Decoding SEO for business leaders: 5 tips to get stakeholders on board

As SEO professionals, when we present our strategy and project ideas, we are often met with blank stares from business stakeholders. They are not able to connect the dots from SEO jargon to business goals.

And my fellow SEO colleagues, we need to own this one. Every so often we forget to speak in simple language that is understood by all. We do tend to speak in acronyms and codes.

In today's digital world, we buy and sell online, we pay our bills and make our deposits online. When the first instinct of the users is to "Google" the products or services they want, the business needs to ensure they provide content that meets the user's search intent. Search Engine Optimization plays a pivotal role in ensuring this content is optimized and available for search engines to display to the end users.

Organic search contributes significantly to the website performance, as well as plays a critical role in the buyer journey, which could lead to a conversion or an engagement. Without proper SEO strategies in place, users will face difficulty locating your content and instead find your competitors.

Thus, understanding SEO is essential to overall business

success – and we need to be able to decode that message for all business leaders to understand and value.

Know your audience

First off, you must know who you are talking to when you are explaining SEO. Set a foundation, that it's about users, rather than search engine bots. Typically, the non-SEO professionals consider SEO to be a technique to outsmart search engine bots and algorithms to rank number one in Google search results. Well, we all know that is not how things work. As a matter of fact, there are dozens of articles on mistakes to avoid.

Leverage your competition

Show and tell always works. Walk your business stakeholder through an actual keyword search on Google and let them observe how the competition is dominating the search results. Then slowly clarify, like peeling an onion, why the competitor is performing better and where do gaps exist in the internal strategy. Essentially breaking it down in simpler terminology. Show how the competition has out-maneuvered you with optimized content, appropriate keywords targeting, and applied technical best practices to ensure the website is visible and creditable.

Get hands on

User experience plays a major role in how search engines crawl and understand the website. When UX teams integrates SEO best practices, the websites are easily discoverable in search, not to mention it leads to effective user experience. In lieu of justifying the business holder that the site navigation is broken, demonstrate how difficult it is to search and navigate to the desired pages. Rather than stating that if a page is taking 3-5 seconds to load, it might be slow, let them experience the frustration of a slow page load. These are

critical experiences that lets the story develop itself.

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If you are trying to gather backing for a technical project, we need to be extra careful. Algorithm, tags or metadata are not widely understood terms. To an untrained ear all this sounds like gibberish. It will be beneficial if you explain the advantage each element delivers, instead of narrating a variety of technical terms.

For example, instead of saying we need to implement noindex tags, you might want to say, “we need to secure the confidential / private content that is currently getting displayed publicly.”

Instead of asking for implementation of Hreflang, you might want to state “this will allow the business to indicate to the search engines the different web pages in alternate languages that exist and their relationship.”

Get funded

Why should the business fund the project? How does SEO contribute to the bottom line? Advocating SEO successfully means selling to the business stakeholders on the benefits SEO brings. Demonstrate how SEO impacts each stage of the user journey and how the SEO project would bring in effectiveness.

First order of the day is to understand what are the business goals. Usually, it is how to increase revenue. Here make data your friend. Present the data on how much traffic is being

attracted organically and how organic users are engaging with the site. What amount of revenue is generated by organic users, the return on investment and of course the repeat buy stats.

Once you show the funnel and profitability of the channel, the buy-in from stakeholders is easy. Then you can break into individual projects and how these projects impact the buyer's journey. Consider your execution plan, define and specify details about the people and cost required.

> *The better you explain SEO, the more likely your stakeholder will buy in the project and provide funding for execution.*

Conclusion

SEO can be easily understood by anyone as long as you put it in a language that they will be able to recognize. Simplify your message and make it into comprehensible concepts, which not only explain what it is, but why it works.

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ll have on their bottom lines.

Google updated their exact match close variants

to include implied words, paraphrase words and same-intent keywords. How does

this affect Alpha-Beta?

Notes from Michael Akkerman, Global Head of Pinterest

Partners Program: discovery, research, audience engagement, oversize, timewell

-spent, communities.

There were more than a billion voice searches a month, as

of January 2018. 40% of those mobile searches had local intent.

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