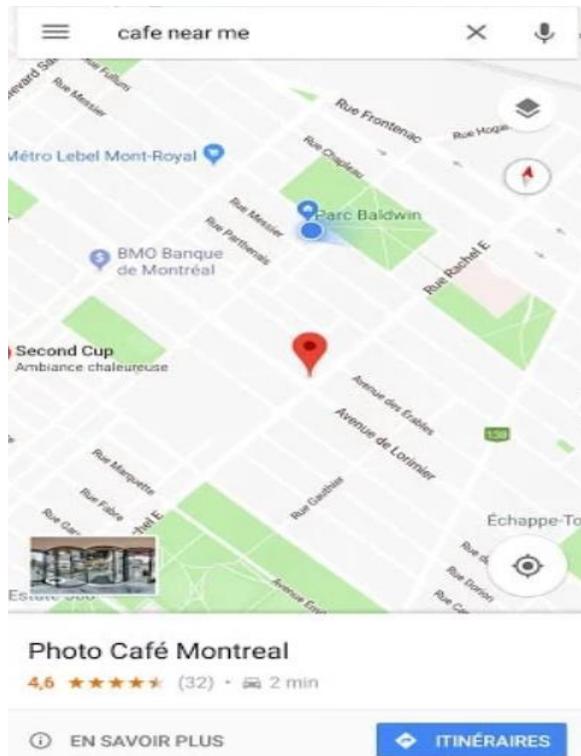
Google determines your local positioning by analysing many different factors, like behavioural signals. By having this type of data, Google can better understand what characteristics they must focus on to match the daily search of its users perfectly. Click-through rate, mobile clicks, and check-ins from GMB are all examples that help the algorithm better understand you, as a human.

Here is how a Virtual Tour affects your local visibility:

Let us start with the use of mapping products in the daily lives of consumers. **44% of business searches** are driven by a mapping application, like Google Maps, which means that every local business in the world should be concerned about their positioning and their attraction on these platforms.

An excellent way to drive clicks on your listing would be to add a virtual tour to your GMB page. Since 2018, local searches provide direct access to the interior of the store. This step allows your visitors to jump right into the store straight from their phone. Once they are in, you will see your clickthrough rate jump to the roof.

Below, you can see a map search for the keywords: “**cafe near me**”. In the bottom left corner, you can see a square with a 360 arrow. For most businesses that do not have a virtual tour clicking on this square will lead them to the street view of their business. For businesses that have a virtual tour integrated on their GMB, the square will redirect them to the inside of their business. Instantly allowing new visitors to select what store they are going to visit.



### **Virtual Tours increase online bookings by an average of 85%.**

By having a reservation button on your GMB page, you are already pushing your future customers in the right direction and are helping them do what you want them to do (book a reservation). Google shows that by adding a virtual tour to a GMB, businesses see an average of 85% increase in their online booking.

The hypothesis is that you are helping your visitors better understand your store by showing the global ambience through your virtual tour. Your visitors are then more likely to book directly from the GMB page since they are already on it.

### **Social Signals**

A small part of the local results algorithm considers the social signals of your brand. Google will struggle to find you if you don't have anyone engaging with your content if you don't share pictures, use different platforms to share your content. If you're not active on your various social platforms, Google will not think you're vital for the community. Remember, it is always about how you interact with the community.

Fortunately, two platforms can combine virtual tours and social posts:

**1- YouTube** might be the most efficient, owned by Alphabet (parent company of Google) the algorithm associated with YouTube is higher than Facebook or other social media platforms. You can use YouTube to publish 360 videos. What we suggest, if you have a minimum of skills with any video platforms that allow 360-degree images, is to create a short, interactive 360 video and post it on the YouTube channel linked to your GMB page. Do not forget to use the

geo-localisation tag when you post on this platform. Optimising your video's SEO helps your brand pop up in local and regular organic searches.

**2- Facebook**, you can use it in 2 different ways:

**First:** We suggest that you embed your street view tour on to your Facebook page. By doing so, you allow everyone that has not gone through Google to analyse your business, also to see the interior of your business. It will increase your reach and interaction with visitors.

**Second:** We also suggest that you ask for an individual 360 image of your virtual tour because Facebook now allows people to post 360-degree pictures. Surprisingly, we have had some crazy results, driving insanely low CPM and high interaction with this type of post. If you are dedicated, put a link to your GMB on your post so that people can see the full virtual tour via Google, and boost your post to reach more people.

### **We tried this strategy with a restaurant in Montreal**

The goal was simply to generate interest in the Facebook post (they had 385 followers at the time). we decided to post a picture of the terrace while there was a snowstorm outside. The text was reminding everyone that we were eager for summer to come and to start using the terrace again.



It is during these cold times that we cannot wait for summer to arrive! Only 2 months left before the opening of our outdoor seating! Do not forget to bring your own wine ;) Thank you to the Go 360 Canada team for this picture.



On such a small page, we managed to reach naturally 1,716 people, when the average post had 36 of reach. 27 people shared the post, 213 people interacted with the post, and 306 people clicked on it. And all this engagement was on a 0\$ budget. We generated a ton of reach on Facebook, much interaction between the viewers and the brand, and we helped their local SEO. All that with one virtual tour.

## Part 2: Virtual Tours increase interaction

You have probably read some other blogs about content marketing and the importance of it. Video, photo, text and audio are different forms of content that are post-worthy. By creating content and by publicising it on different social platforms (GMB included), you help your brand. There is a proper way to do this. Posting recycled content and unattractive pieces of content will not help your cause. It is all about the engagement between your brand and your audience, and they are not going to engage with boring content.

As we previously explained, 360/3D pictures are still something new for most people. Sharing this type of content puts you a step higher than competitors that are not doing it.

One of the best ways to generate engagement is to increase the interactivity of your post. Chatbots are an excellent example of high engagement because they can personalise the experience of your audience, and they can adapt to the behaviour of your audience.

**In this case**, personalisation is a bit harder to achieve, but it does not change the fact that virtual tours let the client do what they want. By allowing your visitors to choose what they see, they will be much more inclined to consume the content that you present them.

The best example we have is the 3D Virtual Tour of Alfa Romeo.

**Alfa Romeo** Created a landing page on their website only to publish their virtual tour. They drove 4,882 views in the span of one month on their landing page and generated a total of 2,272 clicks on the tour, which means that they reached a 46% click-through rate on the piece of content that they published.

Even better, we helped Alfa-Romeo place information in the virtual tour. When you enter the tour, we displayed videos, images, information, and links that redirect the user to the car's landing page. One way to reduce your bounce rate on a page and to make your traffic jump from one page to another on your website. (Remember, the more time site visitors spend on your website, the better chance you will close a sale with them.)

By having a 3D Virtual Tour, you can also use your website's visibility to promote your business interior. We compiled the statistics of 55 virtual tours integrated on any website and in a period of 6 months, they collected a total of 301,000 impressions.

**Lastly**, as Google mentions, interaction is everything, even when it comes to in-store visits. With a case study, held in New York, Google analysed the performance of virtual tours from 147 restaurants. When presented with a virtual tour, 50% of online visitors would click through to make a reservation. In the end, participating restaurants experienced an increase in online bookings by 30%. If this is not a pretty sight, we do not know what is.

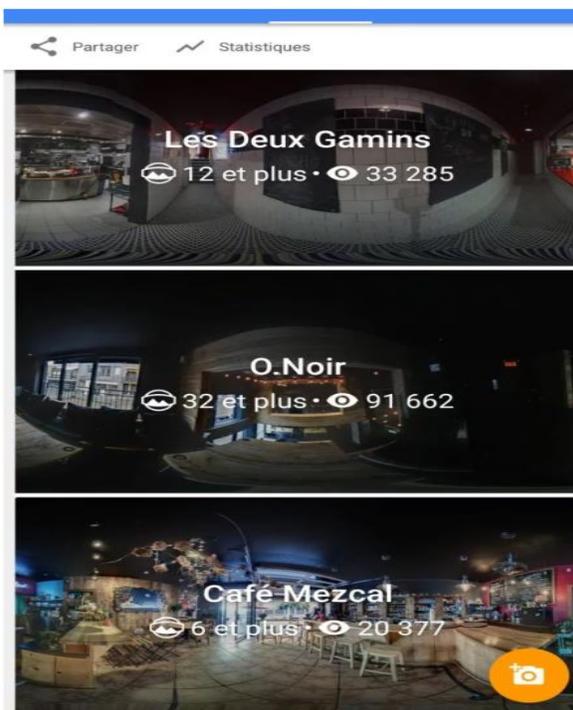
## Part 3: Virtual Tours generate massive organic reach

Of course, we kept the best part for last. The undervalue of virtual tours is crazy! We have rarely seen services that have generated this amount of organic views for a minimal amount of effort. Google has shown that the usual ROI of a virtual tour is four weeks when calculated with the usual price of \$800.

### Here is a little analysis that we have done.

This study focuses on service businesses. As seen in the full study, 90% of the selected businesses are offering a service, or sell to customers directly. We then looked at the visibility of each business selected and calculated an average of their views to have a monthly statistic for a span of six months. The results showed that we managed to generate an average of 19,481 views per month per business.

In only nine months, Go 360 Canada generated a total of 4.9 million views on street view for the totality of its client. Here is an example of one of our clients that made over 15, 000 views per month since creating their virtual tour.



## The average Facebook ads Cost Per Thousand (CPM)

One of the most significant notions to consider when it comes to an advertisement is the optimisation of your dollar according to your campaign goal. In 2018, Facebook ads had an average of \$19 of CPM, which means that for every 1000 people who see your advertisement, the average marketer would pay \$19.

We know that \$19 to reach 1000 people is already extremely low, but what if it could be lower?

ONoir Paid the average price of a Virtual Tour, by spending \$800 for one virtual tour, this business managed to generate almost 100,000 views. Equivalent to \$1,900 worth of Facebook ads.

The best part is that a business can keep this source of visibility for the rest of its duration, bringing hundreds of thousands of views for no additional cost that is optimisation.

If we look at the average views our clients make on Google Street View; a virtual tour would be worth \$380 of Facebook advertisement, every month. No additional work to do, no specific campaign to create. Only one single photoshoot.

## What should you take from this case study?

What we would like you to take from this case study is that there are many ways to generate visibility for your business. All you need to do is create a good strategy that is well optimised for your audience and your price point, depending on your product/service offering.

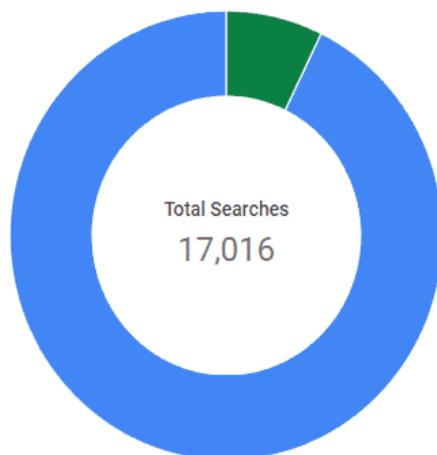
The first step for any local business owner should be to learn everything there is to learn about local SEO. What does it do, why does it help and how to optimise it?

Once again, we want you to see the value of Google My Business (GMB). The image below shows the total amount of searches, over four months, for a small shop close to downtown. We created their Google listing in October, and already 93% of people are finding their business by typing a keyword related to their commerce. By searching for one keyword on their phone, 15,500 people learned about this new brand.

### How customers search for your business



1 quarter ▾



#### Direct

Customers who find your listing searching for your business name or address.

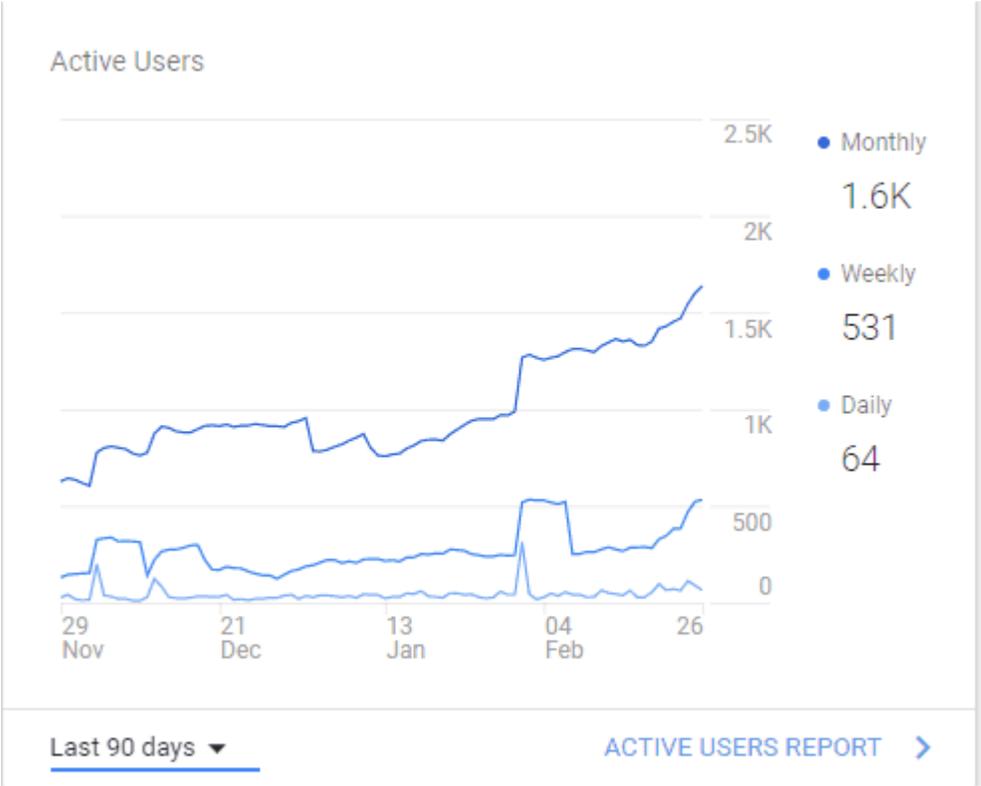


#### Discovery

Customers who find your listing searching for a category, product, or service.

Here is a graph of our own Google Analytics. We did one big burst of Local SEO for Go 360 Canada. On Google, we went from position 14 to position 1, and here is the evolution of traffic on our website. In the past four months, we doubled in monthly website visitors.

Once you understand how vital local SEO is for your business, you will realise that adding a Virtual Tour to your listing will only help you get more people in your store. Even in the worst-case scenario, hypothetically your virtual tour gets under 1,000 views per month. You wish to get more visibility out of it; you can still use it in different ways; social media posts, Facebook integration and website integration. There is so much you can do with your virtual tour!



In other words, there is no way that you could ever waste your money on this type of marketing service. Feel free to book a call with an agent if you need directions for your online visibility.