



All About Link Building for SEO



Does Google still count links? And if so, how do you use links effectively to improve your search engine rankings? SEO expert Adam Trainor explains.



Adam Trainor

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 832. So if there's anything I talk about on this show that you want to look up, you can check it out at SuperFastBusiness.com. Today, we're going to be talking about SEO. We'll talk about a few other topics as well, in particular, a little subdivision of SEO, which is link building. And I think a lot of people actually think SEO equals link building, but we'll probably find out today that's not the case.

Hopefully, if you've been listening to previous episodes of SuperFastBusiness, you've heard my guest, [Gert](#), from [SEOLeverage](#). He's been on many other shows. We've talked about a lot of things to do with SEO. But this thing, we can't escape. Link building is still there. It's in there somewhere. How important is link building? Should we be doing it? How could we do it? That's why I brought along my guest today, Adam Trainor. Welcome to the call.

Adam: Thanks, James. Pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

James: You've got an interesting background, Adam. I went on researching you, as with many guests. You've got a few different skills. You're a clinical nutrition qualified master's degree, you've done chiropractic medicine, like you've got a doctorate in it. You have been running digital agencies, you have a tutoring company. And I know of two things you're currently active in.

You've got a role with outreachmama.com, which is the way I met you through one of our mutual contacts, James Duffy, and I think you've also been helping him with a business called OnFolio.

The role of link building in 2021

So I want to go into a few different topics today. But I think some of the things we should explore will be, let's talk about link building - where is it at, in 2021, in terms of SEO? I think we should start there, and then we'll see where we go from there.

Adam: Sure. So is there a world where links won't matter? Sure, that's entirely possible. We're not there yet. I would say links are still the number two ranking factor, after content and what's in your website. So all other things being equal, links are still the differentiating factor. I should say all other things, it's doing a lot of work there.

James: So when we talk about links, let's just be super clear on that. You're talking about someone on a website, linking with a hyperlink to someone else's website. And there's a lot of things that will come into play there. Such as, you know, the specifics will be, what words do they link? What page are they pointing to? Where on the website is it placed?

And what kind of website is it? Is it a similar category? Is it authoritative? Is it the footer link in a spam forum? So this is where I think people get confused and what I want to throw some light on, because it's pretty easy, and considering my background in SEO, which most of my listeners would be aware of, it's how I got started. And then I built an SEO business, which I ran for seven years and then sold.

It's very tempting when people first discover SEO to just think, oh, I'll just go and buy some links on Fiverr. Or I will start sending out emails asking people to link to me. That's the second thing they do after the first thing. The first thing is, what if I just put the keyword all over my page in white text on a white page? You know, will that work?

Occasionally, I find someone who still thinks that Google might be indexing alphabetically, so they want to do the AA Aardvark trick. But you know, like, let's bring it up to modern sophistication here. Let's talk about the different types of backlinks that we can generate for our site, because I think there'll be a big differential between what's easy to get, and what might be a little bit harder to get or cost a little more, and why we might be interested in that.

Adam: Sure. So I mean, Google's goal in life, aside from making money off ad revenue, is to ultimately serve the most relevant possible results for any given query. Really, what they want to do is, you know, you type a search on the internet, and without really clicking around on your part, you instantly get the most relevant results.

James: Well, those two things are actually related, because only by delivering relevant results do people use Google, which means they've got a platform to sell ads on, right? I think they're actually, they're hand in glove. So in other words, Google wants the highest quality results so they have a great user experience, so they have a platform to sell ads on, which is how they make most of their money still in 2021.

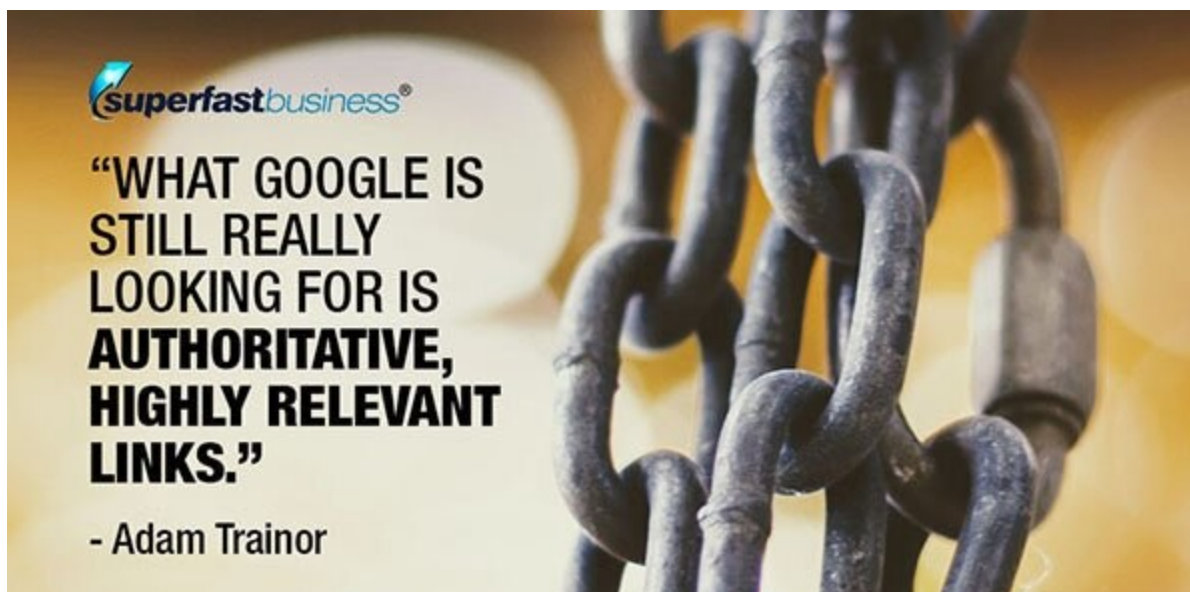
Adam: That's right. Couldn't have said it better. So I mean, Google is doing a lot behind the scenes with their algorithm, with machine learning, AI work, to do a better job of being able to actually read everything on the internet and understand what it's talking about and being able to serve the best results.

But until that's perfected, which we're still, you know, some ways away from, the way that Google still really determines what deserves to rank, you know, what is authoritative, what is relevant, is through backlinks. As you described, a backlink is when one website inserts some element of clickable text that redirects to another website.

You know, this is still Google's primary mechanism for determining what deserves to rank, and you can tell that because they crack down so much against any kind of link building. They wouldn't fight it so hard if it wasn't very effective. Once upon a time, certainly the best way to rank was to get some cheap software, spin up a bunch of exact match anchors, and send dozens and dozens of links to your money pages until they rank.

Penguin and other sorts of adorable animals came along and made it so that's no longer the preferred strategy. But as in all other things, they're getting much more sophisticated in how they look at and how they interpret links. So in today's market, there are still a variety of links, like you mentioned, everything from kind of like blog comment spam to guest posts, which is primarily what OutreachMama uses to niche edits to private blog networks. There are a lot of different ways to build links.

And Google is getting a lot better at understanding what different types of links look like, where they come from, which links deserve to be considered and which don't. You know, part of that, one of the advantages now as an SEO, is that the current iteration of the algorithm doesn't actually really penalize sites that are having links built to them.



All it really does is devalues those links. So if anything, link building is, in some ways, less risky than ever, but you have to work a lot harder to get the right kind of links. What Google is still really looking for is authoritative, highly relevant links. And unfortunately, there is no way to get those on Fiverr, right? You really do with link building, kind of get what you pay for.

You know, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. And so, when you think about getting a link back to your website, there's a lot to consider. So there's the aspect of, is this from an authoritative website? Is this website trustworthy in the eyes of Google? And is this going to be a dofollow link? There's a lot we could talk about in terms of different types of links.

You know, Google now is asking webmasters to actually categorize the types of outbound links, so in the outreach world that makes things a little more complicated. All that to say, in the world of link building, there are a lot of options, you kind of have to be buyer beware, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

James: Okay, so just a quick recap, links are still important, because just like a few of my other guests have talked about, the [AI is coming](#), and it will be important, but it's not quite there yet. This is a recurring theme we've heard. So there's still high value in having, I guess, a hand touch, or I guess some element of manual process that is not just a machine yet.

In fact, when I came online, I don't know when you came online, probably a while ago too, but about 2005, 2006, there was this tool called Traffic Equalizer, and it was pretty much, you push a button and it just concentrated out this huge expansive website, and it just basically gave you an iceberg to link to things from.

And people were actually doing Google arbitrage, they were getting traffic to these sites from SEO, and then they were actually able to buy ads and send them to their site. And then they'd click on the Google ads to make money, and they were actually making a profit. But those things don't last as well. So it was an unnatural system.

So when I came online, these things were starting to get smacked down and I always thought, there's really only one way to go about this for the long haul, and this is an important thing, the sustainable business model is built on stronger foundations than tricks. So in summary, links are still important. It's probably worth doing right if you want the business to be surviving long term. And that's why the longer I've been in the game, the more I've seen this evidence backed up.

And it's interesting to make sure that we're following what Google actually want. So if we addressed our whole perspective as, how can we make our website more valuable to Google if it were to pop up in the search results, you know? And that's where all the other SEO comes into it, you know, like, time on page and giving people a great result that they don't click backwards straightaway, and that within your site, you're linking to the content with a good usability path and that you've got a clear site map and so forth.

A closer look at guest posting

So in terms of all the ways you can build links, you've decided to focus on a particular type of link, you've alluded to guest posting. Let's just sort of zoom in on that ecosystem and tell me what that looks like.

Adam: Sure. So there are a couple of reasons we focus on guest posting primarily. One is that guest posting done right through actual outreach is actually how Google tells you to build links. They certainly frown on guest posting and paid guest posts, but natural outreach and connecting with other websites and having other websites identify, yes, this is important content, I want to recognize it is technically what they're looking for, right? So it seems, makes sense, they'd give Google what they want, right?

The other reason is that, from our perspective, as an agency, it's a process that we can make scalable, while still maintaining organic, white hat principles, whereas many other link building tactics, it's really hard to execute at scale, in a way that it's actually natural.

James: I feel like I'm the recipient of some of those unnatural methods. And it's not even just link building, you know, it's everything, from podcast guesting through to - every single day, someone's trying to sell me 10,000 Instagram followers. That's a massive scam going on with that. But they'd be cheap wins, wouldn't they? You'd get your followers but no traction.

So you've had to sort of figure out a way to scale a high-quality output. Now, at this point in the podcast, my audience, they're so switched on, they're already clicking over to outreachmama.com. So I want to tell them, you mentioned before that you can offer a good deal for my audience. I'm not an affiliate, I don't have any financial gain from this episode, this is just bringing in an expert. But you've got a coupon code, they can save some money.

Adam: That's right. If your audience wants to use the coupon code "James", they'll get 10 percent off their entire first order of links.

James: There you go. So I'll just say that now because they're already crawling over your site, checking you out. I know that's how they work. Because if we mention it at the end of the show, Adam, they're going to say, Oh, damn, I've already ordered. So anyway, if you like what Adam's talking about, obviously, go and check out the site, use your coupon code. Makes no real difference to me, other than I want to bring value for the audience. And I'm sure it's fantastic for Adam.

Adam: I certainly don't mind.

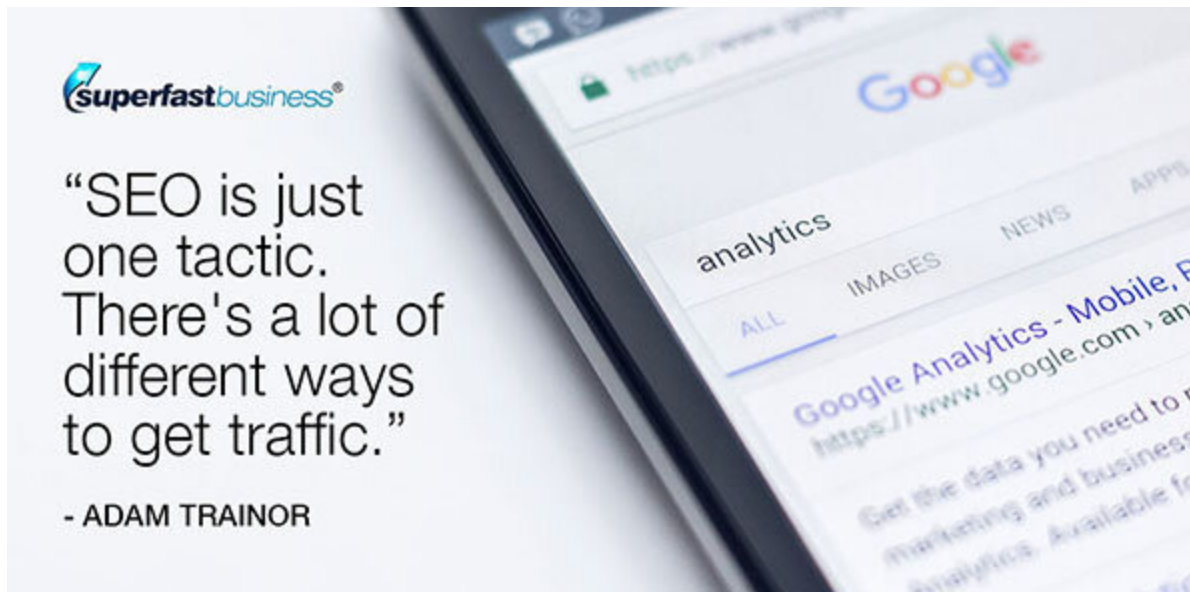
Do it yourself versus the agency route

So you've got this agency. You're helping people get these, because I suppose if we were trying to do this ourselves, let's sort of contrast this, if I'm a website business owner, I think I want to get involved with SEO, I'm convinced I'm on board, I know I need links, how am I going to do that myself versus coming to an agency? What are the pros and cons?

Adam: Sure, it's a great question. So, you know, it's no secret, we're running an agency, right? And so we're trying to make a profit by selling links. So obviously, if you were to go out and somehow recreate these processes on your own, in theory, you could acquire a single link at a lower cost than we could get for you, because you don't have any overhead, right?

That being said, there's a lot to consider and a lot of value that we add in terms of having it done for you. The first is to consider that one link is unlikely to move the needle on anything, right? Often when we're looking at, you know, what it's going to take to rank sites, especially if you've never even thought about SEO, and it's on your radar, and you're in competitive niches, it could be dozens, hundreds of links before you even start ranking for your target keywords. And so this is often a long-term strategy.

And so you have to be able to invest in whatever, you know, if you're doing this on your own, link building tactics, it's going to take up a good chunk of your time, and your money, to be honest, like, it's not necessarily that much cheaper to do it yourself, right? So there's the actual fulfillment, the acquiring the link side, which, to be honest, I think, for a lot of people when they get into SEO, is the kind of biggest, you know, like black box, how do I get that?



I know I need these things called backlinks. And I know they're out there, you know, how do I find them? So it's not even necessarily that easy to acquire them, right? So there's that side. Then there's understanding how to use the links, right? SEO is just one tactic. There's a lot of different ways to get traffic. SEO is one of them.

And so you have to ask yourself, Is this even the right tactic for me, right? So if I look at my website, and I want to rank for some super competitive keyword like, best wealth advisor, my hometown, kind of thing, SEO may not be the right approach for you. Like, so you have to start by looking at the SERPs and seeing how Google's treating that keyword, you know, asking yourself all kinds of questions.

So before you do anything else, I always recommend, you know, think like you're one of your customers. So start googling around for search terms you'd think to use if you were trying to find you, right? And then see what Google shows you. And then there's a lot you can learn from that without even using any tools.

You know, the first kind of questions to ask yourself are, does Google think that I'm looking for a product or a service? We have some large companies that compete on very high volume keywords that, you know, I hate to break it to them, like they're not going to rank for because they're selling a service, and Google thinks people are looking for a product, right? So it doesn't matter how authoritative your website is.

So sometimes links aren't even the answer, right? So if you don't understand that kind of basic foundation, you could be wasting time and money and not even know it. So there's, what's Google looking to provide? Are there a ton of ads? So if I look at a search result, and there's maybe a row of shopping ads, there's a row of search ads, maybe there's a map pack, maybe there's another row at the bottom, there's only maybe four or five actual organic results in there, and if it's a very competitive keyword, how hard is it going to be to rank for those?

Does it even make sense for me to use my budget that way? How long is it going to take me to accomplish that? That doesn't even get into thinking about, you know, you mentioned before, anchor text, which is that actual clickable text. So if I have a [www.James's website](#), you can click that, the anchor text is the actual wording.

So Google uses that anchor text as a way to determine what search results the page that you're linking to is relevant for. And kind of like we said before, once upon a time, you could just spam dozens and dozens of links with the exact match, you know, if I want to rank for, best, I don't know, air fryer, I would just send dozens of best air fryer links to that page, right? And I'd own that keyword.

That doesn't work anymore. Now you have to really understand how to use anchor text, you have to understand how to analyze what anchor text is currently working, look at what the competition is doing. And if you're talking hundreds or more, thousands of links, then we talk about anchor text ratios, and what percentage of anchor texts should match your keyword.

How many synonyms should they have? How many kind of naked or brand anchors? So there's a lot to consider there. And then even getting like super geeky, you know, what matters most right now is relevance, like topical relevance. And so what we focus really highly on, you know, from soup to nuts, is making sure that the website that we're reaching out to is very relevant to either your industry or the topic you're trying to rank for.

But then even more granularly than that, we're thinking, Okay, does the article we're writing make sense? Is it relevant to the page we're linking to, you know, do the h1 tags, h2 tags, we're using make sense? Does the language around the anchor text we're using make sense?

So there's so much to consider that, you know, just like it would be insane to go up to a lawyer and say, I have a business, I'm having some legal troubles, I'm thinking about maybe, you know, practicing my own law, do you think that's a good idea? Or should I hire a professional? You know, there's so much to understand and so much to learn.

It's your choice, as a solopreneur. Do I want to invest the time and resources in becoming an expert in this domain, which can have huge dividends? But, you know, is it worth taking on a second career on top of whatever it is I'm trying to do every day? And oftentimes, the answer is no.

James: Solopreneur. That's one of my favorite buzzwords, what a misnomer. Solopreneur is just job, but employed by self. Like, most of the audience here are beyond solopreneur, they have a small team, because we talk about team a lot. It's really the question, do we deploy resource into our team trying to figure this out? Or do we hire?

How hands on - or hands off - do you want it?

So when you say stuff like, you know, we've got to figure out what type of link or where to get or how many and where to allocate budget? Do you help people with that? Or do you just fulfill?

Adam: It's a great question. So I think one of the benefits of our service is that it can be as hands off, or as hands on as you want it to be. So someone like you, James, probably has a great idea of exactly what you need to do to rank with your product.

James: Well, I've got a [Gert](#).

Adam: That's right. You've got a Gert. You don't have to worry about it.

James: He's looking at our dashboard. He sends me a Loom video, he goes, Okay, good news, we're now position eight for this phrase, we're seeing conversions come through from this traffic, I think you need to get some links for this particular page, we've already done the onsite linking, now it's time to build the offsite links. So we know exactly what we're shopping for.

Adam: That's right. So you could tell me what your website is, and I can provide either a menu of sites, with which we've worked previously, that we think are relevant to your niche and let you choose, you know, from a preexisting menu of sites. Or we could conduct a custom outreach campaign, where we will prospect, like, an enormous list of sites that are hyper relevant to whatever website we're trying to rank, and then we'll conduct manual outreach campaigns.

And because, you know, we have really good systems, we know what our close rates are, we can guarantee a very narrow range of monthly links at a given budget. And so in your case, you just give us the website and tell us the target page and the anchors you want us to use, and we do the rest.

James: Nice.

Adam: If it was someone who had an idea that they knew they needed SEO, they wanted to rank their business but didn't know where to start, you know, often the first step is a strategy call with me, where I will break down their website for them, kind of help them think about, is SEO the best approach, does this make sense? And if so, okay, where do we start? And really help them soup to nuts, like map out the entire strategy for them, and really, it's completely hands off for them. So it's really whatever you're looking for.

James: Well, that sounds good, it's good that you're at the size at the moment where you can offer that kind of service. I do think, there's something I often say, if you can outserve your competitors in the market, you're going to win, because that's still the rarest thing, is to actually get the service. I'd say most people just want someone who is knowledgeable and trustworthy, who just answers their questions.

That's what was missing for me when I came online. It's actually the origin story of what SuperFastBusiness is. I had nowhere I could go and ask questions and get an answer from someone who was actually any good. And so there's a big demand around that. So it sounds like you're providing a great service there.

I think a lot of your background, especially your academic rigor and disciplines there are far more than I've ever had. To get to the level of doctor, you're obviously good at systems, processes, following things through, working out, mapping things. So that's a really great skill set. You have also been applying that to portfolios of businesses. It'd be a shame not to ask you a couple of questions while I've got you, because I think we've touched on link building.

If I want to sum up the link building phase, it's, you still need backlinks. If you don't know how to get them, have a chat to Adam at outreachmama.com, use the coupon code James if you want 10 percent off your first order. That pretty much summarizes I think. We got through all that.

How running a team differs from going solo

What do you think are the differences between running a team and being a solopreneur? I think you're well versed on that, and it's a topic close to my heart.

Adam: Absolutely. I definitely had the pleasure and the pain of both. So being a solopreneur, you know, you're running the whole business. And even if you have a small team, like oftentimes, I used to have complete control over what happens when it happens, how it happens, you know, which is both a blessing and a curse.

You know, usually the reason you're a solopreneur is because your constraints are money. And so you're putting in a lot of sweat equity, you know, because you have time. And what you really need to prioritize in that instance, is what is the 80:20 of the things that are really going to move the needle, right? Because there's a lot of things that you can be distracted by, and you'd like to spend time on, that aren't necessarily actually moving the bottom line.

So I think when you're in that situation, your biggest goal is figuring out, how do I narrow my focus to doing exactly what I need to do, and often feeling overwhelmed and incapable of doing the rest? Which is why you're still a solopreneur. When you get to the point where you're managing a small team, it's a completely different job, right? Where now or even, I should say, really where you're managing a large team, but I think it's a much bigger jump to go, you know, to a team of like 10, 15 people than just have a couple of VAs that you're kind of working with. And the job really becomes a lot more about management.

And one of the tricky things is, I've had a lot of management jobs in my life. And one of the things that has always struck me is how little time we actually spend teaching each other how to actually manage other people. Because that's the biggest part of the job, is learning how to communicate, how to set expectations.

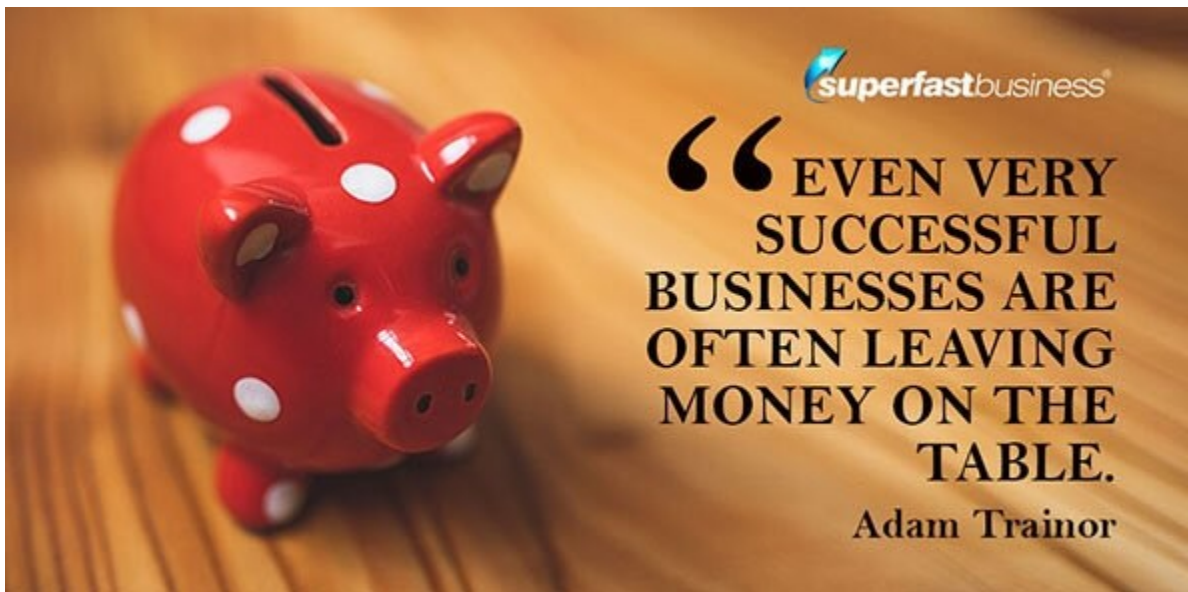
I think as an executive, your job really is to come up with a strategic vision for the organization, and then really be able to articulate that vision clearly, and then get buy-in from your team to execute it. Like, that's your job. It's very different. It's how do you find the right people, ideally, people better than you, right, at the things you need done, that you can put into positions, tell them what you want them to accomplish, and then empower them to succeed. So it's a completely different framework, a completely different mindset.

James: How often do you have a look at a client, you know, they come to you, they say, Adam, we need some help. Maybe they're coming through the link building thing, and then you look into it and you think, oh, gosh, they don't really have a strategy. They don't really have a team. What's the advice you're often giving these people?

I'm thinking in terms of growth levers, common scenarios you see that are easy to remedy or that someone should be aware of, if they're listening to or watching this podcast, that they would know. I mean, we just did an episode very recently with Gert talking about [the perfect dream team for an SEO crew](#). You know, like, what roles you'd want if you're trying to do it in house.

Common issues and their fixes

But we still recommended you probably get help with the link building, which is something that's interesting. It's a really hard one to do in house. That's one thing I found. What are your favorite problems that you encounter that you know the fix for that you might want to share with us?



Adam: Sure. So something that always strikes me is even very successful businesses are often leaving money on the table. And there's a lot of often low hanging fruit that you can identify that are hard to see if you're too in the weeds of what's going on. The first is that you would be shocked at how many businesses don't have, like, really good tracking in place.

So they don't really understand, like, where their leads are coming from, like which channels are working, and at what rates they're converting. Because you can't really do anything until you identify that, you know? Until you understand where customers are coming in, which are your successful avenues in acquiring them, and at what rates they convert, it's really hard to understand, like, you know, what leverage do I want to pull, what traffic channels make no sense to go after? So that's one. That's a big one.

James: It doesn't shock me. But gosh, I know how many times we've talked about this. People trying to run ads on Facebook without any tracking in place blows my mind. SEO, of course, you can track a little bit because you can see where your site ranks in Google, you get to like, manually search for it. You can use any number of tools, you can get reports. Even Google provides you some data on that sort of stuff. So it's quite trackable.

That's what I actually liked about SEO in the beginning, is, you know, it's an easy recognition machine. Like, if you're ranking, you can see it there. It's like, in black and white, Google says, job well done. And then you see if you can keep doing that with more and more pages or more and more websites, as it turns out. So yeah, tracking, without it, you're basically wasting your time. Love it.

Adam: And your money. A lot of money.

James: And your money, yeah. A lot of money.

Adam: So tracking is a big one. Another one is, so if you're in a situation where you don't have a team or don't have the position you can ask a lot of people, get out and network. Find people who have skill sets that are different than you, and ask them for their advice. Not necessarily, you know, asking someone to do something for free. We get trapped by this curse of knowledge, right, where we know what we know and we don't know what we don't know. And so it can very often be that someone with a fresh set of eyes looking at the same problem is going to be able to articulate solutions that you couldn't even imagine.

That's one of the advantages of having a team with kind of diverse viewpoints and then different capabilities. But build your personal network so that you can get that from, you know, the biggest thing I've seen about people who are really successful and are able to level up effectively, build really large, effective personal networks, right, so they have friends that they can tap, you know, get input, feedback, advice anytime they need it, I think that makes a real difference.

James: You just described SuperFastBusiness. I mean, as a coach, that is my greatest weapon. And even my high-level clients who I often speak to every three weeks, within three weeks, it's amazing how much perspective can be gained. They're still in their machine for that whole three weeks, and I'm out of it. And then when I get back in it, it's like, we're in a different zone. Every time, it's fascinating.

It's kind of easy to look at someone else's stuff and find the errors; when we're in it, it's almost impossible. And the community we have at SuperFastBusiness membership is very much a collective from all around the world of people with different strengths and skill sets. And that's step one for network.

Why face-to-face is still a powerful tool

I will say this, and I'm interested in your point of view, certainly, when you have an online business, a digital world is very tempting to dwell in. I feel that I got my absolute biggest leverage by going offline, by traveling and going to conferences, exposing myself to new environments and perspectives. I'm glad I finished that sentence. And it's going to be a little more difficult at the moment. But when it is possible, I think the face-to-face connections are going to be even more powerful.

Have you used some of that sort of in person yourself versus just virtual?

Adam: Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more. I think both are valuable. I think the first thing is, anything works if you do it, right? So it's important not to get hung up on, what's the best way to network and, you know, to suddenly decide to never do anything, because you're hung up on that stage.

Anything works if you do it, like get out, meet people online. I think my current job, I've never actually met my boss in person. We've been friends for 10 years. But it's a completely virtual friendship. You know, other businesses I've worked for, all the success came from exactly what you're saying, going to conferences, speaking, engaging with people. So everything works. It's context-dependent.

James: Certainly, like, the reason we're chatting is through a mutual contact who I have met in person who lives in Korea, you know, and is from America. And we got connected through a friend I met in Austin, Texas for the first time face to face, but I knew online for many years. I can trace almost all my interactions back to an in-person initiation at some point. So when it becomes a thing, I think that will be good.

How to get a website to publish someone's links

In terms of the link building stuff, you're pretty much doing online relationships. That's why I suspect you have to be pretty good at that. I'm curious, what motivates a website to publish content with a link to someone else's site?

Adam: That's a good question. It depends on the website. So anyone who owns any website is getting spammed every day with dozens of emails, with offers to write free content for their website, right? The outreach game has been going on for some time now. Everyone's using Brian Dean's templates, and it's very repetitive, and it's really hard to stand out. And so what we found is, and this sounds like, very cliché, but really the best thing to do it is to give before you ask.

So you know, the way that we stand out in people's inbox is, because we're acquiring so many links all the time, we are often able to offer them a link. And so we'll reach out and perhaps offer them a link, you know, another property that we've got a link from, in exchange for just building relationship, right? Like, the first step is just to give them something to say, Hey, we really like what you're doing, we want to support you, that kind of thing. And build a relationship before you ask for anything.

Outreach is like dating, you know? You'd never walk up to someone on the street and say, like, Hey, let's get married, right? You'd be insane. You wouldn't even do that on the first date, or the second date. You'd take some time to get to know them, right, chat them up, like, take some time to get them to know, like and trust you. It's just like any other relationship. So I guess the long version of that answer is we build real relationships with people. And that makes them more than happy to help us.

What surprises Adam most about his field

James: Excellent. Let's finish up with the thing that surprises you the most about your industry or link building or anything that comes to mind that really sort of changed your perspective on how this operates?

Adam: It's a really good question.

James: That's my KPI, by the way. If I don't get, That's a really good question in the podcast, I'd bin it. So we'll go live with this one.

Adam: That's right. That's right. I'll give you two answers. One is related to the industry itself, which I'm sure you understand, is that there is a lot of garbage out there. So I'm not going to pretend that we're the only good vendor out there. There are other great link vendors out there. But there's a lot of crap. You know, buyer beware. And it's really, I become very cynical about the SEO industry.

In terms of Google, and what surprised me is that, every day, I encounter real life examples that make me think everything I know is wrong. Right? So what's really important to understand about everything I've said, anything every SEO ever tells you, is that there are no rules. There are exceptions to every single rule. And at best, what we're giving is guidelines. Right?



This is what we think Google is looking for, based on years of experience and a lot of trial and error. But there are exceptions to everything. And every day, I see websites and niches that, you know, websites that shouldn't be ranking that are, websites that aren't ranking that should. So take everything with a grain of salt, and don't be afraid to test and experiment.

James: Such great advice. I can speak to both of those points where in my own experience, when we built our SEO business, the crutch that all of our competitors were leaning on was these automated blog networks. Back then, and I'm talking about 10 years ago, you could just have multiple subscriptions to different blog networks and put whatever you wanted on them.

And we realized that that's building on a beach of sand, like it's going to get washed away. And they all got slapped down, all of them. So in a sea of mediocrity, we realized we needed to have our own controls. We did it in two phases. Phase One was I had 2,000 domain names, and we built 1000 of our own websites with actual, real content, and I think I had 30 or 40 different IP addresses, and we could rank pretty much anything we wanted without those networks.

But then I wanted my business to be operational without that at all, which meant building on other people's platforms and creating relationships and the sort of thing you're talking about. So it's much harder to do, but all of our competitors collapsed, and I ended up having a really strong business that I was able to sell by differentiating from the sea of mediocrity.

So I really like what you've summarized this with. Everyone listening can take heart in that. Let's not just phone it in out there, let's not just do the pedestrian thing. I mean, I made 830 something episodes deep into my own podcast. And I'm just talking about innovations right now, even with the coaching client I had just, before this call, talking about 10 things we can do. He's also got a mature, established podcast to make our podcast way better.

So wherever we're at, we can level up. And I like what you're doing. I haven't known you for very long at all. But I like the cut of your jib, it's a sailing expression. And I'm sure what you're doing is great. So keep up the good work. I'm glad we got introduced. And thank you for coming and sharing with us about link building and what's happening, and why it's important, and how to go about it.

I'm sure this episode will be well-received by my audience. So I just want to say thank you on their behalf.

Adam: Terrific, James. Thanks for having me.

James: All right, so we'll put this up at number 832 at SuperFastBusiness.com. We'll transcribe it. There'll be a concise, actionable summary on the blog post at SuperFastBusiness.com. Just a little house note, a few months back on the advice of our SEO advisor, we switched from providing the full transcription on the blog post to a condensed highlights version, which has been well-received by my audience, well-received by Google.

We still provide the full transcription. You just opt in once, you can get the transcription for every episode I've ever done. And we also often have cheat sheets or extra resource guides. So there you go. That's over at SuperFastBusiness.com, Episode 832. Thanks, Adam, for sharing with us. We'll probably catch up again, I'm sure.

Adam: Sounds great.



Get the most out of your
content marketing efforts
with help from James

[CLICK HERE](#)