123 - Online Reputation and AI

Gert Mellak 0:00
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SEOLeverage Podcast Intro 0:29
Welcome to the SEO leverage podcast, where we talk about search, marketing, and conversion.

Gert Mellak 0:39
Welcome back to SEOLeverage.com. This is episode 123. My name is Gert Mellak. And today we're going to talk about online reputation in the age of artificial intelligence. Now online reputation has always been dear to my heart, just feel for those brands that have competitors, affiliates, negative reviews showing up when you type in their brand name, just because very often, it's just competing pages, trying some shady techniques to get some visibility there, at the cost of well known established brands. And on the other hand, very often, brands are not even aware of their money, they're missing the revenue that's actually going down the drain, just because they're not taking their online reputation correctly. So in this episode, I'm going to give some tips, but also show how artificial intelligence just took this matter to a whole new complexity level.

1:32
First of all, let's clarify one thing you cannot legitimately, ethically hack a website and get articles taken down. Also, webmasters are very, very reluctant bloggers are very reluctant to take articles down just because you asked them about it. So online reputation really goes into a very, very different direction. And the direction is, in most cases, to actually outrank whatever it's showing there with more favorable, positive, semantically richer content that Google wants to rank and then actually SEO optimize that content. So what people see when they type in your brand name is actually what you want them to see.

2:15
In online reputation management, we take control of the narrative, and really proactively make sure we feed the engines what we want them to know about the brand. So they forget or rather get a neutral impact from negative reviews. As an agency, as a consultant, it's obviously I'm very often if somebody hasn't been doing some reputation work a little bit of an ethical question, everybody decides their ethical line, mine is very, very clear. Staying away from anything that I believe is really shady, really illegal, and things like those, but we have been having a lot of legitimate businesses that just get called out for being either too expensive or not exactly

bringing the results the people thought they would be getting etc. And they just losing a lot of revenue. I remember a brand losing six figures every single month, just because of one unhappy client spamming the entire internet with negative reviews about the brand.

3:22
While hundreds or even 1000s I think on Trustpilot, to confirmed clients actually, were raving about the brand. One unhappy client these days can actually cost a company a fortune. This is the time we're living in. And this is why it's important to take online reputation seriously. And really make sure that you have first of all the knowledge about what is happening, what is being said out there about your brand. And second author, someone you trust. And that can help you to do the monitoring, but also take the necessary actions to polish your image online. Because what people find out about you within a few seconds, is what's going to help them make a decision. And if the impact they get from the platform they use in order to find something out about you is not positive enough, they're not going to buy from you. It's as simple as that. Nobody wants to make a bad purchasing decision and tell their friends and family how they got scammed. So a lot of people are going to do the research before they make a purchase to whatever they find is going to impact how they act.

4:29
AI now with generative AI like ChatGPT or Gemini or Copilot or Perplexity all the different tools and new ones coming out every single day has taken this to another step because it used to be really mostly on mostly about Google, maybe some social media platform sometimes as well, but really mostly about what people find on Google that made had to make a decision about a potential purchase or form an opinion about the person or a brand. But now it might really, they might really turn to ChatGPT and say hey, is this in this company actually a legit business? Should I actually buy from them? Are they going to help me as a car repair shop, make get more clients. And generative AI is always going to respond with whatever it was being trained on, hardly it is going to come back and say, 'Hey, I really don't have enough training material or knowledge about this to make an informed recommendation.' So it's just going to make things up. And this is where it gets really, really dangerous. Because generative AI might make up testimonials in favor of a brand that is actually that are not even real. We had international corporations being mentioned, as SEOLeverage clients, for example, that I wish we had, would be great to work with them. And I would love to work with a thing, the ACME Corporation, for example. But honestly, unfortunately, they're not clients of ours. But generative AI just mentioned a testimonial from their CEO.

5:16
On the flip side, you might see negative reviews being given for legitimate brands, we had a lawyer who is doing great and getting having 1000 clients or more every single year, and most of them providing five star reviews on Google because they're so happy about the service. He got called out on Glassdoor for shouting at his employees. So generative AI used this as training material and said, Yeah, he's a good lawyer has a lot of clients, but he shouted at his

employees and is really in a bad mood all the time. This is not the kind of feedback you want your potential clients to get before they make a purchasing decision.

6:41
This is only possible to combat, if you first of all know about it, which is why our clients get a lot of brand monitoring from our consulting services here as part of their SEO consulting. But also, you want to take control over page one, what is page one for your brand? What is page one? For your founders name for your brand's founders name? If I search for the founder of XYZ, what am I going to get? What is information coming across? Is there any other past outdated articles out there about this founders activity on another company? Maybe the other company wasn't as legitimate as the current one is? What can they find out about your brand, your product, your service, your founders, within a few seconds with a simple Google search is going to be the very likely training material that AI tools are using in order to inform their users tomorrow. So this is now the time where you want to make sure you bake your brand into the AI algorithms. By providing the semantically correct information they can properly process. So they can actually inform their users about a positive image about your brand. And you stop losing clients through these kinds of requests. So if you're thinking about it, it's really first of all about Google, what is coming up on Google? Do your competitors have to come up there? Or can we do something about it? Imagine you're there are two car repair shops one comes up whenever somebody searches for the other one, they are going to get quite some attention they don't deserve. Just because they were really sneaky and trying to rank for the competitors brand name. It's not necessary.

7:37
It's also not necessary what happened to another client of ours who actually lost a lot of affiliate commissions to his affiliates who tried to outrank his main website. There's obviously an issue with his affiliate agreement as well, but actually cost him a fortune for traffic that he legitimately owned. And if it wasn't his affiliates network that was so strong in SEO and actually trying to outrank him, he wouldn't have lost so much money. So affiliates, by the way, are really high potential, but also the high risk endeavor. If you will go down there, make sure you have the proper affiliate agreements in place. So they don't compete with you with for your brand name, which is the easiest win they can have.

9:08
So really summing up, you have to control page one on google, you have to control how you connect your brand with the important terminology people might be using on AI. So AI and language models can actually give the right answers. If you want to know more about how to go about this, if you want support like our clients get from us in order to make this happen, in order to bake your brand into the AI algorithm is early enough, head over to SeoLeverage.com and schedule a call with me. I would love to get to know you, your project, what you're up to and what your plans are to tackle the AI age with your branding.