

A portrait of James Schramko, a man with dark hair and a slight smile, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and a dark jacket. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

CASE STUDY: TRIPLE REVENUE WITH MULTIPLE BRANDS AND STRATEGIC SEO

Discover the power of strategic SEO. James and SEOleverage's Gert Mellak reveal the innovative approaches that multiplied a client's revenue by three.



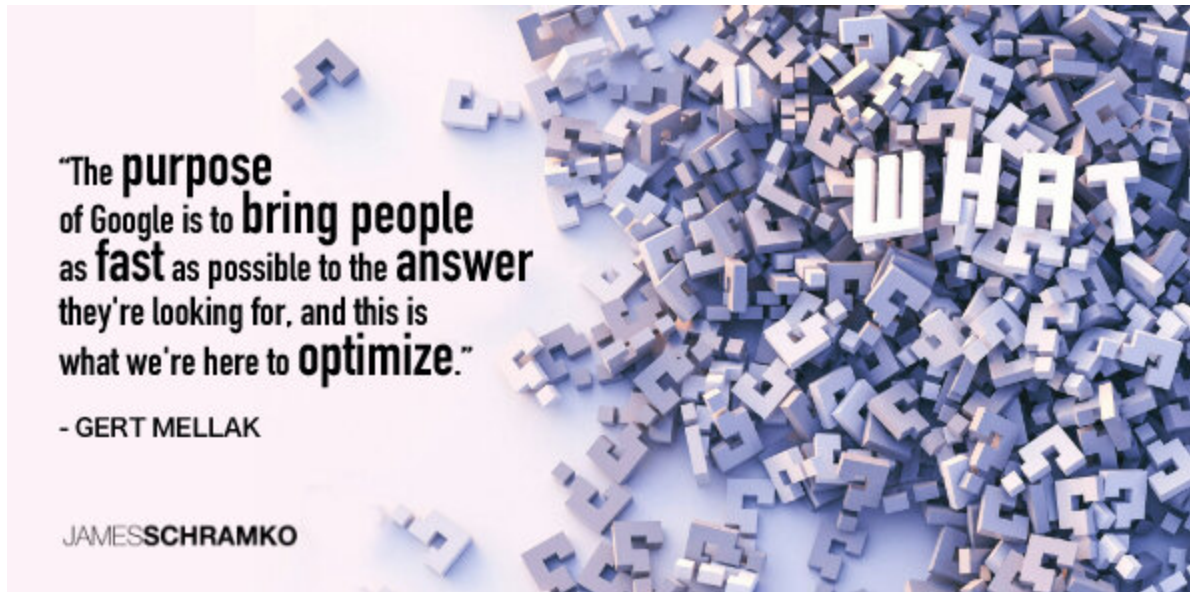
Gert Mellak

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1063. We're going to be having a case study today. A pretty exciting one actually, triple your revenue with multiple brands and strategic SEO. Of course, I've brought along [Gert Mellak](#). Hello, Gert, good to see you again.

Gert: Hey, James, good to be here.

James: You're our resident SEO expert, [SEOLeverage.com](#). I must say, I've been following a few socials from some SEO people. And I'm really learning a lot of interesting information, particularly in relation to how many searches are done every day, how short the time spent on the platform is compared to other platforms, you know like, people spend hours on YouTube or hours on Facebook, but they spend seconds on Google. And that's because they're searching with a very specific intent. And when they find that resource, they click onto it. That's the game you're in, right?

Gert: Absolutely. Every platform has its purpose; the purpose of Google is to bring people as fast as possible to the answer they're looking for, and this is what we're here to optimize.



James' s own case study

James: So you've got a case study for us. I like case studies because it's real. You're saying this actually happened. We can often learn from case studies because if there are any elements of the case study that are relatable to our own business, then of course, they could inform us as to some of the things we might be able to do to get such magnificent results.

I mean, who wouldn't want to triple revenue? And look, I don't know if we mentioned it in the last time we chatted, but it was pretty good to see after our big prune on my own website, which you help us with, we jumped from page 100 to page one for one of the terms we're after. And I can't help but think that might have been to do with what we did, based on your instructions. So I just wanted to say thank you for that.



Gert: No problem. Yeah, it definitely makes sense to make sure Google has a very clear idea where you want to go, and you're not all over the place.

James: Yeah, well, it's good to throw in my own case study there because I'm a sort of active participant in your voodoo magic, right? Whatever trickery or sorcery you're doing, it's working. And I'm pretty sure it's all aboveboard, and we're not doing anything crazy.

But it was good to experience that because, you know, whilst everything else has been discussed, there's so many other things to do, from VSLs to high ticket to TikTok shop to AI, like, you know what it's like, the moving feast of IM. SEO is such a long-standing, predictable, reliable, worthwhile thing to be doing.

Navigating family business dynamics

So tell us about your client in this situation. Where do we start from?

Gert: I think the best probably to start, when I got introduced to this client, it was actually still a few years back. So we still had in-person meetings, it's a local business in Madrid. They have, like, a family business, the father's running pretty much the show there, the son wants to kind of establish himself as following his father's footsteps and taking over more and more responsibility.

And what like very often with some, it happens often with family businesses, they get stuck at some point, right? They have their way of doing things, there is no way of breaking out of it, they're really, really stuck to everything. And same thing, every week has 60, 70, 80 working hours, there's no way to actually do something really drastically different because this is just the way things have always been done. And I think whenever you feel your SEO is, is like we've always done it, this is very often then a key point to say, Hey, wait a minute, let's put a hard reset here.

James: Yeah, bringing back a lot of memories for me, a lot of motor dealerships were second- and third-generation family businesses. Partly because the original generation, you know, went out and got land and then over time, it became too expensive and difficult for people to set up. So they were already entrenched. And then they passed down the business.

A lot of the politics around family businesses are very difficult. Is the son who's trying to break out and do things differently, are they right? Or are they wrong? You know, could they throw away a family treasure? Could they ruin - just because they need to be seen to be doing something different or taking the lead, and I imagine a lot of resistance from the first generation if they're still around, because they're like, don't ruin it for us. We've done so well before doing it this way.

And there can be accusations of nepotism. There could be a lot of politics with the staff, whether they're on side with the first generation, or second generation, can be a very delicate situation. And I imagine as a supplier, it might have been interesting for you to have to try and communicate to everybody involved, the stakeholders.

Gert: Absolutely. You have to prove yourself, right? So in this case, the son got, like, certain flexibility to try something. But there was always like the immediate need to actually show this is going in the right direction. So, we did a lot of reporting, actually what we do today, where we, every couple of weeks, send a Loom video to everybody reporting on what's going on.

This started back then, where every month, I would physically drive to this company and explain to the son and the father when he was there, what the situation is, Look, so many people are not coming to your website. You type in this, you rank there, etc., to actually show them the conversions that are happening, to slowly get this trust, and get from a very, very small arrangement to actually scale this up and really make this, like, a very strategic framework here.

James: I love it. Yeah. Gosh, you know, the last place that I worked, the owner was a second generation. And his son, the third generation, was a digital media agency doing the website stuff with me. So I had, like, a foot in each camp. And then my very first or second client, as a digital marketing agency, was a motor dealer where the father was running it. And the daughter was the manager.

But the father was super progressive. And he's just like, Yeah, do whatever you need to do. He was really switched on. And I'm guessing when you went out in person to meet them, you would have had to have had the father's buy-in for him to trust that you know what you're actually doing and that you would let him know if you think the son's doing something crazy or not.

Gert: There's definitely this trust relationship, there are those conversations where I say, just keep me informed. Let me know how this goes. Let me know if you need anything, those kinds of things. So it was like the son could pretty much run the business. But there was always this veto from the father, potentially, that would come and say, Yeah, I want to do this. But let me just check in with my father. I can go so far. We can invest a little bit more. But let me just confirm this really quickly. Right? So these conversations, obviously were there. But they went away very, very quickly after we were able to show some results after a few months.

The cost of stagnation

James: So what was the cost of not doing something? If they just continued to do it the way that the father ran the business, what would happen?

Gert: Something we see a lot of times with family businesses, things just have changed. So whenever there's, like, a father and son, father and daughter, very often in the scenario, the father expects that if the daughter or the son just does exactly what they did, they're going to have the same success.

And I have never seen this work out well, because everything changes. Competitive landscape change. We are not carrying printed catalogs anymore to all the businesses, and we are just one out of three catalogs they have, and this is where they purchase. It just doesn't work this way anymore. So this expectation of, just do what I did, and I just spent my time in the sun and ringing doorbells and saying hello and shaking hands, and this was good enough to get us to seven figures - it just wasn't a situation that could continue this way.

And I know of another family business in a similar area, very close, actually, 20 kilometers away. And it actually went down. Because they were not empowered, the children, there were two daughters were not empowered enough to make those calls. They just had to run it as they always did and send facts, I don't know what. And they just went down.

The company's pretty much ran down to the ground because the father was just not ready to really let new things happen here. So what would have happened here was with just decrease in revenue, letting go of staff, really probably focus, like maybe on one key product the family could run on its own without staff or something like that. I mean, there's just no way you can compete. It's a very competitive space they were in, so they had to do something, it was no other way.

The shift from quantity to quality

James: Were they watching competitors take ground that they were missing out on?

Gert: Absolutely, absolutely. Because it was just clear that digital marketing was more and more coming up in Spain as well. Spain was a little bit behind here. Definitely it was clear Google Ads was being used more and more widely. So there was just no way - competitors would have eaten them up alive.

James: Yeah, I've seen it like in the online world, we see change. A lot. I was just having this conversation with someone earlier. When I came online full time, in 2008, some of the people who are now in the market would have only been just born or three or four years old. Think about that, the amount of change, an entire generation has changed.

So we're seeing the change with AI. I mean, I've really learned my lesson recently, and that is that we should be spending as much time updating content as publishing. And I reckon, you know, 10 years ago, probably the game was just, publish as much as you can. Publish the very best you can, and keep it the very best.

A strategic SEO overhaul

So what did you actually do in this guy's case? You've gone up, you've met them, you've said, Okay, your competitors are taking ground, the world is changing. And the old man says, Okay, well, we got to, I guess, okay, try something. What do you do?

Gert: We actually started, obviously, auditing what they had right now in place. Back then, there were some things that had to be done on their website, they had no SEO optimization whatsoever back then. So they had no Google ads, they had actually Google ads running. And we audited the Google ads and pretty much saved I think, \$500 on that just doing things a little bit differently. But they pretty much needed a fresh start.

So optimizing the website after auditing it was the first step, but then really lining up the necessary content work and really conversion-driven content work, because it's obviously, they wanted one to inform what an office is, and what an office desk is. They wanted to sell office partitions, office refurbishment services. So they had a very clear focus on who their client was, which could be architects, construction firms, the authorities very often are looking for them, schools, etc.

They had a very clear view. We built, essentially, there was another conversation I had with them back then, where I said, Hey, let me ask your salespeople, right, let me ask them, what kind of conversations do they have? We didn't use even a keyword research tool for the first month in SEO, because I just wanted to make sure that whatever their salespeople get asked all the time, it's actually reflected on the website.

And this was actually a funny strategy, because even though I'm all about updating content, there are a few of those early articles we wrote that are still driving leads 14 years later, we didn't touch them. And this is really, when you nail the industry, you're absolutely crushing it.

James: Yeah, I remember when I went to buy a stand-up desk. I was telling the guy about video marketing. And I actually made a video for him while I was in his office and loaded it up to YouTube, and he put it on the homepage of his website for years until I took it down eventually. But I imagine in some markets, you might have an advantage for quite some time until the others come along, if you're early to move. If you're the last one to move, you can see what's already worked.

Keyword research for enhanced conversions

What about this keyword research thing? Is it true that a lot of the searches that are being performed in Google have never been done before and that only a few of the searches will actually result in the type of search that ends up being a purchase?

Gert: Absolutely. So both is truly a new ways of people find to search every single day. Percentages vary here, I've heard everything from eight to 15%, 20%, 10% of searches that Google has never seen before, which is why it's so important that Google actually understands your content, not only price to match keywords anymore.



And the second thing is obviously, like you say, it's not about creating as much content as possible, if your goal is to actually drive home conversions and sales. You want to be strategic, you want to know that if this is the amount of resources I have to put into SEO, let's put it where it's most likely to drive conversions and drive actually the right trafficking.

So what we're looking at very often and also in this particular case, was how can we drive better traffic in? That's to do what we actually want them to do rather than have top-of-funnel traffic browsing on. We actually targeted people at a very, very low level with a combination specifically on local and regional SEO.

Maximizing impact with minimal content

James: Does this mean you can do more with less now? Like, if your fix-up kit is to analyze what they've got, analyze what they're trying to do, research their target audience, maybe speak to their salespeople, have a look at what's always been working based on analytics, if they have it, then you could just say, Okay, if you really want to hit the bull's eye, you just need at the minimum, these core pieces of content structured this particular way onsite. Is that a good starting point?

Gert: It depends on the site and industry, I would say. What we usually do is, we score the different areas that we know are important for SEO. I have a [scorecard](#) on the website as well, on [SEOLeverage](#). If somebody wants to go through the processes, rather assessing the process that you have right now, if this is a process that can set you up for success.

But when we audit the website, we score the entire website and say, Hey, in terms of conversion tracking, you really need to do something in order to make better decisions. In terms of on-page content layout, page experience, we have a series of things we assess.

We figure out where there's something that needs to be done, and then line up the roadmap and say, Hey, month one is all going to be about page experience, because this is going to affect the entire website. Month two and three, we're going to focus on content creation and build up those pieces of content that you definitely need. And then afterwards, we are going to see where, based on the data that we see, we should be taking the next steps or should be focusing a little bit more.

Essential content for every website

James: What are some examples of the core content that should be on every site?

Gert: There's always a room for like, very important questions, the common questions you get on sales calls, the common questions people come to you with, common problems. They say, Okay, what are we actually looking at? And then I'm always a big fan of, kind of ultimate guides kind of thing, not because they would convert so well, but they are like a market research for us.

And this is a little bit of a tip for everybody, I think, if you don't have, like, a really extensive piece of content on your website that just introduces your entire industry, you're missing out, because you could use this for market research and say, Where does Google believe you're already somewhat relevant?

And you might come up on page eight, like we had on your site as well, James, where you came up on page six, page eight for a few terms, which just told us that in a matter of five million results, you are pretty relevant already, and this in the second round and the second iteration just allows us then to really build those topics out. But you need this first large piece where Google just finds all kinds of keywords relevant for what you want to do in order to put a certain initial rating on your site.

Adapting to Google's content extraction

James: Does that also start appearing when people do searches as a little breakout? And is there an uproar about Google hijacking that content and just showing a snippet of your content but not showing your actual page so that people can sort of get their answer without having visiting your site?



Gert: This is always going to be the case, it's definitely been a movement over the years where Google would extract certain parts of the websites, essentially trying to help users so to speak in two ways, either, they jump in directly to the section of your website they're interested in, if you have headlines in place, which is actually really good, because Google makes sure people actually find the spot they're looking at in your articles they're searching for.

The second is that Google gets better at extracting information, like the language models do as well. We are just now in this moment where the website needs to clearly communicate what you're doing, because you might not control fully where this is going to be used. It might be used in Google Gemini, as it's called now, or Copilot, or it might be used in ChatGPT.

I would expect long term with a reference to your website. We have seen some different versions these days. I would expect long term they can't get away with just stealing content, they're going to have to cite the sources and offer a way to do, for one, the research. For now, you just want to make sure that the platforms understand what we're doing, we're communicating clearly, we put content that's related strategically in contact with each other. And then we are really set up for success.

But a lot of searches, back to your original question, are going to be answered just by Google giving the answer you type in. What's the height of the Eiffel Tower? you don't need to visit a website to see it. However, if the website's only purpose is to have the height of the Eiffel Tower to drive traffic, in trouble anyway.

The strategic race in SEO

James: So you just mentioned Gemini, and I think that was a rebrand or repositioning of what was Bard across the whole suite of tools. And this will be interesting. Would you say we're in a race now for what we feed Gemini in terms of how it thinks about our website?

Gert: I think it's going to be hard for language models in general to keep up with the rhythm. Right? So Google has figured out over many, many years, how to be very quick with indexing content, making sure the answers are there, adjusting to different search intent, which is its own project completely.

If you typed in Twin Towers, before and after 9/11, the result would be very, very different, just because Google reacted to a different search intent. So you definitely have a challenge, and I do believe they're going to try to be really fast and really accurate. But they still have a little bit of a time lag. You can expect that you will publish something today, it's not going to be, tomorrow, available on ChatGPT for someone asking about your site.

But I think now is really the time to do, like, a bit of a land grab and say, Hey, I established my business in a way that the language models can understand what we're doing, that they trust us, because we are mentioned on many different sites with link building with PR strategies. And actually, there is no doubt who we are. We set ourselves apart from competitors that might even have a similar name, etc., there are different challenges there. So we established ourselves right now in the market for what is going to come in the next one to three years.

How soon can you expect to rank?

James: Right. And I remember when you could publish something, and then you'd be ranking within minutes, certainly hours, definitely within days. Is it still possible to do that?

Gert: Depends on your authority, depends on your type of content. If you're an authority in your industry, Google is going to give your content that you publish a little bit of a head start versus another website that's not an established authority. So if you're established, they're definitely going to rank you higher, faster, and see if the user signals they get for Google users visiting your website actually correspond to their expectation and say, Hey, now we're solid, so we can definitely put it higher up.

There are sites that pretty much have a handbrake pulled up, because they have the right content in place where Google will love to rank them on page one. We have many of those clients where we didn't just look at what's ranking on page two, three, four, where we think this could be a good one, to create, like, a specific optimized content piece. We create it, a week later it's on page one, at least, if not number one.

James: So basically, you're letting the handbrake off.

Gert: Exactly, we're losing the handbrake, and they're sitting on gold they don't even know about.

James: That's pretty much what happened to me, to go from page 100 to page one. We let the handbrake off by, I think, dumping a whole bunch of pages that were confusing Google.

Cloning and optimization for market dominance

Now back to your client. You've had a look at their site, you checked their languaging, you made their core piece of content, what other things did you do to get such a great result?

Gert: We actually then obviously established them first with their main website in the market, they were getting number one rankings across the board through their main service from office partitions to flooring things and painting offices, etc., whatever they offered. And then, in one of those check-ins, where I drove there every month, they happened to mention that it's really hard in the industry, because people paid like 90 days after delivery, 120 days after delivery, not many competitors could actually stand the test of time to actually live that long, to actually get their job paid.

And there was one competitor in particular, actually gave up. They went broke, they gave up, they couldn't bear it anymore. And within a session, I remember I had my PC laptop back then open. And I just quickly did a random check if their domain was available and just reserved it very, very quickly. Within the same call, I had the domain, same meeting, I had the domain reserved.

And then over the weekend, I checked archive.org where you can check what websites looked like before, et cetera. And I just rebuilt on a WordPress site the main sections of this website. On the Monday, I presented it to the client and say, Hey, let's run some ads to this very quickly. And this pretty much turned very quickly into a six-figure business and has been since then.

So whenever we get together now, thinking again, say, Hey, this is still working, we can't believe it. And that's just doing maintenance work for them, for that company. Plus, sometimes use it as a third quote if they have to do some work for the authorities. But what we achieved is we now had two sites. We pretty much cloned their business. We took over, our competitors could have been a different domain as well. Happened to be a competitor, which had some site implications that were beneficial.

But it could be a second site. We just cloned their business, now we come up twice in the organic segment on page one. But we also come out twice in the ads. So you open up page one for the key product, they come up four times. The chance that somebody clicks to them is incredibly high. So this strategy definitely worked out. This already brought like additional six figures in, brought a few new clients in, past clients of this competitor are still calling them for repair work and maintenance work and stuff like that.

So this all works really, really nicely. But it worked so well that we did it again. So we cloned the business again with a new brand, new company, new phone number, etc. Same people doing the installments, they just changed T-shirts. They go there. So we now come up six times on page one, and it's dominating the market.

James: I love it. I first did that in 2008, the beginning of 2008. I was selling a lot of software as an affiliate and then I watched John Reese's Traffic Secrets DVD and one of the tips was clone your website. So I went and got another server and set up another site and started really dominating that first page. It's interesting that it still can work now, but I think you gave away some important points here, you need a new phone number, a new company, probably a new address, new everything, you can't have any overlap, right?

Gert: It's what I recommend, right? I've seen sites that get away with just cloning, it's keeping the same details in place. I think I'm always about long-term sustainable strategies. And it's really not that expensive to get a virtual office somewhere and a different phone number. And many companies have different Ltd, or SSLs, or something like this they can really put next to it, there's no need to have this risk.

If you go for this strategy, my recommendation is always to split it in a clean way apart. So nobody can actually report it to Google for any competitive advantage you're trying to sneak out there. But you can actually just clone your website as well. And it might even work.

James: I know of a few clients that I work with, and some you know, have got multiple sites selling big numbers of things. I won't even mention any more than that out of privacy.

The results of Gert's efforts

What sort of results did you see with this client?

Gert: With this client, in particular, so he definitely, I think, went from two proposals or three a day to 20, 30, sometimes 50. He went from doing, I think, one and a half, or two million euros back then to now six, I think they're going to hit seven this year. So we're still scaling, even considering doing this again and adding another competitor into the mix. Because there's just no competitor who can really keep up.

And we just want to really dominate this, he wants to scale like crazy. He's looking at a new place to have a bigger factory, bigger machines, bigger I don't know what. And I'm obviously all on board with this. So we're definitely going to do this again. But yeah, definitely tripling revenue at the very least, increasing staff.

He obviously now has full power over his company, his father is playing the side role right now. He's just has just seen how this actually goes somewhere, places the father had never thought of in this particular case. And it's definitely a strategy we have since also used for other clients as well to just say, Hey, do you have another website? Many clients have like, 20, 30, 50, 100 domains lying around. Why not use one of those and try something, build something up, put a little bit of information on that site as well?

Literally before, I had a call with a client of mine, who is actually considering splitting the website into two. And we just mentioned these exact terms there, and the implications it has, but also the big potential in that.

James: I hope they send you a new office chair over here.

Gert: I actually got my desk from them. [laughs]

The easiest way to get help

James: Nice. So if someone wanted help from you, Gert, what's the easiest way to do that?

Gert: Easiest way would be to head over to SEOLeverage.com, get in touch with us. You can fill in the scorecard there as well. Just to assess your process, your current SEO process, if this is a process that can actually set you up for success. And then we have a conversation and confirm if we can help and what this would look like.

James: That sounds easy.

Gert: That's the idea.

James: Well, thank you so much for sharing that case study. The big takeaways for me are the idea of cloning, the concept of having the absolute best core content that might last as long as possible. So having a long-term, sustainable - I think that's the word - sustainable strategy in mind. Also, if you have multiple stakeholders, you really need to bring them together and decide that you want to trust your supplier and see if you can get small wins to grow that into more confidence that things can be done.

It's always good to see a company in a competitive market doing six million euros. That's really great. You know, we'll hear lots of stories about people doing it tough, but I imagine SEO is a really staple part of their business model mix, and they've clearly got a knack for providing Google what they want.

Gert: Absolutely. I think that's the core of this, and then obviously, there's a very sustainable service delivery on their end but also the readiness to try something new, whenever you are ready, just drop them an email say, Hey, I want to try something for three months. Let's do this. And it's just all for it. And a lot of the success they got actually came out from those emails.

James: Love it. Thank you, Gert, really appreciate it, and I hope to see you on a future episode.

Gert: Thank you so much.



JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

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HELP**