

080 - Conversion Rate Optimization You Can Do Today

Kurt Philip 0:00

But it's not about cramming 20 reviews on a revolving slider on the homepage, it's like picking one or two really good reviews that communicate your product really well in their review. This product does x and it really helped me with x problem, whatever and someone's actually written that review. That's great to have right below your, your offer or your your headline of your homepage. And then a nice call to action to the offer. Just very simple. But a lot of people have, you know, a very ambiguous offer on the homepage. With no real call to action, you can't really tell what it is, or you can't even get in contact with them. The only way to get contact with them is to go to the contact us page and fill out some really long treaty form. So the easiest way is to just like what is your goal of the website, make it very clear what your offer is. And then make it very easy to for people to complete the goal that you want them to complete. That's it.

SEO Leverage Podcast Intro Music 0:57

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

Gert Mellak 1:06

Welcome back to Seoleverage.com. My name is Gert Mellak. And those of you who know me know that we add SEO leverage, we always start with figuring out what do clients actually want to achieve. The best traffic or the highest traffic values are not worth much if this traffic doesn't do what we want from it convert, usually into leads, into sales. And as much as I'd really like CRO, conversion rate optimization, definitely far from being an expert. This is why I'm really happy to welcome Kurt Phillip today, who I guess knows a thing or two about this. And this has agreed to be sharing some stuff. You're welcome, Kurt.

Kurt Philip 1:46

Thanks for having me on man. It's um, it's interesting. I actually come from an SEO background, too. So that's how I got into CRO was like I started doing conversion rate optimization on my own affiliate sites, on my my own client' brick and mortar business websites. And then that's how I got into it like 20 years, I've been doing it now something like that. So it's, it's it's been a long journey. And I saw the need for it in the marketplace about five, six years ago. So that's why I started convertica.org at some. It's definitely been a good change of business direction.

Gert Mellak 2:19

That's amazing. Yeah. Obviously, in the SEO industry, people know you as the CRO guy, and you had a different domain the croguy.com in the past, it's now convertica.org. Could you give our listeners who might not have heard about you a little bit of your background? How do you,

so you came from SEO, you have convertica.org, how's your relation with CRO, has this developed?

Kurt Philip 2:42

So when I, when I pivoted from SEO I was having, I was had a bit of burnout went through a few growth and growth and Google penalty cycles a few times. So I sort of burned out from that. So I took a few months off and then pivoted into into CRO guy was the original version of it. I didn't know what the potential was at the time. So I was just like, Look, I'll take on five or six extra clients a month, that'll buffer the SEO fluctuations that I have from like, having to rely on SEO all the time. And then it grew very quickly from there. And but larger brands didn't take me seriously because it was the CRO guy, right. It was like a consultant. So I think a year after I started that in 2016, I think it was. At the end of 2016, we pivoted into Convertica. And that's sort of our client bases, sort of seven and eight figure businesses that have a super large amount of traffic and large amount of orders and sales. And then that's sort of like, that's sort of where we are. That's where we are today. We've got around 20 staff, and worked with right around 800 clients now. So it's been very busy.

Gert Mellak 3:59

Isn't it? There's must be amazing. I mean, there are two things that come to mind. We also have a team of I think 26 people right now and growing. So obviously there's a lot of management, big money on pile of it. I have heard not sure if this is still the case that you handle a lot of the operations, day to day operations off to someone on your team, is this correct?

Kurt Philip 4:18

Yes, I found originally when I was when I picked it from CRO guy to Convertica, I hired sort of apprentices to duplicate me right to run tests, come up with ideas. But then you get to a certain size, which was probably about 10 staff, where it's just not scalable at that point. So one of, one of the apprentices was showing like really, really good operation skills and management skills. So then he ended up moving into the operations, head of operations position. And then now yeah, he's got 16, 17 people under him, that he's hired in person and trained and everything, and now he's actually partner in the company now. So five years later, he's come come a long way.

Gert Mellak 5:05

This is this is amazing. This is amazing. You mentioned initially you're working with mostly seven, eight figure companies. This brings me to something I wanted to touch upon actually a little bit later. When does it really make sense for someone to start with CRO or engaging in agency legs, like your agency, always? People, but a lot of people not not as many as you would expect, know the conversion rate and want to improve it? And now it makes sense to work on this a little bit. But when does it actually make sense to engage in CRO agency like yours?

Kurt Philip 5:36

Yes, I literally just had a call before this one other guy that wasn't quite ready for the services. And he was sort of like, I think you've said he has around 6000 traffic a month, but they're over, like 10, 15 pages. So no pages when they have over 1000 traffic a month. And at that point, it's just that we can't run split tests quick enough. So for a client to be on retainer with us, they need to have, ideally above 10,000 visitors per month, per page that we test. Ideally, that's that's the ideal situation. We can go if it's like a lead gen type website, you can go as low as three or 5000, depending on the site, but ideally is that 10,000 per page is where we can run two tests a month and compound the results coz most clients are with us six months plus. So in order to get good results in a six month timeframe, you need to be on a run, you know, six to 10 tests, ideally, coz you're gonna have you're gonna have one or two losers in that time too. And you don't want to, you don't want to spend two or three months waiting for a test to complete only to find out that it's a loser, right? Then you've lost that client almost almost certainly. So we work with mainly those clients, because it's, it's our price point, but also the traffic and audit volumes, we need to be on a run tests. So that's that's the main reason why we work with clients that big. But we also have clients in the low and mid six figure. But on average, that would be 7, 7, 8 figure businesses, because that's just the best clients to work with where we can we can run enough, run enough tests.

Gert Mellak 7:15

Absolutely. This makes a lot of sense. If someone doesn't get to this level of like 10,000 visitors a month to 3000 for lead generation, is there anything they can do in order to improve the conversion rate?

Kurt Philip 7:29

Yeah, absolutely. So almost all clients I do a call with on that on on sales calls, trust and credibility is just missing. So for some reason, developers always put reviews right at the footer, footer of a website. I don't know why this is?

Gert Mellak 7:46

I think it's a good question.

Kurt Philip 7:47

No, exactly, exactly. It's a WordPress template. But these developers have no idea about marketing and sales, obviously, the developers, but it's very frustrating, but it's good for us. But it's very frustrating for the client, because no one ever sees the reviews, which are the most important, right. But it's not about cramming 20 reviews on a revolving slider, on the homepage. It's like picking one or two really good reviews that communicate your product really well in their review. This product does x and it really helped me with x problem, whatever and someone's actually written that review, that's great to have right below your, your offer or your, your headline of your homepage. And then a nice call to action to the offer. Just very simple. But a lot of people have, you know, a very ambiguous offer on the homepage with no real call to action. You can't really tell what it is, or you can't even get in contact with them. The only way to get contact with them is to go to the contact us page and fill out some really long shitty form. So the easiest way is to just like what is your goal of the website? Make it very clear what your offer is,

and then make it very easy for people to complete the goal that you want them to complete. That's it. And most people try to offer every, let's just say we have like a web design firm, for example. And they also do web design, AdWords, Facebook ads, and they like trying to sell everything instead of just becoming very clear and, and being able to communicate their offer of just one of their services very well, that they're very good at, that's the highest margin and then pushing the user to fill out a lead magnet that you know, that's a hard to, a whole another thing but I think people overcomplicated a bit too much because that's that was the way it was that, was the way it was 15 years ago. We didn't know what we're doing but the markets maturing a lot now you know, so

Gert Mellak 9:38

That's really interesting that you bring this up. I think the Wordpress templates and the themes you can purchase for cheap or get free. They're doing a lot of damage to the industry and to those websites. Because once you're on in different areas that are really made to be sold. Essentially was our experience people they're made with all those components and everything flashy and all images optimized etc. Now then, you started playing this to your website and upload your own content, which doesn't look as good anymore. And you might remove a few components because you don't have so much traffic. And ultimately, you have a crappy website, that's not conversion optimized, it's not SEO optimized at all. This is doing a lot of damage. We do very often quick audits for sites. So this is something that people can get very cheap on our website. And I'm usually then giving them some, some feedback. And a framework I learned, I think, from my mentor, James Schramko, a few years back. He just said, Look, you need to say who you are, what you're doing, why people should trust you, who has trusted you, and where people can sign up. And this is something that started to stick to my head. And we tried to apply this to our SEO clients as well as well. We're just really asking why should people at this stage trust you enough? Or where is the next call to action? And very often compare this to pharmacy stores in Spain, there is one on every corner. But there's none on websites, there's no call to action anywhere, sometimes it seems to be making it really hard, right?

Kurt Philip 10:58

Yeah, exactly and I think it's, it's, it's so easy to make a website now. So what happened, the big trend we saw was people starting their own e commerce websites when COVID happened. And then due to the loss of scale, a lot of those guys became really successful from that, due to just everyone moving online, they didn't know what they were doing. They set up a Shopify store, they upload their products, and boom, they're making seven figures. They didn't know anything about marketing, they didn't know anything about sales, they just found a niche or a product that was needed at the time by luck, honestly, by luck. And then they're coming to us making two and a half million dollars a year and their conversion rates at the floor, you know, so that's what we saw on a huge amount, of a huge scale was was exactly that sites that just look like absolute crap. But we're just a great product that people wanted so so we had a lot of success of working with guys like that, that they didn't know how to communicate their offer or make it easy for people to buy, they just use a standard template on on on Shopify now.

Gert Mellak 12:03

It's interesting, we've worked with a lot of people who who have also gone gone big really with Facebook ads, maybe on social media have like 50,000, 100,000 subscribers or followers or whatever it is based on the platform. And then you look at their website and not extracting any leads to get a lot of traffic, don't know really know where to direct this because it was just all their attention. They were pretty much at a client literally tell me they lived inside Instagram for two years, just to make sure that this was growing and answer all the direct messages, etc. And now we're trying to build out the website essentially, as a lead generation platform. What was really interesting for us and we do a lot of site audits from SEO, you know, as usually the first step we really need to audit the entire site, the content, the backlinks, etc, to get an idea what's happening and what might be affecting what a lot of people don't track the conversions. And this is really interesting where you say okay, then apparently it's it's working good enough or but they you asked him about the conversion rate, even multiple seven figure businesses we've seen not tracking conversions, so they they track the sales, the revenue, etc. But they don't know where this comes from, where then the first step we try to take is getting those conversion rates up and say, okay, where does this traffic come in and actually then convert. What do you think tracking and then also CRO is is not widespread? It's not something people have in their minds.

Kurt Philip 13:19

It can be complicated to set up right. It's like a lot of people get into analytics and they're just like, What the hell is all this? I mean, it's easy for it's easy for us because we've been doing it for so long and it used to be quite basic and that's quite advanced, but when you spend enough time in analytics, it's very very simple and I mean you can spend, you can spend a couple of hours on YouTube trying to work out how it works but it's it's still complicated understanding what a conversion is, understanding like, where to make them fire and understanding what funnels are is like second nature to guys like us, but to new people in online businesses really not as quite as foreign. So one great attribution tracking software that I found a couple of years ago was made by a guy and also in the DC called Jesse Hanley named bentonow.com which has been really good for our business that allows us to identify exactly how much each client is worth to us when they came in, when they signed up, what what traffic source, what uhm anything, creates like an avatar profile about that client, and whether they come in on their mobile or here's a bunch of ways to work out, if same person will these type of things. And then you even have email off the back of that so then you can target those people on separate lists. We moved away from MailChimp to do this sort of stuff. It's been huge being able to segment the traffic based on so many more. So many more details. So not the traffic, the list has been huge. But that's that's a piece of software bentonow.com is one that's worked really well for us. But I don't know, I don't know why. I think it's just like people are unaware the market is starting to become more mature, but for people starting out, it's not really talked about, because you just trust, if something looks good that it's gonna sell, right? It's like a nice theme or whatever, so

Gert Mellak 15:15

I had I had a plan once this was years ago, obviously, when we're talking about maturity, this was 10 years ago, probably. But they asked him if the site was working for them. And they just opened up the page and said, Yeah, look, it's working. And I said, like, Okay, what about conversions? What about contact requests? What about visitors, etc, they had, they didn't have

any of the iDA analytic software installed, they were just waiting for the phone calls to come in. This was a local business. So they just track success based on marketing, essentially, based on phone calls, and have a registered answer today, five phone calls tomorrow, once something is off, and then we have 10. So something's going great. Our segmentation, we have seen work this really, really well. Once you segment which kind of articles drive actually the right people in and then convert, and then those conversions actually turn into sales, people that are using like bento, or Sigmetrics, or we could report or things like those seem to be doing a really good job tracking, then across the different channels. We have had quite some success with clients, when changing lead magnets, and I was wondering what your experience was. So what we usually find a very often find is that people spend quite some effort bringing up an ebook or something that works, essentially, for everybody interested in their niche. And then once we start switching this up, and putting something in that's relevant for the actual article where this is being published, then conversions skyrocket. And I was wondering if this, this is obviously not a stage yet we're, we're probably an A/B test would make sense. They don't have those 10,000 visitors, we just essentially change one thing for another one and see what happens. And so again, you're using this lead magnet, then this article, let's try that one and see what happens. And this is a difference very often from five to maybe 30% conversion rate. How do you go about about lead magnets? In general? Where do you start? Or do you only do A/B testing, in general with the clients of the sites you're working with?

Kurt Philip 17:08

Yes, I can only speak about changing lead magnets on my own business, because most of the businesses we work in or already work with are already quite established, right. And they're already creating a lot of revenue. So we're just trying to polish their sites up to milk out another 20, 30, 40% in conversion rates or whatever. So but on our site, we've tried a bunch of different different lead magnets, again, because it's low volume, high ticket, it's, you can't I believe split test it, it has to be a manual tracking system, right. So it's like, and again, that's highly inaccurate, because seasonality, different times of the year, depends what you're spending and things like this. But a lot of times if it's not converting, if it's not converting, it's very clear that it's not converting. If you then change it to a lead magnet that starts to convert, you don't really need to split test it right. It's obvious that your lead magnet before was crap, it was like an ebook. But I think the old way to do it was like a free six page, I don't know summary of best CRO tips for 2020. It was like something that was very popular ages ago, right, but we just got creative with doing, you know, we just do a full on audit for every site that submits to us, gets them on a call, we have like a 10 step, email sequence that then goes to them to warm them up. And like we have a bunch of stuff, I think, the ebook lead magnet or whatever, something of value that you want to hook them into, get their email, whatever that is, is just like the first step, it should never be like, the one and only thing you do, once you got their email, that's the whole point of getting them as a person on your list to now build that relationship with them. And then once you've gotten them on list to build the relationship, now it's time to show your true value by giving them say, five to 10 emails of value before one email of selling. That's it instead of a lot of people will do like two or three emails, and then boom, buy my product 50% off whatever. And I think you need to spend a while especially in our niche where you know, five figure minimum customer value, it's a lot lot different to say, if you're selling a 37 dollar, equals or something. So

it really depends on on the type of space you're in, but , but yeah, I think getting the email on the list is where it starts. And then once you've done that, now it's time to like build that relationship with them by telling giving them heaps of free tips and free value. So I think you're like the best person in the niche that you're in, so

Gert Mellak 19:32

Now absolutely. I think digital marketing in general procedures in SEO as well as obviously trust based so this, you can't give guarantees, you can talk about experience, you can't give guarantees upfront. Obviously in SEO you can and digital marketing and social or wherever conversion optimization, I guess you can probably. The more clients you have, the more references you can point to the easier it gets for a client to make a decision. Like if you worked in such and such we are into trust. We have like a lot of examples obviously after a while, right?

Kurt Philip 19:58

Yeah, exactly. So we looked at all our clients, and then we looked at what the average conversion rate increase was, and then the main and then looked at like, Okay, what is a, we don't call a guarantee, but we call it a goal for the the campaign link. So we when when I'm on the sales call them we hit, we say that our goal is to hit a 20% increase in conversion rate by the end of the campaign, if we don't hit it by the end of the campaign, we keep testing at no extra charge until we do. And that actually works better than a refund, because that shows like people are coming to work with you, because generally, like 20% is a sizable amount of revenue increases for them. Right. So and that, that worked a lot better, because obviously, we can't give guarantees either. And you can't advertise guarantees, because we had our Facebook can shut down pretty quickly on tweeted that we didn't know about that at the start. But, but yeah, it's a much better way to show show value and show your the value of your campaign and proposal without sounding like a car salesman. Right? Right.

Gert Mellak 20:58

Absolutely. Absolutely. One thing that came to mind when he said you work with already several 100 tests at once in parallel, we see this with SEO as well, the more clients we work with, the more experience we have, the more information we can extract from one client possibly and say, Okay, this might also work for this can let's try this there. How do you come up with testing ideas? Is this mostly cross referencing projects that have been working? Or you have you have a creative process on a project or a brainstorming, what you can do there? How do you go about this?

Kurt Philip 21:29

So we have, we have the Strategy Department, and that consists of about five of the team. But up until about client 100, it was very much creative, very much like brainstorming, other case studies were part of some paid subscription newsletters that we'd share split testing, winning split tests, and so on. But now that it's very little creative input, and it's, we see a website and we go okay, what's we have a whole Rolodex of test successful tests, we go, okay, what are the first five tests we're going to run here that will have a high chance of winning because they don't have x x x. And then so it's got a much higher win rate once we switched to switch to that

process. So we actually track what our win rate is, we track what per caught out, what our, like lose and increase rate is and things like that, and we can see the changes and how much they've impacted. So when we switch to just using what's worked on other clients, previous winning campaigns, it was so much better and more efficient, much more efficient than trying to come up with new ideas all the time.

Gert Mellak 22:35

That's really fascinating. We, we obviously when, when we take this out this side with my team, we very often say, okay, like, this is this is something that worked for this one, let's start with this, this, this, this, this. And then we line up essentially the prioritized items in the audit and say, Okay, let's, you don't do anything else. But get those meta descriptions, right, because we know you're going to triple your rate. And if you don't do anything else, make sure you have those menu elements essentially be part of, part of what you're doing. Just to make sure that Google understands they are important on these pages, certain certain things, we definitely also can start and then probably in our case, it gets a little bit more custom, but I can understand the more data you have, the more things you, you know where you can start the testing process. So that's really, really interesting. I want to go back to the lead magnet once more, just because I know for many of our clients, this is a really important topic, what do you think characterizes a good lead magnet?

Kurt Philip 23:30

A high perceived value, so it's not necessarily that it is high value, but a higher high perceived value. So what guys used to do back in the day with courses, SEO courses. As you would know, BlackHatWorld and and all those places back in the day was, they would put a image up of the soft, the course or the free course giveaway. And there would be like five DVDs, that would be like a software box, and it would be like value 297, now zero if you give me your email, and just like trying to communicate to the visitor, how much value this PDF or ebook I keep just using this as an example, because it's probably the most common, common one. So it could be like, our top 10 biggest CRO findings of 2021. And then we can communicate you know, our clients have spent 10s of 1000s of dollars to get this information through using our, using our, our process, but you can have it for free just by entering your email. So it's not so much about, of course you got to have value in the document too. But don't just say free eBook. If you enter your email, you want to really learn how to sell that ebook. So that it seems like it's worth a lot before you, before you try to like, you're you're trying to advertise that that that lead magnet right does that. Does that answer your question?

Gert Mellak 24:55

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Definitely. How you how you frame things I think this is true for or all kinds of all kinds of places on the website, how you frame something is just impacting how it works. And then we'll we definitely selected, the more relevant, we can make it to the actual page where it's where it's on. But you said obviously your clients very often have this in place already. The relevance if you can just kind of try to embody the person that's on this page and what they're going through, if we make the lead magnet be like the next logical step for them. It seems like really good. So if someone comes to on our website and has an, a question about

how to do SEO for Magento, and they see a Magento checklist to get your SEO, right, it's just going to be a very logical next step for them to get additional value and opt in for something like this. Whereas if the book we have, for example, is not going to be the right fit for everybody, because they're on a particular situation, they might have come to the website, just to solve this particular issue. And to figure out how to optimize a Shopify site, for example, for basic SEO, and then the general ebook is not going to be a good fit. But yeah, definitely framing value, I was trying to turn my clients to value obviously needs to be worth more than the email address, I'm giving up for it. And if the value is really good, I might choose my good email address and not the crappy one and never check. So obviously, not every email address is created equal, right.

Kurt Philip 26:20

I think one thing that's changed in the last few years with the rise of mobile too, is that the old web 1.0 free style websites with your home your company, about us, contact us in the menu, then your offer, then all the different section pages explaining what your offer is. Those kinds of websites, obviously, depends on what you're offering. But a great example of how I communicate this is I just bought a premium signature the other day of a Facebook ad. I don't know if you've seen them too. But it's a really nicely graphic design signature that they sell for, like 30 bucks. But this is a graphic design agency, which is, this is a great example of a graphic design firm, that worked out a really low amount of work for quite a high margin probably takes them like 20 seconds to create this product. They sell it for 30 bucks, and they do hundreds of them for sure. But when you go to the website, it's literally there's one thing for you to do, they show examples of, of all the great signatures, their premium signatures and how many people have sold, and then just the one area for you to buy it, there's nothing else. There's nothing else on the page. And I think that is something that a lot of businesses would, should do and would get much better conversion rate just by giving the user one thing to click Next, and then purchase your product rather than having for them to try and navigate around your website. We sell the best signatures and then scroll down and then shows a bunch of signatures and then they just get lost in where they need to head, you want to sort of like push them in a direction that heads towards that conversion without any any confusion or leaks, I guess conversion leaks,so

Gert Mellak 28:07

This is really interesting. I was going to wrap this up but I have one more question if this if this is okay. Have you ever had a client where you suggested them for CRO purposes to split things across multiple websites?

Kurt Philip 28:22

Can you explain a bit more what you mean?

Gert Mellak 28:24

I'm auditing a client right, right now a client site and they have like a very particular design they have every every menu item is essentially a button. So every call to action looks exactly like the menu items. And they had the offer probably 25 different services. So the first thing that came to

my mind when I saw this website is look, I will split this up into sub domains or something like this and say, Okay, this service goes there the service goes there is if I was offering CRO tomorrow, I would split it off Seo leverage.com and call this CRO leverage might get this domain after this call. It is off to zero leverage. And just make sure people don't get confused with all kinds of information missing.

Kurt Philip 29:04

Yeah, I think that would be that would be a great idea. Because that's web 1.0. Right? Like when you're when you're an SEO company, but you also sell AdWords, you also sell Facebook ads, you also sell graphic design, you sell everything and then you sell nothing because of this. Like if as long as you need to really specialize in one thing or have a separate website for each of those things. so that because generally people won't cross sell, you know, if they want a logo, they're not going to generally want SEO kind of thing. So there's no use having that option there at the one chance that you might be able to sell them some some SEO or something. So give it a focus, keep it basic and the conversion rates will all go up from there.

Gert Mellak 29:46

Awesome. Well, thank you so much Kurt. I want to quickly recap, we talked about or you talked about people starting really into SAP testing when they get like 10,000 ah 10,000 visitors per month. You talked about this tool as well, this was bentonow, I think I made a note and granted link into the in the show notes as well. If somebody wants to get some, some more insights, he talked about changing things rather than doing an AP test if you don't get to this level and see if they don't convert, you obviously need to make a change until you get it converting, talked about making things keeping things focused, making sure that obviously the value perception is met in order to get this lead, get this conversion going. And first and foremost, and this is definitely matching the experience we have here as well. trust and authority probably the most important thing people can fix on their site, just making sure that visitors get a sense that they are trustworthy. There's just so many people out there I think this is even even more an issue now with more and more AI generated content where it's just so easy to create a website as if you were the expert of anything. I can create a medical website on cancer treatment tomorrow with AI and probably for some for a non expert it it looks really decent and they might trust my advice they shouldn't really, so trust and authority really backup what you're saying but the examples make sure they're visible, focus people on your website. I think this was really good advice. We're going to publish the links to your site in the show notes if they want to get in touch with you, someone listening to this show what would be the best way

Kurt Philip 31:21

Just convertica.org. Convertica.org/blog, we have all my contact details in the right hand sidebar, my Twitter, Facebook, although YouTube channel we've, I've been did for a period with a bunch of CRO videos. Yeah.

Gert Mellak 31:40

Awesome. Well then thank you so much Kurt for taking the time. Anybody listening to the show, you're going to find the recording and a written summary over at SEOLEVERAGE.com/podcast. This is episode 80. My name is Gert Mellak. This was Kurt Philip from Convertica. Thank you so much.

Kurt Philip 31:55

Cheers.