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The Life of Your Product's SEO

Bob Dunn: Hey, Rebecca, welcome back to the show.

Rebecca Gill: Thank you Bob, I'm very happy to be here.

Bob: Now for those who don't know, you were on episode 12 and now you are on episode 102, wow how time flies.

Rebecca: It does, you've been a busy man.

Bob: Yes, it's like wow, that's 90 shows and I know in fact your first one was very popular and I want to have you reintroduce yourself to the listeners as far as what you are up to these days and kind of what your gig is.

Meet Rebecca Gill, SEO consultant

Rebecca: Okay, well like Bob, said my name is Rebecca Gill. I run a design and SEO agency based out of Southern Michigan. **We do custom website design and SEO consulting products** for a variety of clients. **I also produce and sell online SEO courses at DIYSEOCourses.com**, and I recently launched an **SEO podcast called SEObits.fm**.

Bob: Very cool, so you're just about as crazily busy as I am, it seems.

Rebecca: Yes, you know and I'll throw in some other things, like I do summits and monthly webinars for iThemes and some onsite boot camps as well. We just have to keep ourselves busy.

Bob: Yes, no kidding, we're both very good at that. Well, we're kind of taking a different approach to SEO today. Last time, you gave us an overview of SEO, eCommerce and online stores, specifically around WooCommerce. This time we're going to take a journey through a product's life of SEO, and I thought this might be kind of fun, a different way of looking at things, actually taking it from the beginning to the end. We're going to start at the very beginning.

Now when you're in that development phase of your product that you'll be selling online, is there anything that you should keep in mind when it comes to the SEO or does that even play into the strategy at that point?

In the development phase of a product, does SEO still play into the strategy?

Rebecca: Oh, I think it absolutely plays into the strategy. When I had a very active theme store of my own, and I was selling WordPress themes online, everything we did was based on data and research. Before we would even create or potentially start to design a WordPress theme, I would look at individual niches we could target. **I would look at the competition and do a lot of research, into who the competition is, the quality of their products, and then what type of search volumes are associated with that.** We would do all of that before we would even consider product development.

I would encourage store owners to do the same because you invest a lot of time and money and effort into product launches or even creating an online store, and **it really needs to have some of that based on data so that you know that you can dominate a niche and bring in some solid search traffic** and excel and get payback for your time and your investment.

In the development phase, would you approach an virtual product differently than a physical one?

Bob: Now within that same question, would there be anything you would do differently in that phase when you're looking at a virtual product like themes and that kind of thing versus an actual physical product?

Rebecca: Well **both of them are going to have competitors**, and both of them are going to have search volumes, and types of search keyword phrases that would be used to bring in that traffic. Whether you're selling a physical product or a virtual product, **you need to have a really good**

understanding of your competition, the market, and then what type of traffic you can get in from SEO so that you can get payback. I'm a big proponent of making sure that you get ROI on any type of activity you're doing. **I don't think it changes from physical to virtual.** If it's virtual, you might have a little bit more competition because you can get quicker to market.

Any tips for ranking a product in the search engines prior to release?

Bob: Kind of in that same phase, are there any tips that people can use to help them start ranking their product in the search engines prior to their release, or is that dangerous to do too much before you actually put it out in the wild?

Rebecca: If it's a brand new store **I would start building the website and getting that out there, and building my social media presence, and my email list before I launch.** If it is a brand new product on an existing store, it doesn't hurt to **create a product page** and start to nurture that, so Google can be aware of it before you actually launch. I would do that with our themes.

I'm giving away my secrets now, but **I would create a WooCommerce product and have that published a week before I went live.** It would be fully optimized for the theme and ready to go. I just wouldn't have the buy button activated, and that way I could get it out there and Google could see it, so that when I did push that live and people went to go search for it, when they went to look in Google, they would quickly find it. That first

search at that point would be for the name and I'd already want it in place there, and ready, and accessible.

Bob: Okay. So you're creating the site and you've created your product page. Let's not base this on WooCommerce or any specific eCommerce platform, but is there a standard checklist of things to do to make sure that page is ready to go for when you actually do that official release of that product?

Is there a standard checklist of things to do before official release of your product?

Rebecca: I always had a list of things that I did. Again, I was using Woo. Not only would I have short descriptions and really long descriptions readily available, and you're knowing all the pertinent information people needed, like components and just things they would frequently ask for. **I'd have the ROI ready to go, my focus keyword in place, my meta titles, my meta descriptions, and I would already have had that keyword research done** because we wouldn't even launch before that. There are a number of things that I would do and then **I would have a post-release launch checklist** as well where I would share it on social media, I would write a blog post. There's a lot of things you can do. You can do it in steps, you can migrate yourself through.

I have some **checklists available on my SEObits.fm site**. There's a **process checklist** that your listeners could download. In episode three, I have a **list of SEO questions** that I kind of go through as I'm in that planning stage and starting to target some good phrases. In episode 11, I have a **list of keyword sources** that you can do and I'm trying to remember where I have it. There's another list I have out there available

that's an on-page checklist you can go through and check off to make sure you're hitting a number of the key elements, so you are putting your best foot forward and making sure that you're attracting as much traffic as possible.

What about adding video?

Bob: I'll get those links from you because I know you have a lot of amazing resources out there and we want to make sure everybody has access to those. In that same vein, when you're doing this pre-release launch and you said maybe you write a post about it, would there be a benefit to adding a video about it as well, in the pre-release or not?

Rebecca: Absolutely, and here's the really cool thing about video is I'm a multitasking mom who runs an agency and also does client work herself. I don't have time to sit through videos but I'm not the norm.

Bob: Me too.

Rebecca: The world is migrating to video and there some amazing statistics. YouTube alone is the second biggest search engine outside of Google, and I think it's like **one-third of the internet users are users of YouTube.** Video has this huge market that people love and they embrace it. Now they've got mobile devices and lots of bandwidth, in the U.S. at least, and they can really digest a ton of video. My husband loves video. The thing I love about video is two-fold. One, **it gives you an extra opportunity to show up in search** because you can show up in YouTube search, as well as you having that video show up in Google search. Then the other aspect of it is **it reaches a completely new target market then you would reach with the written word.**

You can see a lot of those really popular YouTube stars, like a fashion blog, or a makeup blog, they're totally using video to kill it and to sell products. It is very powerful and like you mentioned, you referenced a training and I'm doing a webinar with iThemes for video SEO and really what you have to do to **optimize videos for YouTube**. Very similar to regular SEO, but it's got some different nuances. We're doing this because video is getting so popular and it is such an integral part of SEO now that **you can't ignore it anymore**. Whether we like it, it's here.

Bob: You mentioned at the very beginning and I'm the same way as you, I'm not a huge fan of videos. But we need to think about everybody else. A store owner might think that videos suck, but most of the world doesn't.

Rebecca: It's true, and especially the different generations. I would add two points. One is this: the different generations will embrace video differently and at different volumes. Both of my children love video. My daughter will look up videos that will help her do math problems. Who would think that that's where she would go but she would go there instead of the written word.

I think the other area is that people aren't just using them for cat videos and funny dog tricks anymore. **It reaches to all types of industries and all types of niches and all types of products, and it is a great marketing tool**. If you are going all in with your store, you need to consider not just your product SEO and what you're doing there, but you need to reach out to social and blogging and videos, maybe podcasting because we are a multimedia world and the search engines know this, and they are going to embrace it because they know your users are going to embrace it.

Bob: Exactly, next comes the marketing of your product and this is kind of in the actual pre-release phase, too. But you're laying out your marketing

plan, and I think through some of your answers have touched on this, but obviously, SEO comes into play when you're physically setting out your marketing plan. Some thoughts there that you could share?

Where does SEO figure in at the marketing plan development stage?

Rebecca: SEO is really touchy throughout the marketing plan. It is at the beginning when you're considering development and strategy, and you're in that research stage. It is in the middle when you're at launch and you're optimizing your actual content in your products. It's going to play into effect after launch when you need to continue to market that via various channels. If you're using SEO right and you're relying on SEO to bring in some very targeted and focused traffic that'll convert, **it has to be throughout the entire process.** It's not the end and that's a lot of times that I see people get frustrated with SEO is because they throw it into a plugin, into a WordPress plugin, or some meta boxes on their ecommerce site and think that they're done and that's all they have to do. But that's not the case, you're not successful that way. **It has to be throughout the entire marketing process from planning a strategy all the way through execution** for it to be really successful.

It can be successful. When I used to do that theme store, I could get payback on a themed design within six weeks and that was because of SEO; I couldn't have done it otherwise. Obviously I'm a true fan, I'm an SEO cheerleader. It's because I've seen the results and I've had results from it for 15 years and I can still see things that I worked on 15 years ago. My past employer's site or client sites and I know it's not just a here today thing, it's forever. It lasts for a very long time, so it's worth the investment.

Bob: Yes, I've found the same thing. Organically, especially just doing the basics, I look at over the years the things that keep coming up in Google and I think, "Wow, you know I spent some serious time on that off and on, but it certainly paid off." With that, okay we're rounding up this process where we've done all this, we've executed it, we've done the big release, and now it's kind of another product on our shelves. Any tip you can give us to keep your product's SEO ranking healthy for the long run?

How can we keep our product's SEO ranking healthy for the long run?

Rebecca: I would encourage you to **be a good servant and serve your target market**. Think less about SEO as just a tactic, think about it as an avenue on **how you can provide value to the people that you serve**. If you're thinking in that way, you're going to continue to provide fresh content through your website, you're going to be active in social media, you're going to be pushing out some type of value to your customer base, whether it's via email or it's online, like additional how-to videos.

There's so many different things that you can do, but the more that you continue to love your site, and love your store, and make yourself accessible to the world online, the more you're going to get results from SEO because that's what the search engines want. **They want you to produce a positive user experience**, and they want you to be a servant to your target market and really do good for those around you. Trust me, Google will pay attention to that and it provides you goodwill back because you are helping them serve their target demographic.

Bob: Now I'm going to throw one last question in, I'm kind of starting to throw in for this new season a little bonus question. Rebecca's out shopping online and I'm assuming you do it off an on.

Rebecca: I'm a Christmas pajama shopper at 9:00 at night and I get 90% of my presents that way and then prime them in.

Bob: From an SEO perspective, what's the one thing when you're going ... It might be general websites, but really when you're going to online stores what's the one glaring screw up that you see time and time again that you know directly effects online stores SEO and it just drives you crazy because you just want to be able to get on their contact form and send them something and say, "Why are you doing this?"

What drives you crazy when you visit an online store?

Rebecca: I have two pet peeves with eCommerce stores. One is as soon as I hit the home page **they whip a box up in my face.** They've not even dated me yet and they're already asking for something. I always feel like, "You know what, you got to at least let me in and make conversation with me first before you're throwing me your ask." I know that that's a really big pet peeve with Google. It was just on a podcast where Google was an interviewee and they said that they don't like them, they've written algorithms to address the issues on mobile but in general they don't like them because they know users don't like them. That's one of my pet peeves because I know **it compromises the user experience, and if you compromise the user experience you compromise your SEO.**

My second pet peeve is **when I go to those individual products, and there's nothing there.** I can't tell what it is because they've just used basic information that is provided by the manufacturer or they're just basic elements to get it live and they forget that we're not the store owner. There's so many questions that we have and information that we want, and a lot of places the more information you can give the better. You need to make it very digestible for people so you have a good positive user experience, but **you need to give them information so they can decide whether or not buying your product is going to solve their needs.**

Bob: Exactly, and I think an ideal example of that is, of course we all buy there, is Amazon. I mean you go to that product page and you've got your basic description, you've got all that stuff, but there's so many other things, reviews, extended product features, tech specifics, whatever that you can go into on that same page without having to have a thousand questions lingering in your brain.

Rebecca: I absolutely read reviews before I purchase stuff on Amazon because I have been burned on Amazon before. It's a great example, and **there's been a lot of products where I've not purchased because their description didn't give me enough information but the reviewers did.** What you're doing in that when you don't give enough information in that description, you force us to go to those reviews and look at the reviews. If you gave me enough information at the start I probably wouldn't look at those reviews as much because you've already satisfied my need for solving my problem. You take that control out of your hands and you now place it to the reviewers when you are very skimpy on your descriptions and your information.

Bob: That's a good point, I never thought of it that way because **you are basically saying, "Now I'm going to leave it up to all the customers to be my sales people for me."**

Rebecca: Yes.

Bob: Crazy. Well, again excellent. Even after 90 episodes, you've still got that magic touch.

Rebecca: Thank you, I try to. I'm really passionate about SEO and I really believe that anybody can learn and excel at SEO, and that's my mantra is to make sure that the world knows that and understands that, and they embrace it.

Where can we connect with Rebecca on the web?

Bob: Very cool. Besides your website, which you can go ahead and mention that again, where else is a great place for people to connect with you on the web?

Rebecca: Well so you can find me at RebeccaGill.com. I am **RebeccaGill on Twitter**. Then some of those resources that I mentioned, those checklists, are available at SEOBits.fm. That's also on iTunes, but obviously iTunes won't have all the downloads available.

Bob: Perfect, well thank you, Rebecca for joining us a second time around.

Rebecca: My pleasure. Thanks so much for having me.

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