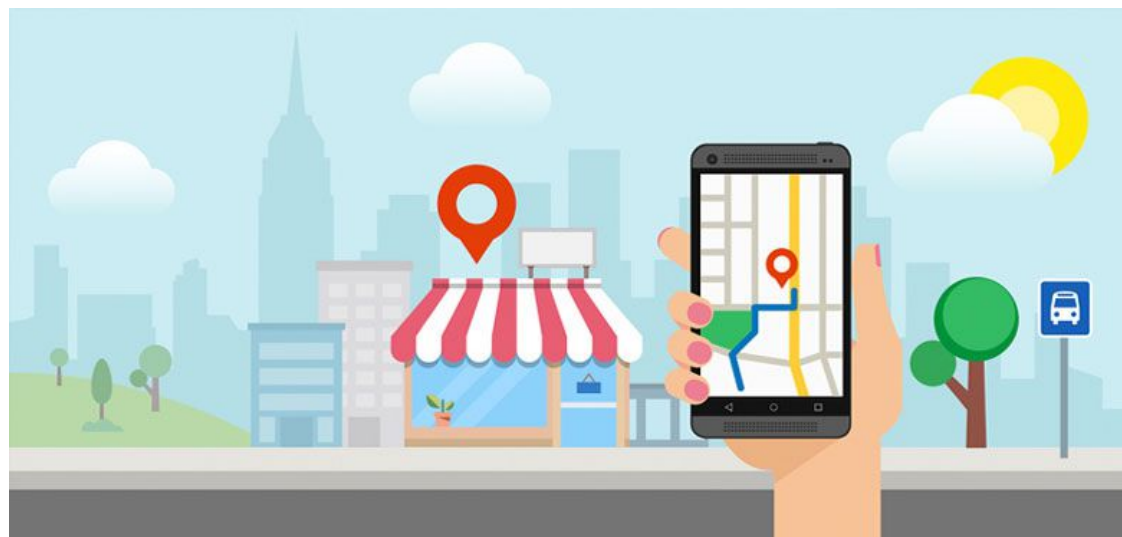


# Google's top 'Near Me' searches 2017 (and what they mean for marketers)

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Every year Google releases its highly anticipated list of top searches for the past 12 months. In 2017, amid searches for events, politicians, personalities and moments, a set of consumer behaviours emerged.



The most interesting of these to leading local search and location management agency Business Positioning Systems (BPS) was the continued prevalence of “Near Me” searches globally and the release of the first list of top “Near Me” searches for the South Africa market.

So what were the most searched “Near Me” terms in 2017 in SA?

Near Me	Personalities	Questions
1 Pharmacy near me	1 Dumile Masilela	1 What is dineo?
2 Dentist near me	2 Joe Mafela	2 What is bitcoin?
3 KFC near me	3 Joost van der Westhuizen	3 Who won the money fight?
4 Jobs hiring near me	4 Zodwa Wabantu	4 What role can the private sector play in poverty alleviation?
5 Hardware store near me	5 Mandla Hlatshwayo	5 How to lose belly fat?
6 Gynecologist near me		
7 Printing shops near me	Searches	TV Shows
8 Steers near me	1 Dumile Masilela	1 13 Reasons Why
9 Sushi near me	2 Zimbabwe	2 Game of Thrones
10 Doctors near me	3 Cyclone Dineo	3 Isibaya
	4 Joe Mafela	4 Uzalo
	5 Karabo Mokoena	

The results clearly indicate that when it comes to health/medical emergencies, South Africans are reaching for their phones to find help, possibly due to the perceived anonymous nature of online assistance. Quick-service restaurants (QSR) are the next most searched sector with South Africans using brand name (KFC, Steers) as well as category (sushi) search terms. This highlights a massive opportunity for marketers, who need to not only list their locations, but optimise to ensure they rank for generic category search terms (such as sushi).

*Printing/Hardware Near Me* searches were the next most frequent, indicating that consumers are often in unfamiliar areas when needing these services. (BPS carried out an audit on the popular search term *Hardware Near Me* and found only one major brand – Mica – had their online location data correctly listed.) The very fact that Google has now released a top ten "Near Me" list for South Africa indicates we are catching up to the rest of the world and using our phones as our final research tool before making a purchase.

Searches with local intent grew by over 30% in 2017, with the majority of this growth happening on mobile devices. This paints a very clear picture for marketers - consumers are now empowered to the point that they will use their smartphone to close the loop and make the final purchase decision. All the ATL brand affinity and brand-building rands you spend will get you on the consumers' shopping list, but increasingly consumers will turn on their phone and find something convenient when purchase intent takes over.

This means marketers need to ensure they're present, visible and accurate across the digital landscape so that consumers find them, when they need them. 'Place' was always one of the original 4Ps – the tenets of marketing. Now, as we become empowered consumers with smarter phones and WIFI everywhere, ***'Place' has become having an accurate place/location on every digital platform.***

To make sure your location data is clean, listed and managed on *all* of the most important digital endpoints contact BPS and make sure you get the 'Place' piece of your marketing strategy 100% accurate.

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