

A close-up portrait of a man with short, dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a blue collared shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage and a yellowish light source.

JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

5 ACTIONABLE TACTICS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SEO

Is ranking your site in Google a struggle? James and SEOleverage's Gert Mellak explore five practical tactics that can immediately enhance your SEO.



Gert Mellak

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1067. Today, we're talking about five things you can do right now to improve your SEO results. Of course, SEO is standing for Search Engine Optimization, particularly Google. I've brought along my friend, expert, guest, partner, [Gert Mellak](#) from [SEOLeverage.com](#), to talk about this. Hey, Gert.

Gert: Hey, James, thanks so much for having me back.

James: Yeah, look, you're on rotation. Because every time we do an episode, I get people saying, Thank you, that was very helpful. And I think it is a moving target, this SEO thing. And it's nice to keep tabs on what's happening. But also, it's really good to have actionable insights and things that we can actually do to get results.

An update on James's SEO

I want to give you an update, actually. Today, I had someone contact me and say, Hey, I noticed you've deleted a podcast we did, off your website. And I said, Yeah, we did. And he said, Is everything okay? Like, Did I upset you? I said, No, not at all.

It's just that, Firstly, we've still got it all up on YouTube. And we actually send people with our newsletter to the YouTube channel these days for the podcast, that's a strong channel that I want to develop. And partly because YouTube seems to be dominating the search results for the topics, and I figure, well, if they're owned by Google, and they're getting promoted in the channel, that's okay to do that.

Secondly, we still have the feed on Blubrry, so you can actually get all the podcasts. But it went off our website because we had a big prune a while back, and we actually took over 1099 pages or posts that we deleted off our website. And I just wanted to give you that feedback, Gert, that we're starting to rank quite well for some of the topics that remained.

And when I looked into it just to alleviate my friend's concern, I said, Listen, we only had 13 people visit that post in the last three months, so no one's missing it, because no one was looking at it, and it's still available. So anyway, if you are a podcast listener, and you're wondering why some of the episodes aren't on the actual website, you will find them on YouTube or on the Blubrry RSS feed. So there's that.

Secondly, the ones that we left are the ones that actually get traffic that people are interested, that define what it is that we do here. So that's a little explanation. And all of this came about because that was my big lesson that less content can actually get you better results, which kind of sits well with my philosophy in life and with the 64:4 approach that I take, and I talk about it in my book, *Work Less, Make More*. So anyway, there's that feedback.

What else can we do?

I'm curious to know, Gert, are there things that we can do to get better SEO results?

Gert: Absolutely, there are a lot of things we can do. And today, we're going to talk about five of them that people can actually implement right afterwards. So if they want to take notes, I think this would be a good episode to do so, at least to note down some keywords. And Google is actually really, really still the key player.

I was just looking at a statistic from SparkToro, where Google is actually the source of two thirds of the traffic of the entire Internet. And this is something we very often forget. Like you say correctly, YouTube is on an upward trend, definitely, and definitely an important place to be. But we still have so much traction from Google.

And we can't forget it's traction where people actually are trying to solve a problem. So the quality of the traffic coming from Google and receive it with all the lead generation on our clients' projects, is exceptionally good.

James: Yeah, well, I mean, it's great the results you do, Gert. I see your [case studies](#), I've been reviewing your case studies, and tangible results, not just ranking for a keyword. But driving leads to a service business, causing sales for an e-commerce business. Those sorts of results are what people want ultimately, that, you know, if you're a barber, you want people sitting in your chair, getting a haircut, and buying some shaving cream, a new razor or whatever.

Tactic 1 - Consistent simplicity is key

So what's the first thing that we can do to improve our SEO results?

Gert: I think the first thing, and it's interesting, this is one that has been around for a long time, but hardly anybody does it well. It's describing your brand in very simple terms consistently. And I want to explain this a little bit.

We're having search engines that analyze text on a semantic level to try to make sense of the concepts of the page. And they're getting better. Everybody has been playing with ChatGPT, you see to which extent they start actually understanding stuff and not only making stuff up, getting better, thankfully. But we also need to see that it's also machine that processes the website. It's not a Google employee making sense of this. It's a machine.

So sometimes I see brands - very often actually - I see brands, and they're having like really, heavily revised copy on their website or very flowery descriptions of what their brand does and what their philosophy is in life, which might be compelling for a reader, maybe. Very often, it's even they're easier or better to use simple terms. But for a machine, it's almost impossible to understand what you're all about.

So what we are looking at here is, I am this and that, I do this and that for this audience. So I'm an SEO professional helping business owners with their SEO. And this is what we want to do consistently. And when I say consistently, I'm not only focusing on the whole same website, you want to describe and refer to your brand on your website, in this in similar terms, but you also want to look at this off-page on other websites, talking social media profiles, talking YouTube channel descriptions of YouTube videos, etc.

Why? Because the machines are also going to process that content. And if you're on Twitter, a consultant, and on Instagram, a lifestyle designer, and on YouTube, you're a YouTuber, for the machine, it might happen that you are three different things. And it's very, very hard to connect the dots.

The machine might just think there are three James Schramkos for example, if the profile wasn't consistent, and they would not be able to assign the credits that you deserve, on one end, actually to the other parts. So if Instagram is going really well, and you have a lot of engagement there, there might be some indirect effect on other channels. But they can't assign this if this is not consistently implemented.

James: There actually is another James Schramko. A fellow over in the USA, who's got a couple of pictures of Toyotas on his profile. It's quite different content than what I'm publishing. But I'll take your point. So if I was helping people in business, I was mentoring them, whatever, I might still use an easy-to-understand label like business coach or online business coach, and I might have it consistent.

The machine that reads it all

But when you say the machine, what are you referring to?

Gert: I'm referring to the programs that gain your website, the bots, if you want, right, Google is having a program that opens up your website, internally, reads the content and tries to understand it, follows the links, we call this the crawling of your website. And this is a process after the crawling is going to be to index the website and trying to make sense of it, store it in the index in the database, so to speak.

And they also have a knowledge graph, which is actually the database trying to make sense between the different concepts. So there is your name, there is what you do, who you help, what's your birthday, where your pictures are, what your website and social media profiles are, it's all connected, but it can all only connect correctly if you are consistent with the brand definition.

So action step really for everybody: go to your, especially, homepage and about page, make sure you have one or two sentences that are very short, very clear about your brand. I'm this and that, or this brand is this and that, helps this group with this particular problem.

James: And you're saying they crawl - they might go from my website to [my Instagram profile](#), and then they'll crawl that? And then they'll sort of link it all up as part of the map of James Schramko.

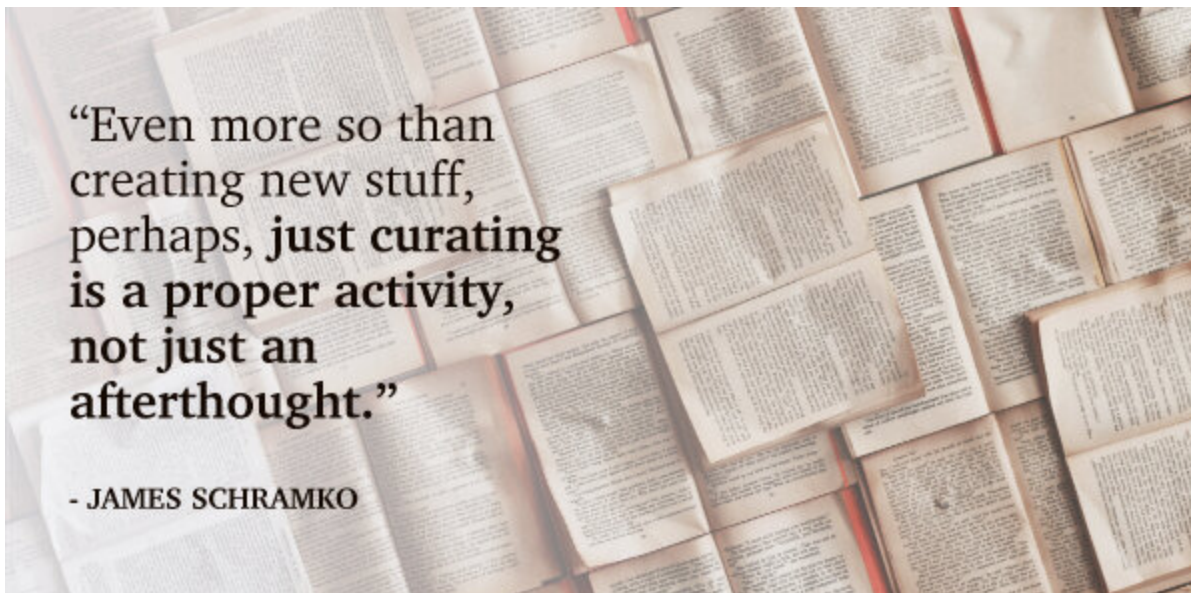
Gert: Ultimately, they want to make sense of what they find and connect what should be connected. And this only happens if they understand this is the same person. I had the same issue. And sometimes it still comes up, where I'm a writer with my books and I'm an SEO on another end, and Google sometimes seems to have issues understanding I'm the same person.

And then there are tactics we are implementing to actually fix this. But it's not easy for the machine. We just take it for granted that Google can just figure it out. And especially if you have a rare name, it might be easier. But if you have a name where there's an option that there is another one on a person with your exact name, it's extremely hard for Google.

So the interlinking is really important. It's important that you have one particular page that's like the home of your entity. We call this the home of you or your brand. And this is where all the connections need to come together.

Where cleaning up beats new stuff

James: Yeah, this makes sense. And I suppose if you've been around for a long time, like I do, you might have had various iterations. In the past, I was a paid traffic expert, I was an affiliate marketing expert, I was a membership expert, I'm a revenue share business model expert. I'm known for concepts like [OwnTheRacecourse](#), etc. So [Work Less, Make More](#), the book. And so, I would be called an author on Amazon, I imagine.



So I guess - and I think we said this in the [previous episode](#) or [the one before that](#) - we should spend a lot of time cleaning up and making sure our house is in order. Even more so than creating new stuff, perhaps, just curating is a proper activity, not just an afterthought.

Gert: Exactly. And it's as easy as google your brand, or your name, your personal brand name. And just look at the first few pages, what comes up. This is what Google thinks is the most relevant thing about you. And if there is information that you think is kind of outdated, kind of not relevant anymore, you might want to either create more relevant information, or try to edit the information that's out there.

There is a high chance that somebody where you were a guest a while ago, is happy to change the link on that page that they have about your podcast episode, we get a lot of positive feedback from people happy to make a small change after a while if you have a different focus now, if you want them to link to different place, etc. But it's also nice that you have a history, obviously have the experience, than in different areas. For Google, it's really important to have consistency, as much as possible, it's never going to be perfect.

James: Yeah, I think when we did the big prune, we took about a third of our content down. So it would help them understand what we are. I do get asked from time to time, people wanting to change their links, so I can tell they've been in touch with an SEO person. It was [Chandler Bolt](#)'s team, it was [Noah Kagan](#) at some point.

So they've all had someone in their team looking for their links and saying, We'd love you to change the text that links to us or whatever. So that's really helpful.

Does this also inform that authority panel that shows up on the right-hand side, if you've done a good job of this?

Gert: Exactly. The authority panel and knowledge panel, as we call it, is essentially the confirmation that Google has certain information that they have confirmed about you. So you put in Barack Obama, there is a lot of information to have just confirmed and have been educated.

Google has been educated by different sources they trust about this particular brand. Like in your case, as well, if I type in James Schramko, there's a knowledge panel showing up and Google has enough information about you that's consistent, that they say, Hey, this is actually the truth.

And this is how we are actually able, as agencies, with these specific tactics, to actually manipulate what Google's understanding about a brand, or also make this shift happen. If somebody still comes up as a developer, in my case, 20 years ago, there is a way to actually now come up as an SEO professional, at least as an SEO consultant, as long as all those sources that we can analyze that Google uses are consistent.

James: Barack Obama, that name sounds really familiar, I just can't quite place it.

Gert: Yeah, maybe you should google it. [laughs]

James: You know, if people do that search, and they don't like what they see, did I recall that you help people fix that, [reputation management](#) type work?

Gert: Exactly. We just recently launched the book, Fix Your Online Reputation, really giving specific information about that, and helping people also to tweak their process. And we specifically work with brands that are actually losing a lot of money just based on what is coming up for their brand name or for their personal name, some historic things that are not related, for example, some negative press, etc., just to make sure that people get the best information when they, for example, have seen an ad from your campaign on Facebook, they might google your brand, and you really want to control what's coming up there.

James: So yeah, I mean, so you just launched a book, what's it called, Fix Your Online Reputation?

Gert: It's called Fix Your Online Reputation.

James: Where do you get that?

Gert: You can get it on Amazon.

James: Okay, cool. Well done. I didn't know that when I asked that question. It sounds like such a setup. But it says what it does on the tin, I think that's really great. So just in summary, the first thing we can do is describe our brand in really simple and consistent terms on every property that we can, and the way that we could check it is google ourselves and see what's coming up on the first few pages and then go and change them if possible or ask people to change them if it's on a third party site. Got it?

Gert: There you go.

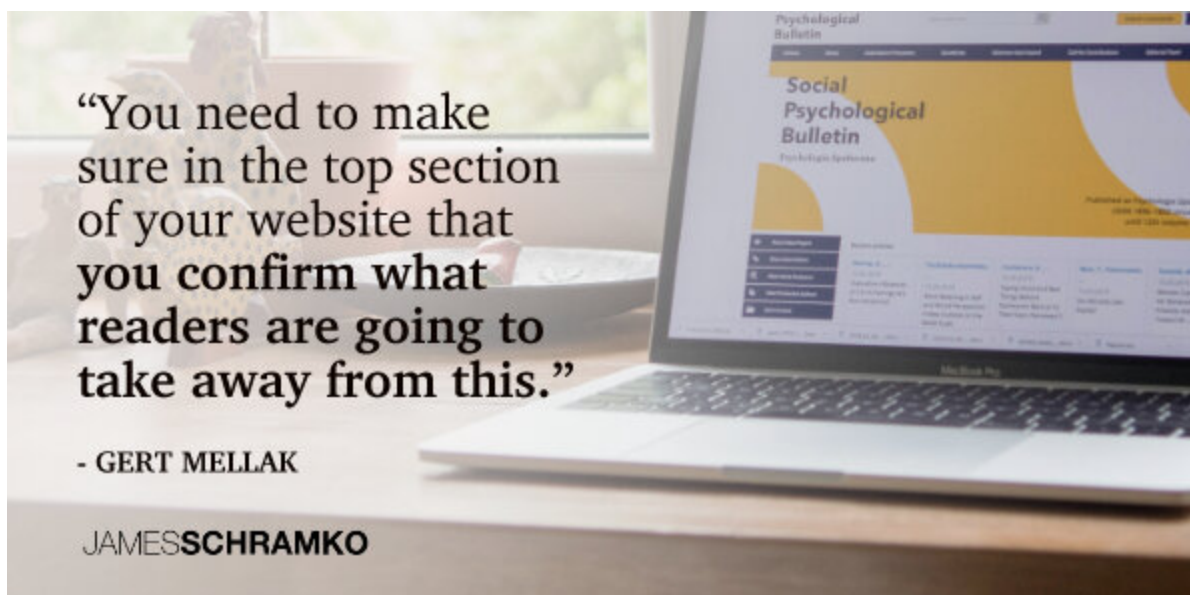
Tactic 2 - What's at the top of your site?

James: What's the second thing we can do?

Gert: The second thing is focusing on the top section of your website. And this is where I would want everybody to think how they behave when they search for something, click on something. How much time do you actually spend on a website before you think, this is not what you were looking for? I remember a conversation I had with Greg Merrilees, actually, on my podcast, SEOLeverage.

James: That's [Greg Merrilees](#) from [studio 1 design.com](#). He'll send me an email and he'd be saying, I laughed or I spat my coffee out when you mentioned that. I do try and give him a shout out, because his designs are obviously amazing. He's the one who does all our websites and so many of my clients. A true fan of this podcast, he's listened to every single episode ever.

Gert: Definitely, I love working with him, with Greg and his team. And I remember him saying that there are, I don't remember, sorry, Greg, if you hear this, I don't remember the milliseconds, you told me it was, but it's like, you have a fraction of a second where somebody's going to already figure out whether this website is for them or not, and design plays a big role.



But at some point, they're also going to start reading the words. So what we want to assure is that the most relevant stuff is on top. And if you think about a long article, you open up on a mobile phone, there is a long scroll bar on the side that you very quickly notice. And you say yes, this is it. This is eternal. This is 5000 words; I'm not going to scroll all the way down to see if the last paragraph answers my question. You need to make sure in the top section of your website that you confirm what readers are going to take away from this.

So very often, we recommend putting key takeaways on top, like in a bullet point list, put a table of contents on top. This is specifically for articles, not something you would do on a service page, just visually and for conversion purposes. But definitely on an article where different sections you want to enable people to jump down to the section they are actually interested in. And you want to tell them at the beginning what they can expect. Because this is going to keep people longer on your site, it's going to keep them more engaged. And the chance that somebody jumps up who you could actually help is much lower.

James: So when we said at the beginning of this episode that we have five tactics you can implement, that was a pretty clear promise, right? And so we call this the hook, right? The hook. We know it in videos, we know it in copywriting, we have to create a good hook in our content to encourage. Is that one of the factors, if someone stays on a page a little bit longer, would that help the page rank?

Gert: That's up for debate.

Do hooks help with page rank?

James: [laughs] I know it's not published. What's your hypothesis on that one?

Gert: I think Google is smart enough to know when to use it as a criteria and when not. Somebody is searching for the height of the Eiffel Tower landing on a page, even if they click through properly, they get the answer already. Even if they click through to the page, Google is going to know that this is not a criteria for the success of this search.

James: You're not going to have to go to a page to find that. I'm almost certain that the world's largest scraper would give you that answer without having to even click on a site.

Gert: Exactly. But it's even, about this, I think they show it even in the search box, you don't even have to hit enter.

James: That's it. It is. The height of the Eiffel Tower, 300 meters, 330 to the tip, and another one says 324. So I didn't even finish my search. So whoever's publishing that content is not getting the click.

Gert: Yeah. But the interesting thing is also for definition, somebody's searching for a definition, for example. And even if it's not the featured snippet that's showing up right on top with a definition embedded in the search, Google will know that somebody searching for the definition is not going to spend a whole lot of time on a particular page.

However, somebody searching for marketing tips or email marketing subject lines, they are going to spend some time so it would make sense for Google to take whatever data they have about it into account. And my theory is they do.

James: Right. So tactic number two that we can do is we can focus on the top section of each page to improve the experience, to intrigue people to continue on that page. Would it be fair to say what we're trying to do here is make sure that when someone has arrived here from a Google search, that they get the most compelling and accurate confirmation that they are on the correct page?

Gert: Exactly. Very concise, Hey look, this is what you can expect here. It doesn't have to be the answer. But tell them that you are the page that's the best to answer the query.

James: Nice. Well, I don't think there's too much to discuss around that particular one.

Tactic 3 - Things have to relate to each other

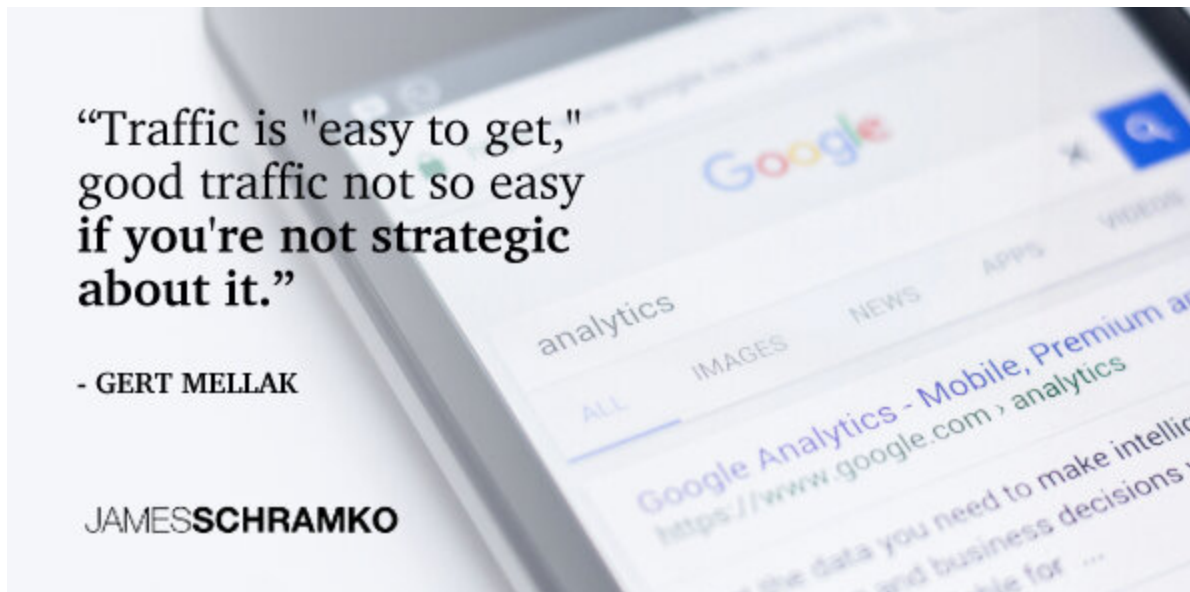
Let's move on to tactic number three.

Gert: Tactic number three is about internal linking. And I know a lot of websites, or website owners, know this is something they completely neglect. They come to me to calls and say, Look, I already know, let's audit the website, but I already know we have internal linking pending. We never do this, we don't know what the process should be about where we've been really work on the process and give them an SOP on how to do this.

For me, it's important that people take here away that Google and all the other AI engines are getting better with context. So you publish one piece of content and let it sit on your blog, which is what a lot of people do, they just hit new post, new post, new post, and they blame Facebook for this because over a year, it's so important to have something to publish, and they didn't want to publish your competitor's posts.

So people went a little bit overboard. But it's adding new content. But all this content is not automatically related to each other. You might have to, sticking with the example of email marketing, you might have been talking about email marketing on 20, or 50 different articles. But if you don't link them together in a strategic way that Google can understand and follow, things are not going to fall in place as you expect.

So on the one hand, it's about context. So imagine you have an article about email marketing, and you have another one that's about opening rates. Once you link them together, each article is going to start ranking for long-term keywords from the other one. Because they are now in context and they weren't before. So the opening rates article is going to rank first only for opening rates and mostly for opening rates stuff, and the other one only for email marketing.



But once you link them together, email marketing open rates is suddenly going to be a keyword you have access to, because you make the connection happen, you give Google a better understanding how your content is related. And you are going to get better traffic, which is ultimately something I'm very big on, because traffic is "easy to get," good traffic not so easy if you're not strategic about it.

How to go about interlinking content

James: I've got questions around this. For context, at one point, I had a couple of 1000 domain names, and I had 1000 blogs, and I had some custom software written that could, I would just basically add my own ad server. And I could log into a dashboard, type any word, and then it would go across the 1000 sites and find that word or phrase, and then it would link them between each other.

And so, I could rank really well for that word with the anchor texts control as well. It did also some other tricky stuff, like for Microsoft when it showed in Microsoft, it would actually rotate the links each time so that it was constantly generating new things. Anyway, this was a long time ago. But it did remind me, there are some plugins for WordPress, for example, that will automatically start linking up words between your site. I'm wondering if they're still around, and are they any use?

Gert: They're definitely still around. And they're slowly getting to a point where I might also consider using some of them. I'm rather conservative with my SEO approach. So I like to have more control over when I want to place the link.

Also, you want to look at conversion as well. If you add those plugins, you have to check if you might have a paragraph that has 18 links going out, just because over time, you just add more words you want to link and it's going to add up. And you suddenly have a paragraph, which pretty much consists of links, and it's not going to have a good conversion rate, and the links are not getting clicked anymore.

I think it's much easier than that, it's as easy as tweaking the process and making sure that whatever you put out, starting today, has a few links in there to content that you know you want to push. And this is where we inform our clients specifically, in consulting, and say, Look, this article needs some more interlinking.

We did this recently with a [revenue share article](#) on your website where we told your team on [Slack](#), Please, can you put some more internal links pointing to this particular article? We think it can get more authority and context this way. And this is really the important point. It's also about authority.

James: And did it work?

Gert: It did, absolutely, you landed on page one.

James: [laughs] Yeah. I remember that. So in that case, my team will go and search my blog for anything related to [revenue share deals](#), and when they find posts that's not linked, they could link that back to the article that we want to rank. Is that right?

Gert: Exactly. In many cases, we will even show them a spreadsheet with passages that we have found that would be relevant with suggested anchor texts that they can highlight and link.

James: Making it too easy. It's just giving it to them on a platter.

Gert: We really want to facilitate the process ultimately. Yeah.

James: Yeah. So that's what you do as a service. I mean, I love that. I was just thinking, I hope my team's listening to this particular episode. And then I remembered, of course they are because they edit it and publish it and do everything. So I'm hoping this is happening. But what I'm hearing is, before you go down the automation route, it might be good idea to do some manual internal linking to really take control of it and so that you don't go berserk. Because sometimes those things can play up and get a bit hyperactive. Right?

Gert: Exactly. And you might end up looking like Wikipedia, which is definitely user-friendly for an encyclopedia, but maybe not the right thing for a service business.

Giving certain pages authority

But there's a second aspect to internal linking I want to mention as well, which is actually driving authority to certain pages.

So if you think about authority, this used to be called page rank and link juice, it's all the same thing. Let's call it authority, right? Other websites linking to yours bring authority in. Your internal linking takes this authority and distributes it across your page.

What this means is, if you have like, for example, you got a really good PR on one of your articles, and this article gets linked from other websites, news outlets, guest posts, etc., this article suddenly has a really strong authority. You want to make sure that you strategically place internal links from this article into other sections that could use some authority as well, that might not get so many links from the internet.

So you have pages with certain authority, the homepage is always on every single brand, one of the big authority pages, if not the most authoritative page. So you want to look at links that you have from your homepage pointing to your key pieces of content as well, or pillar pages or services.

But also, inner pages might happen to have a lot of authority. Sometimes it's even login pages, for example, that are completely underused for internal linking. Everybody has links from software directories to the login page and doesn't use this link juice properly to actually drive the authority elsewhere.

Where do sitemaps come in?

James: Clever. Just a side note, I actually own the domain linkjuice.com. So if you're listening to this podcast and you would like to buy that domain name, get in touch with me. It is for sale. Secondly, you sort of indicated the sitemap there. Because the sitemap is often found on the footer of the page, and it generally has a pretty good sort of linking to every page on the site. Is that something that needs sculpting? And how different is that to the robots.txt sitemap, that, you know, I don't want to get too technical, but these might be questions that someone would have.

Gert: Yeah, absolutely. Makes sense. We're talking about tactics today, anyway. So I haven't been actively creating a sitemap I would link in the footer for many years. Just because on a normal website, usually it's not a problem anymore that Google would discover the pages on the website, right? Google has different ways to discover a page before they crawl it.

So there is a discovery process first, or exploration process where they just create a list of URLs, and afterwards, they're going to crawl them. And this discovery process, they have different sources on how they can discover them. The Google, the robots.txt linked XML sitemap, that usually is created from Yoast plugins, for example, on WordPress automatically, and you would just add it to the Google Search Console. This is one of the places is just a list of links of all the links and usually also the date of the last update.

So Google knows when this was last updated. And Google can go through those and decide when they want to crawl this page again, or if something has been updated and know about it and can crawl it directly. This is the one that I would always recommend, because very often, it's also interesting to see if there is some error that happened, something got noindexed, but is in the sitemap, or things like those. And we want to know about it. So it's good practice to add that one.

James: It's a good place to find all sorts of interesting things on someone's website.

Gert: Absolutely, you can. It's very widely used for scraping websites, as well, figuring out all the URLs they have, taking what they want to index, etc. `

James: Hidden pages, test funnels, all the rest of it.

Gert: We even find thank you pages. In our audits, very often we find thank you pages where they actually give away what they have behind the opt-in, or even courses, entire courses, we sometimes inform clients that are available on the web, they just didn't know about it. So in audits, we sometimes discover some of those nuggets.

James: Yeah, this is old school stuff. So that is basically number three, internal linking, leveraging the homepage in particular. And you gave away a little nugget there, the login page, could be a good one as well. And so, you should have a robot's sitemap file, an XML sitemap.

Gert: Yeah, the XML sitemap and that's then linked in the robots.txt file.

Tactic 4 - Presentation counts

James: What's tactic number four, Gert?

Gert: Tactic number four is actually having the content in a way presented that Google actually wants to rank. So what I mean by that, if you have a keyword where you feel you're not getting ahead, very often, eight out of 10 times, you have it presented in the wrong format. So if you think about somebody who is searching to buy a surfboard, Google already knows they're looking for an online store.

James: I know somebody. I know somebody.

Gert: Somebody typing in buying a surfboard, or two fin, three fin surfboard, I don't know.

James: Okay, yeah, I don't think you're a surfer there.

Gert: No, I just learn from your Instagram. [laughs]

James: Twin fin or thruster, yeah.

Gert: [laughs] Shouldn't make up those examples. So somebody's looking for a bike, right? [laughs] Somebody's looking for a bike. Google already knows they're looking for an online store. They know they're not looking for a blog explaining why riding your bike is the best leisure activity you can pursue. They already know what we call the search intent. They intend, why did they put in a search query in the first place? Right.

So when I want to rank for this bicycle-related search query, I need to make sure that my content has the same format. I can't force Google into ranking my article about cycling as a leisure activity for a transactional query like buy bike online. It's not going to happen. So very, very often, clients come to me and say, Look, I have no idea why, we have tried everything. We don't rank for this particular term.



And I have no other tool, I need to open up Google and say, Look, this is what Google wants to see. Compare it with what you have on your website, and see, can you actually produce something similar? Can you actually create, maybe on a Shopify site, we would ask the client to create that collection page that looks very similar, to start ranking better rather than trying to build I don't know how many thousands of dollars of links to the article, which also happens, to kind of try to convince Google of something they're definitely not going to do. So making sure that you actually have what it takes to rank on Google, you figure it out by looking at Google and what they're actually ranking.

James: This is a really important one. I mean, I had a client the other day, they asked me, I've got a research step in one of the things that I teach. So he went and did research, he found what's there. And then he came to me and said, I've found what's there. So I'm going to do a unique positioning, so that I have something different that stands out.

I'm like, You're missing the point here. The research step is to show us what the platform wants to give us. So when you do something different, you're basically, you're taking a tightrope here. Like, you're risking everything, because you don't know. Like, if you were to make something quite similar to what they've already proven, they want to present, that they want to serve up, they want to show, that would give you a much safer starting point, that's the bullseye. Don't go too far from the bullseye with your piece of content, because otherwise it's a risk. By all means, take risks after you've done something like that.

So this is a critical point. Buying more links or trying to promote something that they don't want to promote is not going to get you - or might get you the reverse result than you want. It could actually expose your website is trying to manipulate and then they may get pushed further away from their goal.

Gert: Exactly. And first you just really, to your point, you want to fit in. And then you want to stick out. This is how I explained it to my clients. First you need to fit in, so Google actually knows what kind of animal you are. Right? So now I know that you fit into this group, now we can have the traffic, we have the people on the website, and this is where we - through the offer, through the copy, etc. - we can start to stick out.

James: So basically, we should get on the train with everyone else. And then we can move the carriage.

Gert: There you go.

James: Okay, I like that. So working on your search intent and making sure that you've got the right kind of content and having a big clue as to what's already out there and doing well.

Tactic 5 - Where very long articles come into play

What is number five, tactic number five? I know you've saved the best for the last, are we going to do a drumroll or something?

Gert: I think number five is something, just to keep the suspense a little bit longer, number five is something I think a lot of people are not really aware of. They come to us and say, Look, I need a keyword research first, I don't know what's happening. I have been blogging for so long. I really don't know what I should be targeting and what my people are searching for, and how often they search for it, etc.

So number five is really to leverage the data many people already have or can easily get, which is actually working a little bit contrary to number four, but for a purpose. We want to create very long articles at times. So what's happening with a very long article is that it's probably not the best result for any particular search query unless somebody has a very generic, very top-of-funnel query.

So something like, What is email marketing? is begging for a very, very long article or a content hub with tons of sub articles, whatever it is. But if you have such an article about your industry, there are a few things that are going to happen. First, Google is going to get a clear understanding about your brand, just because you've spent so much time creating such a comprehensive piece of content. And they are going to rank you badly for a lot of different keywords in bad positions, right? So we have clients who rank with long articles for 3000 keywords.

James: It sounds like my old podcast transcriptions, which we did for many years. Like, in the old days, we would have transcribed every single word you and I said, and it would have been word-for-word on the blog post where this podcast is. And then later, we would split it over two or three pages, but it was really long. And it'd be pretty clear to Google that we're talking a lot about SEO-type stuff.

But when you add up 1000 podcasts, and all different topics, I mean, I'm rotating through [operations](#), [SEO](#), [traffic](#), [emails](#), etc., like all these different topics, it starts to become very hard to figure out what this is about again.

Gert: Exactly. But if it's an article, the good thing with a long article or transcript on a particular episode about a particular topic is that it already shows you where the potential is. So if you do a podcast about ranking drops on your show, for example, and you have a long article about what to do with the ranking drop, Google is going to start ranking you on page eight, page 10, page 12, page 15, page 25 for a lot of different keywords.

But this means even if you're on page 10, it's still in the top 100 out of five million results. This does tell us something. It tells us that we are really kind of relevant, Google assigns us a certain relevance. They don't think it's top notch, they don't think we have what it takes to rank on page one, but they think we are among the 100 most relevant sites on the entire internet out of millions of results that they could be showing. So what this does is, it sets us up for further iterations.

So what I mean by this is what we do with this data is we analyze it, we tell our client, Look, these are the keywords that you're already relevant for. Is there anything in your industry - we don't have the industry experience - is there anything in your industry that you think is very related to a middle to bottom of funnel search or question you would get at an event or email somebody would send you with a particular inquiry? And then we take those keywords and optimize specific content for them that can actually rank on page one.

Going back to number four, what is it that we need to write in order to rank for this keyword on page one in the top half, which is usually the goal? And we only have this information very often because we did this market research. The keyword research is mostly going to rely on tools which do some analysis on the internet as well. It might go to Reddit, it might go to Quora and extract some questions and things like those.

But very often, it really takes actual users. And this is where very often also Google ads is handy to have for data mining and see, how do people actually phrase this? How do people actually search? We can get this information from Google Search Console and from other tools as well. Where do we come up in bad rankings? And then iteratively go through those keywords, go through this information, and then create content in a space where Google already assigns us relevance.

How long is long?

James: I like that. It kind of reminds me of, I published a lot of podcasts. And then we went through the site and found, which ones are we ranking for, which ones are aligned to the kind of solutions that we provide? Which ones make strategic sense? Which ones are actually getting the visits? And then which ones don't fit into any of those categories? We should delete them, like 1099 pages. The strategy was, publish a lot, and then prune. So you're saying do one long post. But when you say long, you said 3000 or 4000 words?

Gert: Probably a few thousand words. So just imagine you can do this now with AI-assisted actually, just talking to your phone for 10 minutes about your industry. There's probably enough material with some tweaks and edits to get a really good long article about your industry out, which could be like an introduction to XYZ industry. And you talk about everything that comes to your mind.

This is usually good initial context to create a really very long article, if it's 8000 or 5000, it really doesn't matter that much. A long article with a lot of different, very focused information and topics and tips about this industry. And then you let it sit there for a while. And after a while, you're going to see, there's a lot of information. If you already have a lot of content, chances are you don't have to write it right now. You probably have so many different articles about your industry already, that with auditing, the Google Search Console information, and a simple SEO project, we could already extract this information and tell you, Look, you're really relevant for this set of terms, for example.

James: Most people should probably have an hour's worth of content on their about page that they could transcribe, that would be a good sort of setup.

Gert: Exactly.

James: Okay. So the fifth one was long articles that expose you to organic market research, that allow you then to make better decisions on where to go specific for your targeted campaign.

Gert: Exactly, because it also shows you where you can actually rank. So it's one thing that you do keyword research and know whether 10,000 people searching for this particular topic in the US. It's another thing that I'm already among the top 100 that can actually rank for a particular keyword. So we do this with our keyword research just directly. So we just grab this data. But I know that a lot of keyword research is really just based on fresh information from tools, rather than taking into account your website and what you can actually realistically aspire to.

Recap and closing

James: Love it. So to recap, we've talked about tactic one, describing your brand in very simple consistent terms. Tactic two, focusing on the top section of each page. Tactic three, internal linking, especially the home page. Tactic four, content based on search intent. And tactic five, long articles as organic market research. These sound like little mini projects that a team might embark on to tick all these boxes. Is that the kind of thing you can help them with?

Gert: Exactly. So we have both, we have clients on retainer where we consistently do like, all kinds of things, we consistently help the team like we do with you. And we have one-off projects as well, where we actually just look at the internal linking, or just really look at specific parts of the website in order to make them work, and then work project by project in order to make the situation for this particular site better.

So this is usually in a conversation where we decide which approach makes the most sense. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to go into full retainer right away. But there is a lot of value in tackling a particular area of their site's SEO as a one-time project and take it to the next level this way.

James: I love it. Well, you know, this episode is brought to you by SEOLeverage.com. Gert, what a fountain of knowledge you are. You know, I love chatting with you because it's really good to get an up-to-date picture of what's working. It's still interesting to me, this whole thing, SEO. And like you said, Google is such a monumental website. It's just driving so much traffic. It's good to participate in it. I'm glad we have you on our team. And we've benefited from that.

So personally, thank you. And I know the service works really well because we get great results from it and continue to do that. So thank you very much. I hope we'll get you back to talk about something else new and interesting. And if you do need help with your website, with your SEO, if you want to take on a project or look at a retainer or get your reputation sorted out, I would recommend you get in touch with Gert at SEOLeverage.com.

Gert: Thank you so much, James. Always a pleasure.

A photograph of a workspace on a wooden table outdoors. A silver laptop is open, with a glass of iced coffee in the foreground. A large green plant is on the left, and a cactus is on the right. The background shows a wooden fence and a building.

JAMES**S**CHRAMKO

**GO FROM SIX TO
SEVEN FIGURES
THIS YEAR WITH
HELP FROM JAMES**