

## Episode 19 - 3 SEO Mistakes + Tips For You

Lauren 0:01

Welcome to the Launch Your Blog Biz podcast. I'm your host, Lauren McManus. I used to be a full time tax accountant and CPA with a whole lot of limiting beliefs and "I can't's" whenever I thought about starting my own business. Fast forward a few months, and I quit my job after starting and growing my first blog to six figures in just a year. This is my space to share and yours to listen and grow about how to build and scale your own blogging business and design a life on your terms. Let's get started.

Lauren 0:35

Hey, y'all, welcome back to the podcast. I hope that you're doing awesome today. I am bringing you another episode in the SEO world today. This is going to be part two of our talking about SEO strategy. And of course, I brought back Noah Riggs, our resident SEO expert. Hey there, Noah.

Noah 0:57

Hey, y'all. Nice to be back.

Lauren 1:00

That's it. You don't want to say anything else. Or?

Noah 1:03

Oh, I mean, like, okay, yeah.

Lauren 1:06

No, I was just joking. I meant to just keep going.

Noah 1:11

You gotta be more clear with the sarcasm. Alright, keep going.

Lauren 1:19

I'm not sure where we can come back from that.

Noah 1:21

Alright, here we go. Hey, thanks for having me back. I am super excited for this episode. I really think that you guys are gonna get a lot more value out of today's episode. Because last time was really just a lot of background and things like that into me, but we're really getting into the nitty gritty in this episode.

Lauren 1:43

So y'all last week, we or two weeks ago, we talked about how when *Create and Go* got started with SEO. Well, I guess even back up before that, we really didn't have an SEO plan. The reason for that is because we were just doing so well on Pinterest and YouTube that we just didn't really need to pay attention to SEO, if we're just being honest. And it's really easy to just let other things go when something's really, really working for you, but the problem was that it

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kind of came back to bite us in the ass later on. Noah is going to talk now about the things that we did wrong, that really put us off on the wrong foot, when we ultimately did start to pay attention to SEO. So Noah, you want to get started with mistake number one?

Noah 2:31

Yeah, absolutely. So Mistake number one was really kind of just like you said, *Create and Go* wasn't created with SEO in mind. You guys were really doubling down on the things that were already working for y'all and Pinterest at the time was absolutely killing it. And so, you know, you guys were all into those things, and kind of letting these other things like in this case, SEO, fall to the wayside a little bit. I think that, I'm not sure if you guys at the time, I don't know at what point in your journey, you're like, "Hey, I think we need to start focusing on SEO." But just like you said, it kind of came back to bite you, because we had to go back and work on a lot of things.

Noah 3:20

And those things could have been done right the first time. And so it didn't seem like it at the time, I'm sure to you guys, but it was a huge mistake that you didn't focus on SEO at the beginning, because the content wasn't really targeted towards just SEO beneficial topics. You know, you guys didn't write about specific keywords that didn't necessarily have a large amount of volume. You guys were writing about words that had like, maybe 100 searches a month. And so I think you guys were kind of just creating what you thought your audience needed. Was that kind of the goal at the time?

Lauren 4:03

Yeah, I think so. I mean, that sounds like it was a good plan, right? No, we definitely did. But it was more about focusing on the topics that were just trending on Pinterest at the time, to be honest. And you know, I don't think that it was the worst strategy, I think that it worked really well for us because Pinterest was flooding our blog with traffic. We really felt at the time that we could do no wrong. But it did become apparent that this maybe wasn't the best long term strategy. I think that this is why we're talking so much about SEO now, because we realized the great importance to really get continued growth and success for your blog through a traffic source like this.

Lauren 4:44

Platforms like Pinterest, and Instagram, Tik Tok, so many of those that grow and change so much so drastically and Google's really the only thing that's been around for a long time. And while there have been big algorithm changes, there haven't been a whole lot of really big changes, right? It's not about stories and all this, you know, viral content, it's more about just, you know, working searchable traffic. And really, we were just looking at what was trending on Pinterest and creating content around that, some of it was honestly just what looked popular.

Lauren 5:19

So it wasn't even really what was necessary for creating products or selling things. It definitely wasn't super targeted. And I wouldn't say that there was a really set structure or plan to it. I don't

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think that we thought too much about related keywords, pillar posts, you know, anything like that.

Noah 5:39

Yeah, no, absolutely. Yeah, you were kind of just following the next trend looking for the next biggest thing on Pinterest, and YouTube. And so that was definitely mistake number one. For everyone listening, you really want to have an SEO strategy from the start. You know, that was the thing that when I eventually shifted into SEO at *Create and Go*, I was like, "What's the plan?" And you guys were like, "We just want traffic. Like, we don't really know yet. We just want SEO traffic." We kind of had to start crafting that strategy then, and getting more aggressive with it.

Noah 6:22

When it comes to making sure that you're starting off on the right foot, you really should go into blogging, with the first goal being having a strategy for SEO success. You should be clarifying your niche, and most importantly, utilizing a content calendar as soon as you start. That was something that you guys had, but I don't think the focus of the content calendar was SEO, it was focused on the next pin that you needed to create or whatever article you guys were starting. So definitely the number one thing that you want to do is have that strategy from the start.

Lauren 7:02

Yeah, definitely having a content calendar makes you organized, but it doesn't mean that you necessarily have direction. I think that was the difference there. And all that makes sense, because it's really all about creating content with a purpose, right? We talk a lot about that at *Create and Go*, but it's also creating content with a specific direction, I guess. And I can tell you that since we started *Avocado*, we've created well over 200 articles. I mean, I think it might be closer to 300 at this point.

Lauren 7:31

But we've also deleted and redirected a lot of that content over the years because so much of it just honestly wasn't relevant or it was just an attempt at something that just didn't work out. Some of it, which is honestly random and stemmed from "Yeah, let's try that. Why not? It's working for this other person." And yeah, obviously, you can save yourself a lot of wasted time from the very beginning. Of course, that would be ideal. Well, so what else do we screw up, Noah? Let's move on to mistake number two.

Noah 8:01

Yeah, so I'd say the next biggest mistake you guys made is probably that the content wasn't really optimized for multiple keywords and phrases. Luckily, this wasn't just you guys. I think a lot of people who are starting their SEO journey, they kind of have tunnel vision. They have a tunnel vision where they're focused on one single keyword and when they write an article, that's the only keyword that matters. That was a lot like how you guys created content. And there isn't necessarily, that's not entirely wrong, but when you are focused on SEO, you should be trying to optimize for multiple keywords and multiple phrases in everything that you create.

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Noah 8:49

And you guys never really planned out like four or five additional keywords or additional key phrases that you wanted to focus on. I think that that was a huge problem, because a lot of the keywords at *Create and Go* that are targeted are really competitive, some of the more competitive keywords out there on the internet. So by targeting additional more specific phrases and keywords that are less difficult to rank for, you can bring in traffic to those articles a lot easier.

Noah 9:23

It was kind of like your articles were at that all or nothing stage, if you weren't ranking for the one main keyword you were targeting, then you weren't really bringing in a lot of traffic to that article. Nowadays, in all of our articles we try to go after at least four or sometimes even five additional keywords to target and that brings in traffic to those articles for some of those, "easier to rank" for phrases.

Lauren 9:50

Okay, that also makes a lot of sense and it also feels good I guess, because when you have this one shot at this one keyword and you just don't make it, it's very disappointing. So using those related keywords and phrases and whatnot, that does make a lot of sense. I know I'm even somewhat guilty of this today, but thankfully, of course, I have people like you to fix it for me. But I do tend to have a singular focus when it comes to writing an article targeting this one particular keyword or phrase and not remembering or caring to tie it into related keywords.

Lauren 10:23

And I'd imagine that a lot of people are guilty of this, of just thinking about this one reason that you're creating this article, writing, and then just putting it out there and not really thinking about the impacts of the SEO and how you can use these related keywords, phrases, and whatnots to really boost the reach of this one piece of content. And yeah, just not thinking about how much this article relates to other articles, how they tie in together, how they relate to each other, making sure that both your audience and Google know that this content is tied together. So that does make a lot of sense. So how do we fix this?

Noah 10:58

This is definitely one of those things that I remember going back and fixing it was a lot more difficult. When it comes to updating your content, it's just going to take some work. You're honestly going to have to rewrite a lot of portions of articles, and things like that. But it is really, really easy to do whenever you're writing a new piece, writing a new article, or just starting your blog. You really want to go into it with a focus of not being afraid to go after those small wins.

Noah 11:30

So when you have your content calendar, say you're targeting a big keyword. That's good, you want to be ambitious, and you want to go after that big keyword. But you also want to set yourself up for a chance of success for ranking for those other smaller key terms. So whenever

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planning an article out, when I'm at work, I try and make sure to of course, have that main focus keyword. Say for example, we were using Yoga for Women for *Avocado*, that would be a main focus keyword for a very large piece of content.

Noah 12:06

That specific keyword is pretty difficult to rank for, it'd be one of the more competitive yoga terms. So to make sure that we have a chance of bringing in traffic, for additional keywords, we could use things like, Yoga for Women with Back Pain. By including that in your article, you can actually bring in searches for that and improve your articles ranking for yoga for women overall. It kind of works in a way that by getting those small victories, you're more likely to rank for that big keyword that you wanted to rank for in general.

Lauren 12:48

Interesting, interesting. Okay, I like this point, too, because I think it's also a really great reminder to write content that relates to what you're selling. For example, we sell a yoga program, and sure it's about that general keyword of yoga for women, that's very hard to go after because it's very competitive. But that's also not the keyword or the phrase that sells this product.

Lauren 13:09

Talking specifically about back pain, flexibility, anxiety, and all these other problem areas, that's what this program focuses on and provides solutions for. Really, this is getting into creating what we call Sale Centered Content. We talk a lot more about this in our *Six Figure Blogger* course, because this is where we teach our students about how to create their own products and how to sell them. But anyway, I think that's great, because it's really, I guess it's a bit more like going after medium and long tail keywords sort of, right?

Noah 13:41

No, you're absolutely right. These are definitely more "user intent" or "buyer intent" specific key phrases. They're usually like, say if you were hiking, hiking would be a one general big term, but hiking backpacks would be a much more specific key term. So they're usually more specific. Like you said, they usually stand to convert better, make you more money, make you more affiliate sales. They're usually the content that answers people's questions, or solves a particular problem versus that overarching key phrase.

Lauren 14:18

Yeah, okay. So it's more like using these particular keywords, but also doing so with a solid plan for what that content is going to do for you. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. All right, well, where are we at with mistake number three?

Noah 14:34

So mistake number three. Everyone says this and it kind of makes me laugh, but it definitely is one of those things that you just, it doesn't just happen when you're a kid, there's many cases in life where you're like, I just didn't know any better. It sounds like a cheap way to get out of

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trouble or just a good excuse, but *Create and Go* really was a classic case of, you guys just didn't know any better. You didn't know that it would be difficult to go back and focus on SEO or to go and optimize for SEO.

Noah 15:11

This is kind of like a blanket mistake that really covers the remainder of the issues that you guys had. That is just that, lack of education in SEO. You guys, the website categories needed work, the internal linking needed to be changed, we had to move the course links to a new domain, we had to get a new coded website to speed it up, update articles, and audit, just all kinds of things that you guys just didn't know to work on from the beginning. So I don't necessarily think that every person should know SEO, like the back of their hand. But I think that knowing all of the basics is really important. And I think you guys just didn't have all the basics mastered yet.

Lauren 16:03

Nice. You're saying it's not my fault.

Noah 16:08

Yeah, typical scapegoating, you know, you just didn't know any better. And who can blame me?

Lauren 16:15

All right. All right. Well run with that, it wasn't my fault, I had nothing to do with it. No, well, that also makes sense. Because again, as I've already pretty much said, I've been very honest, we chose to ignore SEO. It definitely was a conscious decision and we didn't think that there were going to be these kinds of repercussions. It was always like, "Oh, yeah, we'll just pick that up later, when we have more time or money to focus on it." Right? I think that a lot of people probably have that same mentality of, "Oh, it's not going anywhere."

Lauren 16:44

That's really the whole point of this episode, we're trying to explain that we had that mentality, and it did come back to bite us in the ass, as I said. I don't think it's actually the best strategy to just completely ignore it, this also doesn't mean that you have to go crazy with it, but definitely pay more attention to it. I get it, because it's easy to ignore these things, not to prioritize them, when there's just so many other things going well in your business, because it's like, "Oh, yeah, there's time for that later, right?"

Lauren 17:13

And that's where we were. I mean, so many things were working that we were able to ignore other parts in our business, and things like site structure and site speed. We knew that they mattered, but things were just going really well at the time, and there was just again, time for that later. Anyway, it's about doing it right from the beginning right, and that makes it much easier to manage along the way. Right, Noah?

Noah 17:36

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Absolutely, absolutely. And I think the main thing is to just try and avoid being that person that just didn't know any better. You want to educate yourself about SEO, because in relation to blogging, it is one of, if not the most important traffic knowledge you can get. When it comes to making sure that you avoid that mistake, and making those same mistakes, it really is just about the fact that knowledge is power. You want to make sure that you're avoiding that pitfall of trial and error and just "Oh, let me experiment and try this."

Noah 18:19

I mean, you should experiment, but you should have a strong base, a strong idea of the basics of SEO. And you want to realize what possible mistakes can be made before you make them, so that you don't screw up. My dad always said when I was young, it was one of those things that, when he would try and teach me something I would always try and do it before he finished teaching me. And he'd always be like, "No, wait till I finish teaching you because I want you to do it right the first time."

Noah 18:52

This is just one of those things. You know, I don't really suggest anyone go into blogging without those basic understandings. It doesn't really matter where you choose to learn them from whether it's a free course, free youtube videos, or one of our courses at *Create and Go*, no matter what you should make an effort to master the basics of SEO. Knowing those things, you're going to position your blog for the best chances of success and avoid a lot of those pitfalls that we had to go back and fix at *Create and Go*.

Lauren 19:28

Yeah, and y'all I think it's important to point out here that this is still very much a learning process for us, too. Maybe we don't feel the daily pressure or the daily changes in all the algorithms and all this stuff as much as we did in the beginning. But we definitely feel them still on a month to month basis, and especially on a quarterly basis. And really, we're just being transparent with you about our SEO failures and success so you don't make those same mistakes that we did.

Lauren 20:03

We did create an SEO course that our students have the right knowledge that they need from the very beginning. So if you are interested, the link to our SEO course is going to be in the show notes or you can always find it with the rest of our courses on *CreateandGo.com*. I really enjoyed this episode, and I hope that y'all did too. This definitely won't be the last time that Noah is on the channel, because we're going to continue to be talking about SEO and building your strategies and everything else under the SEO sun. So thank you so much, Noah, for joining us today.

Noah 20:36

Yeah, thank you. I really appreciate you asking me to be here. To everyone listening, I really, really, really hope that you guys learned some important lessons from the mistakes that we've made. I hope that you take those to heart and make a solid effort to avoid those same mistakes.

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Lauren 20:57

Alright, y'all. We'll see you next time.

Lauren 21:02

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