

New Business Podcast

Episode #12

**NBP012 Getting Start with Small Business SEO,
with Neil Patel**

Chris Ducker: Hey, everybody. It's Chris Ducker here. And this is the [New Business Podcast](#) where insightful how-to business strategies collide with actionable tips and tactics. Look no further. You found the podcast that you need to tune in to catapult your business into the 21st century.

Well, hello there everybody and welcome to another edition of the New Business Podcast [episode 12](#) to be precise. And thank you very, very much for tuning in. I am your host, Chris Ducker, and feeling very happy today because not only have we got another fantastic show lined up with a brilliant, brilliant expert guest, but over the weekend I actually did a special event here in Cebu.

Actually, I did a couple. I was speaking at a couple of events. But one of them was actually in my co-working space, Location 63, with the Suitcase Entrepreneur herself, [Natalie Sisson](#). Now, she will actually be coming up in a future episode of the podcast. But I had such a great time with her and I thoroughly enjoyed hanging out with her.

And the other really good thing that came out of that whole weekend is I actually had a couple of my VAs come down from Manila to Cebu and we sat and we brainstormed and mind mapped out an entire year's worth of content creation and marketing.

So as you guys know, I'm on a little bit of a content creation and marketing push this year in 2013, all part of my wicked evil plan. I can't believe I just did that on my own podcast. But it's all part of my evil plan to go ahead and continue to grow the Chris Ducker platform with a roundup of the release of my book from *Virtual Freedom* which is all about how you can grow your dream business and utilizing virtual teams. And that will be coming out early next year.

So, I'm trying to build this platform up as much as I can and I thoroughly, thoroughly enjoyed sitting down with my own virtual team or at least part of it to talk about the content side of things and sort of getting busy on that in the next few months. So expect a boatload of really high quality content coming your way in the very near future

Now, when you talk about content, it's hard not to discuss SEO, search engine optimization in terms of the overall scheme of content marketing because obviously, we're creating all this content because we want to be found on Google and all those other search engines. And we want to have our content consumed and shared socially on places like Twitter and Facebook and Google+ and LinkedIn and all the other fun social networks out there as well.

So, I don't claim to be an SEO expert, all right? And when Google released the Panda and the Penguin updates last year, I did know however that there was going to be a lot of trouble spell for a lot of small business owners that were focusing their efforts on SEO or paying someone else to handle that side of their business for them. And then obviously, since the landscape has changed so much, I decided today, I thought it would be a great idea to bring a little calm to the storm in a simple effective way so that every small business owner out there can understand what they need to do to market their products and their services and build their brands online today.

So, my guest today is the founder of two internet companies namely, [Crazy Egg](#) and [KISSmetrics](#). He's also a blogger over at [quicksprout.com](#). He's also worked with and advised some very, very large companies such as HP, Amazon, AOL simply to just help them make more money from the internet. And he's named one of USA's Top Entrepreneur – sorry, from Entrepreneur Magazine and was just recently recognized as one of the Top 100 Entrepreneurs under the age of 30 by President Barack Obama. So without further ado, let's talk small business SEO with Neil Patel. How are you, mate?

Neil Patel: I'm great. Thanks for having me.

Chris Ducker: Well, this has been a while putting this one together. So, I'm more than ecstatic to finally get you on the show. It's fantastic.

Neil Patel: Definitely. I'm glad to be here so ...

Chris Ducker: All right, good stuff. So I mean for those of you tuning in, SEO or search engine optimization is basically the way to get your website to appear at the top of Google. All right? It's all about that first page. It's all about those first three spots, those first five spots, above the fold, whatever, whatever way you want to look at it. It's about getting found through the search engine.

And I'm not going to bother now, Neil, with the whole kind of who you are and what you're all about thing because I think that the large majority of my audience is pretty savvy already and they'll know who Neil Patel is. So if it's cool with you, I'm just going to dive straight in and we're just going to start rapping. We're going to get into this thing. Is that cool with you?

Neil Patel: Works for me.

Chris Ducker: All right. So let's do it. So, here's my thing and I've spoken to a lot of people over the last couple of months about this. Is the more traditional SEO route such link-building for example, is that still important in the market? With everything kind of crawling with "content marketers and social media experts", is that essence of link-building the old school SEO way, is that still relevant do you think?

Neil Patel: It is really relevant, right? It still works well. What's changed is how you link-build. Before you may go out there and get links from article submission sites or directory, stuff like that. Now, you're building links these days to really good content. Before, you were still merely link-building to your homepage to try to get rankings. Now, you want to build links to your internal pages and have a whole – more holistic approach.

So what's happening is, is instead of people going out there and manually building links, they're doing it indirectly by creating good content. Some people still manually create links but creating good content is the easiest and most effective way to get links for now and probably in the long haul as well.

Chris Ducker: Right. I'm with you. I mean do you think that – I mean, what's your professional, very experienced opinion when it comes down to Google and the changes that they made last year? I mean there's enough written about it online already but what was your take on everything that happened last year?

Neil Patel: Yes. So I think is that they did quite well. A lot of content sites saw a more increase in traffic. A lot of spamming sites saw a decrease. People writing great content saw an increase as people who are just regurgitating the same old information, spinning content, and stuff like that saw a decrease. People who are building too rigid anchor texts links saw a decrease as people who have more of a natural link profile saw an increase.

I think it's for the better off of the whole industry and it's causing the game to be much more fairer. You're now able to more easily get rankings in competitive areas or industries by creating really good content sites or product-related sites. If you solve a real problem, people love it. They'll naturally link to it and you're starting to get much higher rankings as a result.

Chris Ducker: Well, that's my take on it as well. And I guess maybe that's my background in sales is that the old adage of just solve somebody's problem, give them a solution to an issue that they're having and they'll be a customer forever. They'll become a fan forever. And so, I've always preferred whenever I personally create content myself, I hate the idea of having the keyword stuff and all that sort of shit. It drives me crazy.

I want to write with my own voice to genuinely help people. And that's just always been my focus. So I actually, I didn't get hit too badly at all in regards to the sites that I was updating and I was working on regularly like my blog. I did however take a little bit of a hit on some niche sites that I was playing around with. And even one of my business websites where we had done quite a lot of SEO in there regards to blog networks and stuff like that. That took a pretty heavy hit. But we've recovered from it. We focused on the content.

And what you're saying is that and I completely agree with you, is that we've really focused on now creating the absolute best quality content that we can and it's naturally getting linked to. So you're banging on the money.

Neil Patel: Definitely.

Chris Ducker: So, here's the thing. All right. So what does the complete SEO small business rookie, what would you say like the top three most important tools that they have to have in their arsenal when they get started focusing on SEO to really market their business online?

Neil Patel: Sure. So one is, you need analytics. You can use any form of analytics you want out there just to give some visibility of what's happening. If you don't know what your traffic numbers are, you can't do anything.

Chris Ducker: Yup.

Neil Patel: Two, and assuming you're starting off, I would look at a general SEO tool. Something like [SEOMoz](#) or [Raven Tools](#) or something like that that just gives you a basic sense of what's happening in the landscape with your website, what's wrong, what you needed fixing, yada, yada, yada.

Chris Ducker: Yup.

Neil Patel: And the third one which I think is really important is a keyword tool. Like a really deep keyword tool, maybe like a [Wordtracker](#) or whatever it may be. And what that will end up doing is that will help you determine what you should be going after because the last thing you want to do is start ranking for terms that aren't making you any money.

Chris Ducker: Right, exactly. The money comes along after the traffic comes along, after the content has been created, after the research has been done. So you truly do have to begin almost how you want to carry on. I mean it's kind of begin with the end in mind, that sort of type of thing.

Neil Patel: That's correct.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. So, I mean what do you feel then – what do you think the first thing that a small business owner should do to actually get started with SEO? I mean he's got his tools. He's got the stuff there. What's the first thing? I mean in that research motion, break that down a little bit for us because this is what you do, man. You get paid mad amount of money by some of the largest companies in the world to do this for them.

I'm not asking that you give too much of your secret sauce away but I would love to be able to get into your head a little bit in regards to, "Right. I'm ready to go. I've got my tools. I've got my analytics. My SEOmoz is there. My Wordtracker is in place. I've done some research. What do I do now? What's the first step out of the gate?"

Neil Patel: Just create a really good content. Find out what your readers want. It doesn't matter if you have a B2B website or B2C website, you can always have content. Find out what they're looking for and start writing content that educates them. It doesn't have to be content on your product. It just has to be content that educates your target market.

For example, KISSmetrics, we're analytics company, right? But our target market or our target buyer is a marketer. So we'll blog on things such as SEO, conversion optimization, pay-per-click. Even though we don't offer a lot of those services, we'll still blog on it because the marketer is our ideal customer, right?

So when they read it, they'll be like, "Wow! This guy writes great content. What do these guys do?" They'll check it. They'll go to our homepage and be like, "Cool! KISSmetrics, customer analytics solution, let me try it out."

So you want to build trust and that's the whole purpose of creating great content. And when you're creating the content, you'll notice that it will start spreading on the social web, via Twitter, Facebook, or on resource site. What you want to do is when you're writing it, make sure you've share it with your own account, have your friends, your employees, your team members share it as well. And it should help you get some social love which can help with rankings and overall traffic.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I love the social love aspect of it because we're in a very social world now. I mean just two years ago, three years ago, five years ago, we're in nowhere near where we are now, right? So, what kind of – what do you feel social media – what role does social media play in the general SEO landscape?

Neil Patel: Yeah. Social media is really important. Search engines both Bing and Google have explicitly said it that they use social algorithms to actually help determine search rankings. So they're looking at things like how many tweets, how fast are you getting the tweets for a page, the number of Facebook likes, Google+ likes or votes. They're looking at all those factors to also help determine rankings.

Well, we noticed that if you get a ton of social love, your rankings will skyrocket. They'll go down after a while but you'll get a quick boost which is nice.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, absolutely. Now, we can't talk about SEO without obviously bringing up content in general. You personally and I read your blog. I've been subscribed for a long, long time. You produce such an insane amount of content which is by the way, some of the most high-quality written stuff that's available online, in my opinion, for what it's worth. But it's all top level stuff.

What do you think in terms of a medium though with content, now I know that you're biggie for graphic fan as well, what do you think is really working best right now in regards to content mediums themselves? Is video still – video has been like the next big thing forever, right? You know what I mean?

Neil Patel: Yeah. I will actually say, it's just plain, old, ugly content that's just well-read. And not just like a blog post, more so detailed stuff. So like, I wrote an advance guide to SEO, 45,000 words. It did extremely well. SEOmoz has a beginners guide to SEO. It did extremely well. And I actually got the idea from them because I believe I've read somewhere how they got over a million visitors to their beginner's guide since their lifetime. So I was like, "Maybe I'll just create a guide on the advance guide."

Chris Ducker: Right.

Neil Patel: So for SEO. But what I found is really detailed content does better than anything else.

Chris Ducker: Right. So you see now, it's funny you say that because I noticed myself that when I've invested the time to put together a bigger post, a longer post, call it three, four thousand words or whatever, I haven't had as much stickiness around that post, as much comments, as much shares that I have with maybe a 700-word post with a 2-minute video attached to it. I mean what do you think about that sort of situation?

Neil Patel: Yeah, I'm with you, right? So it's like the more detailed it is, the stickier it is, the more elements you add, videos, images, all that kind of stuff into one post like it's really meaty and detailed and that's not called fluff because if you have a ton of fluff, there can also high drop off rate, it works extremely well.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. No, I hear you. So here's a quick question then that came in from my very good friend Ralph Quintero over at The Great Business Project. And he's curious to know what's better right now? Is it the more traditional landing page or is it a blog-content type landing page? What's going to work better now in terms of converting people into opt-ins or even customers on the spot?

Neil Patel: I found landing pages work better for converting customers. So what you want to do is – search engines are more so like the blog page, content-rich pages with links everywhere and navigation and news and all that kind of stuff.

Chris Ducker: Yeah.

Neil Patel: So you have those pages for search engines and you have the landing page to convert people and you try to divert traffic from your blog or your website into a landing page. That's what obviously works extremely well.

Chris Ducker: I think I've seen a shift in landing pages as well where they've gone from being this sort of forever growing long – I mean just ridiculously long landing pages where there are all these testimonials, most of which are probably fake, and just tons of bullet points and highlights and all this sort of stuff.

Now, it's different. I've noticed this myself. The landing pages seem to be three or four screens long. They've got some really nice, clean images, a very large buy now button or opt-in button nowadays. I mean how do you think or what do you think rather about the way that the more traditional landing page has evolved in the last few years? I'm really curious to know because I know obviously you've been online for a long, long time.

Neil Patel: Yeah. No. So to clarify, you're asking what is the best form of a landing page?

Chris Ducker: I'm curious on your thoughts really and how you think the way that the landing pages gone from that very once long page with lots of highlighted texts and all that sort of type of stuff to where we are now today where things just seem to be a lot more condensed and a little more concise?

Neil Patel: Yeah. The long ones still work. It's more so where the big shift has been as people are taking those long copy pages and converting them to video because the video ones convert a lot better.

Chris Ducker: Right. So you're saying, if you've got a landing page, you're selling something, you've got to have a video on it basically.

Neil Patel: That's correct.

Chris Ducker: OK.

Neil Patel: I think video is really helpful, video with the founder's voice, old school videos with them just drawing the text like writing it out.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, they're kind of cool. I've seen a lot of those recently where you sort of get this hand that's sort of moving very quickly and it's drawing almost like an infographic in front of you and then the screen is changing. I mean those videos just stand out. And you want to carry on watching because they're just so darn cool. You know what I mean?

Neil Patel: That's correct. Yup.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, it's all good. I love that stuff. Now, here is something that I want to ask you. On your about page on your blog, you've got a lot of info in there about your background and your experiences and all the rest of it. And obviously, the listeners should absolutely go over and check all that stuff out because you've got a very kind of cool background.

But there is one sentence on there that I've pulled directly into my notes here and I'm going to read it out right now. And I want to ask your reaction. I want to ask for your reaction and I guess your explanation behind it because this is something that kind of really stood out to me so I'm going to read it right now.

“Over the next few years, my number one goal is to share what I've learned with you so that you can have a better life than me.”

What's the motivation behind that? I mean that really stood out to me.

Neil Patel: Yeah, I just want to help people succeed. People helped me succeed so I'm just trying to replicate it and help them succeed as well. There is pretty much no more motivation than that. Like when I started out, I didn't have a ton of money. A lot of people helped me and I was like, it's my way of just repaying it back, right? Like if I can continually help other people do the same, I'm a happy camper.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. But there's a lot of people out there that they're not doing that. And they had all that success and they had had a lot of help from other people as well but for some reason, they're reluctant to pass that knowledge and that experience on. I mean do you think they're just scared? Are they scared they might be knocked off their pedestal?

Neil Patel: That's correct. I think they are or they're too busy or they don't care to help other people.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. I mean my belief is that if you help ten people, there are going to be 20 hands that are going to be created out of that at least. You know what I mean? I just think that the ability to be able to take any level of experience in any kind of niche and pass it on to someone else in regards to their business or their life or whatever they're doing, for me, it's incredibly gratifying.

And I noticed, I talk a lot about virtual assistants and leveraging our time as entrepreneurs and things like that. and when you meet somebody at a conference, you give them some tips or they read a blog post or listen to your podcast and then six months later, you meet them again or they drop you an email and they say, “I heard you say this, this, and this. I did it. And oh my God! You’ve got no idea what it’s done for my business.” That stuff is just gold, right? That kind of gratification is fantastic.

Neil Patel: It’s awesome, right? And this is like – at least me and myself, I love it. That’s what encourages me to keep working and do well. It’s like fun hearing all those people say what you did for them.

Chris Ducker: Absolutely. I couldn’t agree more. So there’s another reader question or listener question rather. This is from Daniel Hayes, it came it via Twitter. And he wants to know if you’ve got any tips in regards to SEO. This is a good one. It got me intrigued. SEO of images online. I mean we’re becoming more and more visual online and Daniel said that he sees a lot of people just sort of using the standard filename their camera creates or screenshot 4422 or whatever. They don’t change those titles and they don’t add the tags and stuff like that. What kind of advice have you got on that side of things for SEO? Is it important? Do we need to worry about that stuff?

Neil Patel: Yeah. It may just drive a ton of traffic. So I’m going to break down a few ways. For the basics – a bit more than the basics. Yeah, image in relation is too complex. So, the first one is all tags. If you have the image like of the Golden Gate Bridge, be descriptive like, “The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco covered by fog,” or whatever it may be. You can also do long descriptions. So you could do, what’s that called, “The Golden Gate Bridge – Image of the Golden Gate Bridge taken on February 12, 2013 when there was five car accidents which caused traffic,” whatever.

Chris Ducker: Right.

Neil Patel: So it’s really detailed. And then you want to make your filename relevant so you can call it like San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge.jpg. So that helps. You want to have big images because search engines like that but you want the file size so like how many megabytes or kilobytes images, you want that as small as possible. So you can use programs like Sketch to shrink them, right?

Chris Ducker: Right.

Neil Patel: And the other thing is, is you want to use images, I know this sounds weird, but it’s not necessarily image optimization but it kind of is in Google’s Rich Snippets. So like author profiles, logo, or stuff like that. It really helps so you can

have, let's say your image next to your URL when someone does a search as that helps click throughs.

Chris Ducker: And then you're also getting people search for images on Google and stuff like that and then they obviously going to see that image there. They might end up clicking through to your site and so forth, right?

Neil Patel: Exactly. And I will say the last one to consider is build links to your images as well. So go out there. Find any links or anything you can end up doing to build the links to the right exact image because they start ranking higher image search. So linking to it from your post, whatever it may be.

Chris Ducker: That's an interesting one. I've never even considered doing anything like that. But I'm going to test it now.

Neil Patel: Yup.

Chris Ducker: I'm going to give it a go right now. So all right, getting back to SEO a little bit more in regards to more traditional stuff, let's have a look at one area that I really like and I've had a lot of success with myself and I know that you're totally in love with this as well, long tail keywords. I mean you've written some great stuff about this on your blog as well. Give us two or three gems in regards to long tail keywords and why they're just so damn important.

Neil Patel: Yeah. Long tail keyword is where the majority of the traffic is. Head terms sound great but it's easier to rank the long tail and they make up over 80% of your traffic if you're doing things right. There's really so much traffic than the head terms and the long tail ones convert better as well.

Chris Ducker: Right. I mean not just that. But I mean it takes a lot longer generally speaking, to rank for more of a primary keyword anyway.

Neil Patel: That's correct, much more longer.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, yeah. So, all right. I want to just shift gears a little bit there. I'm paying homage to [Srinivas](#) from Blogcast FM using that little segue. But I want to switch gears a little and I want to talk a little bit more about entrepreneurship and where you feel you are in your life right now with what you've achieved so far and where you believe you'll be sort of three, five years from now. I know you're on this mission to grow this huge, hundred million dollar company and all the rest of it. So how do you think you've developed yourself as an entrepreneur doing what you do over the last sort of five years or so?

Neil Patel: Sure. So, what I would end up saying with that one is over the years, this is like you got to go out there and just hustle. What I've ended up learning over like

the last five years as an entrepreneur, if you don't hustle and move fast enough, things just won't be as effective. Like you've got to go and do as much as possible with as little as possible with whatever resources you may have.

Chris Ducker: Right. I agree with you. I agree with you 100%. And I mean when you were in the process of growing, let's say for example, Crazy Egg? What was some of the instances where you felt like you really needed to move fast?

Neil Patel: Sure. I didn't have a ton of money. I was using borrowed money. I had to figure out how to make more money because we had to pay them back. And we got our support [inaudible]. So I did scrappy things like, "Oh, Crazy Egg would be a perfect partner for designers." So I went to all the galleries at that time, CSS galleries and then negotiated advice for pennies on the dollar. And we had I think like over ten thousand email sign ups just from that.

Chris Ducker: Right. And I mean do you feel that the things that you've learned in your early part of your career, are they somewhat still things that you do now or have you kind of shifted a little bit and grown up a little bit so to speak?

Neil Patel: Yeah, I shifted and learned a lot. You pretty much learn from your mistakes and then you move from there. But the key is entrepreneurship. You've got to keep on learning.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I know. Tell me about it. Tell me about it. Exactly. So all right. Well look, I mean I think this has been one of those conversations that is just so perfectly concise and simple. And I knew that this was going to be this kind of conversation because SEO in general is a pretty complex subject for a lot of small business owners. We're not sort of traditionally tech-savvy.

We're having to become like that more and more and more now. And I know a lot of people listening to this podcast are slightly older entrepreneurs and not that sort of hotshot 20-odd-year-old that kind of gets all this stuff relatively easy. They've really got to work hard to understand.

What would you say, just going into the last couple of questions here, what would you say would be the easiest way for slightly older people to start understanding what SEO is all about? Is there may be a book that they need to read or a video they need to watch?

Neil Patel: I would go to SEOmoz.org. Under their resources section, they have something called [The Beginner's Guide to SEO](#). And it breaks it down. It has great illustrations. It will pretty much teach you the basics about SEO. Anyone can read it. And it will be really easy to understand if you read that.

Chris Ducker: I love that. I love that. And we're going to link to that in the show notes, everybody over at ChrisDucker.com/episode12. And I think it's – I haven't actually looked into that guide but I know a lot of people that have mentioned that to me when I've spoken to them. So you've prompted me. You've kind of kicked me at the butt a little bit. I'm going to go and check that out as well even though I don't feel like I'm still classed as a beginner so to speak, I'm pretty sure that I'm still going to be able to pick up some good gems in that, right?

Neil Patel: Definitely.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, cool. So here's my last question for you, Neil. What is, and this is the question we end every session of the New Business Podcast on, so make it a doozy, all right? What's your number one tip to doing business in today's economy?

Neil Patel: The number one tip, I would actually say to do business in today's economy is look for opportunities. And what I mean by this is there's a lot – and it may sound a bit bad but it's the reality, there are a lot of struggles out there where people are saying, "Hey, the economy stopped. I don't have much money. Yada, yada, yada." And there a lot of businesses that are closing down and exiting. Look for missed opportunities. Go for the easy ones first. So find out where people are exiting. Find out why and what they're doing wrong and go out there and start attacking those spaces.

Avoid the competitive and the well-known spaces or the hot spaces that everyone seems to be in or as well-funded because it's tough to compete in a space where something like an EX space block or social gaming where it's like a year or two ago in which everyone was able to raise hundreds of millions of dollars for it, right?

Go for the unsexy businesses where people are closing down because they don't know how to use these tactics like SEO and stuff like that. You don't need a ton of money to get in there. And go in and try to dominate it. You won't be the richest person but you can make a great living from it. And after you [inaudible] with one, go into another niche. After you go into that field, you start dominating it and crashing it financially as well.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, I like that. So it's the low-hanging fruit analogy and turning yourself into a serial entrepreneur literally overnight. That's where we're going. So all right. Well look, Neil, I want to thank you very much for taking the time out. I know that you're always extremely busy but I really appreciate you taking the time, man.

Neil Patel: No problem. Take care and have a good one.

Chris Ducker: You got it. To everybody else, thanks for tuning in and we'll see you next time on the New Business Podcast. If you haven't done so already, make sure

you head over to quicksprout.com and check out Neil's fantastic blog. Show notes over on ChrisDucker.com/episode12 as I mentioned. And until next time, please take good care of yourself. Continue to focus on your business and work towards all of those dreams and aspirations. We'll see you again real soon on the New Business Podcast. Take care for now.

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