014 - Article Structure

Prologue 0:00
We want people to have the best possible experience on this article, based on the moment they're probably in. Say if I'm in a moment where I need a plumber, because I have my water pipe broke. I'm in a very different moment, then if I want to check out if I should get a Subaru, or if I should get a BMW or if I should stick with Ford, because it has been getting great results for me, when I purchase a car. The moment is really different. It depends on the search query. If I need a plumber, different things are going to be interesting. And the format of the content, the structure of the content needs to be different.

Intro Music 0:49
Welcome to the SEO leverage Podcast, where we talk about search, marketing and conversions.

Gert Mellak 0:58
Hello, and welcome. This is Gert Mellak. This is Episode 14 of the SEO Leverage Podcast. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen in. If you're interested in SEO, if you want to improve your online business, grow your business with SEO, organic inbound marketing. This is the podcast that's going to help you through. I am personally going to record these episodes, invite guests that are going to give us external points of view. And we are going to have interesting discussions. Today I would want to focus on a story, tell you a story about what happened in 2019 I think. There was this client. And one day he called me with essentially rings around his eyes after not having been sleeping for four nights in a row, I think, because his sites suddenly, with one of Google's core updates lost 70% of its traffic. And 70% traffic lost for an online business essentially, can put you out of business really, really fast. Existing clients might churn, if this is a membership, new clients are not coming in with the same frequency. So this was a really serious situation. On our site, we did a site audit for this guy. He very quickly to be honest with you, the entire team work together, putting this together as soon as possible. Analyzing all kinds of aspects of this site. Making sure that the links were good. There was nothing shady going on. The backlinks were and part of the reason why the site dropped, etc. And eventually brought really down to some user experience elements that were the key factor of why this site really dropped. So there was one thing I remember that did help a little bit already, which was removing big sliders from the top of the page, just to make sure that people immediately started seeing some content, and didn't have to scroll down, scroll past the slider. The sliders weren't too nicely designed anyway. So it wasn't a big deal. But it was just something that came from a few years before that, where it just was trendy to have big sliders for screen videos, etc. on top of the pages. People started getting annoyed by this and the trend came to an end. But this site still was focusing on like these big sliders on top. In other part on though was really coming up with a new strategy when it came to content. So on that side, in particular, we had a situation where the client essentially had a very open conversational style in writing, which I think his audience really resonated with. It was just placed on the wrong position on his articles. So he would start an article in a very conversational style, telling people a little bit

about his background, etc. Before really coming to the point. And one of our key pieces of advice was to get to the point immediately. Not necessarily give the entire answer right in the first paragraph. But at least make sure that you tell people that your result is really going to be the one they were looking for your page is really going to answer the question. Your page is going to solve their problem. This must be completely clear at the beginning of the page. We have sites with up to 80% mobile traffic or more. People are not going to scroll down to see if this is the right page. They're going to just swipe back and click on a different result. So if you're not able on your page, at the beginning to make sure people know they're on the right page, they're going to leave it. They're going to tell Google, look, this wasn't the best result. I preferred a different one. And this is exactly what we want to avoid. So what needs to be done or what did we do in this particular case? In this particular case, I asked the client to focus on his 20 key pages and remove the conversational openings. Essentially rewrite it, rewrite them to a different paragraph, shorter paragraph that made it clear that that what this page was about and what they were going to get on the page. Very often, you can see this on YouTube as a strategy to maintain people's interests. So at the beginning, they're going to say, look, this video is about how to write content for SEO, and you're going to not only learn how to define how long the content needs to be, but you're also going to learn what are the three key tools you definitely should be using, because your competitors will be using them as well. And you don't want to miss out on this opportunity. And then they talk about the rest of the video. So what this does, is it keeps people in expectation. They know what's coming. If they don't mention the tools, people might jump off, because they might think this video is not going to talk about the tools. Or in an article, if you don't mention the key element, you think could be interesting for some people, users might just jump off and try a different result might give this information at the beginning. Content structure within article is really important in this part of user experience. Very often when we talk about user experience, we are only focusing on design, layout. Should this be bigger, should this be red, should this be yellow, should this be green, etc. But user experience is very often also an important factor when it comes to content, when it comes to an article. So what is a good article structure? A good article structure right now seems to be short opening, giving information about what it is going to be about. If this is a long article, very often, the Table of Contents is nice. Wikipedia knew this years ago. Now more and more people are going to placing tables of contents on their pages as well. And then you want to structure your article, well, you might want to make it a nice experience to scroll down through your article. You want to highlight important words. You want to have your subsections. You want to have images breaking up the content into smaller pieces. It shouldn't be overwhelming because there are 2000 words, paragraph after paragraph after paragraph with no highlighting, no formatting, no styling, no illustration. We want people to have the best possible experience on this article. Based on the moment they're probably in. Say if I'm in a moment where I need a plumber, because I have my water pipe broke. I'm in a very different moment, then if I want to check out if I should get a Subaru or if I should get a BMW or if I should stick with Ford, because it has been getting great results for me, when I purchase a car. The moment is really different and depends on the search query. If I need a plumber, different things are going to be interesting. And the format of the content, the structure of the content needs to be different. If I search for an article on how to become a plumber, it's completely different what users are going to expect to find, because they're going to be expecting to find an article about what it takes to be a plumber. How

can you become a plumber? What's the training you need? Well, do you have to attend a school or some professional training? What are the main tools? What are the main character properties you might want to bring to this job, things like those. And you want to make sure at the beginning of this article that you tell people that you're going to tackle on all these elements. So, there are tools out there that help you a little bit in the process, one amazing tool, a little bit advanced, but still an amazing tools, Inlinks, for example. Inlinks does an amazing job in dissecting articles from page one and give you an idea what the structure is, what the content is, what the entities, the elements or topics are. And then help you apply this knowledge to your articles for example. Very often, it's also enough to just really read consciously through the top ranking sites. We use a tool called Surfer SEO, for example, as well, where they also analyze the common denominators. But you really want to know the order of things as well. So it is different if something is mentioned at the beginning or at the end, because if it's mentioned at the end, people might not scroll that far, and might not be happy with the article because they can't find that piece of content. So if everybody starts on how to become a plumber, with the professional training you need, and the professional training on your page is coming at the end, you might not be the most relevant search result for Google and might not get the ranking. So let's wrap this up for you. User Experience does not stop with the design, user experience is very much focused on the content, how it is presented, how happy it makes me as a user to consume it. And you can certainly imagine if you have a huge long article without any illustrations, without any links highlighting, subsections, navigation, etc. It's not the same level of happiness as browsing through a Wikipedia article, for example, with sections with internal references with images on the site, etc. We want to make sure we are in line with the content structure of top ranking sites. We want to make sure that people when they come to our site, at the beginning right away know what this page is going to give them. So they can make an informed decision whether they want to leave the page, where they want to stay, or they want to jump directly to the section they are interested in. This is going to give you a good basis for your content, creation for your content presentation, and is going to ensure that people coming to your site have a positive experience, and at the same time, give positive signals and positive user experience signals to Google, which ultimately is what we want. I hope this was helpful. If you think this is helpful for someone else, please share this episode. Send them a link to Seoleverage.com. This is Episode 14. You can find information about this topic on our website, seoleverage.com/podcast. My name is Gert Mellak, thank you so much for listening in. And stay tuned for the next episode. Bye.