

075 - SEO for SaaS Companies with James Scherer

James Scherer

Ultimately, the idea of content is creating something valuable that attracts people to you. So whether that's on YouTube or social media or on your blog or anywhere, it's about creating something worth seeing. What that means in any given platform differs. But for most SaaS and b2b businesses, it's about education. Very few of these businesses are really creating something that is exclusively just hilarious or exclusively just like about getting, you know, an influencer to wear their hat. It is about like, how can we educate people because the intention behind content creation, pretty much about the platform is to attract people into a marketing or sales funnel.

SEO Leverage Podcast Intro Music

Welcome to the SEO leverage podcast, where we talk about search, marketing, and conversion.

Gert Mellak

Hello and welcome come back to Seoleverage.com. This is episode 75. And today, we have a special guest with us, James Scherer from codeless.com. Welcome James.

James Scherer

Thanks so much for having me. I'm looking forward to this.

Gert Mellak

So am I was really looking forward to this because we do work with a wide range of, of clients. But admittedly, we never worked at the scale of some brands you have been working with. One that comes to mind, for example, is monday.com. And I definitely want to ask you a little bit later about what the difference is on a funded company that can do things on a very much larger scale than the average business can do. First of all, could you give us a little bit of your background and so our listeners can get to know you? Where do you come from? How did you become the vice president of growth for codeless.com?

James Scherer

For sure, okay, so I started in I'm a, I think I call myself a content writer that navigated that career paths somewhat successfully. So I started as an English grad, and I kind of graduated into a world that didn't really have much to do for English graduates. So I serendipitously fell into a marketing role that was content oriented as a start up in Vancouver, Canada, and paid primarily in pizza and ping pong. But it was it was an educational path for me for sure. And that I moved there into an editorial role and then had an inbound and then move into codeless, as Director of editorial and more recently, VP of growth. Yeah, that's kind of my career path. For

me. You know, I love the idea of content marketing, I love the pursuit of merit based attention for clients. And whether I'm in house or with the agency I'm currently with. There's something noble, or at least more noble, perhaps about creating something that attracts clients and attention to your brand, rather than going to them with an advertisement and shoving it in their face. That was anything wrong without bound. But you know, I'm saying. So that's kind of a little bit about me, and why I enjoy doing what I do.

Gert Mellak

Absolutely, I can very much relate to thinking, we have been doing this agency work for 20 years, I did one sales call. And it's called, I just hang up and said, No, I need them to come to me, you can do this all day long. And then we've also focused on content marketing, which ultimately, has really enabled us to grow multiple, multiple divisions, multiple businesses as well. For me, we have in SEO leverage, we have our own application developed, we have some like an SEO based applet where our clients can log in and see what's going well, what they should focus on, etc. We compared it combined it with consulting. And obviously, the more that the application grows, the more this thought of making this a standalone product and enabling access making this some sort of SaaS solution available online definitely comes to us. I know you have a lot of experience in the SaaS aspect. You're working with monday.com, which is definitely to my audience, a very well known name from the project management system. We were on monday.com before we switch to a competitor at some point, and I know they do they come up a lot for content marketing. So something they're definitely doing right. To me, it will be interesting. Obviously monday.com is a publicly traded company, they have a lot of funding, etc. What would you say is the main difference between doing content marketing as a SaaS company and content marketing as a normal average, small medium sized business?

James Scherer

Does this mean like an enterprise level SaaS or SaaS and small?

Gert Mellak

Enterprise level probably.

James Scherer

I mean, the main difference between enterprise and startup is the scale of what they're doing. There's monday.com So we started working with them about 18 months ago, and we wrote 850 articles in a year. Which is, frankly ridiculous. I mean, you know, that's, that's we were writing in about 75 articles every month, give or take, and they're all in all of them are 2000 words. All of them were had custom images and you know, all of the best practices that we can have as a describe to good content, we're in there for every single article. And I think the main difference is that they kind of had a rocket launcher approach to doing content marketing, that just write every article there could possibly be. Whereas small businesses legitimately, I think, have a far more targeted, you know, if you don't have the substantial budget that monday.com has for content alone, you need to be far more intentional with the key phrases that you're going after the articles that you're creating, and how you're supporting them specificall. Monday.com's approach, which is entirely legitimate for them at their scale was, let's write 850 articles, and

then stop, review the success that we've had with those articles, and then go back in and kind of link them and optimize them for conversion, etc. But ultimately, they were just publishing huge numbers of huge amount of content in any given month. I think there's something there's something legitimate in that I think that something that a lot of businesses miss now is the idea of publishing volume of content, and then going back in and optimizing it after the fact. Once it starts ranking, you know, for a second page, you want to Okay, let's make sure that this is good, because it's not being eyeballs on it, or really good. And really optimizing or conversion oriented. I think is also something valuable in being more intentional with the content that you're creating. And that's what I recommend smaller businesses do is, let's figure out a content strategy that works within your budget. And then once we determine what we're publishing how we're going to support it very specifically, and very intentionally, with secondary content with internal linking with external linking social media, like what is how you going to make every article give you the best possible chance of every article succeeding, whereas Monday.com's approach is, let's throw 800 articles into the abyss of Google, and whatever rises to the top we will care about. So it's a very different approach, but those work.

Gert Mellak

Definitely, definitely interesting. Definitely something I've heard we work a lot with affiliates, as well. And I'm part of affiliate masterminds to see what they're doing, etc. And it's definitely something that I hear all the time that you just need to increase the volume, and you can really get away, so to speak with the lower quality of content, just increasing the volume, and then going back to those articles that seem to get some traction, and then maybe really rewriting them. So affiliates would probably go in and write like 50 articles on their scale, which is a lot 50 articles a month, probably with AI support these days, with some minor editing, just shooting them out there, essentially, making sure that every day something new gets published, and Google can jump at it. And then a month later, two months later, see what has been sticking really. And then maybe even removing the ones that do not get any performance and then zooming in on those that that definitely stick. As someone who is working with with writers is there. In every every single day. We have five writers on the team, obviously 850 articles raises, this raises a lot of questions, right? Where this article is written in house, did you outsource this? How do you go about writing 75 articles per month?

James Scherer

So when we first got them under contract, we asked them for six weeks of prep. And we very quickly... We had 12 or so it's so Codeless has about 75 launch freelancers who work for us pretty much fully. And we're pretty much the only the only company that they work for, which allows us to do significant volume. But we also have quite a few clients. You know, we have 15-20 clients, hopefully more in this coming year. But that's kind of where we're at. So when monday.com came along and we said okay, we have 12 who can write project more management related content. And I think we're going to need at least another eight or so to feel it anyway confident that we can hit the amount that you're looking to hit. So we, you know, did our standard job postings on the sites that we post on primarily ProBlogger for the pm stuff. And then brought those writers in, we have an existing onboarding and training program that you just have more processes, which are very specific and in depth and comprehensive. We're a fully

remote team. So we need to have a very clear set of a structured process to bring writers into here's how you get assigned content. Here's what we expected you for every single individual piece, here's how it's reviewed, here's the checklist that you need to be completing. Etc, etc. And here's here's how it's all delivered. So, yeah, I mean, we took about three weeks of hiring and three weeks of training and onboarding to get those writers up to speed. I mean, they also you know, they need to be absorbing significant knowledge like branded information, the style guide the brand guide headlines, all that stuff that monday.com delivered to us to enable our writers to all sound and speak and write with the monday.com voice. So that was very important to us. But ultimately, yeah, it's about getting a lot of talented people, paying them a legitimate wage, salary, and then training them with giving them everything they need to do everything they need to create great content for a specific brand. There's a lot, it's a lot involved, but we have the team. We have dedicated people who do this all day long every day. So that's the difference between having you know, an in house or a Content Agency. Content agencies are like this is what we do is all we do. Codeless creates amazing content. We don't promote it for you, we don't do lead gen. We create great content that ranks. So when you have a dedicated team dedicated to doing that, they should know what they're doing.

Gert Mellak

Interesting. Definitely an interesting one. How do you go in these cases about topic selection? So how do you select 850 topics? Where do you start?

James Scherer

Monday.com content planning process is as expensive as you might expect, and differs significantly from how I tend to do it. Broad spectrum. So I'll give you quickly their process. They did a huge amount of research and competitor analysis. So they identified 10 different businesses that excelled from a content perspective, not competitors, competitive competitors, content competitors, what are the brands that are ranking for the thing I want to rank for the category of content I want to be in? They pulled the ranking key phrases for all 10 of those competitors. And then they did an analysis of based on if you've heard like the ice analysis, it's that times a lot. So it's what is the kind of intent behind these key phrases. Does that align with what we want to be found for? What is the in their space like they did an analysis of like, what is the cost for paid ranking position for this key phrase? How competitive is this from a linking perspective, and they just included all of these variables, and that it was many, many variables into a essentially a priority score for each individual key phrase. And then that kind of analysis resulted in a significant list that was broken into categories of content. So project management being one of them task management, because they were expanding to the CRM space, that was one of them. They also did like a vs tech content. So clickup versus Monday.com, Asana versus Mondat.com, every single possible, possible competitor. They did software category, and they did a best of category, you know, so breaking up all those categories, and then doing the analysis for each individual topic and prioritizing it from there. So yeah, big, big, big process. But, you know, they found 800 articles that they were happy with and they're doing fantastically, you know, we drove over 30,000 new, you know, ranking positions for the content we produced it's you know, it's hundreds of 1000s of visitors, but it also you know, they spent a bunch of money doing it.

Gert Mellak

Obviously, you need to balance it out. I certainly did check out before this call a little bit the rankings. I saw Monday.com coming up and, and take it out on our tools and just to have an idea obviously, there's an ongoing growth and more content, they publish with the the authority as well. So not everybody is going to get their articles ranking with a normal domain if you're not monday.com who's listed from CrunchBase and other really important authoritative sites that is obviously also contributes to the rankings. This is really interesting. What do you think would be something a normal business could take away from an enterprise level content strategy apart your some already mentioned to be really focusing on the intent behind the keywords you want to rank for the kind of content you create. Anything else that comes to mind?

James Scherer

Yeah, I mean, focusing on the behind the key phrases, but also creating a content plan with clear intention that every article you write has a goal. An internal goal, not just reaching the target reader but also this article supports this article. This article lives within this category that category is one we're going after in q2, that kind of thing with like the intention behind the content plan. I think it takes away from what Monday.com did. And this was this is how I kind of tend to create content strategy is the category structure. I use a pillar and post content model within categories. So identify early stage businesses, startups, small businesses, identify the three to five categories of content that you want to be found within. And then within each category, identify three to five content pillars, and then 20 or so supporting topics supporting articles for each for words for within that category of supporting those pillars. And then honestly, recommendation would be to publish that volume to invest for the first three to six months in creating those articles. And then going back in, like monday.com has done a lot of other clients do whether big or small, after six months, see what's worked and see what's clicked with Google, and then say, okay, are content planning for q3 is going to be based on the success we saw in q1 an two. So if you see one of your categories, one of your pillars, either ranking or, you know, almost right on the first page of Google, and the category itself doing pretty well, then you can say, okay, that's the category of content we're going to focus on, we're going to step back a little bit from the other categories. Google seems to be just clicking, we seem to be clicking with Google for this category, specifically, let's create content within that. So that's kind of what monday.com did at scale. They did those 850 and then had a pause. Okay, let's go back. And let's audit. Let's see what's worked. And let's double down on some of those things that have worked for us. And across the board. That's what I recommend clients do. Not pausing fully. Because copy you know you need to consistently publish content in order for Google to see you as a, you know, a publisher. But step back internally, check out what's worked, and then have that inform your content plan. Rather than just again, just throwing things without intention willy nilly, and seeing what works or not even if it works, hoping it works without any real, real plan behind it.

Gert Mellak

Yeah, makes sense doing doing more of what works definitely something we have, we have higher high on top, we even have, the app developed around those concepts of the app itself

highlights what like which articles are going up, which articles are going down. So we can really focus on those articles that seem to be resonating with Google where we say, Okay, this is what Google sees our client as an authority. And this is where we can then create more about more of this content. And client of ours are probably going to remember the content map to have seen many times where we tried to lined up these pillars and supporting articles. So I think we're really very much in line with this. One thing that's always interesting for clients is when they think about content, how does content across different platforms aligned? So they see content obviously, from SEO, we see content on the website and blog posts and articles and things like those. For clients, content very often means YouTube, social media, blog content, etc. How would you put all these different things together? Can they be put together? Or are these completely different things that everything needs to be dealt with and dealt with separately?

James Scherer

Ultimately, the idea of content is creating something valuable that attracts people to you. So whether that's on YouTube, or social media, or on your blog, or anywhere, it's about creating something worth seeing. What that means in any given platform differs. But for most SaaS and b2b businesses, it's about education. Very few of these businesses are really creating something that is exclusively just hilarious or exclusively just like about getting, you know, an influencer to wear their hat. It is about like, how can we educate people because the intention behind content creation, pretty much about the platform is to attract people into a marketing or sales funnel, right? You're talking about tofu content, directing people towards know through content when people towards both for content, and a sales call, or whatever it is. And I think at the heart of that, therefore, is education, which for me, is the basis of content creation, blog content, being kind of the heart of it. Blog content is long form educational content that is related to your business in some clear way. And as such, it is, for me the jumping off point for all the other content types, all their content platforms. Creating an educational article that is 2000 words long, and includes best practices and top tips, etc, etc, etc, allows you to say, Okay, I'm going to use that content, the heart of it, rather than having to go original or like, make up my own thing, if I'm the Social Media Manager, or if I'm in advertising or whatever it is, I'm going to say okay, if this is if this is the foundation of what I'm creating, what can I take from this long form article that I can use on social media? Okay, taking some from article to turn into a YouTube video that clicks and people or resonates with people. So think of your blog content as Yeah, kind of the starting point for all our content types. That set so like that's, like, you know, looking to repurpose content is not a new idea to do this kind of thing. So let me just also give a caveat, which is that while that really I think it works for social media, I think where it can work for advertising to promote lead, get lead gen content that is about education, whatever, whatever. Video is somewhat different. There are tools, all the kind of SEO oriented research tools SEMrush, Ahrefs, they now do offer search volumes within YouTube. And what we've found generally in the b2b and SaaS space, is that a lot of the high volume searches on YouTube or on the video platforms do not align perfectly with content that we would create a blog. And so you can't just do like a straight repurpose of a blog article, and have it naturally succeed on YouTube. The content format doesn't really work as well. How you put the video together is not massively helped by long form blog content. So what I would say is that have a content plan that is devoted to blog content creation, that feeds your social media, possibly feed

your advertising efforts, and then have a different one that shows YouTube search volumes or video search volumes and the keywords associated with that. And if some of the blog content works, and can feed that channel, for sure, but don't assume it's going to in the same way, that it I really do think that if you write an article on, you know, the 10 best practices for, you know, Facebook advertising, you really can repurpose that significantly into an infographic into a Facebook post or a social media post, or whatever it is, that will generate potential. It's not a given within the video space, not anymore.

Gert Mellak

That's really that's really interesting was that we figured out a very similar thing here as well, when clients started, many of our clients have multiple 1000s or 60- 100,000 subscribers on YouTube. And also ask us for keyword researchers and things like those. At some point, we offer this separate service to the YouTube research just because it's just a very different animal, right? So what the competition looks like, what kind of video should you should be create? How long should this video be how to just be like a like an interview style? Should this be like a talking head, should it be an animation, video, etc. There are videos, very simple ones, we created Animation Videos years ago, they're still running and still driving leads, and that's fine. But ultimately, YouTube is definitely a channel that, first of all deserves its own attention, I believe it's not something that just is something to read be repurpose the same as a podcast very often, you'll see people pretty much reading the podcast, the blog articles on a podcast or something like this, which also, then is not going to get any traction. But we have also found that video definitely deserves the attention and requires this just ongoing optimization the same as you would do for SEO for content marketing in general, just to make sure that this really gets traction. And definitely same topic can behave very differently on YouTube. I totally agree.

James Scherer

Quick note on that I have seen, so we bought in a video coordinator last year, who now has her own team, and she's excellent to kind of create content for our clients. As an add-on to our standard content production. We implemented videos on one of our clients optimization opportunities, so content existing content that they had there was ranking through the 11th and 13th position like kind of just off the first page, we do a lot of optimization of that content standardly. But we chose to kind of leave the content as it was and add video to those articles. A kind of a synopsis style one minute or two minute long video beneath the introduction above the kind of take over the rest of the article. And we did see significant, statistically significant and significant ranking increases for the mass majority of the articles, but we did it for so I think it was 127% ranking growth. So if they were intending with the fifth, if they were in a 12 figure to six that kind of thing. So there is there is significant value in video for optimization of written content. So many test.

Gert Mellak

Absolutely. What's your take on transcriptions?

James Scherer

I think that they I mean, they tie very quickly into the idea of AI generated content. I like them for an SEO perspective. And I think that they have value. Honestly, the only the only value from a user perspective and readers perspective. I don't really rate them. But from an SEO perspective, I think they're a fantastic idea. And every article, and everybody should use them.

Gert Mellak

Definitely, definitely interesting one. I have a very contrarian point of view there. And also, some some data on our client side is least, at least to back this up. So I was telling my clients and if they listen to this they'd probably laughing because I tried to really have a strong emphasis on not using transcriptions as the main content material on the article. When there is a video, just because I think it's not good for readers. It's ultimately not going to be good for Google. We see transcriptions rank on page five on page 10. We never see them on page one. So this transcription very often if you can't do anything else, and you don't have any resources and you just have this video. My personal opinion is, by all means put up this transcription and see if this is like going in line with volume versus Okay, does this stick? Does Google do anything with it. And then if we see some traction, and we see this transcription coming up on page four, page three, maybe, then we might ask clients to specifically create articles around them. My personal view is really, if it's not good for users, it's not good for search engines. And if it's, an transcriptions tend to be very repetitive on the same site, this is another issue we have seen for with SEO. So if I probably talked about in my podcast, this is Episode 75, I probably talk about the same themes very often that are important to me. And they're series on other podcast, many of our clients have podcasts and video channels, etc. They strengthen the same themes, what they believe in their values, etc, all the time. So from a transcription, we see that very often half of with is religious duplicate content. Google is going to find everywhere, it's just not well prepared for a reader, because it just what I'm saying I'm not using complete phrases, I might just stop and switch topic, etc. So we have seen those doing really, really bad is might be the selection of clients we have access to. But it's really interesting, what you're seeing there.

James Scherer

Well, I mean, I think as well, from an SEO perspective, I see the value in transcription, if you use it as a jumping off point to create an article, like we do a lot of interview focused content where like we'll get a client will batch topics and do questionnaires, interviewing the client and then taking the transcription of those calls and turning them into articles. So thought leadership interview focused article that then we build upon the actual quotes within it, the transcription part of it into a an article like will have the question, a bit of their answer formatted a little bit better based on the transcription, and then like an action will take away section beneath it. So I think there's value in the service. And I think that there is, but I think I agree with you, if you're just publishing the transcript and straight up, I agree with you. It's not you know, it's not user friendly, it's not going to increase time on page, etc, etc, etc. But it can be a valuable asset to create content from.

Gert Mellak

Absolutely, absolutely. For us, it's probably the breathing, right is going to get so if a client has a video and I say, Look, I've just created a video and we want to write an article about it, it's going

to be the briefing and first research material, apart from all the other research they're going to do. They're going to dive into this and making sure that the main points come across and they are going to use the transcription just for editing purposes probably. We use it is just our clients look, if you have a podcast or a video on this page to podcasts and videos and add on. And it's not. It doesn't have to be related exactly to the texters. People who want to read are not going to listen to the podcast and the people who listen to the podcast are probably not going to read the entire article. And this is where we tried to keep separate versus this is definitely interesting. I agree is the entry point for further value adding or whatever you want to call it. Right?

James Scherer

Yeah.

Gert Mellak

How would you go about developing a content strategy? So if I have a site right now I might have many of our clients come to us and say, Look, we have like 200 blog posts, we wrote them over time, and she had some stuff that was valuable, etc, is not really bringing us any leads, any traffic. How could they go about creating a content strategy?

James Scherer

Co-content planning works the same. Pretty much for me across the board. And I've already alluded to it. Its identify the categories of content for which you want to be known. Identify the pillars within each category and support content that supports those pillars. The pillars need to be excellent, long form, support content, excellent, somewhat short form. That has been at the heart of the content planning. Where it changes is based on your site's domain authority and the amount of existing content that you have. So if you have existing content, so you've 200 articles, and I do a quick close buy on it, see where those articles are ranking. As part of the content plan, I might advise optimization of existing URLs, particularly if they're ranking for the 11th and 30th position, if they're just off the first page, I can give them a little more love. I can update them add images, add content, stats, whatever it is, and move them more easily to the first page, then I can net new content. Across the board, if a URL has been live for a long time, even if it has no significant referring domains, I still think that that URL is more valuable to Google and will have an easier time to start ranking than a net new article will. So I might add optimization to your scope of work to the monthly content plan. However, if you only have 200 articles, Pareto principle is very, very much true in content marketing, which is the you know 20% of your content is going to drive 80% of your traffic if you have had if you've been writing 200 articles total on your site, and haven't been seen a lot. Its entirely possible that none of them are ranking the top 30 positions for a higher issue volume key phrase. If that's the case, I would not necessarily delete them. But I would do 301 redirects to new content that focuses on it. Or I would just publish new content to that URL, just straight up, delete everything on it, change a blog theme, post your content on it, so long as it's a live URL. In any given month, it depends on kind of the resources that I have. I would say that most businesses should be creating about 10,000 words of content in any given month at a minimum, because that allows you to, to a certain extent, throw things at Google and see what sticks, if you do too small volume is going to take way too long for you to be able to actually see what's worked for you.

And once you because you need to see what's what's working for yourself, so you can double down on it. If you publish too little too slowly, it's going to take forever, and your boss is going to get tired of the spend that he's doing not getting any return on investment. So throw some significant budget at it for the first three to six months, see what's working, prove the value of this. And then you'll have the resources in q3 or q4 for whatever it is to, to actually invest in it and see significant growth. So that's the optimization side of things. The last thing I'll talk about really briefly is domain authority. If your site that you're talking about you have 200 published articles, but your domain authority because you haven't really been doing a whole lot else is still significantly low, say less than 50, I would focus my content plan on lower difficulty search terms. So for a domain that has less than 50 domain ranking or domain authority, I would say your pillars should be between, you know, no more than 50 KD within Ahrefs, or 60 KD within SEMrush. Because there are different and your support pieces should be less than 35 KD. Basically, what we're trying to do is identify what is realistic for us to actually rank for with both our pillars and supporting content. The idea behind supporting content as soon as that ranks, which is why I'm saying you should go with a lower competition, even if it's lower search volume, the links the internal links that your support content is driving towards your towards your pillars are more valuable when that support content ranks. If it's on the first page, then the internal link is more valuable. The link juice is active internally as well as externally. So get your support content ranking. Even if your pillars aren't. Make sure the internal links are well structured and ascending towards the pillars and then wait for not wait but consistently publish and then review after six months. If your domain authority is higher, say between 50 and 75, then you can go after more competitive key phrases. And once you get 75 plus the sky's the limit. But for those early stage lower kind of lower budget startup kind of businesses, don't worry about starting with low search volume, focus on getting the ranking URLs, period. And because the value of those internal links, it will be so much more and so much more impactful to get in start pushing to other future content and increase that that contents chance of ranking. Even if there's a target even more competitive search terms,

Gert Mellak

Really interesting. We have seen really great success with quite a few case studies here as well. I remember project specifically as was a language course, that just got hit by one of the first core updates, I think, and lost like 70% and so and the main thing we did with them after auditing their website was really focusing on internal linking, and just say, Look, you have all these articles talking about different aspects of topic x, let's make this main article, a pillar article, let's do some internal linking. And they pretty much double-triple traffic in a few months just with this internal linking, because Google suddenly could make sense. And it's also interesting to see that Google can suddenly rank you for more keywords, the more context you have. So once you put an article in context with another with an internal link, you suddenly see how this article starts ranking for more keywords. This particular client just checked out an article the other day ranks with one article for 5000 different keywords, just because the internal linking is so strong, they hardly did any external linking at the initial, I think in the first two years or so. But only internal linking in which is then spread out all those keywords that were this main article doesn't rank too well. And just grab them and create specific articles out of those. This is also a strategy that seems to be working really well, which is essentially create your own

supporting content based on when your article seems to be somewhat relevant and really can contain the information Google wants to see, but your ranking your number ranking higher than position 15-20-25. Once you then look into this, you very often see that Google wants to have a specific article rather than a full featured pillar article about this topic, and has seen proven to be a really good interesting strategy as well. It's interesting, you mentioned the domain authority. We definitely try to make sure clients pick their battles well. So clients, my come with us, and I want to rank for iPhone this year. It's not going to happen if you're right now selling selling iPhone cases in the local town. But yeah, definitely important. And then we also see that very often disappointing content just converts better. So we work with E commerce sites, but also a lot of sites who just one lead generation from SEO. And those pillar topics very often don't convert well, at least in our experience, because they're just too broad. So people really are not at the stage where we want to take action. You mentioned, middle of funnel, bottom of funnel very often those are really top of funnel people they just want to know but this is actually about. And what is this Shopify thing for example or what is this, there's monday.com, what is this actually and do I really need a project management system and all those kinds of things? I'm sure Monday.com ranks for this. It's interesting, those very often don't convert too well. And then you have those specific ones and say, Okay, I don't know, where can I sign up for monday.com, or it's monday.com free. And things like those suddenly, then drive to conversions. It's easy to rank. And this is also where we very often when I audit websites, I see they have some weird rankings, and then they look into this. And it's those helpdesk tickets they have where they just answer very common questions in their helpdesk system. We use health cardio, for example, or Zendesk, whatever you might be using, you can add your questions. And those are very hardly ever optimized. So this might be just two or three phrases, answering a specific question people have all the time. And then you see people actually getting traffic through this, this is really interesting. So this is just such such a low competition where they can really get into this and get like you say they're supporting content ranking and supporting content. If it ranks on page one, obviously, it means Google thinks it's highly relevant, and highly relevant article and the links it sends out is always going to be valuable and authoritative.

James Scherer

What's interesting that I really quickly went back a sec is the idea of content pillars being not just your the high, the high volume searches. I talked briefly about monday.com doing their analysis of all the different variables that make a priority piece of content or priority topic. I would say that, for me, a key phrase like project management tools or project management software. The intent behind that search is very clearly people who don't want to know what project management is, they're looking for the tools and software that can solve their pain point, the project management oriented pain points, specifically, looking for lists of tools. That is a far more valuable pillar, you get the search volume is less than project management as a broad scoping 150,000 searches per month kind of key phrase. So when you're doing pillar analysis and identifying the pillars that you want to put into each category, consider the intent behind the search term. Even if the search volume is lower, you're going to if you get on the first page for that search for that high intent search, you're gonna see far more bottom line changing, you know, stuff than you will if you rank for some insanely high volume search term in the first page.

Gert Mellak

Absolutely all those what is X, Y, Z queries lend themselves really well, for pillar articles were just introduced this topic. And then you can just keep adding paragraphs whenever you have another supporting articles just make this happen. It's just a very, very, very nice way to work in second. Let's now grab this one and also create a specific articles here, add a paragraph, provide some context. And Google is definitely going to love it, it's going to drive relevance back and forth. And it's definitely going to do very well. Definitely a very important point, just really make sure that the intention just makes sense and is just not too far off from an actual, actual potential client in the first place. Right. I want to wrap this up very quickly, I just want to ask you one more question. How does content decay play into a content strategy where you see content that has been is slowly going down in traffic because it becomes less and less relevant. We poke our clients with a stick every few months on important articles to give them a little bit of a fresh aspect or a facelift, so to speak, change a few things, improve a few things, etc. You can see content, if you put it out there. Even if it's not a competitive niche, it's going to go down in traffic after a year or two. Usually, unless it gets links consistently. How do you go about content decay?

James Scherer

We incorporate content optimization within every scope of work that we have. Usually after about six to nine months of working with a client, if they're doing net new, like totally new content. The other side of that is to focus. Well, there's Okay, let me finish that thought. First, I'll move on to the next. Client optimization essentially is, we do a constant analysis, performance reporting for our clients and we identify when individual URLs are ranking in have either slipped or our ranking optimization opportunity positions, again, left between 11th and 30th. For more than 250 or 500 search volume key phrase, that with a little bit of love, either because they've slipped they need a little bit of love or because they just haven't kind of quite gotten to their potential, they need a little bit of love. A note on that is if a URL has plateaued between 11th and 30th. A plateau would be it has increased in search in ranking position in more than like a month or so then it becomes an opportunity, if a URL is, is relatively new and actively climbing, let it be let it see where it sits, like wait for it to hit its peak. And then you can come in and optimize it don't touch the URL that's climbing actively. If it has slipped if, as you say, like there's decay involved in its ranking position, firstly identified if the article itself is targeting a known evergreen topic. We have one client who does financial aid for students. And one of the key phrases that we targeted early on was Biden student loan forgiveness, which was very specific to an individual President talking about individual thing. It was a current event topic, which is very different from student loan forgiveness, period. Student loan forgiveness, is it as a concept is an evergreen topic that people will always be interested in happiness for a long time. So some amount of content decay on your non evergreen content is to be expected and legitimate, doesn't mean you shouldn't go after those topics. Because particularly in the current event stage like you can write quickly, and drive significant growth for a short amount of time, from current event focused content. So if that slips, it slips, there's very little you can do about that article. Unless you've kind of maybe the URL was actually a student loan forgiveness, not Biden student loan forgiveness, and then you can go in and do a full rewrite focusing on the broader general more general term. But if it is, like dedicated to a specific current event, there's little you

can do to update it. Because it's the things over. However, if it has slipped, and it isn't evergreen topic you can go in, there are a lot of tools out there, yours may be one of them, I'm not entirely sure. But like phrase, clear scope, marketmuse, SEO Surfer, all of these platforms allow you to drop in your URL, your existing article with the targeted key phrase, and what those platforms will do will compare what you have done what you've written to the writing competition. And they'll say, Okay, you're missing this symmetric key phrase, this topic, this subject matter, this amount of work, count, whatever. And if you are, basically what that'll do is it'll allow you to see exactly what you like what you're missing. And then when you add it, publish it again, or don't publish again, like update the piece, and then wait a month or so, wait for it to be indexed. And then for any kind of change, and then check in to see if what you've done hasn't improved the ranking position of that URL. If it looks like you are optimized in those tools, and you're still falling in rankings, then we need to talk about links internal and external. If your article is on those platforms, and to your eye, optimized, and great and up to date, and has all the statistics in the beautiful, then you're slipping, because you don't have enough referring domains, enough backlinks, internal or external, which is then when you change from content creation to management of your ranking positions with an agency or labeled an agency or your own team or doing a quick site audit and make sure that you're linked as well as you possibly can be from all your content. And yeah, that's but that's an entirely different conversation.

Gert Mellak

Absolutely. That's interesting. That's interesting. We definitely saw, it's just really almost impossible to keep up with SEO unless you have some machine learning algorithms do some filtering for you. We were pretty much unhappy with everything we found. And this is when I hired the developer and said, Look, we need to build something around. And we keep adding features and and this content decay, we just finished this up where can just really see what kind of articles are going down. And the ones that want to check if there is a reason why they go down. If you have how to say Merry Christmas in I don't know which language, obviously it's going to have a seasonality and we know it's going to come back up automatically. And we want to focus in it a few months ahead. But then you certainly have advocates that just just run they just are expiring essentially, they're expiring. They didn't have any, any value anymore. And then you want to go back remember, we audited a laptop site. And all the pricing information was from two years ago, obviously, thankfully, Google takes this into account. It doesn't rank those pages so well, because otherwise the search would be useless. But there are other topics where clients probably tell me Look, this hasn't changed in 10 years, this is still the same. That's fine. We definitely see. See it go down anyway. Right. So you just need those tools. Google Analytics does a really bad job. I think not sure what your thoughts are. I really to help with identifying URL. You need to do is on the URL by URL basis, which is tedious and impossible. And this is where these tools just definitely come in the tools. You mentioned Surfer, etc. Our clients definitely know them, which is I think the basic parts of the basic part of the an SEO toolkit these days. I used to do those with handwritten notes 15 years ago, I just went through the top 20, top 30 pages and made handwritten notes and then gave them to the client into look, produce something that matches all those topics and all those guidelines. This was a long time ago, thankfully, a long time ago. But yeah, this is really interesting. What's really interesting to get your point of view, especially I appreciate you sharing so openly how big brands like

monday.com are doing. It's definitely fascinating assumptions thing, okay, if I get if I got a client who says, look, take \$500,000, let's do some, let's make some content where would I start. And it's definitely interesting, how much research goes into such a project? How much intention based research, obviously, how much planning? Where do you want to be in a couple of years? And how does this affect the 850 articles that we can create, we have to create right now. Competitive research, obviously, a big part of it interesting. Also, the writers who did. You need the writers to make this scale happen and scale being one of the main themes, I think, the audience is definitely going to take away. So if you create one or two articles a month right now, and don't see any impact scale might be one of the issues you're facing. And then how you structure this with with pillar topics with supporting topics. We talked about this in other episodes here as well. This is definitely the whoever I talked to the still the main theme, topical relevance comes to mind here as well. With all the supporting articles, you essentially start getting eligible for a page one ranking with a pillar topic, then once you've built this authority up. So lots of good nuggets, we're going to make a written version, another transcription here, out of this episode, it's going to be over at Seoleverage.com. Episode 75 and a podcast there. James, thank you so much. If people want to get in touch with you, how can can they best find you?

James Scherer

Yeah, so the site is Codeless.io. And honestly, like, I think, you know, a lot of the listeners are right in the wheelhouse of what we're, we're all about. So honestly, if people want to get in touch with me, just email me James@codeless.io. I'm more than happy to talk strategy and content whenever, whenever I have time, which is I will make time. But no, thank you so much for having me.

Gert Mellak

Thank you so much, James.