



Have Customers Chasing You

Tired of chasing customers? Search engine optimization can turn the tables and have them coming to you. SEO consultant Gert Mellak shares how.



Gert Mellak

James: James Schramko here, welcome back to SuperFastBusiness. This is episode 905. And today, we're going to be talking about getting customers chasing you, because so much time and effort and energy is wasted on going out there trying to get customers come to us, like shouting from the rooftops, and it can be exhausting, or we have a business that's completely dependent on paid traffic, which is risky.

Of course, for this kind of topic, I've brought along my organic SEO friend, [Gert Mellak](#), welcome to the call.

Gert: Thank you very much James.

James: We've had you on this series many, many times. We've got our own series together on this show, because SEO is, of course, one of my soft spots. I started with SEO. Originally, I bought my own domain name, so that I could outrank the IMDB listing for my name when I was an actor. So SEO, it was at the very, very start for me with my online journey, I'm talking 2005.

These days, we've partnered up, we talk a lot about SEO, you've grown your business substantially in the last few years. When I speak to you about business and your team, I recognize a lot of the names, they used to work in my SEO business. So it's like, we're still in the game, just with a different guy fronting it.

And the thing is, you're really good at this SEO stuff, you've been doing it for even longer than I had. And the one thing that you've done particularly well, you started developing out your app to make it much easier for your clients to understand where they can do things to get improvements.

But just before we kick off, I want to say, like, the stuff we've been doing has been incredible. We should celebrate this, but recently you helped us navigate to position number one for a phrase that picks us up clients who are looking for a particular thing that we do, and we teach this, and it's a very, very good direct match for my coaching capability and my skill set. And you've got us up to there in position number one.

And this is a perfect example of what we're talking about today. Someone's going off to Google searching for a thing, we appear number one, they come to us. So because of the pre-work we've done, they're coming to us, they're coming into our funnel, they're opting into our material, buying our course or perhaps getting coaching.

And so just first off, thank you. Secondly, let's just talk about that, let's sort of have a look at the lay of the land at the moment. When people come to you, how often is it that they already have people coming to them on tap? Or is that what they're trying to achieve?

Do customers already have some traffic going?

Gert: First of all, I'm happy that we can give back the favor. You have been instrumental in growing our team and informing us how to set up the right systems, etc. So definitely big thank you back to you. I'm happy to now recently see things working really, really nicely, and essentially achieving what, like you asked, actually, many, many clients are searching for.

So many clients come to us that have been very successful on Facebook ads, for example, have been growing their business with Google advertising, maybe display, maybe YouTube. But ultimately, they're claiming, obviously there are high ads cost, we just had the last quarter of 2021 and the last quarter, everybody who's running paid ads knows that the ad spend can go completely crazy.

Some people even stop running ads or have to stop running ads, because they just can't make a positive return on investment in the last quarter. And this is where many people then turn to SEO and say, Yeah, maybe we should check this out again, because sometimes Facebook ads can be really, really simple, I'm not saying easy, but a simple game where you put in a certain amount, you get back more than that, and you have a scaling business.

But ultimately, then you have Facebook shutting down your account or anything else happens that affects how your ads are running, or you have ad fatigue and you need to find the next trigger that actually works with your audience.

James: Or if there's a software update, you know, there's been a bit of a tug of war happening. There was an Apple update that caused a lot of problems. I was just speaking to someone today actually who has an agency. And he said it was tough. It was really tough. They had to make a lot of changes.

Now, I think there's absolutely a case for paid traffic, and there's a case for putting it across multiple platforms, and we talk about [paid traffic](#) a lot. But what I think is really the big point here is, people who have a great paid traffic campaign and it's working really well, which is ideal, usually ignore SEO, that's really the big point.

And what I've consistently done and through your help, of course, is we have sort of crossed that challenge that usually presents itself, and that is that we are prepared to have an investment for the long haul. As you know, like, because you operate hand-in-glove with my own team, I pay people in my own team to do our SEO point work. Because as an agency, you can do a lot of the stuff, but you still, at some point, probably need the business owner to at least give you access to something or to make a change that you suggest, unless it's like, completely hands-on for some people, and maybe it is, I'm not sure.

But in my case, I pay the wages, I pay my team. And I'd be paying an SEO contractor to get the information on what we should do. But you need to invest upfront. But the benefit of that, of course, is that I have a high-profit margin business now, I don't really need paid traffic. Pretty much, my only cost is my team wages and some software, okay? And a couple of contractors here and there for things that we need.

The typical barriers to starting with SEO

So it's a great situation to get to, but that's what the end goal looks like. Let's just go back to that coalface, like someone's watching this video and they think, okay, my paid traffic's a bit up and down, or they've completely stopped. What sort of barriers do you think are there for someone when they think, oh, SEO. Got to pay up front. I've got to put some resource into this.

Gert: I think, yeah, there's definitely, probably more complexity involved in people's minds than it actually is. So many people come to us and say, Look, I really don't know if I should really start with this SEO thing. We have someone who runs our ads. And this works a little bit better, a little bit worse, but it does bring us clients. So they really want to get some information how this will actually work, the way it really works.

So what I tell them is, look, you need to have someone who can dedicate resources to this project. Ideally, you have at least an assistant, or a writer or someone who can maintain your website and work hand-in-hand with us. And with my team, we sometimes handle the entire execution for clients, but then still need someone who can approve content, who can give us information.

It was yesterday, I had a workshop with a law firm, which is really not necessarily our industry, to know how a law in California, for example, works specifically. So we really need a call once in a while, we need some feedback, we need someone who can essentially work with us, where we can either guide the process, or get some guidance from them in order to work their SEO.



But there's definitely a lot of doubts involved in what it actually means to run an SEO campaign. And we definitely do a lot of upfront education about this process, which is just something that takes a while to start running. So we are very big on momentum, it is going to take some time to build up a momentum where you then see things are actually moving.

It's like starting to push a car, for example. And this just goes very, very slowly, it moves millimeters. And then suddenly, it's in motion. And it's not that exhausting anymore to move this another meter ahead. And a very similar situation we have with SEO, you just need to dedicate some resource, you need to keep going.

But then you see Google picking up faster on new content, you see internal linking working out, etc. And this is then where the motivation kicks in, where people get really, really excited. And then slowly also see those leads coming in, those sales coming in. And then it really gets fine.

James: The thing about momentum is an important one. I'd noticed a friend of mine, [Pat Flynn](#), posted something on Twitter the other day where he had noticed a post of his had slid off the first page, and he went in and just made some changes and then it went straight back up the top.

So if you've got things in motion, and you've been, over time, building the right structure and getting your site to load quickly, and you have some links coming back to your site, if you do make small changes, it can have dramatic impact. And that's what I've noticed with your inputs. You say, Hey, this post here could be updated. We update it, boom, it goes to the top.

But what's missing for most businesses, they're not actually keeping an eye on it. That's step one. Two, they're not even thinking about it, perhaps, as part of - it's so powerful that it could actually replace their other traffic campaigns, but why not do it in addition to? That's really the thing.

Once people have decided it's the thing to do....

Why don't you talk me through the steps that people go through once they say, Okay, I want to commit some resource to SEO, and I'm realistic that this might take some time to build momentum, but I'm excited about, when we do have the momentum, how that will take the pressure off our feast and famine paid marketing cycle?

Gert: So we have a specific onboarding process we have refined over the years, really. And we spend a lot of time initially in getting really to know a customer's business from the client's perspective. So ultimately, we're in search marketing, which means we need to know how their target audience searches.

So if you're a law firm, we need to know how your future clients are going to search on the internet, where they could come across your content, and then make a decision to opt in for something, download something, get in touch with you. So it's very, very important that everybody on the team - and we are normally four to five people, at least, working on one project - everybody on the team knows exactly what such a target client is like, what they search for, how they ask questions on the internet, we do a lot of research there.

And we have even a couple of calls with every new client. In the first call, we make sure that we absolutely 100 percent understand who they are trying to target, which is sometimes a little bit differentiated, so it's really important to dive in deeply.

On the second call, it's me explaining back to them what I understand that they are trying to achieve, and how I think that our SEO strategy or what their SEO strategy should be in order to reach those people in search. And once we're okay with this, then we have an overall strategic umbrella over the entire SEO strategy.

And then we start with what we call an ERICA framework approach. And this is just a framework I've developed after a few years of refinement, where we just make sure that every couple of weeks, we touch upon everything that's important in SEO. SEO is not just one thing and one title tag or one link, or whatever. It's a whole series of things.

It's very similar to the fitness status. When you go to a gym and a personal trainer makes your first assessment, they're not going to just tell you, you should eat a carrot every day. They're going to say, Look, it's nutrition, it's movement, it's what do you drink, what do you eat, when you eat, how you sleep, and give you a lot of things that you need to do everything right in order to reach your fitness goals. SEO is very similar in this regard.

James: Yeah, so you could say it's holistic.

Gert: Absolutely.

James: It's like that classic helicopter leadership thing where no matter where you're focused, they could come down and show you something that you're missing. Having someone on the team, who has a framework that sort of captures the essence of it, is an important aspect of it.

And for us again, the way this looks like from our side, is we're just cruising along nicely. And then we get this little Loom video pop up in our Slack from Gert. And he's showing us in just a minute or two, Here's what's happening. This is what you should do about it. And here's an update on the results from the last time we did this. And then my team says thanks, and then they go and do it. And then we get the result.

It's basically a seamless ongoing operation. And that's really what I want to impress. Like you said, it's not a one-shot thing. And it's not an all-in-one-area focus. And I see people do this, perhaps when they have a misunderstanding of what SEO is, they're just like, okay, oh, I just want to go on a link-buying program, or I just want to pay someone to write articles, or they say, I'm just going to get my site's navigation redone and speed it up.

But these things in isolation might get some impact. But when you do them as a concert, you get this symphony of results. And we've been through that. I remember my team sped up our website, and it got really fast, and then they redid the content, and it floated back up to the top, and then over time, people even want to link to it, which is great. So you could start to see the benefit of this.

Consistency and knowing what's important

But the other thing is, on the long-term side of it, it's very easy just to say, Well, we've sort of done all that and then forget it. And that's where it's always good to, like a garden, you want to keep maintaining it or the weeds will come and grow over and some plants will choke the others and some will get sunburned and die away, like you've got to keep maintaining it.

Gert: Absolutely. And what we very often hear from clients is that once they see this momentum going, they say, Look, finally we see something is happening in SEO, because SEO is usually an on-and-off thing in a company where it's, okay now we have some free capacities. Let's do something for our SEO.

They pull themselves a little bit back up with a little bit of fresh content, etc. But then they fall down again because their focus shifts, they don't have dedicated resources, there is never someone assigned on the team who just looks after their SEO and makes the right calls. And then we see a lot of resources and a lot of money actually being wasted, because when I ask clients what they have been doing in the past for SEO for their website, many, many clients point me to their WordPress plugin they're using and look, every box is ticked, and everything is green on my Yoast, on my rank map, plugin, or whatever.

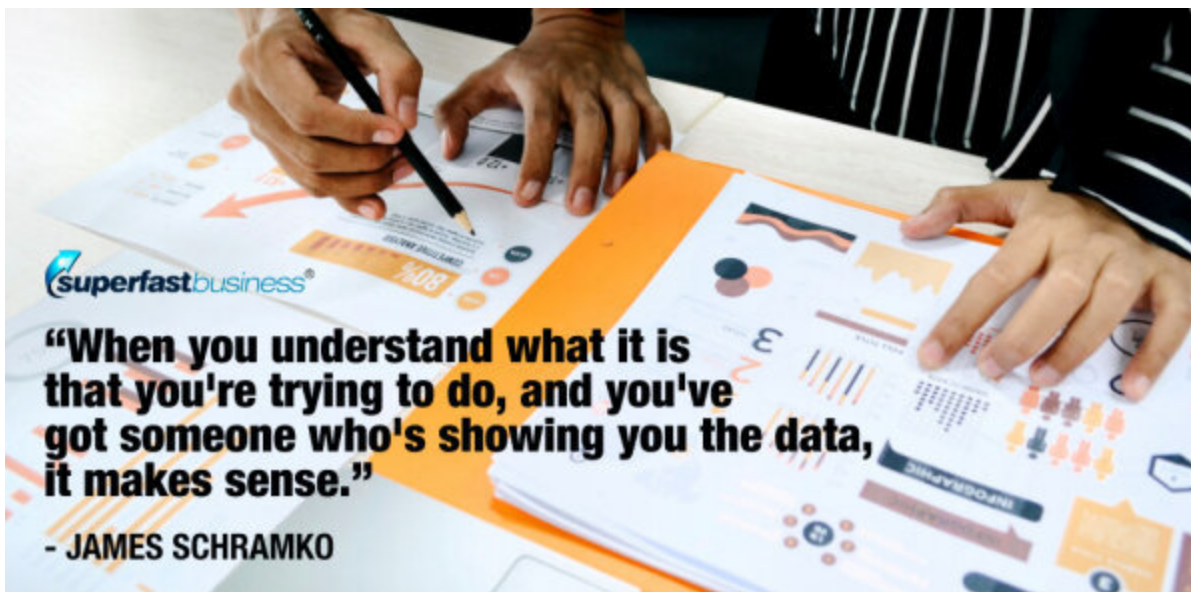


And SEO is just really much more than that. Right? SEO is a strategic focus. SEO, you've seen this on your site as well, SEO doesn't mean that every single article is going to rank high on your website. Articles have different purposes. Some articles have a purpose of documenting that there was a podcast episode. Other articles have the purpose of bringing in the right people to turn into leads by downloading an ebook.

Other articles have the purpose of just sitting there for social media engagement. But they're never intended for search. But what's really important is to figure out which ones are those individual articles. And this might only be a handful on a website that actually drive the right people in. And this is when our application that we have been developing for quite a few years now can seem, where we just strip everything out from Google Analytics and Google search console that we don't need.

And we just focus on the places, where do people come into the website? How do they convert? And then it's really, really easy to filter those articles out that actually drive those conversions, that are actually bringing in those right people. And then we can, in the application now, click on those URLs and see, what are actually the terms people use to reach those websites? Can we create more content around this?

If this term brings us the right audience, maybe we should also address it on social media. Maybe we should run ads to this term as well in order to broaden the audience and to put more pillars down to it. So the focus is really identifying what is really important for conversions, and having someone who monitors this consistently and points you to those five, six, 10 URLs that actually make a difference in your business.



“When you understand what it is that you're trying to do, and you've got someone who's showing you the data, it makes sense.”

- JAMES SCHRAMKO

James: Yeah, that was shocking to me, actually, how much of our content was not useful, that didn't get views or whatever. And then we had to prune and cut back and then make feature posts. Again, when you understand what it is that you're trying to do, and you've got someone who's showing you the data, it makes sense. And the results speak for themselves when we make those changes, and then they pop back up.

It was always just sitting there. It just needed changing. One of the great examples was [an article that I think was probably nine years old](#) that you said, Hey, this one gets a fair bit of traffic, you should update it. And so all I did was make a Loom video of me reviewing my nine-year-old article - maybe it was eight years, I can't remember, something like that - saying, How did this age? You know, sort of like a YouTuber video, like, how does this article stack up now in the current year?

And then I made that video, and we put it back on the page. And then it said, updated for 2021, I think it was when we did this. And it moved the whole article. Again, it just gave it a shot in the arm and took it straight back up, because it was like, fresh. Like, Google wants to reward it, but they were probably sitting there saying, Come on guys. It's a bit out of date. We love this article, but we have to put others in front of it because it's not as new or fresh.

So when we updated it, we even updated the date of the article. That was one of the interesting factors, because it popped it back up in my podcast number series and confused some of my listeners. The funny thing is, some of my listeners were like, Hey, I love this retro blast from the past post, you know, like, I see what you did there. And that was actually an unintentional scenario, but pretty cool.

How much do you stand to gain?

So where to from here? Like, we've got this concept that, hey, customers could actually come to us on an ongoing basis. And all we need to do is just say we're in it for the long haul. We need to do a little audit. We need to get things cooking. And then we need a person in our team or some resource to be able to effectively actually take advantage of all of these things on an ongoing basis. But how rewarding can it actually be if we get this in place?

Gert: It's definitely extremely rewarding once you see it that you start ranking for, not only ranking for certain terms that are interesting for your industry, but actually those rankings bring in traffic that then converts, traffic that requests a proposal, traffic that wants to get in touch with you, traffic that books in a call with you, or actually makes a sale.

We've worked a lot with Shopify sites these days as well. This is when it gets really, really rewarding. You see, for example, we were just working on that Shopify site that was pretty much only listing products. And we started bringing some more context to those products with descriptions with more informational kind of content as well, then suddenly, you see people do their research. And then from this research point, make the purchase decision. This is a very big point, for example, for e-commerce sites.

So it's just really all about, first of all, making sure that we have the status quo on the website, this is usually done with an audit here, where we just go through the website, make sure we have a solid technical foundation, and no roadblocks really for Google to index and properly understand how the site is structured.

And then from there, really start filling out this momentum, make sure that we have the data tracking in place, can actually understand what kind of traffic brings certain kinds of results. And sometimes it's even us suggesting some lead magnets, making some suggestions for opt-ins in order to drive more of the right traffic to your ebooks, for example, etc.

So we very often also give some conversion optimization tips. We just did this on a website, and they immediately jumped like 30 percent in conversions, just by putting a few extra buttons here and there and making sure that they actually leverage the content they have built up over time.

James: I think they're the ones that I like the most, is when you say, Hey, you should consider doing this or do that, or this thing you've got here, if you just change that. That's where we've had the biggest results with the least amount of effort, where you've looked at the information, see something obvious that we're missing, and then point us in that direction, then my team and I create it. And that's done. So it's worked great.

I wish this for everyone. They could have inbound leads coming from their SEO work. Of course, you're over there at SEOLeverage.com. Someone wants to get in touch with you, Gert, go through the system, the onboarding, the getting hooked up to the app, have you working on their account, that's the place to go.

You and your team of course, ever-expanding team, really getting great results for everyone who's gone over there. So I appreciate it. And thank you for coming along and sharing again.

Gert: Thank you so much for having me, James. It's always a pleasure.



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