



Wednesday, May 13, 2020: 11 a.m - 2:30 p.m. Eastern time

Executive Summary

Key takeaways from the Google for Communicators Virtual Boot Camp

11-11:25 a.m.

Marketing During COVID-19: Be the Best Answer with SEO

Lee Odden, CEO, TopRank Marketing

- When a crisis comes along, marketers are faced with burning questions about how best to respond, such as:
 - Should we keep doing what we're doing?
 - Is it time to cut marketing and PR budgets?
 - Should we pause to see what everybody else is doing?
- Perhaps we should take this opportunity to evaluate data, pivot accordingly, and optimize content as we go?
- Lee Odden, CEO of TopRank Marketing, says the coronavirus pandemic is forcing companies to pull back on explicit product marketing in favor of an emphasis on "purpose" and utility for the public good.
- Right now, marketers should be focused on empower customers—not selling.
- Enter the power of SEO, which can help customers pull themselves toward solutions on their own terms.
- If you're not planning to invest in SEO efforts during this time of extreme reliance on web queries, you could be left in the digital dust. Odden cites a survey that found 63% of respondents believed SEO's importance will increase dramatically during the pandemic.
- Odden says "you are what you E.A.T.," which is to say your webpages should be stuffed—not with [bogus keywords](#)—but with [expertise, authoritativeness and trustworthiness](#).
- To optimize content for "findability and credibility," you must provide answers users can trust. Infuse your site with third-party expertise, use keywords strategically, and "write about things people are searching for."
- Odden suggests using tools such as Traackr, Buzzsumo and SEMRush to get a sense of what your customers are seeking—and tailor your content accordingly.
- Odden offers five steps to sharpen your SEO initiatives:
 - 1. Create an ideal customer profile.** Uncover what their job descriptions look like (and who they might report to), as well as topics, content types, social media platforms and media outlets they tend to prefer.

2. Identify influencers on specific topics. “Who is influential about topics that matter to your targeted accounts?” Odden says. Use can use a tool such as [Traackr](#) to find the right influencer for your specific niche.

3. Embark upon content co-creation and activation. Determine how best you can spark influencer collaboration. Find the right content types and social media platforms that suit your objectives, and use media relations tactics to earn broader coverage.

Odden says to create “power pages” that thoroughly articulates what a thing is and how it works. Answers common buyer questions, offer examples, include social proof and third-party validation, and include calls to action throughout.

4. Pursue content promotion. Now it’s time to get influencers to promote your optimized content. Encourage cross posting on different platforms. Pursue getting links published in earned and owned media. Consider repurposing old content, too.

Organic search is a moving target, and Google’s constantly tweaking its algorithm, but links from high-authority sources doesn’t go out of style.

5. Maintain ongoing influencer engagement. You’re not done once a piece is published. Maintain relationships, monitor experts, and actively connect influencers with each other.

- Odden offers a further four takeaways to boost SEO:
 - Identify industry experts and high-visibility influencers who are already creating on-topic content.
 - Seek out experts who already have “knowledge panels” on Google.
 - Evaluate an influencer’s link attraction rate when they publish or contribute content.
 - Provide influencers with SEO audits of their blogs so they can improve their search visibility.

11:30 a.m.–12:10 p.m.

Master Fundamental SEO Practices, New Algorithm Updates and Protect Your Online Presence During a Crisis

Matt Pressnall, Co-Owner, Perception Builder

- Record baseline metrics before doing anything else. Set up google analytics, and set up your dashboard to display KPIs such as leads, conversion rate, conversion rate by channel, demographic info, etc.
- Use software that finds errors and opportunities on pages.
- 59% of SEO specialists state that technical, on-site optimization is the most effective SEO strategy.
- Start with speed: Fast-loading website correlate to high Google rankings. Prioritize “Time to First Byte” speed (Google recommends 200 milliseconds).
- Page-load time is also crucial. How fast does your page render in the browser? It’s a combo of time-to-first-byte and how fast resources load.

- A one-second delay in load times yields 11% fewer page views and 7% loss in conversions. Slow load times will kill user experience and conversions.
- How do I prioritize my team's efforts? Pressnall says to start with [Cloudflare](#), which can address 80% of all SEO checklist items. It speeds everything up.
- Optimize for "crawl budget," or the amount of time Google spends crawling your site. Google penalizes sites that require more computing time and are difficult to sift through. If you're slow, you get fewer pages crawled. Studies show low crawl budget leads to low Google rankings.
- Influence crawl budget by prioritizing: Speed, Sitemaps, Robots.txt, Not Javascript Rendered, Limiting redirects, and Fixing broken links.
- Content factors that influence crawl budget: Delete thin or duplicate pages, and beef up your "money pages."
- Choose platforms Google is invested in, such as WordPress and AMP.
- Make sure SEO and IT are on the same page to ensure SEO is baked into whatever you make.
- Targeting the correct keywords is imperative.
- Assess keywords by: Volume (is there sufficient traffic to be had if we rank?); Competition (Can our site rank on Page 1 of Google?); Consumer Intent (Does this keyword show that the user is ready to take action?)
- Use longtail keywords, and get a keyword audit to see if you're wasting your time.
- Get a technical SEO audit to understand where you are.
- **EAT, BERT, optimization, content types, link building.**
- Prioritize your E.A.T. (Expertise, Authority, and Trust).
- Show expertise through: awards, industry memberships, guest posts, speaking at conferences, etc.
- Build authority through: Links from respected sites, mentions in the news, brand mentions and shares across social media.
- Be trustworthy: Better Business Bureau, Ability to contact, Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy, Address in footer, HTTPS, author bios, etc.
- Google's BERT update lets Google understand more context and interpret words more accurately.
- BERT takeaways: Websites targeting irrelevant keywords will sink; Longtail keywords will become more important; Relevant content will rule.
- How to optimize your content: Integrate related concepts and topics to supplement your keywords. (E.g. If your keyword is "Viking funerals," you might include related topics of "Norway" or "fjords.")
- Try [Page Optimizer Pro](#).
- Use Answer the Public, MOZ or SEMRush to find questions related to your keywords that people are searching for. Then answer those queries on your pages.
- To beef up your pages: Get contributor quotes, use testimonials from peer groups or authorities, and add visuals such as charts and graphics.
- Blogs are still a safe SEO bet.
- Produce evergreen and timely content. Longer content tends to yield better SEO results.
- Evergreen content: FAQs, Guides, Case Studies, Lists, Checklists, etc.
- For a healthy content mix, produce 80% evergreen and 20% timely content.
- Prioritize link building. For external links, it's quality over quantity. Related sites are better link sources.
- Limit the number of outbound links per page, and link only to authoritative sites.
- Link to valuable internal links

12:20–1 p.m.

Develop a Paid Search Strategy that Delivers Greater ROI

Greg Jarboe, President and co-founder, SEO-PR

- Google Ads can customize campaign types and tools based on what you tell them about your organization's marketing goals. This can be concentrated on areas such as sales, lead gen, boosting website traffic, and building brand awareness.
 - If brand awareness or consideration is your goal, Google Ads will help you determine whether a Display or Video campaign is more appropriate. Useful tools for these campaigns include Keyword Planners, Reach Planners, and YouTube Video Builder (which was introduced in April 2020).
 - If your goal is website traffic, leads, or sales, Google suggests using *all* campaign types, including Search, Display, and TrueView for action (which allows you to use calls-to-actions text overlays or other featured sitelinks to your video ads).
- Google Surveys is a free tool that gauges website satisfaction. Four basic questions are featured in the free version, but you can add more questions (or create custom website surveys) for a low price.
- Search is a great way to started on working with Google:
 - Pick the right keywords: three-word combinations lead to more conversions than one or two-word searches.
 - Set your budget: Shifting your perspective from cost per click (CPC) to a cost per action (CPA) will help you boost your ROI.
- Average CPC for Google Ads is \$2.69 for Search campaigns. There are different rates across industries (i.e., legal services pay more than 3x times as much as a non-profits do for Search campaigns).
- Google Analytics can be a great tool to create goals and assign a goal value. There are Goal templates in various categories: Revenue, Acquisition, Inquiry, and Engagement. You can also assign a monetary value to each goal, or you can use Smart Goals to let Google optimize your ads performance before you start to measure your conversions.
- Smart Display campaigns can assemble and optimize your targeting, bidding, and ads if you provide them the raw materials. Advertisers see 20% more conversions using Smart Display tools.
- Use Google Surveys for your target audiences before *and* after to measure how effectively you've lifted your brand awareness. Using the same questions for both surveys allows you to measure any changes in results.
- Display ads are a great to supplement surveys by generating web traffic, leads, and sales. Search gives you the most bang for your buck but employing multiple usages of Google is the most recommended option for meeting your goals.
- Businesses are shifting to video to more and more, especially during COVID-19. YouTube Video Builder is a free beta tool that walks you through each step of the video creation process – can

range from 6 to 15 seconds in length. (However, you will need to apply for membership for Video Builder, since it's currently in beta mode.)

- Google has committed \$800+ million to support small- and medium-sized businesses. Make sure to apply to see if you can receive Google Ads credits that you can use for your organization.
- You should update your Google Ads to keep your current customers and attract future customers. Whether you're trying to get by on a smaller budget or you've re-forecasted your goals, your campaigns should never be static.
- Google Optimize lets you set up a simple A/B test to test variants of a campaign. Start small with your first A/B test (change the color of a button, remove an extraneous form field) before expanding the scope of your testing.
- Performance Planner uses machine learning to determine what's working for your campaigns and makes recommendations on how you can alter them for greater effectiveness.

1:05–1:45 p.m.

Use Google Analytics to Improve Your Programs and Prove Your Value as a Communicator in a Time of Crisis

Alan Bush, SEO and digital marketing instructor, University of California, San Diego

- Analytics gives actionable insights if you use the data properly. Areas such as research, sales, marketing, risk assessment, and customer targeting – essentially all fundamental business areas – are all measurable via analytics.
 - SEO, social media, email marketing, paid media, direct mail, and other marketing channels are all interconnected through the centerpoint of analytics.
- Other analytic tools besides Google Analytics include Adobe Analytics, Hootsuite, Sprout Social, Buffer, HotJar, SEMRush, CrazyEgg, AHREFS, and SpyFu. They can all be used to measure website traffic; social media and outreach; user interaction; and keyword & link data.
 - You guide the tools to structure your strategy, don't let the tools guide you.
 - The social media platforms themselves also feature helpful tools – don't ignore their features.
- Google Analytics tracks and reports website traffic for over 30 million users/websites, with 17 million in the U.S. alone. You can also find industry specific data through Google Analytics.
- It's helpful to understand the Consumer or Customer A.R.C:
 - Awareness (Gain awareness)
 - Research (Do the research)
 - Conversion (Earn the conversions)
- Conversions/goals are MACRO (activities that you want your visitors to take: phone calls, fill out a lead contact form, request for a quote, etc.) and MICRO (early indicators of success: signing up for a newsletter, downloading a PDF, etc.).
- Demographics are important and easy to measure, but sometimes they can tell different stories:

- For one company, the majority of web traffic was from younger audiences, but people 45+ converted at double the rate of younger audiences. While more women visited that same company's site, the conversion rate for women and men was about the same.
- English is the primary language of communications for the top countries, but translation opportunities could yield sales from other types of customers.
- Understanding where your customers are from can dictate future activities (i.e., a lot of traffic from Texas might encourage you to organize a future event there).
- It's important to measure new versus returning customers. Returning visitors typically generate a measurably higher conversion rate than new customers.
- Understand which pages are your exit pages (which page users leave) – that's a great place for you to set up a CTA or action item. This tends to work more successfully than setting up a CTA on the home page.
 - CTAs shouldn't be intrusive – videos, audio/podcasts, and newsletters are good resources.
- Make sure you're optimized for desktop and mobile – you can even examine which mobile platform leads to higher conversion rates.
- Measure by quarter and year (seasonal and cultural trends), generate purposeful content (avoid doing things for the sake of doing them), and use the data to shape your future agenda.
- Not all social media channels are appropriate for all brands/organizations – for instance, industrial manufacturers should probably focus more on LinkedIn instead of Pinterest.

1:50–2:20 p.m.

What's New and What's Next in Google's Suite of Tools

Ryan Sorrell, Senior Associate of Search and Analytics, Walker Sands

- Mobile optimization ensures visitors who access your site from mobile devices have an experienced optimized for the device (specifically mobile phones, not tablets or desktop computers).
 - Content is critical, regardless whether you're using mobile or desktop. Same goes for user experience and performance (site load times, interactivity).
 - 70% of users flee sites that take 5 seconds or more to load.
 - Mobile tends to have a more local focus ("restaurants near me"), and they tend to have a higher buyer intent than desktop users.
- Google will be crawling the mobile version of websites to help determine their website rankings in September 2020, emphasizing how critical it is to invest in mobile optimization.
- Mobile accounts for 58% of all Google searches. 57% of users would not recommend a business with a poorly designed mobile website. 70% of users flee sites that take 5 seconds or more to load.
- Mobile SEO Best Practices include everything from page speed and responsive design to structured data and dynamic serving – these items are a bit more technical and are things to share with your development team.

- Voice search technology allows you to use voice commands to access information on Google and other search engines:
 - 50% of searches are taking place on voice platforms (Siri, Alexa) and it's expected to be a \$100 billion market by 2022. Additionally, 50% of households will have a smart speaker by 2022.
 - Mobile voice searches, like regular mobile searches, tend to be more focused on local searches.
 - Voice search results load in 4.6 seconds, 52% faster than the load time of the average page.
- Voice Search Best Practices include:
 - Using H-tags and bullet points to make it easier for Google to scroll your content
 - Using high quality links to build domain authority and help with search rankings
 - Adding local information for your brand to meet increased search volume for local businesses – Google My Business is a tool you can use to help with this
- Keyword Planner is helpful for keyword research to see how a list of keywords might perform. You can also use it to discover new keywords; exclude branded terms (i.e., your company name) and sort by volume; and sort by location.
 - If you're a small- or medium-sized-business, it's helpful to use a filter so that you're competing with lower and medium competitive terms and note the bigger competitors.
- Google Data Studio features pre-built data connectors to import your data from Analytics, Google Ads, MySQL, and more. It doesn't require specialized knowledge and can be a more cost-effective strategy than hiring a data expert to generate reports for you.
 - You can drag and drop metrics and dimensions; blend data sources; and create custom metrics and dimensions.
- 'Interlinking' helps users understand which pages are connected and assists with site navigation. Site maps aren't as helpful for users, but it is helpful for Google when crawling your site.