

016 - How Local SEO Affects Your Online Businesses with John Vuong

John Vuong 0:00

Content is very important. So is UX, so is journey, uhm navigation, so is ah I would say links, citation building, directory submission. You know, there's the foundations right? And I still boil down to as a business owner, you need to know how to run a business, you need to know how to pick up the phone. If there's a lead that comes in, what happens? If you don't know that fundamentals, no matter what SEO campaign that's driven, you're not going to have the success that you believe it's going to bring you.

Intro Music 0:39

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

Gert Mellak 0:48

Hello, and welcome. This is Gert Mellak from SEOLeverage.com. You're listening to episode number 16 and while we very often focus on online businesses, e-commerce today, we're going to break it down to a more local level. And I'm really happy to invite, to have on the show John Vuong today, who is in local SEO experts focused on local SEO for local businesses. Welcome, John, welcome to the show.

John Vuong 1:14

Well, thanks a lot for having me. I'm excited. I've been following you for a little bit and excited to be on your show today.

Gert Mellak 1:22

Yeah, I'm definitely excited to have you because localist you and we are going to see this in the course of our conversation. I'm sure has a much bigger impact also on online businesses, and not only local businesses. But I don't want to take too much away right now. Could you give our listeners a little bit of an intro about where you come from? What's your access? How do you come to local SEO specifically?

John Vuong 1:49

Yeah, definitely. So my backstory began. I started this agency eight years ago. So back in 2013, is when I began, bootstrapped it, didn't really know anything about SEO. But prior to starting an agency, I was in advertising sales for 10 years. And doing traditional advertising sales, print media, as well as online affiliate. I stayed at a fairly large company, and you probably heard and your audience members know, of yellow pages, and I was there for five years. And that's where I really harvest and learn a lot about running business, because I dealt with 1000s of small

business owners, and understood what really mattered and resonated for them. So I connected on a more personal level relationship building, and really understood like what was important to them, mainly to support their family and community. And understanding what, how to run a real solid foundational business uhm really set me up to, when I was ready to start my own. So the last couple year while working at Yellow Pages, you knew there was a shift, the user intent behavior was changing, no longer they consume that printed format to then consuming on digital platforms. And Google became the prominent place, they became the dominant, you know, monopoly in terms of the digital world. And search became more of a go to place for businesses who want it to be in front of potential customers seeking out the product and service. So I just had to understand how Google operate the algorithm. I didn't really know much about technical digital at that point. I knew a lot of sales, I Knew customers needed someone they can trust. And I wanted to be that middle person or that company to transition away from traditional to digital. And I figured it out after a couple years, a lot of mistakes, a lot of you know, hiring firing mistakes, and just got a good rhythm, good process now and I feel video conference talking and speaking and informing others about what we can do for customers.

Gert Mellak 4:08

Sounds good. It's funny, you bring up Yellow Pages because the backstory of our brand of SEO Leverage really began on a very similar level. We had been doing a lot of programming, a lot of online marketing, lead generation and things like those before I really shifted towards SEO. And we came through a period where Yellow Pages I was already based in Madrid, I think in Spain. I remember a lot of companies were paying us big amount of money to Yellow Pages just for them to build up some local local pages, really locally optimized pages, but the Yellow Page pages was still like the first go to place unless you already had an agency advising you differently. But we started really on a local level. It was interesting, so we did a local offices refurbishment company the new car repair store, not only with local SEO, but also then Google ads and stuff. So very often came from a same level. And then I agree there was a big shift going on. Also, when talking to science, that they said, yeah, we used to pay, I think it was like \$3,000, a year, back then to yellow pages here in Spain, which was a lot of money here. And there was a shift where people started trying to get their own, set up their own side going and be a little bit independent of those big annual subscriptions. And definitely saw that more and more people were just relying on Google, nobody clicked under yellow pages, which did come up back then, as one of the most search, most important search results on the on the top there were the Yellow Pages, essentially. So Google, definitely gave them a lot of credit in the past. Let me ask you something in the last two years or so, have you seen local SEO change?

John Vuong 5:51

There has been changes on a level that were organic SEO was prominent on links and content in UX, there's been a major shift towards that. Because now these larger brands are shifting towards more local, and they're competing with the local players that don't have the same amount of budget. And they're bringing to it a lot of link building and a lot of other larger ticket item strategies that a lot of local players can't afford to implement on their own strategy. So we have to be way more creative than ever to compete with larger brands.

Uhm hmm. Definitely interesting points. For larger brands, we've seen this as well with, especially in E-commerce, ahm where we see use the large brands suddenly targeting really small locations, neighborhoods, etc. Whereas, they also have figured it out, it's not only the big search volumes, that's interesting, but there is a value in adding up small location pages and small, lower search volumes, that in some with the power you mentioned, the investment power they have can then really, really add up. We're very focused on a content driven approach in SEO. I know, some agencies focus only on links, some agencies focus on only citations. I mean, where do you see content when it comes to local SEO?

Content is very important. So is UX, so is journey, uhm navigation, so is, I would say links, citation building, directory submission, uhm. You know, there's the foundations, right? And I still boil down to as a business owner, you need to know how to run a business, you need to know how to pick up the phone, if there's a lead that comes in what happens? If you don't know that fundamentals, no matter what SEO campaign that's driven, you're not going to have the success that you believe it's going to bring you, right. So even with a local standpoint, I feel business owners need to understand and because I learned this at a lot at Yellow Pages. It takes years to learn how to run a business, it doesn't take weeks, months, a couple years, like a lot of things that you learn digitally now, a lot of the nomads a lot of the younger 20 millennials, I would say, right? They feel that with technology comes speed. And they feel they can get things up and running really quickly. Yes, there's different platforms, different slack, stack, stack softwares for different purposes. But my type of client are still the small, medium sized businesses because I resonate with them. I connect with them on a personal level, I really wanna help them become, you know, inspiration and support their community. So depending on your focus, right, I feel as a local SEO agency, we feel there's still a gap and opportunity to compete with the bigger brands because of even though the low search volume, low traffic, hot way higher conversion rate, higher. You know, if done, right, it's gonna cultivate the type of nurturing and lead source that you want in your ideal type of client. And in the realm of SEO, it's all about traffic. It's about conversion rate, it's about quality. And if you believe in running a good campaign, that's what you should ultimately go after and fine tune so that you can make use of your resources so that it can give you the best offer.

Gert Mellak 9:31

Interesting. As you mean to pinpoint you a little bit on the content aspect because it's something we teach our clients in the ERICA consulting we have, where we walk him through a framework, we have come up with and published a book around this. Content is just really something that seems to matter a lot. Google needs obviously content to rank a site and a phone number and address alone is not going to rank for a certain business name. So understanding in local SEO ahm, will there be an advice you could give people, wheras when it comes to content creation and your business's somewhat local business, or at least a local intent coming. Is there anything in particular, you could give them as an advice to take into account? Most of our clients, by the way, create their own content? Or have their their team, there are writers and they create this content based on our, our instructions? But we just say, yeah.

John Vuong 10:22

So very similar. Content is very pivotal in terms of foundation, right? So who do you want to be known as, as the expert, but then really drive home, like then what kind of purpose of content, is it navigational transaction? Is it you know, informational, different purposes based on journey of the client. And then you got to figure out like, answering all the questions that your ideal customer has, right, like that persona, avatar, understanding what they're asking the who, what, why, when, where how, figure out all those really, really detailed questions answering make it easy for customers, so that you can really just focus on that transaction, right, focus on honing down on your expertise, so that makes it easier for them to not call you with questions. But in terms of the local level, a lot of business owners don't understand marketing and sales. They understand how maybe to run a business, but they have all these dreams. And, you know, they want they see their competitor. And they think, well, they they feel they're way better than them, no matter what industry, no matter what business, but they don't understand what it takes right to get there. They don't know their back history, they don't have no idea what went on in their circumstance or whatever. So just being real with people give them a real perspective, laying down the foundation steps this process, and then understanding like how to differentiate, what's a go to strategy market. And I really focus on in terms of local, making sure that they dominate their space. And as much as the competitors have their competitive edge or whatever they think they know that they're dominant for, we have software to detect which keywords are actually ranking for.

Right? We actually have, you know, a lot of the stack, a lot of people don't know what's going on, right? In the back end, what links, what are the content, relevancy? What's the trust will, what you know, everything, right. How long people stay on certain pages, we can detect all that and then give them a more informed educated decision on. They're not really competitors. If you're focused on this as your key go to market. These are your competitors, right? And then give them more clear vision on what you should be putting in your content, and creating good compelling content, focus more on their goals and their aspirations as opposed to others. So stop comparing, focus on what they want. Because a lot of people compare, right. They're like, Oh, they they see on this nice website, they see all these people working for these other companies. It's great that they were able to do it, focus on what you want, as a business owner.

Gert Mellak 13:21

Interesting. So essentially, what you're seeing is that content obviously depends on what stage someone is in, if they're exploring the topic, if they're ready to buy, queries are going to be different content they are looking for is going to be different. And then, and what I'm hearing is that there is value in competitive research, not necessarily looking at your competitor and doing things exactly the same. But checking out what is working for a competitor, where are their ranking? What can we do from our perspective, everybody. Just initially, before we hit record, talking about every agency approaches things a little bit differently, right? We all want to rank for the same topics, probably. But we have probably our, our own approach. So we definitely want to know what competitors are doing. But we want to then interpret it based on what we want to achieve for a business. What's the best thing for our, for our clients? I think this very much resonates to what with what, what we're doing here with the E from Erica with the evolution

where exactly where our competitors, what's working for them, what can we leverage? I remember a case for example, where we was checking out a competitor from one of our clients in the online learning space. And we just discovered an early warning sign where they were losing traffic. Okay, so there was they just lost traffic. We figured out what was the keyword what was the ranking they were losing. We checked it out. It was really purely based on user experience. The poor guy just didn't see this URL coming, I think. Everybody is all the other competitors, we jump, edit really, and and they lost completely. They lost page one. Everybody is trying to jump at it as soon as possible, make things bigger, better, approach things from the level who users apparently were looking for or which made Google users happy, which ultimately, is what we're trying to do. So it's really, really interesting, a big topic that always comes up in SEO is relevance. So things, sites, pages, results need to be relevant. What's your interpretation of relevance?

John Vuong 15:31

For sure, relevance, proximity, you know, it's all about making sure that if you're going to be an expert, in whatever field it is, expertise, authoritative figure, you need to be a thought leader, right? someone that knows what they're talking about, provide good depth, well researched information on your blogs, newsletter, or whatever, on other posts. And other people need to know that you know your stuff, just like any expertise, right? You've been doing SEO for a while, myself now, a couple more years, it's more like, Look, I feel that I know what I'm kind of talking about today, versus when you're first starting off. So relevance is all about experience, like accredited credentials, right? Just like when you're a dentist, you don't just become a dentist, you spend 20 years in school with, you know, designation with training, apprenticeship, working for some other practices, then you can say I have 20 years of experience, right? You know, in terms of like accredited, relevant is I feel you have to be someone of a status, to then speak on that subject matter. Without that, it's very difficult for you to gain traction.

Gert Mellak 16:52

This means, this means you understand relevance more as some sort of authority. That's correct?

John Vuong 16:58

Yes, so relevance also plays in terms of location, and your niche, specific associations, and

Gert Mellak 17:06

I was going to say is probably I would, I would personally probably see in a little bit broader, as okay if it's a service business. In your case, with local SEO, obviously, we are very, very tied to businesses, what needs to be the expert in the area or need to be the authority in the area with SEO, especially when we talk about online businesses, e commerce, etc. Very often it comes down really to topic relevance as well. So I think there are probably different geographic relevance, topic relevance. I remember when we did link building, I think we started link building probably like 20 years ago, or something like that. And I remember one of my first clients was, was in big agency from Germany, hired us for, for links. And they said, yeah, whatever link, you create and report, you need to be able to defend it. Okay. And this was an interesting and

interesting request from this client, because they knew you could create very quickly a lot of links, but defining a link means it must be relevant, it must be either geographically relevant, it must be topic related, relevant, it needs to be relevant, overall in the entire link profile. So I think, relevance very often we, when we talk about this in the team, we very often check what, what makes the search user happy, is a relevant search result. Not sure if this is probably the best definition I could come up with, this probably better out there. But essentially, what it tells us is that for a certain search user based on all those factors, their location, their search history, is a relevant. search engine result is very different. If you search for how old is Obama, and you get their age, and you then put a search into this and his wife, this is going to trigger Obama's wife, because he knows that for you in this specific moment, relevance is a completely different thing than for someone is just typing in and his wife, but Google has no idea what the search intent could possibly be. So very often we see relevance in in context, and especially for local businesses relevance are very often we see it tied to their surrounding other businesses in their area, maybe in other other institutions, schools, etc. So I think this is definitely a big topic, but he also touched upon authority. And I just was speaking on a podcast about EAT. So expertise, authoritativeness, trustworthiness, is this a topic using local SEO as well?

John Vuong 19:39

Yeah, definitely. So Mary Haynes, like I met her three years ago, she's out of Ottawa. Again, Google Google guidelines, everything is all about making sure that they provide the best websites for the given user at that given time, right? Yes, they take into account all the cookies, cache history. They store all their information, the queries and even knows what sites you go on, right to provide ads, ultimately. For it, for in terms of Google, you know, you don't know how Google algorithm works, right? But we can only guess based guesstimate, based on the history and the search queries that actually come out as a result of whatever you type in. So yes, expertise, trust flow, authority, live, links, everything plays, and we don't know the factors in terms of strength, and even percentage wise, right. But if you're doing everything, white hat, best practice, and based on what you see, on history, historic data, it usually is predictable data as well, based on the result and the outcome on your history and your your clients, right, like, usually, I look at your process, your, you know, if you had good proven track record already, and it's specific ni, niche, or specific service, specific country, you kind of know and can judge based on what went on and how they came about getting, even on a competitive analysis, relative basis, right, you can actually sniff through a lot of information to figure out what the journey was. So we do a lot of like back end, strategy and consulting, before we actually deploy and put together a campaign because with all the insights out there, you get a better picture. And as long as you do a lot more planning, it gives you a better leg ahead. Even though you're still gonna do a lot AV testing, you're gonna have to in, do a lot of things just to pinpoint exactly what happens at a certain time to see what the, you know, shifts are. But that's SEO, right? Like nothing is a standalone, set it done it, forget it, everything's changing. And it's an evolving space, because you don't know what the competitors are doing on a daily basis, what other SEO agents are doing. So you're competing all the time. But as long as you're focused on the end goal, whatever that customer wants, right, and wants to be known for, and you hit their KPIs, or you do the best you can, like, honestly, I'm very authentic and very honest, I'm like, look, what you get with my most SEO agencies is their best effort. And if they're in with the right

reasons, like you're in alignment, you build a good relationship, and they actually want to help you grow your business, then they're gonna do the best job they can possibly do for you, right? That's all they can do. And hopefully, that's good enough, but sometimes it's not, and it's okay.

Gert Mellak 22:55

Yeah, obviously, customers definitely, definitely in the focus, you bring up an interesting point, obviously, you don't want to know what your competitors are doing while you're working your SEO. And we found an additional level of complexity in users and users expectations, shifting over times. I remember for example, we, we had a client coming to us with a 70% ranking drop. And we analyzed his site in essentially he, he still had this big, full screen sliders on top where you had to scroll down or there was even an arrow, you had to click on it. This look sounds a little bit ridiculous today, because we are not used to this, but there's only two or three years ago, right? where it was really trendy in many, many industries to have like a full screen video that took a while to load, people were loading for the loading button just to see this poor screen, video, etc. You couldn't do this at some point. So essentially, his side lost for a large part because of those sliders he had on every single page of I don't know, like 500 pages or something like this. So users expectations shift. So while we have SEO, we have SEO is a moving target. So we do our thing. Competitors do their thing. Users suddenly decide to navigate from mobile phones rather than desktop. And everything changes, again. Google adjusts all the time every day launches, minor algorithm updates, and then surprises us before Christmas with a Google core update, which is always a big fan for the industry. And end users just really change that behavior. So users change the way they search to change the devices. Right now, do you ever watch is not something necessarily I'm using for search, but maybe this changes over time or they figure out how Siri can better search something on on Google at some point. Or maybe it's been we're going to figure this out. But definitely SEO is a moving target, we need to be and stay on top of it. We've seen, I've been doing this now for 20 years, I think and we've seen everything. So when I, when we started, we had people writing white text on white background, because this helped you rank. It was really, really fun times we had small sites creating hundreds and hundreds of links, because it was just quantity, it wasn't quality. And thankfully, I'm really it's more challenging these days. But I'm really thankful that Google improved quite a bit. And many things don't work anymore. Because working today in SEO is much more fun. It's much more challenging, but much more fun than it was back then where you just try to find a loophole in their, in their system, they're smart enough to be able to value user experience, value quality, content quality, depth, etc, really understand what their algorithms burden likes, what is really happening in the content. So I think it's definitely challenging, but it is part of the game ups and downs are part of the game. Obviously, from my point of view, I was always saying, first of all, no contracts, everybody should be able to leave if they feel they're not getting the value from our clients. And the second one was full transparency with the same ways we might be talking about what we do for, for some project on a podcast, I might be talking about this on the YouTube video or tell you the client specifically or the team, etc. I think transparency is really key because I think the SEO agency or industry got a little bit of bad light in the marketing field. Just because too many people were taking advantage of, of clients lack of

knowledge, well, it's okay, you can certainly find whatever they want. They don't understand things, they don't understand content. And we were essentially going even 15 years ago already against the grain and saying, look, we are going to tell you everything, we are going to send you the link reports, we're going to send you what's happening. If you drop, did you drop and were not controlling everything. As you're saying we make the best efforts possible and move this forward. Before we wrap this up, I would want to touch upon a point that is very interesting to me. And this is where where local SEO essentially merges with general SEO. And what I mean by this is that even though I'm selling something on my website, maybe throughout the United States, I should could still I can still work in this works really well for our clients, it can still work on a local level. For example, I can sell my, my sneakers in the entire world, but people might search for a sneaker's store, Wyoming. And that can still target queries like this, specifically, do you have in your in your local SEO efforts, any project where you think such things are, are helpful or or come up, or you're only working on on local businesses where they're very limited around.

John Vuong 27:52

So majority of my clients are service based, Google My Business, the map, local three pack, as well as landing page optimization for city specific or neighborhood specific. Yes, I have 20% that are more B2B, more ECom, or, you know, service but more global. So for me, I find that with localized, just understand user behavior, user journey, how consumers buy and purchase and decisions, they might not have the same budget as bigger brands. And that's where e commerce comes into play. A lot of people are competing with the bigger, you know, the ad C's Amazon's or you know, if it's a product play, and they need a competitive edge, so they go after localized, or they go after very hyper long, targeted keywords or different variations, right, semantic keywords or whatever it is, just to win over the more generic search queries that get huge amount of volume. So as as a business owner, you just have to look at the opportunities, the gaps and where you want to compete. Because you have limited budget, you don't have the same amount of money as some of the big huge in house big agencies or big brands that can afford, you know, hundreds or a couple million dollars a month retainers, right? versus you might have a couple \$100,000 right like it. You can't play and you have to be realistic. And that's where benchmarking and, you know, just being upfront with your customers at the beginnings, like look, you want this dream, you need to play in the big boys league and start investing with funding with VCs or something right? So being realistic with people and let them realize who they're really competing with, because you have a competitive analysis and figure out like who your major competitors are before you give them and want to work with them because setting expectations are so critical in any partnership relationship that we bring on because without that, very difficult to manage expectations once a month start progressing, because there is unrealistic most of the time, they want everything for nothing and yesterday's result, like they wanted things done yesterday. In reality, as you know, Google will index and crawl even though you're paying them and you do so many things to initiate that crawl. It's not gonna happen sometimes. And, you know, for you, it's like, okay, it's finally moving the needle, but clients are impatient. They wanted things done yesterday, no matter what. And that's, its overall expectation, managing. And we're more, you know, under saying, we know a lot more, because we're in the industry, and we can read the reports with all the software, most business owners

don't even know how to read and then implement it. That's another thing too. As much as you buy a software, how do you trans, you know, transcribing, really understand what the depth is? analyze it, and deploy it with actions that, you know, is a predictable result that will come out of it.

Gert Mellak 31:06

That's it. Yeah, this is a really good, a few really good points. First of all, and like you mentioned, obviously, everybody has a limited budget, usually, even big brands have their budgets they need to keep, and they probably spend 80%, maybe, or 70%, on on paid ads, and the rest, maybe a little bit of SEO, a little bit of human marketing. But obviously, we need to see what can we do with a budget, what I really tell our clients is, pick your battles, well, there are battles, you're not going to win and just remember to talk to two or three weeks ago, we had a call. And we got them to number four on page one. And that was about it. Because on top, they had Wikipedia, they had Britannica. And I think there was Amazon. Okay, so at some point, you just say, Okay, this is as far as it gets right now, I could not either spend months and months and months and months trying to get ahead. It might be Google launching, and I wouldn't update and say look, Britannica has very short, very superficial definitions here. Let's rank them behind you. And you might suddenly then jump to page one, position one, but sometimes it's always okay, this is as far as it gets because there are just big brands. But we obviously prefers big brands rather than a smaller one, even though it has relevancy in the space and has been around for a while. You have to pick your battles well as your key with the limited budget I have, where can I allocate. And this is where the location pages very often we see working really well with okay. I can't I can't go for iPhone repairs in Sydney, it's just impossible. But maybe when they search for smaller neighborhoods or smaller towns around Sydney, there is a space for me for my iPhone repair shop, where I can really rank actually, and I'm going to be the most relevant search result because nobody, hardly anybody. There are going to probably be three iPhone repair stores. And mine is the only one doing SEO, so this is where very often we can shift the attention. And this is also where I think people ignoring local SEO, get it wrong when they have an online businesses or something we really very often hear where they say okay, no, I'm not interested in local SEO, they don't go to local SEO conferences, they don't go check out local SEO, SEO courses because there's a look I'm I'm selling nationally or internationally, this is not something for me. But then when you break it down, so many people search for your service or your business plus location, and you're offering there and then \$1,000 location. So local SEO at some point is a thing. We had a client who ended up opening virtual offices to have physical locations in many places. Because they saw such a strong impact from local searches, even though they were an online business, they still saw value in having those physical representations in those places because there were so many queries tied to those locations.

John Vuong 34:02

I wanted to add, like the KPI metric, at the end as a customer really uncover what they want. Is it ranking? Is it clicks? Or is it conversion calls and actions right downloads or inquiries. Once you determine what that metric is, focus on it, everything else. Because even if ranking is

subpar, but it's generating good quality leads and conversions, that's ultimately the customer's decision to continue with you or not. If they feel momentum, then you're on the right track. But if it's just a data point of getting a ranking, that's superficial for most part because even if it's a huge search volume that generates very low quality and very low, you know actions afterwards. Who cares, right? most business owners I deal with they care about top line revenue or profitability. Bottom line right? Everything else superficial. It doesn't really matter to them.

Gert Mellak 34:58

They might they might hear about being on top of their competitors. It's just an ego. You got ego based metrics does not convert, not related, not related to any conversions or, or anything, obviously one of the first thing when when, when someone comes to us for, for an ERICA consulting, the first call is always conversion focused always. Okay, what is it? How are you going to measure if I'm successful. And this is a really important part because some people, first of all, either they don't have a conversion tracking. So they might just look at traffic. And when more traffic comes in, they get more calls and more inquiries, inquiries, but they don't have a tracking behind it. So we want to make sure we we make as many decisions based on numbers. So we start establishing the conversion tracking, okay, how many people really click this trial sign up button, for example, on your site, or how many people really try to establish contact because they get to the contact page that's tied to something even if you don't get so many inquiries, because it might be a high ticket, high ticket price, we still want to make sure we identify how many of 100 people come in and do something we really want him to do. So I think this is a this is a great point. We very often clients are more worried about ranking drops than actually converting drops because they check the rankings, but they don't count the conversions, other clients asking me why the traffic drops 15%. And it was because we both had decided before to take down, I think 10 or 15 Euros because they were not relevant. But he had forgotten about it and just saw this huge ranking drop, and then we checked out the conversions. Look, you even won conversions in this in this time, right? So it's really hard. SEO is so tied to traffic, it's sometimes hard to grab people and drag them away from the traffic statistics, and say what is the number of conversions you get from the search channel from the organic segment on Google, you can select this on top. And this is very often what really needs to move the needle. I want to just come back one more to the limited budget. And this is something where we try to bring across SEO is obviously what we both really have identified to make and what we enjoy and what we where we focus on. But I'm also aware that this is just one thing. So I think it's just it's one pillar below an entire strategy. And so very often when when people are not really sure what to do, we might be starting with them on Google Ads first, because they need some quick feedback, what could be terminology, maybe they need to validate their offer scale, they because they just started out, or they have only done Facebook ads, and at some point COVID hit and then it stopped working. This happens quite a bit these days, uhm, so we try to establish that there is always one pillar, it's not going to be the only page it should not be the only pillar below an entire marketing strategy. But we do see that people are apparently dragged over their expectations in terms of speed, from paid ads platforms where you just hit the puppy, put \$5 in it or \$3 like in Facebook, you hit promote then 10,000 people are going to see your offer. They drag this over and say okay, now today I'm

going to pay you for SEO tomorrow you send me the reporting, this has happened to you as well?

John Vuong 38:15

So I only do SEO, I actually don't take any other form. Like I don't do digital marketing, per se, like Google ads, social media ads, video production, all that stuff. The only two things we do is website design and SEO. The reason is, and it's true believer of yellow pages, and those types of clients. And maybe I'm brainwashed. I've done a lot myself, and I only do it to test the market. I've done trade shows, radio, television, newspaper, anything localized, traditional, as well as digital, from social to Google ads to YouTube to funnel email funnels, you name it, I've done it. And then I track the quality of leads more than anything. I don't care about the clicks or the lead magnet, the hook and whatever. It's all about real life lifetime value of a customer, acquisition class as much as I get them and maybe it pays for itself sometimes never does. It's all about lifetime quality leads that I get in nurture and are they resonate with my values? Do they connect with me on a level that I really want to help them or not? And that's more important in terms of proper SEO campaign if you do that properly with any agency yourself, anyone in the world there's great companies out there and if you resonate with people that really care and understand your values, understand your mission, understand who your ideal customer is and able to nurture more of that then you got a really really successful SEO campaign. Everything else like ads yes ecommerce great product play great influence marketing great. But when it comes to service, small mediums As businesses, SEO is the bread and butter. And that's why I focus on this because I know based on my experience, and, you know, hundreds of clients I've worked with, it's more best practice right now I have real data to prove it. And until someone has that, to back it up, it's hard for you to understand it, if you're trying to do it yourself, or an agency that specializes in e-commerce, you know, your e-commerce data better than anyone. You know, and that's different industries and niches even within SEO, right. You know, you play where you want to play. And there's a huge market for everyone to play it. It's just choose your battle, right. And I focus on this because I'm very passionate. I love my type of client.

Gert Mellak 40:45

Sounds good. We definitely have seen great success combining the two local SEO and Google ads, especially when because one channel essentially could inform the other and they could say looking paid ads, this really works really well, let's build some content on a local level on for for SEO, then or also vice versa. Then, based on the tools we use in SEO, we were informed about certain questions or keywords that then informed Google ads. I want to really wrap this up, I'm really thankful for you for taking the time for this podcast. It was great to chat about local SEO, we've learned a lot we have learned content in local SEO needs to be tied to the company values to the values your clients represent to the stage they are in. This is a very big thing with transactional search query where search for the best, what cheapest sneaker in Sydney is not the same as if I just type in sneakers, and I'm completely disorientated, I just want to have a general idea. So content really depends on the state on the buyers journey, I think we agree on transparency being a must, for SEO agencies, to gain the trust to really deserve the trust from from the client. And also from an online business perspective, we talked about how local SEO can still be a very important part of your overall strategy. Even if you're not selling or typically

local business. At the end of the day, we sell one to one, we want to be found by one individual person who is in their specific pace, and needs to find a solution. If people want to know more about you, where could they get in touch with you, John?

John Vuong 42:31

So the website that my agency owns is localseoearch.ca. So we're based in Toronto, Canada, but again, we service clients throughout global, as well. We have a podcast called Local SEO Today, just sharing journeys and had some good guests on there. I just really want to resonate and connect with good people. I'm at a different stage. I've been doing this for eight years, and I've seen good and bad in a lot of people, business owners or individuals that want to, you know, get something from you without, you know, paying right, you realize who's in it for the right reasons. And I just want to connect with good people, usually SEO people like yourself and different individuals, consultants or agencies. We're here to help businesses. And they have to realize that if they're ethical, of course, the white hat people, but there's also a lot of people that are fast tracking things hacking or figuring out like tactics and tricks and guaranteeing this and that, well, there's no guarantee in life, let alone advertising, right. And you're leveraging a platform that you have no control over. So understanding, acknowledging what you're able to do, and working with people that resonate with you and your values. And that's the most important thing in terms of SEO or any business relationship as a whole. Just get a hold of good people, connect with them, and you're gonna have way more happiness in life

Gert Mellak 44:06

Thank you so much, great closing frame phrase, John Vuong from Local SEO today. Thank you so much for coming to the show. We'll definitely be in touch. Thank you.

John Vuong 44:15

Thanks a lot, Gert.