035 - What Skills Are Needed For SEO?

Prologue 0:00
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SEO Leverage Podcast Intro Music 0:25
Welcome to the SEO Leverage Podcast, where we talk about search, marketing, and conversion.

Gert Mellak 0:35
Hello, and welcome to episode 35. My name is Gert Mellak, you're listening to Seoleverage.com. And today we are going to talk about this skill set we need for an SEO person. On episode 21, we already talked about the SEO team. So this might be interesting for you, if you're right now, starting out and building your team. Today, we want to specifically focus on the skill set that very often needs to be distributed across multiple people as we're going to see. But let's first start with a general description of what SEO really comprehends. What an SEO or head of SEO role should really comprehend. First of all, I believe an SEO person on your team should have a good idea about the organic landscape in your industry, they should know which competitors are there. What are the big, the key players? Like how strong are they, what are they doing for their SEO, and just have a very good overview about what's happening in this niche. We do this with our ongoing Erica program members on a regular basis. We have multiple people on the team checking out their situation on a regular basis every couple of weeks, then we define what should be the focus below the overall strategy. So this SEO person should really be able to devise a strategy for your brand, lineup the tactics that are going to bring you closer to your ultimate goal. And SEO should not be the only traffic channel but can definitely bring you closer to this goal and renowned want to know how we're going to manage getting you closer there. We always want to make sure that the execution process gets monitored. What's really one of the most important items for us is consistent execution. A project that consistently executes on a regularly updated set of tasks based on the global and Google related changes is usually successful in SEO. However, if the ongoing execution process fails, or there are some big pauses, between updates, content improvements, etc. It really gets tricky. So an SEO person should not only be able to understand the strategic point of view, but also be able to monitor and or even implement an SEO strategy on an ongoing basis and will need dedicated resources to do so. Many people ask me if an SEO needs coding skills or programming skills. And I do think based on my own background with programming, I've been programming for almost 20 years, I think it definitely helps. Because once you know how to program, you have a better understanding how a machine might be able to interpret certain things or might be able to handle certain things. So technically background is good also, in order to be able to assess what is possible on a website, what is not possible on a website. So my

web development background, for example, has been helping a lot of my clients, just to be able to tell them what their programmers can and can't do. And what could be a reasonable time or financial effort necessary to get those things done. What I do with my team, there are not hardly any programmers on the team. What I do is we train them on basic HTML, because it's just, I think, basic knowledge for an SEO person to be able to read and also write short HTML code and understand how a page is built and what certain HTML tags mean. And where does and definition of a headline one, headline two go into code and what does this provoke, etc. So we want our SEO team always to have a little bit of an understanding of HTML code and be able to read HTML, as the browser does. A big skill for SEOs, I think is writing. SEO is a lot about content. SEO is a lot about optimized content. SEO is a lot about writing content in a specific structure and in a specific way that Google afterwards wants to rank. So writing skills is definitely something I would encourage if I was hiring an SEO person, I would want them to have a good understanding of the writing process, be able to write a decent paragraph, be able to optimize an article they don't need to be writers for the entire 40 hours a week, but they should have some writing skills. Another one is really communication skills in general and a few personal traits, I think. Communication skills are just so important, because if an SEO person can't articulate what they need, or what resources they need, what they want to achieve, how they want to achieve, etc. Communication skills, I think are absolutely essential for every single team member. I'm really happy to get feedback from my clients all the time. How well my team communicates. How clearly we explain the tasks. We tried to get better at this every week, really, but I think this is definitely a big shout out for my team, they're doing an amazing job of communicating with our clients and explain why we think certain things should be the focus of their intention. Consistency is another one, an SEO person that can be consistent cannot do their job well. We need to give them enough resources, so they can consistently work on the right things. It's their background that's going to assess what the right things are, or for many of our clients, this is us defining what we think are the right things that need to be focused on. But we need the consistency. We need to be there every week, almost every day, updating the site, optimizing the site, breaking on the right things, making sure this is still in line with what Google wants to show and only then we are going to get results. Another aspect I'm really looking for when I hire an SEO person is curiosity and flexibility. Curiosity, because there's a lot of research involved. It must be possible for every single person on my team to do a few hours of research, get to know a client's industry, the competitive environment, analyze what they're doing, what's working for them, but what are their weak points, etc. So they need to have like an innate curiosity to find out more things. If someone is just happy to execute whatever you throw at them, but doesn't want to do their own research, it's going to be hard to succeed in SEO. The second one is definitely flexibility. SEO changes really, really fast. And you definitely want someone who is flexible enough to adjust. They need to adjust to new strategies, new search results, new algorithms, new tools, new ways of creating content. So flexibility is just a personal trait, you really want to look at when it comes to an SEO person. So whatever we learned here? I think an SEO person needs to have a very broad, like digital marketing knowledge, they need to have a good understanding of a competitive landscape of an online competitive landscape in Google in other platforms. Need to be able to assess what another brand does, what their strategy, how can we position ourselves in order maybe to leverage their weak points. We want a person that is able to line up a strategy or outsource this to an agency like ours. And we want

to be able to have someone focusing on consistent execution. Consistency is key, as everybody who's on our Erica program already knows. Consistent execution is what drives the most results. So this is definitely something we want to focus on. SEO techniques, obviously, are important as well. But if we don't have the consistency in place, implementing an SEO technique today and then forgetting about it for two months, it's not going to bring anything. I hope this was helpful to give you an idea what we're looking for when it comes to an SEO person and hiring an SEO. Thank you so much for listening to this episode. This is Episode 35. If you want to check out a written version of this, head over to Seoleverage.com/podcast find episode 35. We write an article based summary about this and give you the key elements there and you could also download a transcription. You're listening to Seoleverage.com. If you liked this show, I think this is interesting for someone, hit subscribe forward to show it to someone. I'm happy to impact more and more people give more and more SEO advice so we can really bring this industry on a good way. Thank you.