

HMA

HIDDEN MARKETING ASSETS

University

INTERVIEW SERIES

**SEO Expert Reveals
Everything You Need
To Know About
Affordable SEO**

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtofindseminars.com

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SEO Expert Reveals... Everything You Need To Know About Affordable SEO To Get Your Website Flooded With Qualified Traffic

Web traffic is what website owners really want and many business owners think that if they build a website, they'll naturally be bombarded with orders. But that rarely happens. With hundreds of millions of websites out there, it's easy to get lost in the shuffle – unless you know how to get noticed. And In this audio, that's exactly what you're going to hear.

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO for short, is the technical term for all the strategies needed to build a strong online presence. It's an elaborate, but necessary, process that ensures a top page ranking when someone searches for your products or services.

And let's face it, being on the first page for a keyword search could mean jackpot-like results for your business. That's the power of SEO. But it's not an easy process. Search engines like Google use complicated algorithms to rank the relevance of websites. And if you try to shortcut the process with "black-hat techniques," you could get banned from their searches altogether. So it's important to get your SEO right, and this audio with an SEO Expert Lori Olson will tell you exactly how to do that.

You'll Also Hear...

- All about the two different parts of SEO – onpage and offpage – and how to use both to get your website the kind of publicity you want
- How to form partnerships with other websites and build your relevancy with Google
- How search engines work, how to use metatags, and ways to know if you're indexed properly
- Free Internet tools that will tell you what your page ranking is right now and will also let you spy on your competition
- How to measure everything on your website – yes, there are ways to know who's there, how long they stay, what they click on, and more
- How to combine social media optimization with your SEO – and take the fast-track to a better page ranking
- All about online press releases, link building, and bidding on keywords

If search engines don't notice your website, nobody else will either. And since billions of searches are done every day, you can't afford to guess at how to maximize your online presence, and you don't need to. Affordable Search Engine Optimization is the proven way to get all the traffic you need. And this audio will tell you exactly how to get started. For a free SEO web site performance report call toll free in the U.S. 1-877-265-6568

Michael: Specifically, what is SEO? What does it stand for?

Lori: SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, but that doesn't mean much to most people. So, the easiest way to think about it is something like this. Your business is just like a beautiful new car, and whether that is an SUV, a luxury car, or a truck, you put a lot of money into getting the one you want. The goal is for you to take it where you want to go.

Well, your business should be able to take you where you want to financially be in the future. So, clearly when you bought your car or your truck, you didn't purchase it just to look at it, or even listen to music in it.

Although these may be nice things about it, in order to get the real function out of it, you have to continue to buy gas for it. Well, SEO – Search Engine Optimization – is the gas you put into your online business that will get it to where you want to go. Without it, you will be stuck on the side of the road.

Michael: Is a search engine like Google, is that when people are looking for stuff?

Lori: Yes, absolutely right. There are many search engines, and Google is the most common. As a matter of fact, 72% of searches are done on Google.

Once you put this gas in your business, then you'll start getting somewhere with it, but the thing is that most small business owners don't even know anything about SEO. They think it's enough to put their website out there and sit by the phone and expect it to ring. That's not going to happen.

Even though small business owners who have heard of SEO, the reality is they know very little, if anything about it, and even if they think they know about it, they don't know very much.

Basically, there are two parts to it, and the part that they do know mostly about is something call on-page optimization. Then, there's off-page optimization.

Michael: Are we referring to a page on my website? If I'm a business and I have a website, that's what the page is.

Lori: Absolutely, that's it, and actually each page of your website really should be set up and optimized distinctly for the content that's on each of those pages. So, it's not enough just to do your homepage.

Michael: Tell me, when you say optimization, what are we optimizing for? What is the whole purpose of this?

Lori: Well, Michael, the whole purpose is simply this. When someone is searching for products or services and your products and services, and they're doing this in Google or AOL or MSN, we want your company, your name, your website, to come up first.

This is very critical because what that's going to do for you is absolutely enormous. Without SEO, a website will be no more than an online business card or brochure that you can direct people to. You just won't benefit from the full potential that websites can offer your business, and even if that website is the most beautiful one in the world or all of cyberspace, it doesn't matter.

Unless you or someone in your company tells them to find out without SEO, it's going to be lost among the millions of other websites that are using the same online brochure strategy, and how inefficient is that?

Now, of course, you can always place that ads that contain your website address, and a lot of small business owners pay for expensive yellow page advertising, and they put these URLs in those ads, but just imagine that if your website became an unpaid sales force that worked for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week with no holidays or sick pay. That's exactly what happens when you execute an expert SEO plan.

Michael: As you say this, I'm thinking about it. I think a lot of people out there when they think of the internet and they think of a website, it's attractive because you could take all of your products and services. You can put them online, and you can save money on printing. So, as a company, I could tell my customers to go to my website and everything is right there, and I don't have to send stuff in the mail. I save money that way.

I think a lot of people don't realize the other half of the equation. That's the SEO stuff, the market, the demand out there looking for millions of products or services and having good SEO, Search Engine Optimization, is almost like free money because if you make your site where other people can find it, you can tap into that existing demand out there on the internet, but most people are thinking of it as like a brochure or a place to send customers that they already know and are dealing with to the site. Does that make sense?

Lori: Oh, absolutely. That's right on, and you're losing full functionality of what a website can do for you if you're just using it in that capacity.

The reality is that fifty percent of small businesses don't even have a website at this point in time. So, we're talking about being competitive in a down market. This is an enormous opportunity for a small business to distinguish themselves from the rest of the competition and take over market share.

If you think that sixty percent of the small business owners don't even have a website, and the ones who do don't even understand it beyond being an online brochure, there's an enormous opportunity for you to carve a special place for yourself.

Michael: So, you're saying, people when they look for products and services, the masses, the market statistically people are looking online, they're not using phonebooks anymore?

Lori: Yes, and I think that's what's happening here. Notice that the yellow pages and all those directories have become online as well. So, what's happening is there's a lot of business owners for example who would say, "Well, I'm not an internet ecommerce business," or "I don't sell across the country. I sell locally."

Well, the reality is that 90% of online searchers, they really still buy locally. So, what does that mean? That means they're online. They're

searching for information, and they're searching for you, your business, and if they can't find you, well, they're going to your competition.

Fortunately, right now, most of your competition isn't even online with a serious online presence. So, that means this is a huge, huge opportunity. I can't state it enough. It's a huge opportunity for small businesses to distinguish themselves by getting online.

How do you do that? You don't just use it as an opportunity to give contact information because that's not enough. People want information, that you can have a website that provides information for those searchers, well, then what you've done is you've already educated them about your products and services. You've distinguished yourself as an authority or a professional that's worthy of doing business with, and then they're going to seek you out. So, you'll add an enormous amount to your bottom line.

There's really two parts of SEO – Search Engine Optimization – as we were talking about before. There's the on-page SEO, and there's the off-page SEO.

Michael: All right, what is the on-page SEO?

Lori: Basically, the on-page stuff is everything that you can do to make your site easy for the search engines to spider. This includes making sure that your metatags and descriptions have the right keywords, and that's just kind of like a code place you put so that the search engines spiders will index you properly.

Michael: Can I ask you what does spidering mean?

Lori: It's actually a script that's written by the search engines for them to go through your site and make sense out of it. Basically, that's the easiest way to describe it.

Michael: So, these search engines are going through the entire internet, cataloguing, categorizing every single website out there.

Lori: Well, only websites that have been what they call indexed. In other words, if you're not indexed, you haven't been introduced to spiders, and they don't know you exist.

Michael: Is it possible to have a website and maybe your webmaster or your web guy never indexed your site?

Lori: Oh, absolutely.

Michael: What percentage of websites do you think are out there existing on the internet, but have never been indexed?

Lori: I think most of them.

Michael: Really?

Lori: Yes. Everyone puts up a site, yeah, and I think that's more the norm than not. Now, we're not talking about the professional sites that you see out there, and the ones that you're looking at because clearly those have been indexed.

I'm talking about the ones that small businesses, stay at home businesses, solo entrepreneurs decide to put up, and they expect to be found. They're never found.

Michael: Once my web designer puts up my website whoever I paid, there are specific steps that they should do, or that one should do to index it in the search engines.

Lori: Oh, absolutely.

Michael: And, most people are never doing this.

Lori: No, most people don't do that. Now, there are some places that for example, I know with Go Daddy, they have features that-

Michael: Who is Go Daddy?

Lori: Go Daddy is a hosting service.

Michael: What does that mean? You can go to them and get a website?

Lori: Yeah, build your website. There's a whole bunch of hosting services that you can buy your domain name, and they'll host it for you, and they'll give you hosting plans. There's host stater, which is very good. There is one and one and Go Daddy. Those are good names. You can get an inexpensive domain names.

Michael: Is a domain name like your website name, <http://www.lbuycars.com>?

Lori: Right, that's your unique name, your address that they'll find you. That's what you're calling your site. I know that Go Daddy for example, if you buy a Websites Tonight, included in their service, they'll submit you to the search engines.

So, in those cases, if you has a hosting service that does that for you, but that's where it's a little tricky because a newbie to the website world doesn't even know that someone has submitted it for them. So, they don't know that this is behind the scenes and it happens.

For people who aren't having that kind of service done for them, their site is not being indexed until it gets submitted to the search engines.

Michael: I didn't know that. I'm just thinking I just bought about fifty websites, and I own the domain names. I have hosting for them, but I haven't even thought about the submission process. Maybe that's something that the hosting company can do for me, but they never told me about it, and never even considered or crossed my mind until you just mentioned it.

Lori: There's other ways that eventually you'll get indexed. If you want to get indexed right away, you need to submit. Say if your site is loaded with relevant and rich content, and that it's starting to get traffic from who knows where because maybe you're part of a network or you have a fantastic emailing list that has now become aware of your site and they're doing a lot of visiting to your site, and they're doing searches on it – not searches because it won't come up until it's indexed – but, there's a lot of ways that it could be driving traffic to it.

Then, over time, it will get picked up, but it will be a longer period of time, but if your site doesn't have the benefits of having lots of traffic coming to it or some way that it's going to flag to the search engines that you exist to be indexed, then it's not going to happen.

A little bit more about the on-page stuff, so you need to make it attractive to the spiders. How do you do that? You've got to make sure that there aren't broken links, that there aren't poor scripts or code underneath.

Michael: What's a link?

Lori: Well, the links are those little hyperlinks things where you put the mouse over it and it points a little arrow. It allows you to click, and it redirects you somewhere else.

Michael: Okay, and it's usually like in the blue with the underline.

Lori: Yes, exactly.

Michael: That takes you from one page of a site to another site.

Lori: Those are internal links. They can take you from one page to the next, or they could redirect you to another website. Anything that connects you to another location on the web is a link.

Michael: How does a link get broken, and why is that bad?

Lori: Well, it's bad because it makes it clumsy. It's like the spiders which aren't really spiders. It's a script, but it becomes cumbersome and it can stymie them from what they term as crawling your site.

Michael: So, a link may be blue and supposed to go somewhere, but it goes to nowhere and you get like that error page.

Lori: You get the error page, or it could even be something where say the link was so long that it goes down into the next line on your text – sometimes these links go forever, and then it breaks at the end of your page line and goes to the next line. That's not good either.

So, what you're better off if you have a very long link like that, there's ways of shrinking them or just putting that whole very long link on the very next line instead of having it broken over two lines.

You can clearly see there's a lot of things that have to be considered because just think how sophisticated the internet is, but there are little stumbling stones that aren't apparent to the eye that are behind the scenes that make it impossible for spiders to crawl, and if they can't crawl your site, well, they're just going to stop.

They'll go halfway down the page and you may have valuable content on the rest of your page, but it's not going to be recognized because of these broken links.

So, you spend a lot of time writing content for your site, and then it's not going to have any value to you because the spiders can't navigate your site.

Michael: I see. So, if a spider, let's say they start from the top of the page, and they go down and they're reading all that code, and if there's messed up code, it won't be able to read it. It'll just give up.

Lori: It'll give up, so then you're not going to get the full benefit of all the work that you've put in. So, then the other stuff about on-site optimization is that you've got to make it not only friendly for the spiders, but you've got to make it optimized for your visitors, and that means you have to be cognizant of how the eye actually moves across a page.

Studies have tracked eye movement, and show that if you have text that crawls from one side completely to the other or it's disjointed and the eye can't navigate the page easily, well that creates eye fatigue and as silly as that sounds, they've measured eye movements and it's almost like your eye is traveling miles. It'll get fatigued and will bounce off.

You know that we're all familiar with so many different websites. We're all experts in our subconscious minds, and we need to look at sites that will have an appeal to us. We expect our navigation bar in a certain spot to be able to find our way around it pretty easily.

If we don't, it gives us a very quick message that this is not a professional site. It affects the image that your business is portraying and the image that's imprinted on your visitor, and it will determine whether that visitor stays or leaves in a couple of seconds. If they leave in a couple of seconds, you've lost them. They're not coming back.

Michael: Because it's so easy just to click away, so if someone comes to your site and it's ugly or it's not set up properly and they get frustrated, they're out of there.

Lori: Oh, and people think that sometimes you want to hear the music or you want to have a lot of flash. Well, that stuff is not necessary, and sometimes we become so impatient, we want to get to the content. We

want information. That's what we're searching for. We don't want to be entertained. It needs to be appropriate for your site, and most of all always has to be appropriate for what your visitors are looking for.

You have to deliver that quickly and you have a quick chance to deliver that. All those factors have to come into play when you're optimizing your web page.

Michael: I'm curious. When someone's eyes hit a webpage, where do they say that the eyes go most?

Lori: The golden triangle is the upper left corner.

Michael: The upper left corner, just like when you're reading a magazine ad or something.

Lori; Right, and there has to be a flow to it that will direct your visitor's eyes further, but it's interesting to not that Google as part of its algorithm that's ever changing, takes into account how long a visitor stays on your site.

So, supposed you've gotten to the point where you're putting your keywords and you're coming up on a search. It doesn't matter if it's page one or if it's page ten. Google is going to start to evaluate you when you put those keywords in, and now when they come to your site, Google will measure the time that's spent on your site.

Michael: They can figure out how long a visitor stays on a page on a website.

Lori: Exactly, they know exactly. So, if your visitors are what they call bouncing off your site, well, that does not bode well for the relevance of your site.

See, Google's business is to provide its visitors with relevant content. That's the purpose of Google and its search engine is to come up with the best and most relevant sites for when you put in keywords.

If you're not doing that, they will lose market share to other search engines who are doing it better. So, it's very important for Google to deliver a good search experience for their users.

Michael: So, let's say you have an unoptimized site, both online and offline. Someone comes to your site. It's confusing and they're out of there

within a second. This is happening every single day, 24/7, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Google is taking that into account every single day and may be penalizing you from coming up on the search engine pages because they can measure how long they stay and they're gone, and Google knows it's not relevant.

Lori: Yes, Google will say you're not relevant, and Google and how they view it as relevant, that's what search engine optimization basically is. It's making sure that you are relevant in so many different categories you can score high or low on.

When you're optimizing, you're obviously making your site the best in each of these categories so you will be deemed highly relevant, and you will provide the best experience for your visitors, which is ultimately going to convert them to being visitors to prospects to customers.

Michael: This is fascinating. Let's keep going.

Lori: That's the on page stuff, and there's clearly a lot to it. There are the metatags and the descriptions and all that is under the page content, and then there's your visitor experience.

Another important on site optimization factor that people don't consider is something called an Alt-tag.

Michael: What is an alt-tag?

Lori: Alt-tags pretty much label your images for the search engine spiders.

Michael: So, you mean when I have pictures on my website, each picture has a name attached to it.

Lori: Yes, you can put text underneath your picture. That's great, too especially if those captions have your keywords in it. That's really great, but it's important to remember that the search engine spiders can not see your images. They don't know it's a beautiful relevant picture. Under the scenes, it has to be tagged for them so that they're recognizing that this image even exists on your page.

Michael: Okay, so a search engine knows that it's an image by looking at if it's a jpeg or a jif or a bitmap.

Lori: I know in HTML code they say image, and then they define the image because your file is already going to be up there and it's going to be a jpeg or something. The alt-tag labels it as an image.

Michael: So, what mistake have you found that a lot of website owners are doing that creates a problem with this alt-tag.

Lori: They don't use them. They just put the image up there, and they don't even create the alt-tag. It's just a way of tagging it and saying there's an image here, and it's best to use the image in your description. Use your keyword.

Michael: We talked a little bit about on page optimization. Now, you say there's off page optimization. First of all, describe to me what is the specific difference between on page and off page optimization?

Lori: Well, the on page stuff is everything that you can do to make your website itself optimized for the visitor experience and to be found by those search engines. Then, the offsite stuff is everything you can do to drive traffic.

There's enormous numbers of methods. It's the marketing part of driving traffic to your website.

Michael: What specifically in more detail is offline? How do you get traffic to your site?

Lori: When onpage optimization is done and as we said, this is where people generally have their knowledge. Then, it's essential to execute them offpage SEO strategy. This involves getting back links to your site.

Michael: What's a backlink? What does that mean?

Lori: Well, there's a distinction that there's all types of backlinks, but a backlink is a connection from other websites in cyberspace in the universe that have been indexed with a connection to your site.

Basically, what a back link is – if you want to think of it this way is like a vote from that other website that raises their hand and says, “Yes, I'm going to connect to your site because your site has relevance to my visitors.” It's a vote of approval.

Michael: Give me a specific example of what a back link is that I could relate to.

Lori: If you recall that links are those hyperlinks, those underscored text or it could just be the URL spelled out, but it's going to connect you to another site.

For example, say you're an attorney and you provide services to a divorce attorney or family services attorney, and there's another site out there that does reviews of attorneys, the best attorneys to use. You've gotten a great write up on that site. Well, that site in turn is making recommendations or evaluating attorneys and you happen to be recommended by them, your link to your site will be on their site.

Michael: It's like one of those blue ones with the lines on it, where if someone clicks on the review site, it will take them to my site.

Lori: Yes, exactly. The best way to look at it is you're forming the kind of partnership with another website, and that they trust and they want to recommend you to their visitors. Certainly, they're not going to link to a competitor. That's not what back links is about, but they link to highly relevant content.

So, when they're linking to you, they're providing additional content or ancillary services that compliment their website to their visitors.

Michael: How does Google know about that?

Lori: Because Google knows everything on the web. They know the interconnectivity of who is connecting to what. This is something that you need for them to spider, and they know.

Michael: So, when Google spiders, they see this review site linking to let's say I was the attorney, my legal site. They see that and they give me a vote of my site being more relevant.

Lori: Yes, oh it gets much more complicated than that, but they'll even know that they site that's linking to you is using what we call anchor text. That means instead of just having the URL or your website address spelled out, it will be the words "Best Lawyer for Families," and they can make that the hyperlink. So, that way, you put your mouse on it,

that's the part that's underlined. That's the part that will connect. That rates much higher than just a bare website address.

Michael: Oh really?

Lori: Oh, absolutely.

Michael: That's called "anchor text."

Lori: That's called anchor text. You don't want always your back linking partner to link to your home page. You want it to link right into the page on your website that has the relevant content to your back linking partner's website.

Michael: You get higher votes for relevancy.

Lori: Yes, so this is something that Google knows, and this is what SEO is very labor intensive. It involves a lot of follow up. It involves research to make sure that you get the appropriate back linking partner, and that once you've made that contact with a site that will back link with you, you want to make sure it has a site that has high page ranks. Here's the thing with page ranks.

Michael: Tell me what page rank is.

Lori: Page rank is a way that Google kind of keeps a scorecard on you with the highest and best being a ten, which of course Google is a ten. Yahoo is a ten. Wikipedia is a ten. You don't see any higher ranking ones in a lot of case, but yes, the best was CNN – all these major, major sites are tens.

A really great ranking site is anything above a five. Five plus, you're getting to be a nicely ranked site. Basically, that's your Google score card saying that you have relevant content, your keywords are in the right proportion or density on your site, not just keywords because you don't want to stuff them on your page. If you stuff your keywords on, then you'll lose score on that.

It's also using something called LSI words which are Latent Semantic Index words.

Michael: What's that?

Lori: Google is so sophisticated that when it crawls your site, it can tell if your content is talking about what you claim your keywords are about. If it doesn't have the appropriate kind of conversation, the words that would be relevant to those keywords, then it's not going to score you high. It's going to think that you just scattered the keywords across your page for the sake of ranking high, and once again, you have no relevance.

Michael: Another goal for me is to get the highest ranking I can on Google.

Lori: That's right because that helps pull you in their search.

Michael: Search Engine Optimization off line and on page can help me do that.

Lori: Yes, you want to get a high page rank. So, to go back to our back linking conversation is that you want to link with high ranking page sites because if you're linking to another zero page, you're starting out as a zero page rank. That's the just the way everybody starts out.

Until you get indexed and Google starts testing you out and seeing what your relevance experience is to your visitors, it's easy to get zero page ranks to link to other zero page ranks. Well, if everybody is looking to link back, but it's important to note that just linking to everybody under the sun until you get a million links is not going to do anything for you unless they're relevant.

A lot of people make the mistake of starting out, they have a friend who has a site, but it's a cooking site and yours is an automotive repair shop site. Well, there's no reason for those to link.

Michael: And, Google knows.

Lori: And, Google knows. Then, if you're also linking to other parallel sites to you that are zero ranks, well that doesn't really add much value to it. So, the trick becomes getting higher ranking sites to agree to link back to you. That's difficult too.

You can contact a lot of high ranking sites, but now they're starting to get concerned that, "Why would I connect to you? I don't want to share my page rank authority with someone who has not proven their merit yet." That's why you need experts as well helping you establish and build yourself up with back linking partners.

Michael: You have short cuts to do this, right?

Lori: Yes, of course there are short cuts, but the reality is that SEO off page does take a long term commitment, and that's the way you're really going to build up a lot of significant back linking partners, really quality back linking partners, but there are short cuts.

Short cuts are getting into directories for example. Those have high page ranks, and those will lend their page ranks to your site. So, that's the first step that you'd want to do for getting back linking partners.

Michael: So, what does this all mean?

Lori: Well, basically, now we'll see that SEO is a very elaborate process, and it's something that takes a lot of time and energy to do, but it's so vital because your online presence will continue to build with SEO, and that of course means that your business, as it builds, it's going to add tremendously to the bottom line of your business and not just in terms of sales, which of course, that's what's going to happen, and also in terms of leads generated because that's what's going to happen, but overall the value of your company.

You can kind of consider it an online piece of real estate because that's what your business's website really is. It's going to develop an enormous value which will add to the book value of your offline business.

Down the road, if you are inclined to sell either your offline or separate the two, you should be able to sell it for a significant amount of money if it's generating a lot of traffic which is being made by the SEO offpage and onpage stuff.

Here's an interesting thing is that people can spend a lot of money for example on the yellow pages or print advertising. That's very expensive. For once, the yellow page book is gone. It's an old edition, or the newspapers thrown out. That's money that's spent and gone.

You'll be investing with SEO because you're really building up your presence of your presence online. Every dollar that you spend is going to get paid back to you many times with the value that your business is building.

Once you develop so much traffic and you develop such a significant to search engines such as Google and MSN and Yahoo, you're going to be getting what they call organic traffic, which means you may never have to advertise again. Your keywords will keep bringing you up on a search in the organic part, that main part on a search is called the organic listings. That means just based on search, you're coming up.

The ones on the top and on the side, those listings on the top and side are called the sponsored ads. Those are pay per click ads.

Michael: People pay for those.

Lori: Yes.

Michael: The ones under those two or three top ones are organic.

Lori: Yes, those are organic.

Michael: Whatever company is on there, they may have just gotten lucky or they may have done some strategic SEO. If I'm that divorce attorney and you type in "divorce attorney," and I come up first, there's a lot of divorce attorneys out there doing business and have no SEO presence, I'm going to get all the business.

Lori: Right, and Michael there's no luck in getting up there. The only way you get up there first initially in a few weeks would be your in that keyword that there is no competition for, which means basically there's not a lot of people searching on it.

That's fine for some people to have a very, very specific niche, and you're selling a high priced product. You are the only one out there. You may only have very few competitors in the world, but your service is needed. Well, that's fine.

For most industries, a lot of competition basically means there's a lot of buyers out there. Competition is a good indicator that there's a robust market. It's not a bad thing, but you've got to make sure that when you're targeting your keywords and you're targeting your market, that you're going to be one of the ones that rises to the top.

So, in those kind of markets, anybody that's on a page one search on Google, well, you can be sure they've done their homework.

Michael: As I'm listening to you, it just reminds me of the Superbowl and a high end football game. You watch the game, but behind the scenes, you've got the coach. They have those Motorola headphones on. They have statistics. They have backgrounds on every player, and it's like warfare. You've got to know exactly what you're doing to win that Superbowl.

Lori: Absolutely, and you think even on page one. There's such a vast difference on the top listing on the first page on a Google search page compared to the bottom listing. It took maybe 75% more traffic to the top ones than the very bottom listings.

Michael: The difference between being on the top of the natural listings in a well-known market or keyword and being on the bottom, just being on the top could mean millions of dollars for you. There are some keywords that are being searched how many times a day or a month.

Lori; It could be hundreds of thousands. Michael, here's what I want you to do when we get off the phone. Go to Google, and in the search bar, key in "Google keyword tool" or you can even do Adwords tool, and it will come up with free Google keyword tool.

Michael: What is that site going to tell me?

Lori: It'll give you a little box, and you can put any keyword in it, and then you'll put the little capture box, and you're going to put the code in there. Once you do, it's going to come up with the amount of searches that were made on that keyword, and also, it'll give relevant keywords which are your Latent Semantic Index words or terms on the bottom of the page, and it'll tell you all the searches that were made on those as well.

Michael: I'm in front of my computer. I'm at the [HTTP://Adwords.Google.com](http://Adwords.Google.com). Let's just divorce attorney. I'm a divorce attorney. So, I'm typing that in, and then I clicked.

So, the top one for divorce attorney, it says approximately search volume in January – 110,000. What does that mean?

Lori; Well, clearly that means if you're number one on a search, that means 110,000 people are searching on that term.

Michael: Just in January.

Lori: Just in January. What would that mean to your business for you to appear number one on the search page? That's the power of SEO. That's what SEO is doing for people.

The people on major search terms or search terms that have volume, it doesn't even have to be a major search term. If you're coming up on a page one search, your business is put in a position to retire.

Michael: It reminds me of hitting the jackpot in Las Vegas.

Lori: Exactly right. This is why it's so vital because you're not spending advertising dollars that once they were done, they were gone. This is something that you're actually building. You're building a very powerful presence.

Michael: It's like the demand is already out there, whether I'm there or not, there's 110,000 people looking for a divorce attorney. Now, if you can position my website and my expertise in front of that demand, I can take it.

Lori: Now, not all 110,000 purchase, but you have to also consider how many divorce attorneys are out there. So, this is why an SEO professional is really essential because there's a balance and a fine line you have to walk that you're going to take the steps that are most effective for somebody starting out from scratch, and it's going to systematically build your presence.

Michael: I'm looking at some of the terms. It shows all these other ones. So, let's say I'm in Chicago. So, I look "divorce attorney Chicago," because if someone is looking for a divorce attorney, they're probably going to look in their area. So, it shows 1,900 searches in January. That's still pretty good. How many clients does a divorce attorney need a month?

Lori: Here's the thing too, that Google is very sophisticated for your local searches. There's a lot of things that we do and we can do for starting out businesses that they really want to target a very specific area or a specific customer.

It's all about targeting and tracking, and that's the other thing that we haven't talked about yet is that you really want to track everything that

you do. You want to know where the results are coming from, what works and what doesn't work, and this is so powerful to have analytics on your site.

So, you try something on a print or a lot of places, and you have no ability to track. What are the results? Who looked at your ad? Who didn't look at your ad? How long did they stay on your ad before they bounced off?

This is an incredible thing that you can do online. You can measure everything.

Michael: Really?

Lori: Oh, absolutely.

Michael: You can tell who looked at it, how long they looked at it, when they left the page, everything.

Lori: Everything.

Michael: Do you have software that does all that?

Lori: Everything can be tagged. You can tag (inaudible) because you'll put the analytics on your site, and you'll see the most pages that were viewed, how long the pages were viewed, how do they reach those sites? From what sources did they come from? Did they come from a search engine? Did they come from a referring site? Did they come directly? There's all kinds of things you'll find out.

Michael: That's wild. Now, what if I want to know how I rank like in Google? Is there a place or website you can tell me that I can see where I stand within Google rankings or if I'm ranked at all?

Lori: Yes, and actually Google provides tons of tools. Google really wants to make the whole thing friendly for everyone. So, you can just go to the Google toolbox, and they'll provide a Google page rank tool.

The one that I really like to use because it gives you a lot more information than that is something called SEO Quake. You can add that to Firefox or Internet Explorer. It's a download, and then you'll probably have to restart your browser.

What happens is that SEO Quake toolbar will come up on top, and it will give you all kinds of information about your site. It will include, first of all, your page rank about your site or anybody's site. You can even look at your competition.

Michael: I'm installing this now. SEO Quake, install SEO Quake now, so this will tell me what my ranking is?

Lori: Yes.

Michael: Okay, I'll play around with this while we talk. So, I'll be able to know where I stand.

Lori: Then, it'll tell you your page rank, and then it'll tell you if you're indexed on Google or not. It'll tell you if you're indexed on MSN. It'll tell you how many pages are indexed on each of those. So, if your site has a lot of pages, only your home page is, it'll say one page.

This is a really great tool. So, it'll say for Yahoo, MSN, and then it'll also have something very important. It'll tell you your Alexa ranking.

Michael: What's that?

Lori: It's a website. You can go to Alexa.com, but Alexa ranks all websites out there. It'll tell you pretty much how you stand. That Alexa ranking, that number, you want that to be lower, where Google page rank you want to be highest being ten.

Michael: So, it tells you how popular you are, your site is in relationship to the rest of the world.

Lori: Yes, and in terms of traffic, your Alexa ranking is lower.

Michael: That's good.

Lori: That's good, yes, because it means you're getting a lot of traffic. Most people, when they start out, their websites are twenty million, and it's not an absolute six figure. You're the twenty millionth website out there. It's giving you a level that you're out there, and twenty million is not good.

The ideal thing is to be under a hundred thousand, but there are a lot of sites that are doing good business that have a million or two million in ranking. The lower that number gets, the more traffic is essentially is there. It's a metric to determine how much traffic the site is getting.

Michael: I'll go check this out. I appreciate that tidbit.

Lori: You can spy on your competition. On that toolbar further down, it'll say density. If you click on that density, it'll show what your competition's meta-description is, their meta keywords are, and what the density of their keywords are on their page.

Michael: Oh, it'll show me the competition.

Lori: Any website you put up on there.

Michael: On Alexa?

Lori: No, not on Alexa, on SEO Quake toolbar.

Michael: I'll play around with this. This looks great. So, why is the execution, or why having someone do all this for me is something that maybe I should think about for my website?

Lori: Because if you don't have someone else do it, it typically just doesn't get done. The reason it doesn't get done, as you can see, it's quite complex. They don't know what to do, or they know only a few things to do. Also, business owners are busy enough, and SEO is a full time job.

You need to decide what the best and highest use of their time, energy and money is. Is a business owner going to be able to spend the time that it takes to learn and do SEO that's effective?

I'm a firm believer in on going education, and that business owners should keep on learning, and they should learn about what SEO is, but there has to be a decision made about what's the best use of that business owner's time, and what is the cost of what I call reinventing the SEO wheel and then getting it done?

So, doesn't it make sense to use those who already expert in this field and who just get it done?

Michael: I think so. Any business has to advertise. When you subcontract to the yellow pages, you're paying an expert to get your millions of phone books printed and all through the city. You are executing and paying someone to do that to get your ad out. It's no different.

Lori: Well, there is a difference. The difference is that once those pages are done and it's an old issue, those are in the trash.

Michael: Those go in the trash, that's right.

Lori: This will always be building. Your presence will be building stronger and stronger, and every year that you're in business, you're building a strong online building that's existing and getting bigger and bigger and more massive presence online.

Michael: Because it's so massive and there's so many people online and so much searching going on, you could get really lucky and it could grow very fast, your foundation I guess.

Lori: Right, and another way – you made me think of this – is linking. You don't know who is linking. The interesting thing is the way that propagates itself is that part of an SEO strategy is something we call article writing, and this is something an individual can do for themselves.

You write articles and then you can submit them to article directories. Then, your information about your website is on the bottom of your article.

The purpose of those article directories is because somebody else has a website or a blog, and they want to put content on their site. Well, they're free to use those articles that writers have submitted to the article directories that demonstrate your authority and your knowledge, but they have to put that content on their site with your information on the bottom, which of course, includes a link to your site.

So, that's a beginning way to supplement directories and getting links to your site right away. That's something that individuals can supplement professional SEO efforts of doing.

Well, if you don't have time to article write, the SEO service should be able to do that for you.

Michael: That's an off page strategy, right?

Lori: Yes, exactly.

Michael: So, why is your SEO company, why are you the best in the world?

Lori: Well, first of all because we can get a lot for you done no matter what your budget is. We are the best, I would say because we are a US Search Marketing company. We do have research and delivery centers outside the US.

Because of this we offer a huge cost advantage to our clients. You have to consider this, Michael, that other popular and reputable SEO companies in the United States can charge anywhere from \$50 to way more than \$500 an hour.

Michael: \$500 an hour for search engine optimization.

Lori: Oh, yes, because just think about what we talked about, what'll do to the bottom line of a company. Fortunes are made by SEOing your company correctly, and because also SEO strategy is very labor intensive, this is the reason why so many small business owners think that they can't afford to hire out a professional because it's very labor intensive and there's a lot of hours involved with it, and look at the typical hourly price. So, they think they have to learn SEO by themselves.

Consequently, because it's so involved, it just doesn't get done, and that's why you have a great disparity between the ones who are doing it out there and then the other ones who are lost in cyberspace.

The reality is that small business owners can and should use professionals to do, and now it's even more affordable than ever because of my company.

Michael: How many companies have you guys worked with internationally in the last four years?

Lori: Well, we've worked with over a thousand clients in the last four years, and we overcome all kinds of language barriers where we have international clients.

Michael: What are some of the services that you guys provide specifically?

Lori: We do a lot of services, and of course, we mentioned the search engine optimization. That's called SEO, and then there's services called social media optimization. That's the Web 2.0 strategies, and you know what those are. Those are the Twitter, Digg, Facebook, YouTube and so forth.

Michael: So, you can actually, if I have a page up on Facebook, there are ways to even optimize that page to help get people back to my main site?

Lori: Yes, these are all different strategies, but also, there are different ways of using it. You've got to be very careful with all those social medias. You can't go in there blatantly peddling your wares because you'll get banned and you won't be appreciated.

Actually, Facebook is very strong about those kinds of policies, and they will ban you from outwardly peddling in their site. Although, they have a pay per click now inside Facebook, which is of course, different that's advertising.

If you're trying to forge relationships on Facebook or Twitter, and you're very blatantly promoting yourself, you will not get a following. The whole idea is to develop relationships and friends on those.

There are strategies that you can use to optimize your social media. For example, you might want to do a social media optimization say in the case that you have a product that would be benefited by a video, for example. So, you'd want to do a video kind of broadcast, YouTube or lots of video sites out there that could direct traffic to a landing page.

So, there's a whole bunch of strategies, but again, it's got to be customized to whatever a company's particular needs are, and then we're in a position to know what would be best.

Michael: Do you guys do pay per click stuff?

Lori: Yes, we do pay per click management. Pay per click itself is like an online keyword auction for the ads.

Michael: It's paid advertising.

Lori: It's paid advertising. That's right. You bid on the keywords, what kind of keywords are relevant to your site. So, you want to get the most effective ads using the right keywords, and getting the best price for your keywords, and you don't want to overpay for it because then you're wasting money.

You want to optimize that and have a management firm do that for you because you'll get the best delivery for the money that you're putting into your budget.

Michael: So, I assume managing all that is time consuming.

Lori: Yes, it requires a lot of knowledge. I've heard so many people say, "I've tried pay per click and it doesn't work." That's like, well, why do people do it out there? Of course it works. There are many companies that just are driving thousand of visitors to their sites because of pay per click. So, to say it doesn't work because it doesn't work for you just basically means that you didn't implement it in an effective way.

Michael: What other services do you provide?

Lori: We do affiliate management, if you're developing affiliates to sell your products. We'll do that. We have SEO Friendly. We talked about that, the onpage stuff the Friendly web design and development. We can basically make you the website of your dreams, whatever that is.

It may include shopping carts, dynamic or static web pages, a blog, forums, surveys, membership sites, and so on.

Michael: Other than price, why do you feel your service or your company is better than say these other companies here in the US?

Lori: Well, of course, I want to stress again that pricing is a huge advantage. Let's say it's the difference of getting SEO done or not for many companies. So, because of outsourcing outside the US, our pricing is at least five to ten times better than our competition.

Now, you might have a few local companies who might offer a cheaper package, but this is really important you need to check how many man hours they'll spend on your project and if they really know SEO.

There are a lot of people who will put themselves out on the internet as providers of SEO services, actually who will only offer very limited services.

Michael: Besides price, what else?

Lori: Well, we deliver, and we do it in a timely fashion. You get monthly reports, and we'll be able to monitor your website's progress. So many companies told me their tales of woe, and they are woe because they used local SEO firms or website designers who start and stop. They miss deadlines, and they never even complete projects.

You don't need this headache. We work very systematically, and that is whether we're developing your website, whether you're implementing your SEO and your social media strategies, or whether we're managing your pay per click campaign.

Michael, the fact that we have over five years of experience in handling search engine optimization and pay per click and affiliate management projects is really important. This is a lot of experience when you consider how young the internet is.

Also, we are committed to accuracy. We do not engage in any sales pitches or marketing gimmicks.

Michael: What do you mean by that?

Lori: Well, what I mean is that we will not sell you a magic or silver bullet. If you allow us to implement an SEO marketing strategy, you will build an online presence, but it will not be overnight, and we will not ever say that it will be. If you have a limited budget, we can get you started in an area that will benefit you the most right off the bat, and then work on other areas as you begin to grow.

My team has the knowledge and strength to get it done and get it done right. We have successfully executed more than 1,200 search engine optimization projects with a team of 250 people. This team is one of the largest search marketing companies in the world.

Michael: Let's say I'm shopping, which I am, and if I want to narrow down a list of SEO experts that I should consider using, what would you tell me would be some good ways to do that. Tell me how to create a short list.

Lori: Here's what I would do. I would do a search online and see if they have any of the criteria we just talked about. Then, see what they can do that fits into your budget.

Michael: Okay, we talked a little bit about Facebook and Twitter and the so-called Web 2.0. That's a term that's pretty new to me, and I would assume probably some new strategies when it comes to search engine optimization. How would I check if I am making my short list if an SEO company is up to snuff on SEO services for the social media type sites?

Lori: Well, the thing to do would be to ask them. There's a lot of hype surrounding Web 2.0 and social media optimization. A lot of it is just hype. However, blogs, RSS Feeds, social bookmarking, now have really become an important part of an overall SEO strategy.

Michael: Why is this?

Lori: Well, Google is always changing. Google is growing and getting better all the time, and Google rolled out Universal Search in May 2007.

Michael: What is that? Do you know?

Lori: Yes, and it drastically changed the way Google search results interface exists, and that now includes results from more information sources like news, videos, Google maps, local search, all kinds of things. So, you should consider social media optimization in the cases, as I mentioned, if you had a product or service and you wanted to rank the video itself in Google instead, say, ranking your web page.

Michael: So, with this new Google changes for universal search, Google is taking into consideration if I have links or exposure on YouTube and Twitter and Facebook and all those sites. That's good, right?

Lori: Oh, absolutely. You'll notice now in your whole search experience, instead of just coming up with web URLs, a lot of times you'll do a search, and guess what pops up?

Michael: That's right, the videos. You're right.

Lori: That's because of the changed interface that's happened.

Michael: Very good. I know what a press release is. That's for the media, but how can a press release and the distribution be important when choosing a vendor?

Lori: Online press release distribution is another good way to generate links. Also companies like PR Web have a syndication network and their press releases are picked up by other websites through RSS feeds, and press releases, they're a great way to get exposure in Google and Yahoo News. They can also counter any negative publicity if that should ever happen to your company.

So, it's important to ask your SEO vendor whether they provide press release distribution.

Michael: Do you do that?

Lori: Yes, we do, and it's really important to know if it's about press release that the press release, they're not all created equal. We know you don't want to make it boring. It's not effective, and if you're just doing a press release that's pretty much constructed introducing somebody got promoted. That's not really interesting, and it's not going to get picked up.

If you have something that's newsworthy about your release - not a sales letter, not a sales pitch because that won't get picked up either - your distribution will get picked up by sites everywhere. Of course, when it's picked up, you're getting those back links which is really powerful.

Michael: So, is that PR Web, that company, you guys handle writing it, or they handle writing it, and they can send it out to the media like hundreds of thousands of potential media outlets?

Lori; Yes, and PR Web has different packages that you can purchase for that release. The price of the package will determine what the range of the distribution - what syndication, where it's promoted - and, it could be as specific as the trade group or industry that picks up your distribution, or it could be Google News or Associated Press, for example.

Depending on the price of the package will determine how wide your release gets distributed, but PR Web won't write it. They're just the

distributor of it. You have to write your own copy, or you have to have a professional copywriter do it, which we can do that.

Michael: Okay, if it gets distributed and picked up, I'm in the search engines through that one distribution of the press release.

Lori: Oh, absolutely, yes.

Michael: Very good. What else should I ask when creating my short list of SEO experts?

Lori: You'll want to know if your website will be optimized for local search. That's really important for a lot of small businesses.

Michael: Why is that important?

Lori: Because local search includes not only submission to important local directories like the Google maps or Yahoo local, but also to other smaller ones like City Search, Ask City, and Local.com.

Michael: For example, divorce attorney in Chicago.

Lori: Right, exactly.

Michael: So, you'll optimize specifically because you know I'm in Chicago. I need clients in Chicago and these are some websites that will help.

Lori: Absolutely. You'll also have to have a listing in the online Yellow Pages directories. Having a presence in these local search engines and the local Yellow Pages, like you said, you'll get that local traffic, so you'll get wider exposure because of the Google universal interface that's changed.

Michael: Do you guys have a service that includes link building where you try and build up more links linking back to my site?

Lori: Yes, that's exactly what we do. That's a very powerful and important part of what we do. Many SEO vendors do not include back linking or that link building we talked about as part of their service. What they will do in many cases is they'll offer it as an add on service.

That's okay, but what's wrong on their part is if they do not inform you of this when you're their client. Since a lot of clients don't know what to

expect anyway, they're hiring somebody for SEO services, they really don't know what they're getting.

So, in the case of an SEO vendor, for example who might charge you \$2,000 say for SEO services and the link building may even cost you an additional \$1,500. So, this is obviously a significant increase to your budget. It's almost 100% more.

Michael: So, ask my vendor.

Lori: Yes, you have to ask your vendor if those services will include link building or not, and if they do include the link building, you're going to want to ask how many links that they're striving to develop.

I say striving to develop because again you know it's that partnership that they're seeking, and it takes a lot of hours to build those links back from those partnerships.

Another thing to do is to request a few case studies. There are genuine reasons why SEO vendors will not display their case studies actually on their website, but there really is no excuse for them not to give you out a few case studies when the client requests them. It's very important that you ask for a few as a sample.

Michael: Okay, what else?

Lori: You also need to confirm who'll make the changes to your website, you or your SEO vendor. If they are not doing it, then you have to consider what the extra cost will be of having someone else do it for you. It's kind of a debatable area.

Many SEO vendors come in as consultants, and they'll give you a report of what changes need to be done to your website, and then you're kind of left having to do it yourself. So, you need to ask them who'll implement the changes on your website, either you or them, and if the changes are simple in nature like working on some HTML pages, then some SEO companies will include this work within the quoted SEO price.

On the other hand, if the changes are extensive and require either programming or database changes, some SEO companies might

either work with your existing development company or your current webmaster, or give you a quote for implementing those changes.

Michael: What about you? You'll do the changes for me, right?

Lori: Yes.

Michael: Okay, so other companies may just tell you what to do, but you'll do the execution for us.

Lori: That's right, and some companies will just tell you what to do, or you may be able to contract them to do it, but then, if that's an additional thing, you've got to find out how much extra they'll charge.

Michael: Very sneaky. What are some other tips I can use when I'm narrowing down my research?

Lori: Well, you can request a sample client report for example, and inquiry about the frequency that they'll report to the client.

Michael: What is reporting frequency?

Lori: Okay, well, SEO is ongoing. So, you're going to want to check the progress of what's going on. It's generally good practice to ask what types of reports you can expect from your vendor that's going to tell you what this ongoing progress. You want to know what the frequency of these reports will be.

Most SEO vendors, when they give you a sample client report, they'll remove the client names and other sensitive data when showing you those examples. You'll need to know these reports because you'll want to be able to check how much time or man hours that they're spending on your project.

When you're checking the same report, by asking how much time they're going to spend on your project, this will be able to give you a ballpark of what their hourly rates are when you know what they're charging. This will be able to help you compare apples to apples with other vendors. So, you'll be able to determine what they're actually charging for the services they're giving you and also it'll give you a benchmark for any additional work that you might want to have done in the future.

Then, you'll also need to clarify what kind of support you'll be getting from your SEO vendor as well, but in the SEO industry, you have to realize that it's very rare to get a face to face meeting with your vendor, unless of course, the SEO vendor happens to be local to you or in the case that your SEO budget is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and that's a reality for a lot of huge companies. That's how important it is to spend on SEO because that's what it means to their business to get on page one.

However, you need to ask your vendor what kind of support you'll get even if you don't see him face to face. The support could be email, chat. It could be telephone calls. Those are the three major forms of support, but I would say that not all clients get the telephone or chat support. It's most common to get email support. The average response time to that should be not more than 24 hours.

Michael: What about is there room for negotiating payment terms of frequency and discounts?

Lori: Yes, payment is usually made in at least two installments. That's kind of standard, and it really depends on the scope of the project. For a small project, you're going to be expected to pay the whole thing up front. You should really check with your SEO vendor if they can offer the monthly installments.

Sometimes, they'll offer discounts, and discounts are possible especially if you're committing to a longer term project or if you have multiple projects going on with them, but in any case, you should always ask about a discount. If you don't ask, you obviously could be missing out on an opportunity.

My company, for example, we offer a discount off our prices, which are extremely competitive already. We do this to veteran business owners. We do this because we want to salute them. We value veterans, and we want to tell them thank you for everything they've done. So, we have permanent discounts for them.

In addition to that, just as an aside, we offer a free self help podcast on our site to support veteran families coping with post traumatic stress disorder.

Michael: Okay, so in a nutshell, tell me some reasons why I should select you over someone else?

Lori: Okay, well, here it is. First of all, you will get quality work at a fraction of the typical SEO cost. So, you will get an extraordinary value for your money.

We always use the latest cutting edge SEO techniques that have been approved by the search engines. That means we never use black hat techniques.

Michael: What's a black hat technique?

Lori: You'll find out that a lot of SEO companies do use these black hat techniques. They're kind of sneaky, not sanctioned by Google. Google will slap you down for that, and you can actually get your site permanently banned from Google.

Basically, you know what that means. This is serious stuff. It's essentially shutting down your business.

Michael: So, don't play around with that.

Lori: No, absolutely not, and black hat techniques, they're used to get quick but cheap results. Of course, if it shuts down your business, it's costing you big time, and here's the thing. Michael, almost always the business owners who are using those vendors, they don't even know that those techniques were being used.

Michael: You see all the time these marketers who sell this software that will get you ranked up to the top. That's black hat stuff.

Lori: Yes, that's a lot of black hat stuff, and they won't say that's black hat. You can buy a lot of software programs that put scripts on your site, and do all kinds of things. It depends on what you're using it for. If it's a landing page, and you want to capture quick traffic over like a month or two month period, and then you get shut down, it's like, who cares? You were in it for the Halloween season, or something like that.

Black hat techniques are not illegal. It's just that if you're developing a business online, you don't want to do anything that's going to shut you down. If you get shut down, that's closing the door and putting a lock on your business, and you don't want to do that.

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