



What Does a Dream SEO Team Look Like?



Effective SEO is a team effort. SEO expert Gert Mellak explains the roles needed to keep the show running - SEO content writer, team lead, and more.



Gert Mellak

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 831. Today, we're talking about SEO. In particular, how we get SEO actually performed by our team, especially when working with a contractor, someone like [Gert Mellak](#), from [SEOLeverage.com](#). Welcome back to our ongoing [series of SEO](#), Gert.

Gert: Hi, James. Thank you so much for having me back on the show.

James: It's easy to have you back on the show, because we get great feedback on the previous episodes, and there's lots of them, and we'll link to them in the show notes. At Episode 831, you helped me with my SEO, you're regularly interacting with my team in [Slack](#) where it's our virtual workplace. We're going to talk a little bit more about that process today.

And also, I'm going to ask you to talk about what's involved with the other people you work with in terms of how you interact with the team, because this is really the critical thing. When it comes to SEO, it's all fine and well to say, Okay, we want to rank well. Okay? Most people understand what SEO is if we explain it. But then it's like, Okay, we do this, we do that.

The point at which people ask for help

But things can get lost at this point. Like, when you start working with people, they've probably already either been trying to do it themselves, have done nothing at all, or have been getting help from someone else, but not getting great results. Would you say that's the sort of fair assessment where people start out when they're working with you?

Gert: Absolutely, absolutely. They probably have tried it, they probably have tried other agencies. And one thing we're definitely going to address later is the topic of consistency, which ultimately seems to play a very big role here.

James: Nice. So they basically have to change what they're doing. And that can be a bit of a challenge. It's like, what we're doing is not working, or we're missing out on great opportunity, or we're not happy with the money we're spending with our current provider. Or they've done an audit with you, for example, which is something you offer, where you can go and have a look and tell them, and you'll tell them, Hey, listen, whoever's looking after you is brilliant. Or I think there's some room for improvement here on what you're doing.

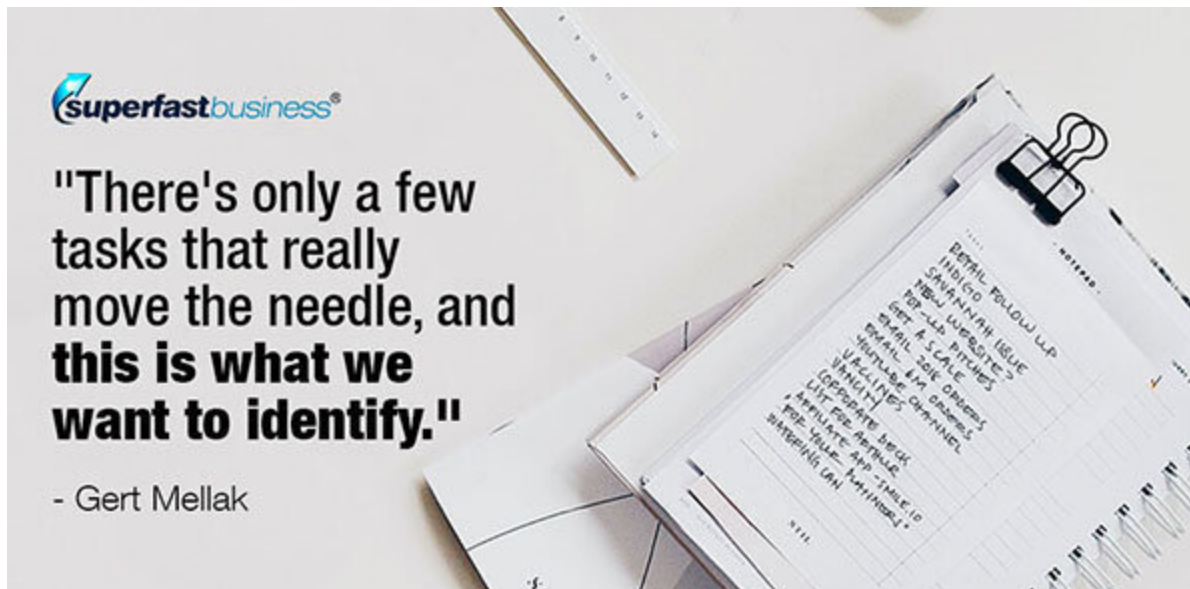
Or you might assess a team, and we've had this before. I've seen it where there are people out there who think they're doing a great job, and they're saying the right things and busy, but they're not actually getting the results. Or if you were to survey them, they don't even know the very basics. So they actually don't even know how much they don't know, and that could actually be really dangerous. So it's like driving off the SEO cliff.

So it can be difficult to make the decision, all right, we've got to do something about this. But a lot of the people come into your pathway or at that point, they do an audit, or they just come to you and say, We're ready to roll. Okay, and a lot of listeners to this podcast are also working with SEOLeverage.com, of which I might add, you know, I've been working closely with you for a few years now.

Bringing the client on board the system

And you've actually inherited through a bit of engineering some of the old team members I had at SEOPartner.com. So you're continuing the flame like an Olympic torch bearer. So when we get to that point, you know, what is the first stage of setting up that you do to onboard a client and get them ready for your ecosystem?

Gert: Such a great point. Definitely, also shout out to your team members. They're definitely probably one of the fastest team members that have been up to speed the fastest, it's a pleasure to work with them, and they definitely enhanced the entire team's progress here.



First thing usually is, as you mentioned, an audit. We really need to know what we're dealing with, right? It's like the DNA analysis you can do now for your body, where they want to know what you're dealing with. This is what we do with an audit, where we just take a 360-degree look at the website, at the content, at the backlinks, and all the influential factors and put together, essentially, it's like an 80, 90-pages document really, with a prioritized list of actions, where I say, Look, there is a lot that can be done, and it will keep a team busy. But there's only a few tasks that really move the needle, and this is what we really want to identify, and this is where we then have a task list that we then, in an ongoing fashion, can work through with the client.

James: Okay, so at this point, I imagine it's a common reaction where they get the 80, 90-page report, and they say, Thanks very much, Gert. We now know what we need to do. We don't need you anymore. See you later. Or they're still on board, but they just get bogged down. How do you stop them from getting overwhelmed with what has to be done? Or how do you still provide value even after you've shown them the roadmap?

Gert: Definitely important. First, we have a couple of calls with the client when they come for an audit. First we want to know their goals. Afterwards, when we deliver the audit, apart from me recording a video with the audit, so they have a little bit of an information when they receive those documents, we then have a debriefing call where we say, Okay, let's now go through this list.

Now, we'll really define in a conversation the next steps you should be focusing on. But then some clients really want some ongoing help and want us to essentially work with their team through those steps. So we have a list maybe of 30, 40 items. We put this down to bite-sized chunks and say, Okay, now in the next couple of weeks, let's focus on these issues that are the ones that we really think move the needle moving forward.

And then two weeks later, we might revise, and then make sure we focus on the next tasks. Again, we just really want to make sure we don't get off track focusing on busy work. And we could very often do a lot of things that would keep the team busy and would be good for SEO, somehow, sometime. But there are probably tasks that are just much more important.

The kind of team you'll want in place

James: What kind of team do you need your client to have in place to be effective at implementing your roadmap?

Gert: Such a great question. First of all, they need to have a team.

James: Right. So if you don't have a team and you want SEO help, you're probably not going to be stepping in on a paid service provider contract (when I say contract, I don't think you even do contracts, do you?) But like a program, because you won't be able to implement, right? So what we're really talking about, if we were to strain this episode into one word, it would be implementation.

So what team, if I had waved the magic wand, someone listening to this could install certain people in their team that you could work with in their Slack? What would that look like?

Gert: We would probably have different roles. So one role we definitely need is a tech team. I'm saying tech team because many companies or many sites have, like, a tech person they have been relying on for eight years, and they have always been doing a little bit of programming. But there are a few issues with this.

First of all, this person might go away, this person might lose interest, this person might be overwhelmed. We're now having speed optimization on a very high level where many programmers, I'm including myself, have been doing programming for more than 15 years, would be overwhelmed with what needs to be done these days, I'm a little bit disconnected. So you need a service rather than an individual programmer.

So there are very good services out there like TunedWP, for example, where they're doing an awesome job, just optimizing websites on a consistent basis. They have their 24/7 service. You really need, if there's a problem on a Friday afternoon, wherever you are, it's going to be hard to get this fixed with your programmer or your tech person, you want to have a service you can rely on.

If your site gets hacked, many people don't know even where to start. There are specialized services that know exactly how a site needs to be cleaned up. So the tech thing is like an engine of a car, this just needs to work, right? So from A to B, it brings you from A to B, the site needs to work, we can't worry about technical issues, or plugins or site speed.

James: So tech person. I'm lucky in my team, I think we've got a really good tech operator. And we actually brought in specialists to show us. I think we brought in [Justin](#), for example, to show us how to speed up our site. We brought in you to show us how to do better SEO, even though three people in my team used to run my SEO business.

So we actually said, Hands up, it's been a few years, we are no longer cutting edge with this, we should bring in a specialist. So we bring in the experts. Once they learn that and have it on board, then they're good. So all right. In our dream team, we've got someone who's technically savvy, who can do things like site speed, redirects, caching, plugins, or whatever, depending on what platform you're on.

If you're lucky enough to be on a platform where you don't have any involvement with that, you may have to accept that there's a 10 or 15 percent penalty, you won't be able to get it as fast as you can with a custom thing. But at the same time, for me to get the faster site, I need to spend a lot of money on cloud hosting, I need to spend money on a full-time team or contractors to work on it to get that extra 10 or 15 percent, and that's something you got to weigh up whether it's possible.

A platform you may want to consider

And I imagine a lot of people listening to this podcast don't want to have that extra 10 or 15 percent with the extra \$2,000 or \$3,000 a month price tag that comes with that. So you might be looking at something like [10XPRO](#), and that will get you a long way down the track. But you won't get that last little bit of fine tuning. But maybe you can live with that, if you don't have to worry about what I have to worry about.

So there's pros and cons, and that's probably a discussion for [John](#) as well, at some point from 10XPRO, because it's an interesting one that I'm going to get asked about, so I want to just cover it here.

You've got good customization in terms of titles. You've got the ability to change the content on the page. You can turn pages on and off from being indexed or not. But there's always going to be a little bit that you can't quite do. But also you don't have all the hassle of hosting and plugins and updates and all the rest of it. So that's why I'm building on that platform for my new sites.

Gert: I think 10XPRO is definitely a very good option for new sites, because you just get a lot of things out of the way, and you focus on what's really important. As you're saying, the money you're spending on, the really good speed plugins are commercial plugins, you have to pay something every month.

James: Definitely. My hosting on Amazon S3 is \$1,000 a month. And I have a full-time web developer in my team who just maintains my website. I have external contractors we bring in to help us. So it does definitely cost us. Like, we're a seven-figure business with a six-figure wages bill per year to keep this thing running. Some of it's optional, that's what I want to say.

You're covered for tech - what else do you need?

But let's say we've got the tech team and our dream team, we've got the tech component, or a supplier, who can give us a supply contract to do the things we need to get done, and give us some backup. Who else do we want in the team?

Gert: You definitely want someone being able to manage the website. This is usually not the tech person, you want to have like, some VA.

James: A content person.

Gert: If it's your first team member, it's probably also the person that's going to help you with content. If you have a bigger team, you probably have dedicated writers, and dedicated people then uploading this content, placing links, uploading images, creating those images, etc. So very often, the first person someone hires, if they have a tech service taking care of things, is a VA, because it's very often if they have experience, they have writing experience as well, and can handle some of the writing, which is going to be essential for SEO. Writing and rewriting content is just an essential task or skill we need. And then the second person might then be a pure content person, maybe.

James: Right, so just on that, if you want a general VA, who can post content to the site, and basically, I call that a content wrangler. But if they post content, if they can take your podcasts or videos or transcriptions of audios and turn that into content for your website, we can find those people at [VisionFind.com](https://www.visionfind.com).

We don't find pure writers. I just want to point that out. Don't go asking for a writer, they're hard to get. But general VAs, who are good at taking stuff that's written, or, if you're an expert, author, speaker who have a podcast and you talk a lot like I do, they will take the transcription, turn that into a beautiful presented document, upload it to the website, make it an opt-in, and they will wrangle all that content and make it good. Then you can still hire writers.

Now, I still hire writers. You suggested that I need some feature content articles. And I went out and paid a professional writer to write some content, which we've put on our site and then started the process of backlinking. And I think this is probably going to come into the conversation somewhere, to start getting that content promoted.

Now, it doesn't all run like clockwork, right? There is a bit of a lag between saying, Hey, here's a good key phrase you should aim for. It's not showing or ranking well on your site. You should go and get someone to write it. We go and get someone to write it, we get it back, we put it on the site, then we have to do internal links, and then we have to think about how we're going to promote it from outside.

This process might take months. But I'm pleased to say, Gert, with your help, it looks like we're starting to pop up on page one now for some phrases we didn't occupy ever.



Think of it like you do your fitness routine

Gert: Absolutely. It's just a really consistent effort that pays off. And you're saying there's definitely a time lag. When you have your team and they know what they're doing, and they can get like specific guidance, like we got your team and say, Look, I need exactly this on that article, I need this article to be rewritten, I need this article to be deindexed, because it competes with another one on your site, it really creates a dynamic, which is very often what people point out why they stick with us. Because they say, we didn't have this dynamic because when we were busy, nobody was taking care of SEO.

When we had a lot of inquiries, SEO was the first thing we dropped. We're not going to do tweaking and image alternative texts, and I don't know what, because we are now busy and then we take up SEO again. And this is like my personal fitness routine, right? So I'm busy. I'm busy. I'm getting a lot of new clients. I gain weight. It's just the way it is. I have more control over my business. I do my three workouts every week. I care about my diet, etc.

So this is how many people really handle their business and their SEO. And this is where they come to us and say, Look, I need some help. They said, like me, Probably I should get a personal trainer. And this would keep me accountable and would lay out the steps and the diet I need to follow. But this is very often how I compare our service where we just say, Okay, you've got the team, you have the resources, they need to be dedicated resources. They cannot be busy with something else as an excuse for not working on SEO.

James: That's it. And within our team, like, we have a Slack channel, it's called SEO, you're in there. And it seems like fairly often, a new Loom video pops up in there, and you give us a new update. As a business owner, I just want to say how much I appreciate when you change from wanting to speak to me about it on a call one to one, to just putting a little condensed video for my team to consume.

That was a game changer for me. It made my life 100 times easier. It got the content into the hands of the people actually doing the work. They look forward to it, and they like it. And it is like a gym trainer, it keeps us fit. So we're getting a progress report on what we've done last time, you're telling us where we still need to apply our effort. And you're also celebrating wins.

I saw a win today or yesterday, you complimented us on something that the team did well. I celebrate with the team because I've got to tell you, I didn't do it, they did it. And you're right there. I'm not sure how often you're posting those little Loom videos, but they're fantastic for us. That's a really valuable thing for us to have ongoing because as the business owner, I feel like we have a finger on the pulse.

And I know if we get too far off track, you're going to call us on it. And then my team also know. They're going to know that I'm going to see it, and I'm going to be aware of it. And we're actually letting go of our goals. So the fact that you've got us hooked up into your app, that you're tracking things, that you're keeping an eye on my business for me, I appreciate it. Thank you.

The great advantage of a responsive team

Gert: Absolutely. Definitely a pleasure, especially working with your team. And very often for us as an agency, it makes it much easier to work with the team executing directly, than to explain things to the business owner who is a little detached, obviously, because business owners are busy with other things. If the business goes in a good direction, they're not focusing on every single word on every single page on their website, and they hopefully don't know how big an image is on their website.

But being able to work with the team executing, and we do this in most of our clients really, is a complete game changer, because if they have the tech person in there, maybe we have essentially an app and a framework we follow. We do these updates every two weeks consistently. So every second week, this is scheduled in for us.

Before we do these updates, we have several people on the team checking out the website, figuring out what are the high impact steps, then we present this in our web application where our client and their team have access, their tech person has access, and they see what needs to be done, they can engage with us and ask questions, etc.

So then when I present this video and talk about the strategy, this is already a refined, like a curated process, and the result of a curated process that was going on on our team. And this is where we just consistently also check out the website in between those updates and see, okay, this is really going nicely, this is really going interesting.

I can tell you an example. For example, we have this client, and I literally, just before this recording, sent him a Loom video, because Google was just shifting, shifting from what they want to show in his niche. So he came in with a specific keyword, he wanted to get this ranking, he started on page six. I think he had been working with other agencies that didn't really move the needle for him.

So he started with this on page six, we brought him to page two, and eventually then on page one with his page on his site. This was an inner page, you could click on it from the homepage, you landed there. Google now shifted. So Google now wants to show home pages for this query. Just the home page, not an inner page.

So what we did was just shift strategy, we need to adapt. Google tells us what needs to be done. So we sent him a Loom video and said, Look, here's what's happening. Whenever Google happens to pick your homepage, you're ranking number three, whenever they happen to pick the page you want to rank, then you happen to rank on page two, or page three of Google. So we need to be able, really, with the team and the dedicated resources, to react as fast as possible.

Stuff covered so far...

James: Nice. Okay, so just a quick recap. This is Episode 831. I'm talking to [Gert Mellak](#) from [SEOLeverage.com](#), He's a professional SEO helping clients, especially a lot of mine, get better results, including us as a client.

So far, we've talked about the best team. You need someone who's tech savvy, someone who is a VA or good at managing the site, someone who can create content, and there must be someone else. Maybe you can highlight if there's any optional things that you'd probably like someone who's good at, design or illustrations or maybe going out doing some kind of outreach for the purpose of getting backlinks, etc. And that'll be a topic I'm going to have on a future episode as well, because I think that's worth discussing. Are there any other optional roles we'd like?

The team roles it would be nice to have

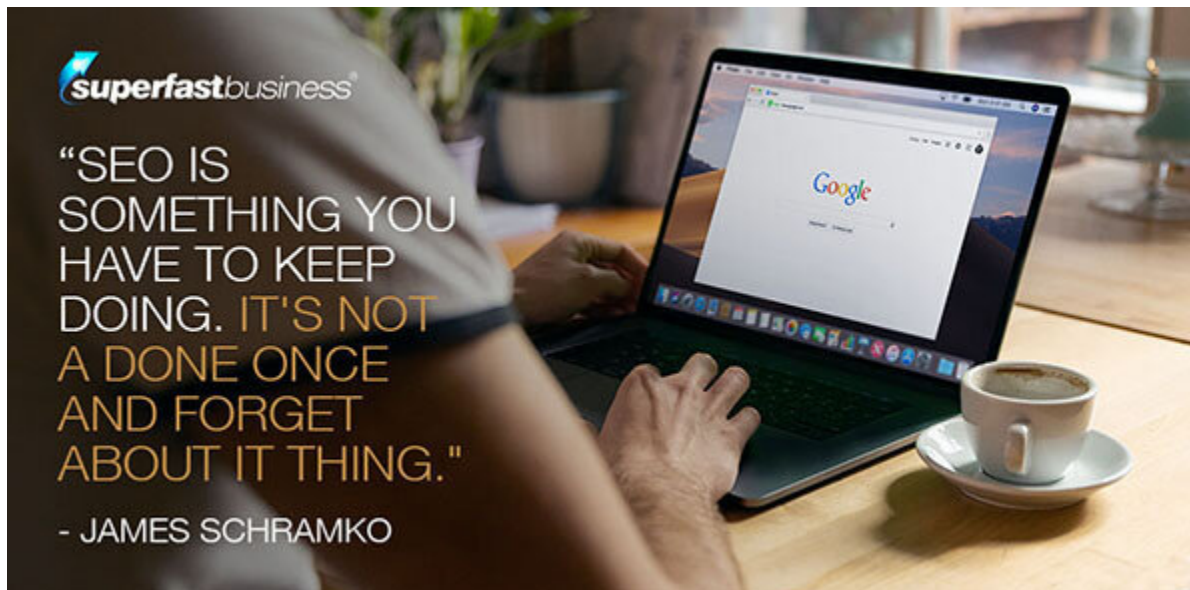
Gert: Link building, outreach, getting links to your site is definitely, I think, an optional enhanced role because it's something that's really hard to do in house because you don't have the network, you keep it usually with multiple years of experience. I think our link building team has like five years or more experience in only building links.

They have been getting really, really specialized in this. They know how to deal with site owners, they know how to find certain sites, how to get certain results. So I think it's something that is better outsourced to a trusted provider, though. So you want to have someone who really gets your goals, who really gets what you're trying to achieve. Because if they're a little bit off, it's not going to be in line with what you actually want to do.

So for example, if I want to get a certain URL ranking, I might have a strategy how I'm going to achieve this, and the link building, the outreach needs to support this entire strategy. I can't just send links to a certain page, I might overstep it, I might get black sheep, as we say, like sticking out on search too much. Just, we're doing this in the wrong way.

So if you have someone, it either needs to be a very experienced person with link building on the team, really only focusing on this and have the goals clear in their mind, or you outsource this to a provider, but also it needs to be a provider really clear about what needs to happen. And this shifts month after month. So it's something that's really hard to do if you don't have the experience, and you're not close enough to this process.

James: Perfect. So we've talked about the dream team, we've talked about how we interact with you, usually through a client's project management tool. You give them access to the app, you train the team on the app. We've also mentioned accountability, of course. As a business owner, we get to see what we're paying for.



The plan is set, but then it's dynamic adjusting as things change, as inevitably do with SEO. It's something you have to keep doing. It's not a done once and forget about thing, unfortunately. But I guess also fortunately for you, Gert, since that's what you do.

What you need to know about SOPs

With regards to SOPs, let's just sort of round out on that. Standard operating procedures, where are they housed? Who's creating them? What's your advice around that for business owners?

Gert: My advice in this is definitely based on what you teach in SuperFastBusiness, because we've learned this concept essentially from you and your team. We keep SEOs really busy, and we advise clients to do so. So SOPs for us is a Google Drive folder with individual Google documents. We can search Google Drive, if I'm searching for how to migrate a website, I'm going to find an SOP; if I search for how to optimize alternative text for images, I've got my SOP.

With clients, we work on establishing their SOPs. So to give you an example, very often with new clients, we work on a property called a prototype article. So very often, we're going to find, like, a little bit of an aged format with a title, a text, maybe an image, maybe no image, probably no internal structure or nothing. And we just work with them and their team to create one prototype article where we say, This is a really good user experience not only for desktop computers, but also for mobile phones and tablets.

So we work with them and on the process where exactly whatever on from now moving forward for a start we put out there, this is the format we want. For example, with podcasters, we might bring them off transcription-only content and get them into having, like, a document or an article around this topic they have on the podcast, just to make sure it's also reader friendly, not only podcast listeners oriented, right?

So we establish this SOP. They might send us an SOP and say, Can you look through this process? Are we doing this right? We give them advice, we give them some feedback, or we might even share one of our own SOPs with them and say, Look, this is what we do on our internal project when we do this, maybe this is of some help.

So we just want to make sure that we, as an external consulting firm, know how they do things when it comes to SEO-relevant tasks, so we can streamline this. If they upload images, and there is no image optimization process in place, or no plugin that takes care of downsizing these images, we will point this out.

If they have no content structure for an article in their SOPs, where they say, Okay, we make this really easy for people to skim, to consume, to jump to a specific section, etc., we're going to point this out. So we really help them establish the processes needed. All with a focus of being able to focus 100 percent on consistent execution.

James: Love it. Okay, well, thank you for being so generous, Gert. Let us know where we can go and get some help. If we're thinking that we need some help with SEO, we like the idea of having accountability; if we have a team, and we're ready to deploy our team to work on our SEO, where should we go to find out more?

Gert: Yes, thank you very much. It's definitely SEOLeverage.com. You're going to find everything there, [our book](#) we've published about a method of how we approach SEO with the [ERICA framework](#), screenshots, demos of the application, how this really works, so you can get videos and all the presentations in there. And also, you can just send me an email to ask any questions.

James: Perfect. Thank you, Gert. And we'll put this episode up at 831, full transcription available. If you have a team member in your team you want to talk to about SEO, maybe send them along to this episode to have a listen and say, Hey, do you think we could do this and start assembling your dream team? If you need a general VA, of course, reach out to VisionFind.com. You want some SEO, SEOLeverage.com.

Thank you, Gert. I'll catch up with you in a future episode. If you've got SEO questions, please send them in, reply to any email I send out, with your SEO question, and I'll put it to Gert on our next chat.

Gert: Thanks so much, James. Appreciate it.



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