

## **Transcripts from the Digital Marketing Sucks (Sometimes) episode:**

I feel like we are in this moment where we are thinking a lot about short term fixes and solutions and trying to grapple with all of the weirdness that is 2020 as 2020 starts to draw to a close. And we're trying to decide what are things that we've learned this year that need to be applied to our long-term strategies versus what are things this year that are unique to a moment where we are living in a global pandemic. And it's got me thinking, although I really can't answer a lot of those questions. It's got me thinking a lot about why I love SEO so much and why I love strategic planning, which I am recording this on November 10th of 2020.

So I am in the middle of strategic planning sessions. Why I love these types of things. And for me, it really is because they are long-term strategies that build in cycles and are really circular and it's like going up a spiral staircase instead of the like straight line called discipline, if you will, from point A to point B. It really serves both my personality and my feminine nature to do marketing work for myself and for my clients and with the people that around me that is long-term and wholistic and sustainable. And I was thinking about this a lot yesterday as I listened to Aiko Bethea on Brene Brown's leadership podcast. And she said a line that, it just really struck me.

She was talking about DEI work, but it struck me as so true for marketing as well. And I've been playing with this idea that marketers really make the world in what we do and how important our role really is and why long-term strategies like SEO are so cool when we think of our role that way. What she said was transformational work includes the transactional and the data. I think when we hear that, we sometimes are a little surprised because so many of us have spent our time in our own businesses or in our work trying to undo the trauma and the damage that we and our clients have experienced in a transactional and data-driven corporate environments in a that honors momentary transactions and numbers much more than it honors people and transformational change and growth and evolution.

And so, so many of us, because we've experienced that trauma because we've experienced that pain of living only a transactional business lifestyle, or some of us only a transactional lifestyle period. When we start to think about transformational work, when we start to think about how we make a better world, how we make a business that looks different from the one that caused us so much pain in the corporate world, we throw all the transactional elements out. We think of

transactional and data-driven as bad things because we are experiencing so much pain and trauma from living only in that space in our business life. And so we shift way too far to the other direction where we only think about the emotional, the story driven pieces, and we lose the benchmarking, we lose the data, we lose how important it is to look at long-term patterns, not just anecdotes.

When the truth is, and this was the point that she was making in this podcast that I thought was so transformational is we need both transformational change, whether it's within ourselves or within an organization, includes the transactional. And part of the way that we make transformational change and the way that we handle our marketing is by getting really serious about not just moment to moment successes, but long-term strategies like SEO. I'm super biased, you probably already know that. SEO and SEM are really important to me.

I believe that they can transform a business because I've seen that over and over again. And there are lots of people that will talk about SEO hacks and they're like, 101 SEO hacks that you can use today. But the truth is that SEO, and for those of you who don't know, I guess I should say again, SEO is search engine optimization. It's like, who shows up in a Google search? It isn't a hack, it isn't a short-term fix. And because of the way algorithms work and fresh content works, it happens in cycles over time.

Meaning you're not always going to be on top in every place where you want to be on top, but the way that you cycle through your results actually will teach you a lot about your business, a lot about what your customers want and a lot about who you are as a leader. But this type of work in your marketing is transformational in the way that listening to stories and telling stories is also transformational. And the data matters as part of a wholistic approach to your marketing. It isn't enough to tell great stories just like it isn't enough to have a great product.

It isn't enough to really care about your customers because the truth is, long-term patterns, the truth is seeing what a market is doing does really matter because it allows you to have more empathy, it allows me and you to see if we are progressing over time, it allows us to see what the changes are that could be coming at us. The data that we use to drive SEO if you are looking at it in a do better digital methodology, is a piece of a wholistic approach to your business.

It's not just about traffic, that's way too simplistic. It's not just about keywords, that's like seeing the tree but not the whole whole forest. And yes, backlinks and keywords, they do still matter, by the way, despite that headline, you read yesterday on SEMrush. You didn't read that headline on SEMrush, maybe search engine journal, SEMrush, they know backlinks and keywords still matter. In fact, I might've seen a

headline like that yesterday on SEMrush. Wanna give credit where credit is due. It's really important for us to understand that SEO is a long-term strategy.

It is the work of years, not days. That said, it is the only digital marketing strategy besides email list building, that builds over time to bigger and bigger and bigger, better results even if you stop focusing on it directly. You probably know this by the way, as SEO, that's search engine optimization, but really in a 2020 world, what we're talking about is more wholistic in itself. It's really more SEM, which is search engine marketing. It's not just organic rankings, it's all the key platforms that show up in a search result.

That's ads and YouTube and rich snippets and image search, plus your traditional rankings, which are what we're talking about in basic SEO. We talk about position zero on a page, when we talk about what you're doing with your video marketing, when we talk about the importance of using keywords in your content, they all sound like small pieces like one off thing that you can check off of a checklist, but really what great SEO is, is the integration of a wholistic marketing practice, it is the bottom line of a do better digital strategy.

Because in order to win at SEO over the longterm, you must be putting people first, in order to win at SEO over the longterm, you must be doing things in your business to make you worthy of coming up high in a search result, in order to win over the long-term in SEO, you must be relentless about providing a better and better user experience for your customers. But the great news is after doing this for 10 years, I can tell you that a little bit of work every day, every week, every month, every year adds up over time, like compounding interest.

It gets better and better and better. And sometimes you'll be at the top of the game, and sometimes you'll be in a different position because this is a cyclical world. And it's funny because for my entire career, the world of SEO has been dominated by masculine personalities. And to my mind mind, that's totally like the opposite of what it should be because SEO matches perfectly with this feminine circular flowing way of looking at the world. And I think the reason that SEO became that way, is because we thought of it as transactional all the time and lost the piece that is transformational. So what would change for you if you thought of your SEO strategy as a piece of your do better digital strategy, as transformational change, instead of just data driven analytics? I'd love to know.