



## Episode 18:

# Do You Know SEO?

[A transcript of this episode.](#)

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Welcome to the Professional Website Investor Podcast, the show where we talk about what it takes to successfully buy, operate, scale and sell a thriving eCommerce business. When it comes to doing business online, we believe that buying an existing website is far superior to building one from scratch. So if you're a career professional who's looking to become an eCommerce store owner listening to this show will give you the knowledge, tools and community support you need to be successful.

I'm your host, Ryan Cowden and this week we're joined by Ian Bond from professional website investors.com. In this episode of the professional website investor podcast, Ian and I discuss how to increase your website's visibility through cutting edge search engine optimization or SEO techniques. If you want to grow your eCommerce store, it's not enough to focus on having great content. While great content is essential, you won't make any sales if customers can't find your website.

We now know that customers rarely look beyond the first page of results that pop up in traditional search engines like Google. This means that if you want customers to find your store, you need to be popping up in the top results in your category. We don't have to leave that up to luck, chance, or even traffic. There are practices that you can use to ensure that your website appears in search results for customers searching for what you're selling.

On this episode, you'll hear a framework to help understand online retail and how SEO fits into that. The old model of advertising was paying for ads on search engines and social media, but SEO is replacing that as a new way to attract customers. Next we'll discuss ways to find the keywords your customers are using to search for stores and services. Then we'll share some practical steps to get you started on your website, including research and competitor pages and designing great website content.

And finally, we'll review some apps and tools to help improve your website SEO, including Ahrefs and Google Keyword Planner. If you're ready to increase your website's visibility, then this is one episode you won't want to miss. There's a lot of actionable advice in this episode. So grab something to write with because you're going to want to take notes. As always, I'll be back on the other side to wrap up any loose ends. So without any further ado, here's my conversation with Ian Bond.

RYAN: All right, Ian, we're back again. How are things going for you?

IAN: Excellent here. I couldn't be happier to be speaking with you today. We've got a topic that I really have some enthusiasm and I think I have a little bit different perspective for people and I'm going to call some people out. You know me, I like to be a little controversial.

RYAN: I'm on the edge of my seat just like always. I'm ready for anything. The general topic that we're looking at here is something we've talked about on the show before. We want to do a deep dive on this issue of search engine optimization, what it is and how to do it. So let's just kind of start big picture. What does engine optimization mean for you in the online world?

IAN: Let me first digress like I am prone to do in endeavors together. And let me just describe for you how it comes into play and why I think that this is such a huge topic for us to talk about today. And I have something that I've created in my brain called the online retail framework. You might think of it as a hierarchy. In lower price things that can fit into a shoe box everybody uses Amazon. I mean they are the undisputed king warehouses within two hours of over 70% of the disposable income in the United States. No one will ever touch that. And Amazon is the ugliest site on the Internet and they give you no information about any alternative products. They give you, for

what you're shopping for. They'll tell you what someone else bought with, what you're looking at. But they don't do comparison shopping and they're really, you know, one might think of it as being a commodity goods logistics firm. Because they do that really well.

They've purchased whole foods and you and I probably know more about avocados than they do. They just get it to you. Now if you're looking for more information and it's a little bit more expensive, you go to an affiliate site. You Google something like best earbuds. I'll give you an example. I just bought a pair of earbuds through an affiliate site last night. Best or top or best ranking or something like that. And earbuds I bought were not expensive, but I wanted an alternative to AirPods. I bought some because my bar ... I went to YouTube and I watched the guy review them and I clicked on the affiliate site and bought them through Amazon, but after he compared and contrasted three or four pairs and they're doing a great job.

The guys that are in the Amazon affiliate world, they're earning Florida, I don't know what they are now, nine or 10% maybe, is it the very high end, the commissions. And so they rely on search engine optimization and only SEO to be able to get your eyeballs on their information. And they spend an enormous amount of time giving, compare and contrast and advice. And YouTube I think is particularly good because it's a great medium to see people display things. But, the sites that are sold by the website brokers that are only websites but that are not in YouTube, sell like hotcakes.

So that affiliate model, which is providing advice, compare contrast advice and then send you do directly to Amazon, that tends to max out somewhere in the several hundred dollars. I don't know, three or four or \$500. Okay. And then comes the higher end physical goods. Online retailers like us, we're high ticket drop shippers and we kind of start at the low end of \$500. Our average ticket is over a thousand, it's probably \$1,200. And we go way up as high as \$15,000 on some products. And we are providing as much advice and comparing contrast as we can and unique product descriptions. And in addition to in the tried and true way to attract traffic, going back to the beginning of drop shipping has always been through Google product listing ads.

And so the old model I think, and high ticket drop shipping is find a supplier that has big margins, throw up a site, maybe do some customization on the product descriptions most of the time. Most of the time it's copy paste with what the suppliers give you and then run Google product listing ads. I think the brave new world that you're seeing people do a lot more of, including ourselves, is using SEO techniques and essentially borrowing from the people that do Amazon affiliate sites and using and employing some of the techniques that they use. And incorporating that into the advice and information that we provide for higher ticket owners. And that I think is a revolution that has started some time ago, but it's still early on when you go in and look at a lot of the sites that are out there that are just horrendous.

So the opportunity exists today to embrace this and now we can launch into your questions about how do we use SEO?

RYAN: All right, great. So a page with search engine optimization versus a page that doesn't use it. What's kind of the biggest difference there?

IAN: Well, I'm fond of saying that one of the four pillars of our SEO strategy is to have the best page on the Internet for our top products. And we ask all of our suppliers, "What are the bestselling products?" And depending on what niche we're in, that might be 10 or it may be 25, but it's not a thousand or 500. We spend a lot of time optimizing those products and making those product pages if you search for them, the best product pages on the Internet. Our suppliers have collections and we make our collection pages, which is usually a style or something unique, a unique set of products that they've bundled together.

We make those colleagues invest a lot of money in their top collection pages. Sorry, we just got an order here and so it just popped up on the screen. I was trying to see how much it was for.

RYAN: Congratulations.

IAN: We have the best ... Thank you. We get a couple of thousand a year, but you know, it's fun. It's still always fun to see it and it never gets old. Trust me.

The best collection pages and then the ultimate story is in the brand pages because people buy into the brands and we're not talking about Apple or Nike. We're talking about things that are very unique, particularly in our case in household goods where people might need a little bit of an education, but they buy into it very quickly. Now, the fourth pillar where I chose where I think we were borrowing more heavily from the affiliate guys, are in things that are frequently asked questions, our installation guides, our comparison guides.

The guys that do affiliate sites, particularly the Amazon affiliate guys, are just really phenomenal at writing lots of content that ranks exceptionally well for what people are searching for when they're just learning about, kind of the product that they want to plunk down some money on. So I forget what I typed into the YouTube search bar last night. It was certainly wasn't the brand name, it was probably the best wireless earbuds, or best AirPods alternatives or something like that. I saw it as you know, when you get to YouTube, there are five or six different choices that go down the side and you click and you listen. And after you've had enough you say, "You know what, I believe that guy or girl." Where I think the future of SEO is in high ticket drop shipping, which is what we do, is to borrow from the playbook of the affiliate guys.

And in addition to all of our work on product collection and brand pages to do the things that get the people at the top of the funnel and get them coming back. We've talked in the past, Ryan, and I don't know what the real number is, but people have to kind of see your brand or see your site six or seven or eight times before they actually get comfortable with you. And in order to become a trusted authority, be known as an expert, you have to provide, I think, the installation guides, the buyer's guides, frequently asked questions. We do videos, we have the best page on the Internet. So when you go to that page for the product, it has the PDFs. It has maybe the embedded video. It has, if there's a specific installation guide for it, has lifestyle pictures in addition to the kind of jail house pictures.

Ones with just the product. People love to see the lifestyle picture, but they also need to see in isolation what it looks like with a white background. We do all of those things. That's the SEO strategy that we employ and we're constantly adding to that. So something that we've added recently is we

now have a site that is very, very friendly for people that go to Pinterest and we're pinning on Pinterest. We've never actually done it before and failed at it miserably. But, we're now doing it in a much more concerted fashion. We weren't as dedicated to it as we were before.

And that's the reason that we failed, to be honest. It was our fault. We just didn't learn Pinterest and now we're taking our time because we think it's really ... it could be crucial to us. So there's lots of ways to develop additional strategies, but the core strategies I think are what I mentioned in terms of borrowing from the Amazon affiliate guys and focusing on the four different pillars that we've chosen that we think are the pillars of our website's SEO strategy.

RYAN: Okay, great. So what's interesting about these guys that you're kind of modeling your page after, these affiliate marketers, is they're providing content that people are looking for, right? And they're doing a good job at that. How do you find out what people are looking for? Like how do you find these search terms or these questions? How do you get that information?

IAN: Sure. They are ninjas. They're absolute ninjas at finding out what people are searching for and figuring out even the most arcane ways to show up as being relevant when people search for those things. So we use everything from Google Keyword Planner to Ahrefs, which is kind of the industry tool. And we're out there, looking at our competitors to find out what search phrases and terms that they come up with. As well as writing content that tries to broadly encompass either one or a number of concepts that people are looking for. So there are tools that can help you. If we can get anywhere near as good as the affiliate marketers are, particularly in the long tail keywords, and show up, we'll hook people and get them to our site.

Right now I think, to be very honest with you, I think it's with a high ticket drop shippers they've had the luxury of being able to afford Google Ads. And affiliate marketers cannot afford Google Ads. They rely solely on SEO. So again, one of the reasons that we love this business model is we have two sources of traffic at a minimum. Which is, we have Google product listing ads as well as we have SEO. We're not solely reliant on SEO and you know, Google changing their algorithm like they do 500 times a year. We can actually do both of that and so we're going to take advantage of that.

RYAN: Okay, great. So I'd love to get maybe a little bit practical here and maybe have you focus on a page of your website and maybe just talk about what does it ... What does it take to take a page of your website and optimize it for SEO?

IAN: Without getting too technical, there are with Google, tags that you have to use, headers and tags and things which you have to do. And so the way you do set up your website initially is make sure that you get all of the things uniformly correct so that Google understands exactly what you're doing. There's kind of a script for doing that. The number of things that go into putting together, what I call the perfect product page or the best page on the Internet for a product are many. The first thing we always do is go and look at how well the competitors are doing. If, for example, we know that a competitors page for a top product might only have 450 or 500 words on it. We know that ours is going to be 750 or 800 words. We know that we're going to have any schematics.

Really Ryan, again, these are for our top sellers. These are our gold suppliers. These are our top products from our best suppliers. You might have eight to 10 best suppliers and so you're going to have 10 to 15 maybe for each one. And you're really going to focus your time and attention on those because it is the Pareto rule of 80, 20, where you're going to get 80% of your sales from those guys. And so you want to spend your time and look at what all of the competitors are doing and invest in having the best resources you can to try to distinguish yourself and those resources fall into having the attachments.

If there's embedded video, doing embedded video, the social proof of having people that have reviewed the products, having not only the white background, product pictures, but also having the lifestyle pictures. Have everything and encompass the frequently asked questions, if there are installation or delivery issues, cover those. There is a myriad of things depending on the niche that you're operating in. And depending on what your competition is doing, you can certainly get a flavor for what it's going to take.

But invest your time and money and whether it's the product, whether it's the collection or whatever, it's the brand, really have the best page on the

Internet. Work that SEO piece. You're going to be trying just as hard on your paid traffic, but this is something that you can invest in and you can reap the rewards forever if you spend your time. And again, in a lot of niches, you just don't see this happening. It's really amazing that old school competitors don't spend time doing this. They may have a lot of embedded SEO because they'd been around for awhile. But, you can certainly compete by having a little bit different approach than people have had in the past.

RYAN: Okay, great. So, um, I was wondering if there's any kind of like third party tools or apps or software that might help people with some of these processes?

IAN: I mentioned Ahrefs because they're really, I think, the gold standard in terms of what we use for SEO evaluation. There are a number of tools that kind of we rotate through. One of the things I think that I wanted to mention and that we're always constantly checking, are our sites because if you make something too image heavy, or if you mess around too much with pages, you could slow down your site speed. So one of the things we want to make sure is we have really reasonable site speed, we want to load in certainly less than three seconds. That's really important to us. I'd be loathed, since this podcast will exist forever to give a whole bunch of tools other than Ahrefs and Google Keyword Planner, which is really the be kind of introductory level stuff because it changes so frequently, to be honest.

RYAN: Okay, great. I'm kind of just stepping back and looking big picture then. What is kind of a good place for someone to start with their website? What would be kind of the priority to kind of optimize your page?

IAN: I always counsel people, either when they're evaluating a website or certainly, once they purchase the website, that the first thing you need to do is to reach out to your suppliers and identify what it is that they're selling a lot of. What is it that you're missing? Then go focus like a laser on those things and narrow your focus. Either copy of the best practices of your competitors, or borrow from them. Borrow the best practices from your competitors and then add things yourself that are either a tutor or that you've learned and combine the best of everything.



A lot of sites are very stale along the Internet and people haven't paid attention to them. So if you go to three different places, you might pick up three different tips or tricks that can help you. And so that's the very first thing that we do, which is to focus on our gold suppliers and their top selling products.

RYAN: Great. All right Ian. That was another great episode. Thank you so much and we'll see you next week.

IAN: Something I have some passionate about. I think if you go back and you think about this retail frame or online retail framework that I talked about, and I think it becomes very clear, at least in my mind, the opportunity is out there. It's sort of a brave new world. Old style drop shippers haven't embraced I think a lot of the SEO practices that the affiliate marketers are so good at. They're just ninjas at it. And by doing, you can garner so much in dollar margin in these higher priced items. We think it's a huge opportunity.

RYAN: It sounds like it. All right. Thanks again, Ian. We'll see you next week.

IAN: Thank you.

RYAN: All right. Thanks.

RYAN: All right, folks. There you have it. That wraps up my conversation with Ian Bond of professional website investors. He shared a ton of valuable insights and advice today on how to improve the visibility of your website using search engine optimization or SEO. We also shared some tools and resources which will all be linked up in the show notes at [ProfessionalWebsiteInvestors.com](http://ProfessionalWebsiteInvestors.com). I hope you enjoyed our conversation. Please consider subscribing, sharing with a friend or leaving us a review in your favorite podcast directory. Until next time, best of luck in all that you do and we look forward to seeing you on the next episode of the professional website investor podcast.



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