

EP008 - Content Strategy - with Anfernee

Anfernee Chansamooth 0:00

Understanding where your audience is, how they consume, and where to reach them is a big part of the strategy, right? You need to understand the buyer psychology and then go and think about, this is a common question that marketers like to ask is, you know, where does your audience like to hang out online?

Intro Music 0:22

Welcome to the SEO Leverage Podcast, where we talk about search, marketing and conversion.

Gert Mellak 0:31

Hello and welcome. My name is Gert Mellak from Seoleverage.com and today I'm very pleased to welcome Anfernee Chansamooth to this podcast. Welcome, Anfernee.

Anfernee Chansamooth 0:42

Great to be here, Gert.

Gert Mellak 0:43

Yeah, thank you so much for taking the time. I had the pleasure to meet you personally at the SuperFastBusiness live event in March in Sydney. We also bumped into Ilana Wechsler, who is on another episode of this podcast talking about the paid side of, of content. And I know you're a sought after copywriting expert, your name drops, comes up more and more in conversations. When we talk about who could write copy, who could put together a case study and stuff like that. Could you maybe briefly introduce your background or tell our listeners where you come from? How do you end up writing copy, creating case studies for the top names really in the marketing space?

Anfernee Chansamooth 1:25

Yeah, so I started writing copy, probably about a decade ago, but I didn't know it was copy. I didn't know the phrase copywriting. I didn't know these things. Right. So I essentially I started a blog in 2009, a personal blog, just to put my ideas out on things that I was learning at the time. I started to learn social media marketing. I was getting into Facebook into Twitter. LinkedIn wasn't a thing yet. And people then started to, I guess, start to make comments around some of the things I was publishing and, you know, I started to see people engage with the content. So people will start to, you know, I would put a post on Facebook, and usually where most people were writing one or two sentences, I was writing what we know now know as long form. So I was writing, you know, epic essays, you know, here's a whole idea or a thought or an experience I had on the weekend. And a lot of them didn't really have to do with business, a lot of it was just my life experience. Or I met someone or like I was at this conference with Gert and

we had this nice chat, right, like, so it's what I learned to develop over time was what and what I was always testing for, was, what was the words or the phrases, or the elements of the content that would resonate, would elicit an emotion and then would elicit a response. So I'm looking for a like, I'm looking for a comment, I'm looking for a share. Which you know anyone who's who's listened to this knows all these things. This is important for content marketing, right? So long story short, I ended up launching a Facebook advertising agency with a friend of mine, back in 2011. He was the technician. So he's the one going in running or doing all the campaigns for the clients and understanding the world of Facebook ads. I was a strategist. So for me, I was looking at what other campaigns going to look like, what's the creative that we need? What is the objective? You know, how do we measure and attract success? Right? The two of us worked really nicely, because he could tell me, okay, these are the things that we can measure, and these are the things that the budget are required and cost per click and all these things. And and I could guess, translate that to the client and say, well, your goal is to generate more sales or more leads, or whatever it is, whose audience you're talking to. So I would start to essentially map out a content strategy with the client, right? It didn't call a content strategy back then, right. So after that business ran for about two years, we were, we had the challenge of running the first business was, we were making sales revenue was increasing month per month, but we knew nothing about profit. And so we were not making a profit, and we were not paying ourselves a salaries. So a common story for a lot of people. So we hang our hats and said, you know what, this isn't working. I'm tired of sleeping in my auntie's couch. You know, it might sound great for Airbnb, but it's not working for me. And so, I gave it up, like, basically, okay, let's move on. He's gone on to do his own thing. I went and just coached people for a while. So for a while I was helping people with business and career coaching, just to help people know, what I'm really great at is actually listening to interviewing people and listening to the real motivations and drivers and concerns that they have, and then translating that into some kind of action plan or some kind of strategy to move forward to achieve the desired outcome that they want for their lives or for their businesses. Right. And that training really helped me move into the next phase of what I was doing. I got hired as the marketing lead, or the marketing manager for Hub Australia, which is one of the largest co-working communities or go co-working spaces in Australia. And I ran their marketing for two years, right? And a big piece of that was working out what are the different pillars that we would have to run in order to be successful to generate new leads for the co-working space. So we had three locations, then since I've left they doubled in size, they've got six locations now. And a big core element of that was content. How can we use content to actually attract? And there was other things like PR strategy, and there was partnership strategy and other things, which you can see that I do, you just asked me before we start to record, you know, I do a lot of this networking stuff, and I'm talking to people at a time. That's because I see and appreciate the value of partnerships. And I see, when when you do partnerships really well, you know, content kind of it's very easy to do content then because we can just say, hey, why don't we just do a blog exchange? Or why don't we guest post for a job or we can just create a guide together. And that is something we put out as a joint entity.

Yeah, so then I left, I was in there for two years as a marketing manager for that company, took a break, got married, then, you know, at that point in time, to be honest, I got burnt out. It's a very, it was a very stressful environment. And then I went became a digital nomad with my wife.

And we went traveling for 18 months, and I worked from my laptop consulting for different companies. And I was for about a year I was his freelance copywriter. And I did some work with Bean Ninjas, which is they were actually one of my first clients. So work with Meryl Johnston, and also member of the superfast community. And I really, she came to me and said, you know what, I'm an accountant. Not really great, not very creative. And I need someone to be able to put out content that's going to be attractive to our potential customers, okay. And I said, I'm not an accountant. So I can't talk about the numbers. But I can definitely communicate to people and express some of the concepts that are important for them to understand like profit first, like, you know, p&l profit and loss and these other things. And so then I started off as just writing content for Bean Ninjas. Actually, the first piece of content I wrote for her, for them was a case study. They actually what she said was, can you interview one of my clients, and, and turn that into a case study that we can put onto the website. And so that's how, you know, that was the first piece of work that I did for Bean Ninjas. And that eventually led into three years later, me becoming the marketing manager for the company, and then coming up with a content strategy developing that. Working out how could we take the number one position for outsource bookkeeping, in Australia. And then around that time, we also expanded into the US and into the UK markets. So we then had to work out what strategy would we use in terms of marketing and content for those regions, right. In 2020, something happened, which was significant, we basically pivoted the focus of the business to e-commerce and focusing on e-commerce clients 100%, seven figure. So million dollar companies and help in supporting them with a outsource, like a CFO service. You know, combining the bookkeeping, but that's the entire story. And right as you know there's been a whole bunch of different things we've tested like podcasts. We've tested, we did 100 plus episodes of the Bean Ninjas podcast, over the last four years. We've done webinars, we've done events, we've done conferences, we've done a whole bunch of things. And I can give you sort of more insight into it, if you have any specific questions. So this year, again, due to the pandemic and things like that, there was essentially an opportunity for me to rebuild my own brand and the work that I've been doing and kind of move out of the shadows of being this hidden marketing guy for these companies and be like, well, he actually has, he started off with a company called Simple Creative Marketing, which is my own registered business. And I've been running under that entity for the last five years. It's just I haven't done a great job of really marketing it until this year. So this year, I've been really active into getting onto podcast, running my own podcast, where we've had you on there as well as a guest. And I really appreciated that. And now people are starting to see Oh, what's this guide, and what's SCM all about? And we've predominant focus on case study marketing, which is something that we can talk about.

Gert Mellak 9:34

That's awesome. So I get the idea that you kind of pretty much touched on everything that's content in the last last years. It's interesting that you have essentially also both parts of experience to put it that way. So you have worked as an in house specialist in the content area, you've done it externally have an overview about different industries. So definitely, you know your stuff when it comes to content. Content is really the main topic of this first season of podcast episodes we're putting together because content they say content is king. But for SEO, and really for search marketing, it's the very reason why someone is going to find you, right? So

we see content, less than on social media to attract engagement, attract likes, attracts, I don't know what we see just as a simple reason why someone is going to find your brand. And if this content is valuable, they're going to memorize you. So the way content works, and when clients start working with us, it's very often that they kind of think this topic could be interesting for my clients, I know my clients, I know they find it interesting, I write about it, it doesn't get ranked, it doesn't bring traffic, it doesn't bring leads, I'll get frustrated, I do another one, I do this three times, I might do this even for two years in a row, and then get really frustrated, and then stop, right? Or, I might hire someone like you who's like, let's take this from the right approach. I think there's just a lot of things, people are getting completely wrong about content. So I was really wondering you as an expert in this field, what would be like the main mistakes, the main misconceptions you see out there that people or like false beliefs, they have kind of internalized?

Anfernee Chansamooth 11:20

Yeah, that's a great question. And I'm going to, I guess, contextualize sort of my expertise in that area I work with. So I typically work with b2b professional services. And also, some of my clients are software companies. So you could call them SAS, I like to call them sort of software companies once they grow beyond a certain size. So if someone's listening to this, and they fall out of that, these principles will also work. You just need to tailor and customize to your industry and the way you do content. But most of the things that you talk about even I know you did an episode early on, where you talk about, you know, content specifically like how to put out good content that can rank. Let's talk about some of these principles. The first thing sort of mistake that I see a lot with small business is and what I say unclear brand and value proposition. So like what you just noted here, the goal of content, there's two, one typically is to attract. So you're trying to get people to your website, you're trying to get them to then once they're on the site, okay, maybe you want them to convert in some way. So you want them to join your email list, you want them to buy something from you. Sale should be number one. But you know, some people, maybe they're not at this stage, maybe they're pre-launch, and they just want to build the list. Right? The thing is, you need to think about the perspective of the user. Right? And I think you've had Greg Merrilees on as well. Talking about user experience, you need to put yourself in the mind of the user and think of what does the buyer want, right? Why are they coming here? They wanting results, right? So if they've got a challenge or problem, so, you know, maybe you know, I'm a digital agency, and I'm looking at my content. And like you say, I've been publishing for the last two years, and I'm getting crickets, my traffic hasn't really increased by much. I'm going to say, I'm going to need to work with an SEO expert, consultant, like Gert, I'm going to go to SEOLEVERAGE and then book-in a consultation or an audit, right, but the reason I'm doing that is because I expect that the expert is going to tell me or help me fix the problem. Yeah. So when I talk about unclear brand and value proposition, often, it's not clear in the content, what you do and how you do it, and who you do it for. Right? I see a lot of generic content I'm sure you have, where it's like, here's the concept, you know, or okay the content maybe doesn't some, you know, you go into Google right now, and you type in content strategy, right, as a keyword, because you're wanting or maybe you put in content plan, because you want a content plan for your own business. And you're going to find millions of results, and you're going to go, Okay, I'm going to probably pick the top three or whatever on page one of

Google. Now, those guys have done a great job. So I'm going to say those for the most part, they're fine in terms of what they've done. But if you skip to page 10, okay, or even page 5.

Gert Mellak 14:02

Oh the three or the two, I was going to say.

Anfernee Chansamooth 14:04

A good point, right? You can see, you know, like the content is very generic, they might give concepts and explanations of what content strategy means, or what a content plan is. But what they don't do is actually indicate and demonstrate how, what's unique about the way they do it. What's unique about their approach, and they don't include or embed within that content, case studies. They don't actually say because I, we applied this content strategy to this business, this is the result that they got, right? So as you're reading that article, or watching the video, or whatever it is, you know, what would be useful for your buyer is to see or you've actually you're not just speaking from theoretical knowledge, you've actually applied practice, okay, and you've generated results for your clients. And you've actually stated in the piece of content you stated, here are three case studies, where we've actually done this and it worked. So now, that is what I mean by a clear brand and value proposition, I'm not going to get into the whole branding conversation, or you can have a branch address on here to talk about that. But that's the first mistake I see. The second mistake that I see is businesses that lead with a product or service first, instead of building an audience, right? So they're thinking to your point, okay, this is typically when I work with people, what happens, they get an idea for a piece of content, they go, Okay, that's a good idea. Maybe they do like the client avatar process, and they work out a common pain point is, you know, the clients, the agencies, they don't have a clear SEO strategy, right? That's a common pain point. So then they start publishing content on this, or they've got a product that they want to sell. They've got a course and anyone is course creating, this is a major issue is people have these ideas for courses, they spend all their work building the product, right, they're gonna go, I'm gonna create this epic course, you know, and then they launch it, and it goes to crickets, and they don't get any sales. All right. Well, they get the one sale from their buddy who just is supporting them, right. And the problem is the audience has not been built. So where I see there's an issue with b2b content, specifically is, you know, if you're putting articles up on LinkedIn, for example, which is common for b2b, but you only have 10 people connected to you, right? Or 50 people, right? That's very different to someone like a James Schramko, who has 10,000 plus people connected to him. And every time he publishes something on his feed, right, people are commenting and engaging with it, because audience is already built in, right? There's an example a real case study where I worked with a client, who his content really sucked on LinkedIn. And he knew it, but he was putting stuff up every day, a lot of it was curating content. So he would read a great article, he put it into his buffer, and then that would, you know, schedule it out, and it come up links, links, links on his feed. So if you looked at his feed, all it was was a bunch of shared articles, right? Sometimes he had one or two sentences to add his two cents to it. But it wasn't really creating the kind of engagement that he wanted. He wasn't generating leads, people were not contacting him, right. So when he hired me, what we worked on first was now the thing that he had done really well was he had built up the audience. He actually had connected with, so he worked a lot with coaches and consultants

and things like this. So he connected with that audience and did connect requests and things like that. And he went out, he did public speaking. So that was a big thing for him at the time. And he built that audience, right. And so when we, I took him through the process of a framework for writing content, I actually was writing a content for him. I helped him pull out specific stories, and then we turned it into really, you know, LinkedIn has, I think it's 400 character limit for a post. And so within 1200 characters, we were able to then put out a post to publish a post on his LinkedIn feed. The first one I think had around 15,000 views, then the second one has 70,000 plus views, right. Now, I'm not gonna like it does sounds magical and not overnight, it took us a month to get to that point, because I had to do a lot of work with him on the first mistake, which is brand, clear brand value proposition. I had to understand from him, how do you actually serve the customer? What is your story? And how does it relate to the customer, right? What insights have you learned over the years that you know, if you were to share those insights would be valuable to your audience, you potential buyer? And that's what I was able to extract from him. And then we produce the content. So when you lead with the product first or the service first and not think about the audience, you have a problem. All right. In most cases, most of your content needs to educate first before it sells. Right. And you would, would you agree with that good with content?

Gert Mellak 18:47

Absolutely. Absolutely. We've people who follow our content, essentially, for months, and sometimes years, before they're really ready and have like, understood a lot or enough about SEO, so they can really build up some trust. And in SEO, we have like, trust is a really big issue. Because obviously, SEO there are no guarantees, whoever gives a guarantee is lying is something everybody wants and it's very achievable with a consistent effort. But there are no guarantees, right? And it's a long term thing. So people really put in a lot of time to decide. And I think it's good to do that. But in over this time, they're going to consume content. And the thing just happens in a lot of cases. We were working with language courses, we're working with coaching clients with marketing experts with e-commerce businesses. And everybody essentially tells me the same. E-commerce might have like a shorter decision span. But we're working with construction companies and people sometimes start engaging with the content two years before they actually purchased the property they then want to renovate. Right? So what are you doing over this time span, you're consuming content and getting closer and closer and closer to your decision making process. And when whatever question you put in there in Google, there is a certain company, a certain business, a certain brand, giving you the exact answer. Walking you through the steps you need at this point, to really figure things out that help you. I think that's definitely great. And I really love the point you're making about the value proposition. Because I've been spending months and years probably refining what we think is our value proposition. We were very much, we're very much focusing on transparency and a lot of client communication. A lot of client updates and even loom video, see, look, this is what's happening. Why is it important? Do you know what it is? Because we know a lot of companies essentially that hire an SEO don't really know what they're doing. They know they have to spend quite some money, it's an investment is to do SEO. And if you're not sure what's going to happen with this money, how this is employed, is if they're ripping you off or is this really in your best interest? I think it is an issue. So be right from the start have made it our value proposition

to really go a little bit against the grain here and say, look, I'm going to hold my clients hands and being 100% transparent of what we think is the best approach and why. And so this is where we are, this is the next step. Do you understand why this is the next step? Yes, you do. Let's go for it. And this overtime has been then creating a momentum for our clients. This is really getting great results. But it comes all down to what you're saying to be really, really clear and have no doubt at all, about who you serve, and how you are going to do this. And then there is not really a competition issue, because everybody has their own way of doing this. And everybody essentially, is going to attract a different kind of client over time.

Anfernee Chansamooth 21:45

Yeah, there's a great concept. I love what you just shared there, Gert. There's a great concept that I learned from a guy by the name of Glen Carlson, who runs a company called Dent, and there's a book called Key Person of Influence, highly recommended you read that or who's listening to this, because a lot of my philosophy around just brand and content is formulated from their theories, which has been well researched. And something that he talks about is that we often think about a target market. So this common phrase in marketing and world is, you know, what's your target market or your target audience? And what he's been able to demonstrate and seen through working with literally thousands of businesses is that the leading companies actually create their own markets. And what we mean by that is Tim Ferriss talked about this in I think he talked about in the four hour workweek, he calls it, like creating your own category and owning that category. So and he was able to do that, you know, he's category was lifestyle design, no one had heard of lifestyle design until Tim Ferriss came along with that book. Right. And in that similar essence, that's actually what I'm doing with case study marketing. Right? Like, if you google search case study marketing is not content on it, no one's talking about it. But I'm literally going out there and going, that's a keyword I'm going to own. Right. And so it's very strategic in that sense. And I want to put to the listener right now, you know, what's your, if you would own a category in your industry or in your niche? What is that, right? Gert could be transparency in SEO. Right? That's probably something that you know, people want, but no one's talking about it.

Gert Mellak 23:14

No one's searching about it. Yeah.

Anfernee Chansamooth 23:16

Yeah. Right. And that's okay. Right. So your role as the CEO, or the voice or the marketing person is to communicate what is the category that you excel in to give another real example for Bean Ninjas, we are, you know, the outsourcing accounting department for, you know, seven figure plus e-commerce businesses, right. So it's a very clear. This is the proposition, this is what we do and who we do it for. Right. And so that's the audience we talk about proposition. Number three, coming back to the mistakes is just focusing on the wrong content. And when I talk about this, something that happens, where I see this a lot in the b2b, what we'll do is we'll publish some article or something, which is like, this is an industry update, right? It's like, this is something that we learned or there's a new algorithm changed. Google's, you know, the panda thing came, and then the next thing came, and you might put that out there, too, on your blog,

the question I would have to that is, would your users actually care, right? Would your buyers care about that update? And if you think they would, you have to explain why it matters to them. Yeah. So it's not enough just to say, Oh, hey, by the way, Facebook has changed the algorithm. Yeah, and this is something I've done in the past, which isn't a big mistake, because no one cares. The only people who care, are other marketers like me, and they're not my customer. Right. So we call this parallel content. I was actually I think it was Rand Fishkin from SEO Moz back then. What's he doing now, he's doing spot for. So he talked about this concept of parallel content. Right. And the other issue that I see with focusing on our own content is so much focus on inbound, right? I know it's hot topic. You search inbound marketing. It's you know, you'll see probably HubSpot own or the result on page one. Because they actually that's the category that they decided to own. They decided we would own inbound marketing as a concept, and then published a ton of content on that. If you look at their philosophy and what they sell to the product they sell to the customers, it's all focused on this one thing called inbound marketing, right. And the issue I see with that is, in order to generate sales for your business, especially if you're in that first one to three years, and you're in what we call a startup phase, or launch phase, as you would know, Gert, it actually, you know, also helps to have real conversations with real people. It actually also helps to pick up the phone and call someone and say, Hey, I think I can help you with your business or reach out to them, for a cold email or a warm email, you can make that happen. Or like what we've done, shop at events. Go to a conference and meet people and have conversations and share what you do. The next level above that would be to actually go up on the stage and speak in front of the audience. And give them you know, even a 10 minute talk about, here's one thing that you need to know about your SEO or for me, here's one thing you need to know about content marketing. Right? And straightaway, you build credibility and trust, because you're seen as the expert, you're seen as a specialist. Right. And it takes courage. You know, there's that statistic, that or common phrase, which is more people would prefer to be in the casket rather than giving the eulogy. Right. And it's, that's the thing, why are we so scared about speaking? Why are we so scared about to sharing what we do, and I love that you've got this podcast, and you're doing speaking, more speaking engagements, because that's building authority. Right?

Gert Mellak 26:34

I want to just add at this space, I do believe. So in I think inbound marketing definitely has its place. I do agree with you that it's not the thing when you just start out. It's going to give you revenue in order to pay your bills in your first year. I do know, we've built several businesses based on inbound marketing. And essentially, it was the driving force, it took one or two years to get there. But for example, having a podcast talking about pain points, getting a brand known to a level where it's okay, you can be the authority. I got it too high once. We did a tech technical support brand here in Spain. A few years ago and we were represented, we're offering tech support for an e-commerce software back then it was PrestaShop. And we got to a level where people called us when they had been through three different software firms that couldn't solve their issue. So we were like the ultimate resource they asked. And we got a lot of things we couldn't handle. There were three software companies before us. We couldn't do magic either. But definitely the inbound marketing was working. So they listen to our podcast months of the month. It was like a software this was. Quite a lot in the DIY space, I remember. But we had, we

had like this inbound marketing does work. But definitely, it's a very long game. So if you can build this up, we have clients that started creating content in 2011, they still get content get leads from that content in 2020. But it was right from the start planned as something that is going to go on and on and on. And every month, we published two blog posts about questions their clients asked for example, right. So definitely, I see the point, you're saying the first sales are coming from conversations, not from people finding you because there is a long trust process. There is a long, long decision making process and relations take time to get established.

Anfernee Chansamooth 28:35

And isn't there a window from the time you say how you started publishing content on your blog, on your website? Isn't there a window before Google actually starts ranking it? Like it doesn't happen straight away?

Gert Mellak 28:46

Exactly, especially when your site doesn't have what we call an authority status. Okay, So there are sites out there that have an authority status in your niche, and the niche and whatever they publish, pick big brands, moz.com, ahrefs.com, for example. They've got authority status in SEO for example. When they publish an article, it's not going to take long to rank in a very solid position already. Plus, they know what to do afterwards to make this content, get this content in front of the right eyeballs and get links and social engagement and all those things as well. But once the site has this authority status, it's easier if a normal site that doesn't have this has hardly any links pointing to them. Hardly any social engagement puts out an article. Probably during a few weeks, nothing is going to happen. Google eventually says, "ah there's no content" not sure whether should do about it, to their ranking to the index it. So after a few months, this content is going to appear somewhere on page six, page seven, maybe if they don't do it strategically. So content, there is definitely a time lags. You put out content, even if it's the best content out there. If your brand doesn't have the strength yet. Where you say this is an authority in this space. Content alone is not going to do anything.

Anfernee Chansamooth 29:56

There you go. Yeah. So these things all play together. So you talked about, you know, strength and brand and these sort of things that relate to you know what the other things we talked about earlier around just what is the brand? What's the value proposition? What's the authority, I love that you talked about authority. And you also mentioned distribution. So someone like a Moz, or an Ahrefs, what they've worked out is yes, we can really produce high quality content. And when I talk about high quality, I know you talked about in a previous episode, we're looking at not only words on a page, but how are you formatting the page in a way that the user will engage with it, you know, some people prefer video, some people prefer audio, some people want the text, you know, you don't want it to look like a textbook that we used to study back in university days where you open it up, and literally, it's 1000 pages of just text. And once in a while, there will be a graph, right? You need to think about, okay, there's a design element to this kind of visual element to this. There's a reason why, you know, Instagram and a lot of these tools that are very visually focused have taken off, because we'd like to consume with a visual format. So I would

encourage that if you have a designer, or you want yourself or you can outsource to someone else, or work, Gert's team, whatever it is, you actually think about, Okay, take some of the concepts you have written about. And then to create visuals that help express those concepts in a quick way that people can absorb. Or what Ahrefs does really well is every piece of content they put out is they actually do a video for it as well. So they do a good, you know, three or five minute video, put some animations in there, make it a bit fun. And so that's, you know, that's something you need to consider in terms of the type of content you're putting out, which is still mistake number three is focusing on the wrong content. A lot of people focus on even just, maybe they'll put up 200 words. And as we know, if we look use Ahrefs as a tool to explore, what you see is a lot of the top ranking articles, we're looking at 1000 - 2000 words plus sometimes pieces of content, right. And I think that's very daunting for a lot of business owners, because they're like, I don't want to write 2000 words that I can't even get to 300 words. But this comes back to the strategy. What is your goal with the content? I remember you saying on a previous episode, you actually said, Gert that it has to do with, you know, 30% of your production needs to be in research. Right? It has to be if you're not doing that you're doing it wrong. You're missing the point.

Gert Mellak 32:19

Absolutely right. Definitely, I was talking with Ilana Wechsler on the previous episode here. And she also brings it down to an interesting thing I usually got thought it was done the other way around. And by no means a Facebook ads expert. But she essentially suggested running ads to test a copy of a blog post before you actually posted to the page. So what I knew was happening very often that you keep posting to your page. And if something gets a lot of engagement, you then promote it as an ad, because it's going to do very, very well as an ad. What I didn't know was this approach, for example, where you say, Okay, I run ads to five different copies. And then I take the two that work the best, and the best way, and either put all my money into run ads to those or take the best copy. And this is going to be then the copy for my organic posting. So this is going to get the most engagement because the market has decided. And this is something where I say very often when we create content for clients, or our clients create content, where you say, what is the goal of this content? If the goal of this content is to rank and it's a misconception to think that every single article needs to be on Google. A lot of articles we have on our websites shouldn't be on Google, or shouldn't be accessible or indexable for Google, because they are just not worth enough. They're not corresponding to any sort of search. They're just because we wanted to share them on social media which is fine, they might do very well and create leads. But once we decided someone, some piece of content is there in order to rank, I need to do my research. So I need to take what is ranking on page one on Google. Is this something that really can compete? I can create a product, a new bicycle today and it has five wheels instead of two. There's not really what the market apparently wants, but I can definitely create my own categories you saying but we know this is a long shot. If I want to make sales with a five wheels bicycle, it's a higher chance that there are already other five wheels bicycle out there that sell very well. Right. So research is definitely essential. I like that you say, people consume content in different formats. I usually tell my client because what we really often see is podcasters, or YouTube, YouTubers that essentially embed their audio or their video on a page right hundred words below it. Just because it looks a little bit weird if it's

just the video but they actually only cared about the video. But what they essentially expected is everybody who searches for this topic, is searching for a video and is having the time the 10 minutes it takes to watch this video or 20 or 30, or sometimes half an hour, an hour and a half. So where we say okay, out of 10 people that come to this site, there might be two or three that really want to watch a video and are in the place and in the moment to be able to consume this video, ideally, with the audio switched on, right. And you've got a few people that rather want in the entire video content, but they might prefer a transcription. Because it's 11pm. They're in bed taking their phone, and they don't want to switch on the audio, they want to read the transcription. And then there are other people who prefer to download this as an ebook or consume like a well prepared, well style formatted content, piece of content. And this is where, why I was also talking with Greg Merrilees from Studio One design about when people really decide to consume the content. So you click on something on Google, they come to a page, very often, they're not going to even bother reading the headline if the overall visual presentation of this piece of content isn't convincing, or doesn't correspond to what they expected. We had clients come to us where I say look, before we start talking about SEO, ask 10 people because you shouldn't believe me, but ask 10 people about the first impression when they come to your website. The idea, my idea being I didn't say anything at this stage, my idea being that everybody's going to say this side looks old, it doesn't look serious. I don't trust this site. And the design is really ugly. Things like those. I don't have to worry about content if the site doesn't communicate my values, my serious appearance, and essentially support my brand. So let me wrap the three points up, because I think they're really important to state here. So first of all, a unclear brand and value proposition I think this is the biggest one. And definitely we have been guilty of this for too long until we get really serious and try to work it out and say what do we really stand for. The business leading with the product before and building an audience, I think this is a big one. And the audience I understand I wanted to ask you a question on this one. The audience is how do you build an audience when you're starting out?

Anfernee Chansamooth 37:16

Yeah. So I think there's different places. That what I gave was the client I worked with who built the audience on LinkedIn. So that's where the audience was first.

Gert Mellak 37:26

It was a personal, interpersonal.

Anfernee Chansamooth 37:28

Correct.

Gert Mellak 37:30

Creation or connection creation. Yeah.

Anfernee Chansamooth 37:32

Yep. The other way to do it is if you're just starting out, you can have your website, you can blog, certainly create a blog, or a podcast or whatever way you want to do it. But you should also be building an email list at the same time. So you want to offer and invite people to, "Hey, if

you like this content, why don't you subscribe, and I'll send you an update every week", or whatever your cycle is. And then now you have people who, once people signal to you, it's all about signals, right? So when someone signals to you, there's an interest, and they're giving you an email address, right? They're saying to you, now I'm starting to trust you. All right, you know, it could be maybe the invitation is not to join the email list, maybe the invitation is going to connect with me on LinkedIn, or connect with me on Instagram, or whatever it is, you know, or come to my next event, right? So what I used to do when we did a Facebook ad agency, for example, we built our entire audience our list, we build it through monthly events that we hosted here in Sydney. And a lot of the time, we actually went out to other people's audiences and said and pitch to them and said, "Can we do a 40 minute presentation in front of your audience, we'll give them some value". And then the exchange was you give us the list, right, whoever signs up, they subscribe to our newsletter. And so now, of course, we're in a time of COVID. So that's probably not realistic. But what you can do is what a lot of people doing now is guest podcasting, you can actually go and appear on, you know, in front of other people's audiences. There are a lot of so much there happening online. You can be a speaker at those summits. I was recently a speaker at a summit hosted by a big marketing agency. And their agreement was, once the summit was over, they would share the entire audience list with me, and they literally emailed me a list of 3000 contacts. I had to then vet those because a lot of them didn't fit my desired audience or target audience, and then ended up getting a hundred subscribed to my newsletter from that, right. And by request, I didn't just go and add them to my list. I actually emailed them and said, "Look, I was one of the speakers. You attended my talk". Did you want to get my, I offered them a gift, which helped them. So now back to your question. Yeah. Audience building. There's different ways you can go about it. I gave you a couple examples. Email list, social media channel. You know, if you're using WhatsApp, I know some people building their listener on WhatsApp. They're actually getting the phone numbers. Adding them to a whatsapp group. That's actually happening in Asia, because WhatsApp is kind of dominating the market in Southeast Asia right now, more so than Facebook and Instagram. So that's another way to do it.

Gert Mellak 40:02

That's very interesting. It reminds me of something I heard Ellen did from success we're seeing at some point, he says that marketing is really like a one to one communication, right? So especially when you say, connection build your audience, go to events, talk to people, get them on your list, get them engaged, and get them sharing your content listing. Essentially what's going on is a one on one conversation. And this is where we also say, okay, when we have like an interesting parallel to SEO, when you're optimizing what's called a meta title and meta description, the search snippet that comes up, it's a one on one conversation. You've got a person with a specific issue, with a specific situation in a specific moment, performing a specific search. And if you don't understand what this individual person is going through, you're not going to the get first clicks so whatever content you have, whatever ranking you have, if you don't get this right, everything else doesn't matter. So the one on one conversation, I think just requires that we see things on a long term when it comes to content strategy. We sealing things with the right angles, see our role. What can we really do in this industry? What can we add in terms of value? And to see this as a very long term. I want to ask you one thing, because this is

something I think, is really coming up a lot. And I want to be conscious of your time, because you've been generously sharing a lot of value bombs here already. What should be the positive elements of a content strategy? Is a content strategy sounds like a very abstract concept, especially if you're someone running their the e-com business, the dropshipping business, their affiliate site, etc? What should they take into account? What What does it take to create a content strategy? What are the main elements models in there?

Anfernee Chansamooth 41:50

Love that question, I'm going to wrap up the five mistakes before we go into that, because this will, it can form the content strategy. The fourth mistake is distribution, right. So what I see happen is limited what we call spray and pray on the promotion, it's like you write an article, I'm going to throw it on Instagram, I'm going to schedule it into whatever tool you're using Buffer, Hootsuite, whatever it is, and you put it out to all your channels. And it's you're just praying, like you hope. And I think, you know, in SEO world, you call it the content, the spike where the first piece of distribution goes out, you're getting clicks through and therefore your traffic goes up, as you see a bump. And then you get like it goes to zero, right? Like nothing returns to what it was before. And I think that when we talk about content strategy, understanding where your audience is, how they consume, and where to reach them, is a big part of the strategy, right? You need to understand the buyer psychology and then go, and I think about this is a common question that marketers like to ask is, you know, where does your audience like to hang out online? Okay. And this actually requires you to having conversations with your audience, people in that audience, right. And so, you know, one of the things is really understanding, okay. So I've seen someone do this recently, Tropical MBA. They did a survey out to like, they've been running their podcast for I don't know how many years now. But they haven't... Until this year, they didn't do an audience survey to understand, to ask certain questions to better understand their audience. Alright. So what they did was they put out a survey and in the survey literally asked, "What is your preferred mode of learning?", written video, audio, whatever. What blogs are you following? What tools are you using? So this is something that we all should need to know about our customers, right? Because if you know, for example, your customers prefer in SEO or they prefer using Ahrefs for, you know, your agencies like to use that tool for research, versus using a SEMrush or some other tool. And then we make sense for you to then go and try and partner with that number one tool, that your audience likes, right? And then get deals and discounts and things like that as well, because that's something that you can negotiate. That's number four, not a clear content promotion strategy, and not promoting enough. So what I see often is they do, you post the article on your site, you hit publish, you schedule it out on your social media tool, and then that's it. Right. The problem with that is, you know, you've done so much work to create this great content, but you're only showing it once. You're not sharing it multiple times, right. And you're relying on the SEO, Google algorithms and things like that to kick in to bring people to the content. But if you watch the people who are doing it, well, like you mentioned, Moz and Ahrefs, and these guys, they actually do a tremendous job of promotion, right? They're running Facebook ads, like what Ilana is talking about in Google ads and they're doing all these things that they're putting paid budget behind it. They're doing content collaborations with other brands that get their content out. You know, we talked about Ahrefs have that, Tim Soulo did a business or blogging course which is that they give away for free and

that's been a huge winner for them. Like they literally give that to all their partners and say, "Hey, this is a free course, go and give it to all your people." Right? And that's a distribution strategy. Okay. So that's number four, and number five is selling way too soon. So this comes down to the intent of your content. What are you trying to achieve with the content? Are you there to educate? Are you trying to raise awareness? Are you trying to sell? Right. You need to get clear about that. Because not all content, needs to be selling content. And not all content should be selling content, if every piece of article that you put out on your blog is buy my thing, right? What do you think that does to the person who visits your site for the first or fifth time? Right. They're just going to get sick of it. I'm done. Right. But if you understand that there's actually a buyer journey. Right. And this is a key element of back to your question about what are the key elements of a content strategy, one of the key elements is the buyer journey, right? Understand and map out visually, maybe on an Excel or Google Sheet or wherever you want to do it, pen on paper, right? These are the steps that our customers typically go through. From the awareness stage through to or the research and awareness stage to the building trust stage to the conversation where I'm going to buy or make the purchase to what happens afterwards. Right. There's a great video of talk done by a guy, by the name of Joey Coleman. If you look up Joey Coleman, hundred days, and Google that on YouTube, or go on and find on YouTube. He talks about so many marketers and businesses focus on the first, like, he's mapped out three stages of the buyer journey. A lot of us focus on acquisition stage, which is when we, you know, we're trying to attract someone that's gonna buy. What we fail to do is focus on the last three stages, which is the retention stage. Which is once they've converted, and they purchase from you, how do you make sure that they don't leave the next month, right? So you can also have content that's designed to keep people around, and continue to educate them and give them insights and be like, "Hey, you know, you're working with someone who's going to not only deliver great service, but we are also going to help you understand these concepts better. " So your business will grow, or whatever their objective is. So elements. So first thing that I usually work through is addressing the first mistake is, what's the brand? What is the value proposition? Let's get that clear. Okay. So we always start off with who's the audience? What is the your point of differentiation? What do you do differently? Now, it's not always about what do you do the best, okay. Because everyone makes that claim, right. Every business is going to say, I'm the best. We do the best SEO. We do the best content. I say, that's rubbish. Like, that's very subjective. And unless you have now, this is why case studies are important. That's why I'm so big on case study marketing is because when you have your clients telling you, and telling the market that you are great at what you do, that's much more compelling than you going out there going, I'm the best. Does that make sense? So, and that actually helps with value proposition and brand. Okay. One key philosophy that I want to impart here is, if you make yourself the star of your business, you're missing the point. The star of your business, or the hero of your business is not you, the hero of the business should be your clients. Because, if they're going on a hero's journey, and if you understand Joseph Campbell, when you've researched the Hero's journey, it's a common... All our stories in the world, you know, Star Wars, whatever it is, the Avengers, they all follow a similar path, right? And if you look at our lives, we go through a similar path. And so your content should also follow that path, right. Because it's one familiar to us, it's innate to us. And when we're really consuming content, we are looking at what is the journey? Like how do I go from A to B, right? And if your content is focused on solving a

problem, so each piece of article that you put out is, this is a problem you have, because you've searched for it on Google and you found us, right? Here's the steps that you need to take to get to the resolution. Which is the promise. And so, again, I want to just restate that, because I can't impress it enough is, you are not the hero of the journey of your own business. The actual heroes are your clients, right? And so you need to focus them, more you talk to them, share, teach them and share their stories, right? The more you start doing that, the more powerful your content becomes. Okay. So we talked about, understand who the audience is, understand their pain points or something that we typically do as a customer or by empathy map. Which is, you know, one of the you know who Taki Moore is, Gert?

Gert Mellak 49:37

Yep, he was quickly the vendor I think for a moment.

Anfernee Chansamooth 49:41

Yeah, that's right he popped in. That's right. So he's one of the masters of content, like honestly, if you watch how he does content, and he's just gone all in on video now. But he understands and what he teaches is this idea of the customer empathy map and understanding. So if you were to map out draw a grid, like x y axis on a piece of paper. All right. What you want to map out is what the customers or your, think about who your ideal buyer is. And then think about what are they're pains. Okay. So start again, start with fears, what are the key fears? And then look at what are their frustrations? Okay, fears and frustrations. Now fear is deep level fear. Okay. So fear for most business owners is my business will fail. Right. Which means I have to go back and get a job. Right. So that's typical for a lot of entrepreneurs. Right. So that's a deep seated fear. The frustrations are the things that are happening right now in their business. I'm not getting enough clients. I'm not getting enough traffic to my site, you know, my content is not working. These are frustration points or what we call pains, right. Then you have to look at the wants. What are the things that they want? Usually, the wants are the opposite of the frustrations. Okay. So I want more traffic, right. I want my content to resonate. I want to generate more sales, right. And then you want to look at what the final thing is the aspiration. Where are they trying to get to with the business or with their life? So you map that all out, that informs your content strategy, because guess what, all your content is going to address those things. And has to mention those things, right. Because that is showing, do you understand who your buyer is? And that makes them relate to the things you put out. Yeah. And so that's a key part. And then the last part of the strategy is what I talked about earlier, which is the buyer journey. We actually map out, what is the buyer journey? What are the stages and phases that they go through? Right, from learning about you? How did they find out about you to when you know, what are they consuming as they move through the journey? And what thoughts and concerns might they have, right, and each piece of content you put out should address each one of those things. And then at the conversion point, okay, what do they need to know in order to buy and so at this point, we might do things like, you know, you might do a sales webinar. You might do a sales call. You might do you know, some kind of comparison table between you and other competitors, or even just comparison between your different products and what you offer to help the buyer understand and make a better decision. So this is all you know, I'm talking about, like a sales proposal document. So a lot of b2b, we do sales proposals. So we send out proposals

to our clients. That's content, right? Typically you're not going to think about it that way. But it is content. And one thing that I do and I talked about, you know, with some of my clients is, every proposal you put out should have a case study in it. You should show that you've actually done the work for someone else, you know, and so that's important. So if you have those three key elements, so your brand, what you are about, what do you stand for? Right. How do you differentiate? Okay. Then you have what we call the audience map, which is basically who the buyer is? What are their pains, frustrations? All those four things that I talked about earlier? Do you remember what they were, Gert?

I was gonna test you.

Gert Mellak 53:01

From the buyers journey, you're saying?

Anfernee Chansamooth 53:03

So we draw the x, y, and then you would have...

Gert Mellak 53:08

Fears and frustrations and aspirations and wants, yeah.

Anfernee Chansamooth 53:12

Wants and aspiration, perfect, right? That's the second part of the strategy. The third one is that you map out the buyer journey and work out what each phases and then from that all those things, then once you have the buyer journey mapped out, then you can then produce ideas around what pieces of content you need to be producing. And then you can map that against a timeline or schedule. Right. So then you can then create, probably the fourth part of the plan is, what is the actual execution plan look like? I would add to that, I would add to that just one final thing would be, in all of this thing, when you get to the point where you understand what the content ideas are going to be that talk to the pain points and the consideration phases that your clients going to go through, at this point, this is when you need to put in your checklist or whatever it is. SEO, this is the point where you have to engage and do the SEO research. Maybe get Gert's team to do that for you, whatever it may be.

Gert Mellak 54:07

That would be a good idea.

Anfernee Chansamooth 54:09

Yeah, this is a very big part of it. Because if you have ideas, but they're not matched to user intent and user search, it's going to be very hard for them to find it.

Gert Mellak 54:19

I think there's a lot of good points, I want to take the opportunity to give a shout out to Taki Moore. I really don't like to consume content in video format. But I am definitely watching every single video he puts out there. They have like a very, very nice length like 10 to 12 minutes.

He's got like two different cameras. He make it really engaging, is like a very high energy, high energy type of person who really definitely agree with you knows how to make content. So definitely he's, he's doing this the right way and he understands his audience and knows how he needs to illustrate concepts, communicate concepts, and that's awesome. So I think this is really great to be... We want a content strategy. We want to make be clear about our brand. We want to understand our audience as much as possible. I like the empathy map. I think it came across this first in the AutoResponder Madness course, I think. This was the first time Andre Chaperon, when I when I heard about this a few years back. And I really liked the content. He was specifically I think, at the end of this module writing, you should go through it again. Because he was like, saying, look, if you didn't get this, don't move ahead, right. He had like a line in there. And he said, "Look, I know you think you understood it, but now do this module again". And then again, it's really, really fascinating what it really takes to understand your audience.

Anfernee Chansamooth 55:48

Because that part, the part where people get that wrong, is they'll do the empathy map as an exercise as a, you know, theoretical or psychological exercise, right? Because the problem is you're making assumptions that you know, what your bias, actually what their fears and frustrations and pains and things are, right. The way you solidify that it's correct is you actually then have to go and have conversations with those buyers, right? And say, tell me about your pains, right? One way that you can do this is actually interview those clients on your podcast, or even don't have to do it publicly, you can actually just Zoom, call, let's have a chat for 20 minutes, I just want to ask some questions do to better deliver a better service for you. Right. And that's a really good way to understand that. And so then you can just validate what you've got on the empathy map. And what you'll find is, you might be surprised about some of the things right? When we were doing this exercise for the co-working space, we had assumptions about each type of customer that we had, right? And we actually went through the exercise of getting the community managers to sit down with each other's clients, at least three or five people who fit that profile, and just ask them some questions to validate what we had was correct. And once we had that, then we went and produce all this content on our blog and things like this, that then spoke to those pain points and as those desires and aspirations. And that actually increased our traffic, because people will then will start to engage with that content. They're like, Oh, actually, you understand, you know, my frustration. So I want to talk to you.

Gert Mellak 57:17

Absolutely. This is also something I really bring up. We work for some people on the website flipping space. Buying, selling online businesses. Buying selling websites, affiliate sites very often. And what I essentially tell them is, look, if this is a space you're not familiar with, and this happens very often, because they come across a good investment opportunity purchase aside, spend the first, the next weeks really diving into this audience as much as you can, because I can provide a keyword research, I can get a basic understanding by covering all ranges of industry from, I don't know electric smokers to high speed internet to ferrets to Ecom businesses to I don't know what we cover a lot of things. And it's interesting that suddenly you get like a basic understanding of a lot of things you never thought you would be in touch. Next month is going to be hair extensions. And then, but you can't go really that deep. So we need a client to

really understand their industry. And here's where I tell them, Look, go sign up for face group, sign up for every newsletter you can get your hands on in this niche. Get to know the vocabulary, the topics, there are always the same issues coming up. And once you really understand them, then you can go through our keyword research, our target, research, our topic research, and evaluate what are really the most important points you know are coming up in this industry. Because there might be other keywords that are also important, but not driving forces. The way I really liked his concept you brought up with parallel content, where it's okay, we can write a lot of content and everything can be interesting. But we can essentially have like very shallow content, that doesn't really make a difference. And if I come across this, I'm not going to trust the next article either. Right? So, I have spent some time reading an article that is not really high value. I click back, click on something else. And this is one of the signals then Google picks up over time that says okay, whoever sent to this site comes back, they seem to be not really engaged, not really happy with what they find. Why should they ultimately rank this page? I really want to, sorry, I didn't want to interrupt you.

Anfernee Chansamooth 59:25

No, what I was gonna say, like you and your team have done a fantastic job of that for me, like when we did the the audit for my site, you know, you highlighted that I actually had a piece of parallel content that's performing really well, that's bringing a lot of traffic, which is the article I have on, you know, whether or not you should join DNI networking group or something like this. And I'm ranking quite well for that keyword. But that's not converting to prospective buyers. Because that the intent is different. They're not there to learn about content and strategy. They're there to learn about networking, which is not what I teach or sell, right. So what you did do is your team gave me some really strong recommendations on well, these are keywords that you probably should focus on, which is more has more user intent and more buyer intent. And that's going to help you get better leads. And I love that. And that was really awesome.

Gert Mellak 1:00:13

Absolutely, thank you. Thank you for that. I think there's definitely a lot of opportunity on many, many sites getting content right, getting content tackled from a strategic approach, rather than just pushing something out. So we have something to share on Facebook, or something to send our email list too. I really want to thank you for all the value you brought here. We probably going to invite you to another podcast because there are a lot of other topics. I definitely want to talk to you about branding. I definitely want to talk to you about events because we just know that in SEO is one of the pillars. I'm far away from saying everybody should do SEO and nothing else. I know this is, we need to be conscious that SEO is part of it. I think it can be breaking very well. It shouldn't be working on its own and and where we really see it is, when people start going a little bit broader. And also focus on social, also focus on strategy, also attend events, also do speaking, also strengthen their brand, also do PR work, etc. Everything really comes together and fits really tightly. Whereas if someone says no, we don't pay \$1 on a click, we only want to do SEO, this can work, especially if you started a few years ago. Or even if we start now and find a real good niche and do a lot of target research and keyword research, really get your audience and have excellent writers, it can still work. But I think it should never be the only strategy someone bet on or someone focuses on. There need to be like an overall strategy

people pursue here in order to stand on a very solid ground. So I really want to thank you a lot here for your contribution. I hope we can get you on another episode talking a little bit more about content. It's just going to be a repetitive theme here. And I think there we can go a little bit narrower than on different aspects like the empathy map, maybe or like the, like the branding in general. And be conscious of your time. Thank you so much. What would be a good way to get in touch with you if people want to know more. I need a copywriter or especially need someone to get a kickass case study going.

Anfernee Chansamooth 1:02:24

Yep, so I've just put together some bonus resources for people listening to this, they can just go to www.simplecreativemarketing.com/gert. G-E-R-T. And if you hop on there, you can just put a free case study guide for those who want to learn more about case study. I put an article which elaborates more on this conversation we've had here and talks about some tips for effectively marketing b2b and professional services in addition to what we've already shared in this episode. So go over there and they're just resources that you can go and grab.

Gert Mellak 1:02:56

Awesome. I really appreciate you putting this together for our audience. Anfernee this was great. Thank you so much. If you're listening to this and you think you want to get your copywriting right or finally get like a content strategy going and really have a strategic long term approach. Content is a long term game, but it's definitely worth it. Get in touch with Anfernee. I know he's working for some of our clients as well. And they seem to be pretty happy with what he is putting together and how he approaches this. So definitely we are going to work with Anfernee as well on a couple of case studies soon. So definitely go over to simplecreativemarketing.com. Thank you very much, Anfernee. This episode 8 of the SEOLEVERAGE.com Podcast. My name is Gert Mellak. Thank you so much. Bye.