

A portrait of James Schramko, a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt under a dark, textured cardigan. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green and yellow foliage under a clear blue sky.

JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

SEO MASTERY: THE GAME- CHANGER OF FULL AGENCY INTEGRATION

Discover the untapped potential of in house SEO strategy when combined with agency expertise. SEOleverage's Gert Mellak discusses what's possible.



Gert Mellak

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1055. Today, we're talking about SEO. Of course, when we say SEO, we just think automatically [Gert Mellak](#) from [SEOLeverage.com](#). Welcome.

Gert: Hey, James. I like the association, definitely.

James: Well, you've been on the episode so many times. I was just looking back through [our past catalogue of episodes](#), some really good ones in there. And we're just sort of - I don't know, I guess it's like SEO, over time - we're chipping away at this topic because it's a fundamental topic.

I do want to talk to you about some changes that I have observed, some things that I'm doing at the moment with SEO, because in the sort of full disclosure/billed in-public way that we're doing things these days, I think it's really useful for people who are following along the journey.

Understanding full agency integration in SEO

But today's core topic, we're going to be talking about SEO mastery from the point of view of full agency integration. I'll first share what I think that means, and then I'd be interested in your perspective on this. From my perspective, full agency integration means that we have a deep, team-based integration with the SEO service provision, almost like they're within our team, but they're just not within our team.

They're in our [Slack](#), they're talking to my own other team members, and it's like a quasi-team member. But of course, we're tapping into a full service with dozens of people and proven protocols, rather than just one hire that we would have to hire, train and manage ourselves.

So that's what I think full agency integration means. We're dealing with an agency, not a person, but we're deeply integrated and have a long-standing type, deep relationship. What do you think it means?



Gert: I think this already covers a lot of points. From my perspective, I would probably say, the more your agency knows about your business, the better the agency can help. And I very often think about this like, when you go to the doctor, the doctor has no idea what's going on in your body, they need to ask a lot of questions, because only then their experience is worth anything.

They can be the best doctors, if you don't tell them what's going on, they're not going to be able to help you. And this is very often the kind of mindset I have when I talk to someone who wants to do SEO with us, I just ask a lot of questions. I really need to figure out, how are they getting their clients? What are those clients actually looking for? What kind of results do they want to get them? To really have an understanding as if I was sitting inside their office all day long, and just heard all the conversations.

We need to get this knowledge transfer going to an SEO agency. And very often, I feel people see an agency more like an external service, like a cleaning service, and you hire an agency, they do their thing, they don't need to know numbers, they don't need to know my client, better they don't know it, because then we can get rid of them and they don't take any IP with them. I think this is actually not leveraging agency well enough. And this is where we are just absolutely for full integration.

James: Yeah, and I think it depends on what you're doing, how important that is. So I'm thinking about my lawn mowing service, the gentleman that comes to mow my lawn and look after my shrubs, he doesn't really need to go beyond the garden. That's a good level of involvement. So gardening service, cleaning service, that sort of analogy, I think, is a good one. It doesn't need a deep knowledge of my business, or what's inside my house, or any of that stuff. Just needs to know how to cut the grass, and trim it, and make it neat, and be really good at that.

The evolving landscape of search engine optimization

But SEO is so critical. And I'll just talk about some of the things I've observed, because I mentioned that. I've noticed a change from a decade ago to five years ago to now, through the deep integration that you have had with my own team, you identified that there's a whole bunch of pages on our site that are not getting visited, and that aren't getting linked to. So they really might as well not exist.

And we can either juice them up or get links to them to make them work. Or we can just acknowledge that maybe that content is not really that useful or beneficial now, even though it might have served a purpose when we published the episodes or whatever, but it had a short shelf life, and it hasn't lived on beyond that.

Yet, there are other pieces of content on my site that continue to get links and traffic, which we'd have to say, show more potential. We only got that level of awareness because you're in there running reports on an ongoing basis. So the integration part implies longevity from my perspective. It's not a one-shot report and then you're gone, because you have to be responsible for the changes, and then monitor those changes as they go.

But what I've noticed is a trend where, over time, people have far more places they can go and search. Because now they can search on YouTube, Facebook, Slack, Skool, Circle, Cliq, websites, community groups, Signal, WhatsApp, there's just so many things now. We're on our phone a lot more, too.

I would say most people would spend more time in one day on their phone than they used to spend in a week, a few years ago, and in a month, a few years before that. And of course, if you go back far enough, we didn't spend any time on our phone because it didn't do anything except make phone calls, right? Unless you're a stockbroker or something.

So there's now this change in where people are searching and where Google is showing you the results from. And I've seen some outrage from people about snippets where Google is showing snippets, but not really encouraging people to click through to the site. So they're getting the benefit of all that good content, Google is, to be able to sell ads, but the site owner is not getting the benefit of someone clicking past the snippet. So that's a change.

The other change is Google seem to be promoting YouTube videos a lot more in the search results. So I've noticed that I can rank pretty quickly for a term on YouTube in the first page of Google, as quickly as I might have put it on my site in the old days. So that being said, I still think a site's very important to collect email addresses and to convert sales. So that's the core reason for a site.

And of course, because I have a site that has a lot of content, there are some core, heavy-lifting pages that still beat out other websites, and YouTube, etc. for keywords, which I'm grateful for, especially names of people, especially my own brand. I always want to control my own name, and my own reputation, critical. I want that knowledge panel, critical.

So it's still worth playing the SEO game. But I have noticed there's changes, and I don't think we'd be up to date with the changes, if we were only connecting with an SEO agency at either surface level, or at an infrequent interval.

The growing importance of brand in search

Gert: It's definitely harder this way, because we have some clients that just get an audit from us every year to see how they're doing. And then they take our suggestions and implement with their team. And that's fine, and they're getting results. But it obviously doesn't allow for such a strong integration, such a good idea where the business is going where they want to actually go.

And you're absolutely right, SEO is changing, search is changing, user behavior is changing. And I'm really looking forward to seeing what the next year is going to show us in terms of where people actually discover a brand. Branding, in general, has definitely gotten more important in terms of search. Branded search is actually a big part of it for multiple reasons, because first of all, those platforms might rank you based on what they know about you from your content on your website.

So the way I like to think about is, your website, with every older content you have on your site, actually communicates to engines what you're all about. And they're going to try to back this up with whatever other websites say about you. Is this actually correct? Are you really a business mentor? Everybody says James Schramko is a business mentor, so it's probably true.

So when there's something about business coming out there, it might make sense to rank James Schramko on YouTube, on other platforms, wherever it is, just because the branding information is consistent. So how you are discovered on other platforms is going to depend on how you're perceived based on your website, which is still your brand's home.

And then branded search is then one of the big important parts or thing in online reputation where somebody really is checking you out on your website, on what other people say about you, what they talk about you. And this is where Google then comes in with your online reputation, actually.

AI's role in search results

James: Would it also be true that the AI tools are building their database of what's coming up in search results?

Gert: Partly, definitely. So definitely if they cancel something, they might do a quick search. ChatGPT searches on Bing directly for example, and provides additional information. Very often, advanced prompts even trigger engines to actually perform a search in order to come up with particular insights. So where you come up for particular keywords still matters, but it might not be a direct way.

James: And the same with Bard?

Gert: Bard is the same. Ultimately, what they try to do is, on the one hand, have a language model that can work with predictions. Everybody might have heard of language models, ChatGPT for example, just predicts the next word. But there are additional layers to it. There is a way where they actually access a knowledge base, the knowledge graph in Google, for example, where they try to actually see, does it actually make sense? What kind of information do I have in my database? To then construct the answer.

So the hallucinations that we see these days, where they just make stuff up, they're going to diminish because there's always going to be more fact-checking before this goes into a language model to formulate an answer, for example.

James: Because I'm pretty sure you can point Bard at a URL and ask it to summarize something.

Gert: Absolutely. You can also compare them, which is an interesting one.

The depth of fully integrated agency partnerships

James: Right. So you know, I'm really curious, I guess, for people who haven't experienced fully integrated agency, what do you think would be the steps that separate it from a surface level engagement? I mean, starting with, obviously, there'd be some kind of discussion at the beginning, a briefing of sorts, when you're initially meeting up with a new client. What happens there?

Gert: Exactly. So usually the briefing, there's some sort of briefing, somebody schedules in a call with me. And they can go to our website and schedule a call in. We check out their website, we talk a little bit about the business, where they want to go, we see, can SEO actually help in this process? Can we actually help with SEO in this process? And see where this is a fit, and then really talk a lot about their business.

So what does this look like right now? Where do the leads come from? Where do their sales come from? Where's the focus? If there are five services, is there a particular focus on one of those services? So we just really try to get to know their idea of what this is going to look like in a year? And how can we actually support this overall idea?

But then also look at their competitors. What do they know about their competitors? What do they know, how they're getting clients right now? Is there something that we can maybe imitate or use as for inspiration and create our version of it?

I really want to feel like sitting on a desk there in their office as my first day, and they're going to start showing me the ropes, because then I'm going to summarize it for my team, to make sure that everybody working on this project has the same level of knowledge about the business, which ultimately affects what I call micro decisions. Because when you work with an agency, the agency is going to make a lot of micro decisions, very, very small decisions that impact the ultimate outcome.

If I have researched keywords on how your audience might be researching, the ones I eliminate, before I show you a list, are going to depend on my understanding of your business and your goals. If I have no understanding about your business, I might give you 5000 keywords. And now, let's select a few. But if I really understand your business, I might give you 20, because I know where you want to go, and I can actually pre-select the right ones for you.



So you can actually then confirm them or edit them or whatever, give some feedback. But those are a lot of decisions are being made by an agency, and I think people underestimate this. So when people just hire an SEO agency and expect them to do their thing, they're probably only getting 10% of what the performance can actually be.

James: You know, I kind of chuckled when you mentioned you pretending you sit down at the desk and you get shown the ropes. Certainly, in my career, some of the ropes that I was shown were not very useful or substantial. There were some classic situations. The BMW place when I got my job there, it was basically, That's your desk over there. That was it. And then everyone went home.

What do I do now? Like, I went to the key board, there was only one key left. I went out, it was in the pitch black, dark, the car had no fuel, I didn't know how to turn the lights on, it was like, nothing. The funniest one was General Motors Finance, where they gave me a cassette player and cassettes, and I had to listen to all the cassettes on my first week, I think, in the lunch room. And it was all in an American accent.

And it was pretty out of date. It was probably decades out of date. I mean, this was in the 90s, and these cassettes were from the 60s or 70s. And I still remember one of the lines, it said, When repossessing a vehicle, do not use words like putting it in the barn. And I'm like, wow. Anyway. So I think that's really interesting.

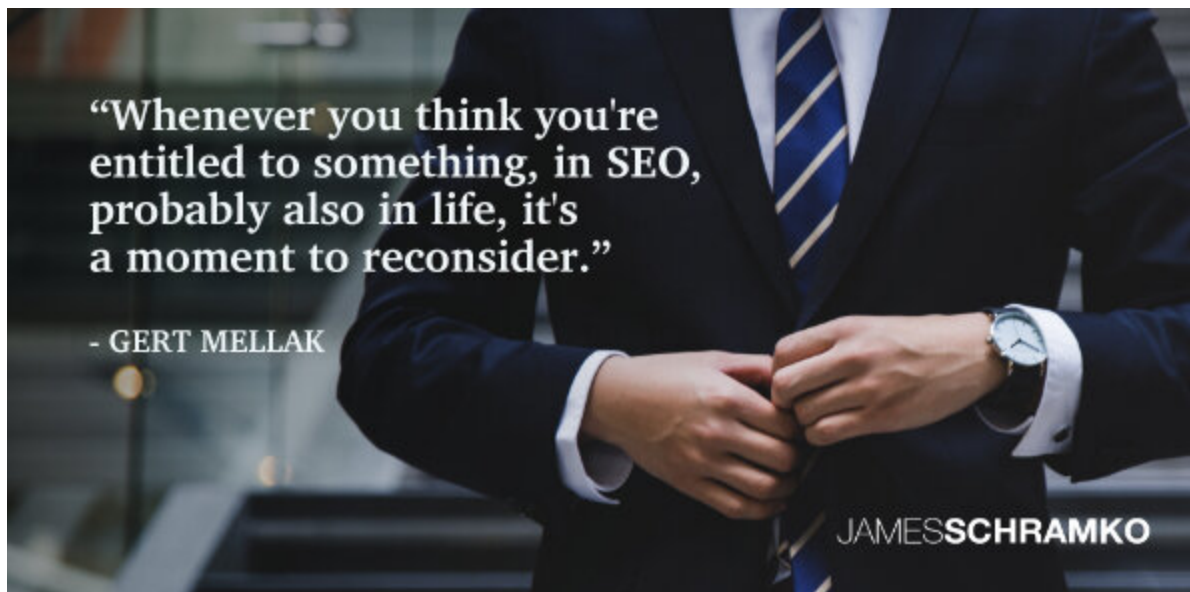
How an agency can enhance clients' SEO goals

Now, I'm covering this point for a reason, and that is, what if the business that you're engaging with doesn't know how to brief you properly? Do you have a way of extracting what you need to be able to help them set and agree on the goals that might be better than what they even thought their goals should be?

Because I imagine some of them come to you and say, We want to rank for this keyword. And you're like, Well, actually, that's not really a good goal to have at all. Let's ask you some questions and find out what's going on. And then we'll tell you what a good, realistic outcome could look like. Do you ever have that situation?

Gert: I definitely do. I have been doing a lot of those calls in the last 20 years. So I obviously have a few questions ready to keep the conversation going, to get the information that I know my team and myself need in order to make the right decisions, but also to brief the clients about what are actually useful goals rather than an ego-driven, keyword number one ranking that we get all the time, I need to be number one for XYZ.

Sometimes it's valid, especially if somebody is running Google ads, for example, and knows a particular keyword does specifically well, they just absolutely have the proof to back up this claim. Very often, it's going to be ego-driven, and someone's saying, Look, we created this industry, we need to be really be number one right now. We just deserve it.



And whenever you think you're entitled to something, in SEO, probably also in life, it's a moment to reconsider. So we definitely have a concerned conversation. And like I say, Why might this be the right keyword? What about other keywords that might be 500 other keywords related to this topic that could be even converting better? Because the client's keyword very often is too broad, and brings in a lot of people that don't even know what it is, and just type this into Google.

So we just try to really understand where they want to go, we try to make a client understand what makes sense from an SEO perspective, which is not exactly the same in paid ads, or social ads, or organic video marketing. And then, so okay, Let's see, what can the roadmap actually look like, in the next months? Because SEO is a long game.

The more we integrate it in the business, the better we can actually perform, which is also something people, I think, misunderstand a little bit where they say, Okay, hire an SEO agency. And from day one, they're going to be 100%. It's just over time, you know a lot about the business, a lot about the competitors, you have so much knowledge in an SEO team working on a project, which is why we always keep the same team on the same project, to build up this knowledge. That is just the performance of the possibilities, the opportunities that we discover are much bigger further down the track.

James: And so, I imagine some SEO agencies will be quite happy just to take money to rank for an ego keyword.

Gert: Yeah, I imagine. We don't do that. We don't do that. I need everybody right now to be really motivated on a project and such projects don't motivate the team, they frustrate everybody.

Optimizing communication in SEO agency collaboration

James: What about a communication cadence, you must have a method? I know, we know from us working together for quite some time, I know in the early days, you used to actually do Zoom calls with people. Well, you used to try and organize them with me, but I wasn't that interested. In Zoom, I don't do many Zoom calls. I do a few Zoom calls every week for my mentor members, which I love. But that's about it, aside from a podcast recording.

And then you switched to Loom calls, which were awesome, because they were now asynchronous. And then they got shorter and shorter, which was even better and better. Right? And also, I noticed updates in Slack, there are updates in Slack, and in your app, for the team to look at. I don't know if I've missed anything there, but is that kind of how it works in terms of the communication? And how often are you speaking to people, and what else do you do?

Gert: So what we essentially have figured out is, first of all, everybody prefers to communicate in a different way. So a lot of times, we just expect it right off the bat. I remember years ago that everybody who's going to be happy to have a meeting with the entire team with us and talk for an hour about SEO, which a lot of clients actually, we just couldn't manage it anymore after some time as you know, and then thankfully, you pointed us to Loom.

Right now, we have like a base level of communication, which is obviously email communication. We have a helpdesk and the strategy is trying to answer as quick as possible. We have full Slack integration. If somebody prefers to work on Slack, we open up a channel, get the team in there, and make sure the communication happens.

We have a platform. It's just like a dashboard/task list/results tracker, etc. where people can ask questions as well, people can schedule in Zoom calls, still, if they want, we regularly every three months, we try to do some sort of workshop call to just brainstorm what's going on in the industry, has anything changed, etc.?

And yeah, definitely, most clients appreciate asynchronous communication. And they might send a Loom video and we send one back, or they say, Give me some more context, we send them a Loom video, it's just mostly the preferred communication. But ultimately, the important point here is there needs to be one person, at least, on the team, that can talk to us.



We have had projects where people really thought this is 100% hands off, and it never is. If you want consistent results, an SEO agency is never going to be 100% hands off. They are going to need input, initially, but also feedback on a regular basis. So if the communication stops, we stop as well. We just pause the subscription, say, Hey, we need to talk. If you can't talk, we can't work. So this is one of the aspects.

The crucial role of a knowledgeable point person

James: So you need a point person.

Gert: Absolutely, a point person with industry experience, we usually call this, a point person with industry experience, not a VA who also doesn't know your business. It must be someone in your business or the business owner, who can actually be approached for information at least.

James: And often the founders are just busy doing whatever they do, right? They're not going to be accessible.

Gert: Exactly. But a lot of clients have really brilliant VAs, for example, who have been with the company for years, who can make decisions, who are empowered enough to work with us and approve content or suggest edits, or revise some research we sent through. It's just important to understand that an SEO agency is going to require a little bit of overhead in order to work with this agency.

James: Look, it's kind of like, when you pay for something, then you have to put aside the time to do this stuff. It's like when you get someone to help you with a book. That's the one I'm the most guilty of. They need things from you. And then it can hold up the process. Or if you [hire a copywriter](#), they're going to want to do a comprehensive brief and then they're going to need answers from you.

So I think SEO is one of those things. If you're going to pay for SEO, you need someone in your own team to have resource to be able to throw at it, because otherwise, the agency's just guessing, or phoning it in, you know?

Strategic SEO planning: moving beyond quick wins

Gert: Absolutely. And it's also important that you get some sort of strategic guidance here as well, where you just say, Hey, obviously, there's communication on a regular basis, but also somebody could keep an overview long term about where the strategy goes. And I'm saying this because a lot of people come in and say, Let's focus on the first month on the quick wins. And the second month, quick wins, and third month, quick wins. And we never get to the point where we develop an overall strategy.

And there are only so many quick wins that are going to give you a little bit of an impulse, initially. But then you really need to lean back and say, Okay, where do I want this to be in 12 months? Let's start working on this. Okay, I can cut down on chocolate today. But I'm not probably going to lose half a kilo or a kilo maybe in the next couple of weeks. But it's not a long-term plan. Right? And then I can cut down on ice cream as well.

James: You can, as long as you're in a calorie deficit.

Gert: As long as you're in a calorie deficit, which is easier without chocolate, absolutely. But overall you still want to have a nutrition plan.

James: To that point, it's easy to look at a calorie deficit on a weekly basis rather than the daily basis. Because if you blow out a day, you could feel really depressed and think, Oh, it's too hard. I can't do it. But if you could sustain it over a week, then it allows for peaks and troughs.

Now I know in our case, we've been chasing a couple of phrases that we know convert into paying customers for me, and we've had a longer-term view of that. And we have over time been able to rise through the results. I'm just curious, to help sort of exemplify this, how much difference would it make for a business to achieve a long-term objective in terms of the result they might experience?

Gert: I think the result has absolutely nothing to do with a quick win you might be chasing at the beginning. And the reason I'm bringing this up, a strategic goal is that you're dominating for example a topic on Google, where I say, whenever somebody looks into revenue share, James Schramko comes up, could be a long-term goal. Whereas ranking number six rather than number eight, for [revenue share deals](#) or something like this, is a short-term goal, might be different again tomorrow when Google shifts.

So we are looking into having your brand show up on all kinds of queries, maybe 5000 keywords on page one, whenever somebody searches this topic, versus one keyword wherein the business owner feels good for a few days, until they drop it down, and again, they feel bad again, right? So I think a strategic goal needs to be, to increase leads and sales from the organic channel over a longer period of time. And it's much more likely to get there with a broad approach than only focusing on a single keyword.

James: I think I know what you mean there. Like in terms of that revenue share topic, I had someone recently, a pretty heavy hitter, he's doing million, million and a half, \$2 million a year. And he got in touch with me, he said, I'm searching revenue share deals, and your name just keeps coming up. And so, wherever you're searching, it's coming up. And I'm pretty sure Google would be one of the searches that people would still look for. And it's going to come up.

And that sort of testimony - and he paid me too, he said, I want to buy your time to ask you some questions. And then I had the same thing happen a week later, from another multi-millionaire guru type expert. They wanted to understand revenue share deals. So I have got a good position on that, because we've made that a focus over time, because one of the two or three things that I'm well known for, the other one being membership models.

Content pruning and focused brand representation

And funny, the things I used to be known for that are, you know, they're like, fourth or fifth level down now in terms of what I'm doing, but revenue share and partnerships, definitely, memberships, definitely. So that was a good strategic goal.

But to that point, you know, with the recent changes that we've made, where we're deleting a lot of content off our website, that was probably not in our original strategy discussion, you know, we definitely didn't have that conversation years ago, Oh, one day in the future, I'm going to tell you to delete two thirds of your website. I'll tell you, I've actually experienced an emotion around this, Gert, where when I went through the spreadsheet you sent, and I sorted by visits, and I sorted by backlinks, and then I looked at the things that are getting no visits and no backlinks, and then I looked at the topics and some of them, I could clearly remember, some of them are a bit fuzzy, because there was 3000 odd indexed pages, and we're going to delete about 2000 of them.

I actually felt a sense of loss, a little bit of, I wouldn't say remorse, but a little bit of sadness. It's like, wow, you know, like, that's probably tens of thousands of man hours that have been, you know, labored, that have been paid for, that we're going to just delete with a click of a button. So the sunk cost of something like that is pretty savage.

But I also felt some relief and a weight lifting off my shoulders to think, that the only things left on my website will be the things that people actually want to see, that offer value, that are getting visited, that are linked. And my hypothesis at this point, and I'll probably update in a future episode, is that it should make the site sharper, it should rank even better for the things we want to rank for, and it should be much clearer, not only to Google, which is obviously who we're helping here, but also to us, the creator, to get a much more scalpel version of our website.

It's like, oh, this is what we do, this is what we're known for, this is where we're going. And all the stuff we used to do, well, I've had a gazillion people on my podcast that, really, five, six, seven, eight years, 10 years down the track, it's just not relevant to where we're at today. It's not relevant to what we're doing.

Some of them have even been pursued by the FTC and fined and all this stuff, I don't even want them on my podcast because they've turned out to be shifty, which is sad and rare, and unfortunate, but it's like, well, it's kind of like, the closest I can relate this to is when you get a new credit card. Maybe your old one got lost or hacked, or it's just the end of the expiry date. And now you have to update all the subscriptions you want to continue with.

And I can guarantee, you always let go of stuff, right? The stuff that got you here isn't what's going to get you there. So to that point, how do you have these conversations around adapting to new parameters about either an event, maybe a bad ranking, a bad reputation, a shift in the Google, like a significant change to the Google algorithm - because I know they update it every day - how do you work around that? Do you build in the fact that, you know, plans are going to have to change?

Gert: I think you're making a really good point. There's a lot of emotion going on around these things. Where somebody says, Hey, I've been building this up from the ground 10 years ago, 15 years ago, every single article on this website, I have written myself. We had a client who had 1500 articles, and we started pruning stuff and recommending to merge articles, and actually get rid of hundreds of his personal hours he invested.

But at the end of the day, we just tried to focus really the conversation around the results they're actually after. And trying to make them understand that the content they created on the blog to share on social media in a particular day where they had nothing better to share is just not that related to their goal now. It might have been related 10 years ago, but just create an understanding where I say, Hey, how is Google ranking this particular article helping you get to your goal now?

And this is what I want him to answer for 1500 articles maybe, or a group of selection of them. And very often, then, they have also some, a period of self-reflections, Hey, I've been building a lot of stuff, but maybe not every single article was the best quality work anyway. So they might start pruning stuff themselves as well that they discover over time when they go through it. I think it's definitely healthy. But definitely also a little bit of an exhausting task if you have to do this yourself.

Ideally, you have a team helping you. And we also help patching things up and filtering and giving you the matrix, what could be a candidate, what is definitely not a candidate for filtering. But what I also try to make them understand is that, like, the situation changes. Behavior changes. User behavior, like you initially mentioned, changes.

And ultimately, whatever is on your website is going to define how ChatGPT, Bard, and the likes, talk about your brand. And once you understand this concept, where you say, hey, your website is pretty much the database, if you want to understand it this way for those algorithms, to talk about your brand, to mention you in the list of the best such and such coaches, or mentors, or best course to learn, I don't know, which instrument, they are going to use the information on your website to define whether you are more qualified, more specialized than someone else.

And if you have a website, especially over time, you probably have been talking about all kinds of things. Just think of my websites where I have talked about lead generation and marketing for gyms and e-commerce, and I don't know what, and ultimately stick with SEO. Somebody searching for my brand, or my company, ideally should get an SEO focus now, which also takes a lot of pruning. We've been pruning a lot in the last year from our own websites, just to make sure that this database, so to speak, is really clear. And wherever somebody discovers us, it is going to be related to SEO.

James: Yeah, I mean, look, I used to own a website business, and I used to own an SEO business. So I think really, the big lesson for us is, we could have tuned on a more frequent basis. If you leave it for a long time, it's really like letting stuff build up in your basement or in your garage. You just keep putting stuff in there and not taking stuff out. One day, you won't be able to drive your car in there. It's like, look at all this stuff.

And so, we've got the Kon Mari sort of situation now where Gert's come along and said, Okay, well here's the spreadsheet, and this stuff should probably go, it's like, okay. Well I'm down with it. I'm so on board with it now that I'm formally requesting if you could do the same analysis for my [surfing website](#). I'm ready to do the same process, because I can see that this is clearly important. And I don't want it to get down the track, to be inefficient, you know? Why have this big behemoth, when we should be scalpel sharp.

Staying technically informed in SEO

So on that sort of, I don't know if there's any other points on that. I know we've sort of been covering the technical side of it. But clearly, to have a technical opinion, you need to be technically up to date with what's going on in the market. And your agency, whoever that is, has to have a finger on the pulse. Would you say you have a finger on the pulse, Gert?

Gert: I would think so, we definitely spend a huge bunch of the time every week in SEO and trying to figure things out, testing things, having websites where we test stuff, how can we rank it, how can we improve it, how can we convince Google, or double check what Google might be seeing out there, if this is really true? These kinds of things.

And you just want to also take a step back from SEO and look at the overall marketing picture and say, Okay, where's SEO fitting into this? Where is SEO fitting into what's happening next year? And what's going to happen next year? Look at different analysis, just as your own user behavior. How has it changed since ChatGPT came up? How has your own behavior changed? Right? What does this new way or this new behavior require? Where does the information come from? What can I do in order to make sure that the information going into those algorithms actually is accurate and consistent?

So you just need somebody, I think, that you trust, where they're just is in there, but really fully integrated in your team and looks at stuff that's happening through your lens. So the ideal scenario is like, an SEO agency could be pretty much like, putting on some glasses with your experience. But through an SEO lens, you look at what's happening, and say, How can I fine tune what I'm doing in order to be prepared for what's coming next?

Key takeaways for effective SEO

James: Yup. Cool. Well, how do we get in touch if we're interested in getting some help with SEO?

Gert: Just head over to SEOLeverage.com. We clearly describe how the process works, and whoever resonates with this or wants to have a conversation, we can just hop on a call and check out what we can do.

James: Thank you very much, Gert. So in summary, if you're going to do SEO, think about going with a deeper integration, rather than surface level. Make sure in the briefing phase that your agency really understands what you're actually doing, and what's working, and what you're trying to get. Also be open to them having better ideas on what you should be aiming for, if you're not aware of it, because they will be working with lots of other people and seeing what benchmarks are available.

You should be comfortable asking an agency, what do they think is possible? What have they seen that works? Set and agree on goals and strategies. Be prepared to adjust your strategy, set up a communication cadence that is effective and good value. And don't be just blinded by keyword vanity metrics, and go with someone who's got technical knowledge. All right, so this will be up in [Episode 1055](#), JamesSchramko.com. Thank you so much. That was [Gert Mellak](#) from [SEO Leverage](#).

Gert: Thank you.

JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

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