

# *The Search Is Over*

*Technology visionary Frank Rice created the innovative app and platform Searchable.com, which has emerged as an essential solution for small and medium business owners to advertise and market to the massive -- and rising -- number of mobile consumers.*

*By Rick Weinberg  
California Business Journal*

**F**rank Rice had seen enough. For decades, he had watched small local independent businesses and their respective communities get crushed.

First it was behemoths like Walmart, Target and Costco that infiltrated communities, slowly choking off Main Street.

Then, as the internet and mobile world exploded, along came Groupon, Living Social, Yelp and others to help revive small local businesses and communities. But those business models and other third-party aggregators hurt many businesses – and their respective communities – even deeper.

Sure, some businesses benefited from the online discount companies, but many others suffered when they slashed their products and/or services by 50% while not receiving their share of the funds for up to 90 days. That slowly choked off cash flow, revenues and sometimes destroyed the business altogether.

Yes, Rice had definitely seen enough. Yet the renowned tech mogul didn't just talk about it, or complain or hope someone else would do something about it.

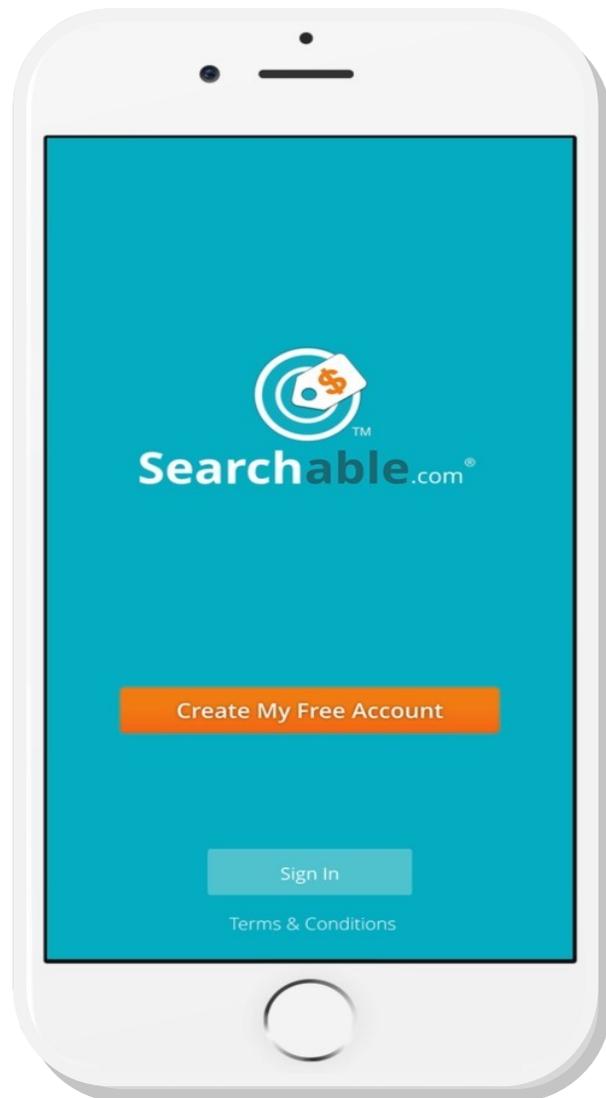
Nope, he did something about it himself.

Rice, who has had an extensive 30-year career in business advertising and technology, created an innovative app and platform called Searchable.com, a novel and affordable solution for small and medium business owners to advertise and market to the massive – and rising – number of mobile shoppers.

“The system is broken and we want to be part of the solution,” he says.

Third-party aggregators like Groupon, Living Social and others appeared to be part of the solution at the outset. But with escalating difficulties to compete within those business models – small and medium business owners took a huge hit to their core.

Meanwhile, Rice and his team spent months of research and development, looking for an answer. Together, they created a dynamic platform, which became the model Searcha-



ble.com.

“We wanted to provide an affordable mobile marketing and sales platform that enables small and medium businesses to compete in the mobile shopping marketplace, which enhances their economic sustainability, job retention and benefits the communities they serve,” Rice says.

“A platform like ours must also provide unrivaled value to mobile shoppers, convenience and be a powerful communication experience. Ours does all of that.”

What Searchable.com does is deliver a socially-interactive mobile commerce platform that directly connects mobile shoppers and local businesses seamlessly together, in real-time, without the control of third-party aggregators.

“The Searchable.com platform can deliver

economic sustainability on a global scale unlike any other currently available – and it creates a level playing field for the small and independent businesses to compete with the big companies that spend millions on search-engine marketing and advertising,” Rice says.

“The last thing a lot of aggregators want to see is a platform like ours go out and save local and independent businesses money,” he adds. “That’s because they want a piece of everything and everyone. Yet we found a way to create a mobile marketing platform where all the sales revenue stays with the businesses -- where it belongs.”

**H**ere’s one of the ways Searchable.com works: Say you’re traveling on business and it’s your child’s birthday. Now, imagine having the ability to instantly connect with multiple businesses in your hometown based on your needs. Those businesses on the Searchable.com platform see your inquiry and respond instantly through the app-messaging interface. Those businesses now have the opportunity to compete with the large corporations and discount a sale accordingly, allowing them to bid for your business successfully. You find a deal on a gift you’re looking for and the store agrees to wrap and deliver it, completing your purchase.

“You can now watch your child open up the present on video chat -- the same day,” Rice says enthusiastically.

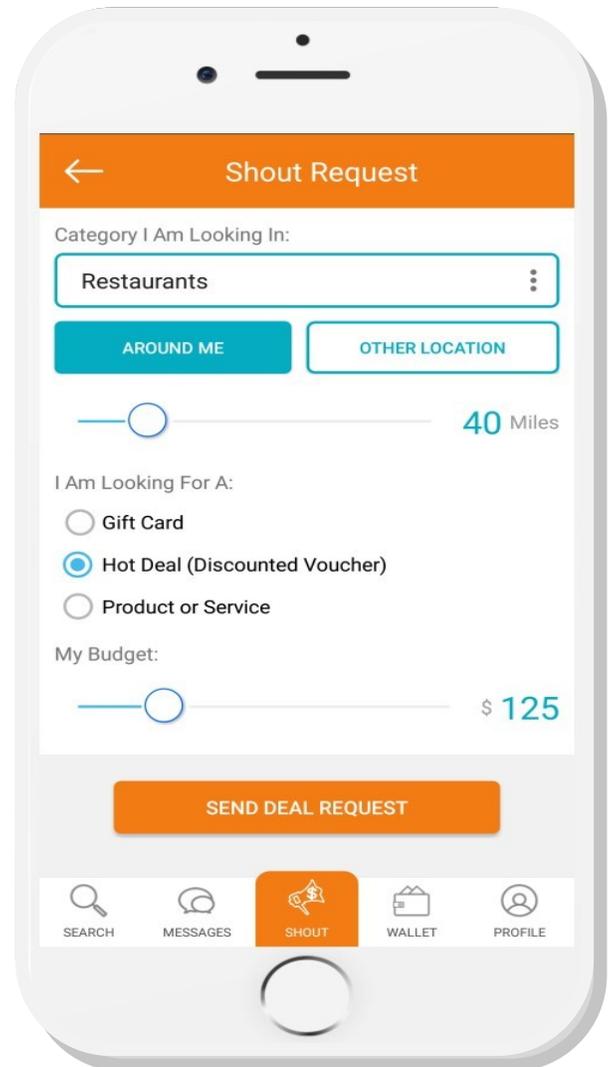
Searchable.com’s innovative and patented system is so powerful and disruptive that it is receiving outside investment interest, according to Rice.

The best aspect of it for business owners is that Searchable.com doesn’t take a portion of the sale, unlike other third-party aggregators. Searchable.com charges merchants an affordable software licensing fee. Other features support a multiple of different revenue streams within the company’s business model, enabling it to keep costs down for local business owners.

“When a mobile shopper purchases a product or service through our platform, the business owner gets to keep 100% of that money – all

in real-time,” Rice says. “That’s one of the many differences between us and everybody else.”

He pauses for a moment, stares outside at the beautiful Southern California sun breaking through the clouds, and says: “We recognized the profuse effort invested by small and medium businesses to provide value and competitive pricing. They are the backbone of our economy, jobs and stability for the communities we live in. So our mission was to deliver



an affordable mobile advertising and unique shopping platform that generates commission-free sales revenue so businesses can offer competitive pricing to mobile shoppers in real-time.”

Some of the flaws that generate complaints with third-party aggregators do not exist with Searchable.com. For instance, businesses visited through other aggregators are not able to

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— Frank Rice, CEO, Founder and President, Searchable.com

effectively communicate directly with the potential customers.

“When a mobile shopper uses the Searchable app opt-in return feature, businesses are able to reach back out to those potential customers who visited their Searchable.com mobile profile. This way, businesses in our platform know who visited them, allowing businesses to directly communicate and promote offers to those potential customers,” Rice explains.

If, for instance, a mobile shopper visited a local merchant’s profile that sells barbecues. Well, that merchant can now let that consumer know that they have patio furniture or other outdoor products available.

“We’ve covered all our bases in every element so both the businesses and the consumers benefit,” Rice says. “We’ve created a true bridge between the mobile shopper and independent business owner – without anyone taking a toll. We refer to this as Humanizing Mobile Shopping.”

**T**his is Rice’s second major impactful technology creation. He is a founding pioneer in the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) industry. From 1997-2000, he helped build and launch one of the first nationwide private VoIP infrastructures in the U.S.

VoIP was a highly innovative and disruptive technology that was instrumental in eviscerating long distance phone charges, saving consumers millions of dollars and sparking a flurry of mergers and acquisitions.

From there, Rice became an angel investor and entrepreneur in various business ventures. Then, several years ago, he came up with the breakthrough concept for Searchable.com, cultivated from years of experience in both traditional and on-line advertising and marketing.

“I have an affinity for small and medium busi-

nesses because I know first-hand what kind of impact it has on jobs and the local community,” he says.

It’s clear that when companies like Walmart move into a community, small businesses, and jobs move out, killing Main St. According to a study called “The Effects of Walmart on Local Labor Markets,” for every two jobs Walmart creates, three local jobs are destroyed.

“This is not the kind of economic development neighborhood businesses need,” Rice says. “Everywhere you look across our country, from New York to Los Angeles, mom-and-pop shops help anchor our busiest and most vibrant business districts. They are proof that our small and independent businesses are the engine that powers our economy.”

And today, more than ever, they need help to survive.

“I’m a community guy and it’s exciting to be in a position to help and support neighborhood businesses and provide mobile shoppers with the affordable incentive to support them as well,” Rice says. “To me, it’s an amazing opportunity to help these local businesses and their communities thrive again.”

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