

Webinar transcript

Marketing Masterclass: An Introduction To Local Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

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00:00 Introduction from host (Greg Smith)

Thank you first of all a very warm welcome to you all for joining us this afternoon. This is our second in a series of marketing master classes from Seafish. We today are talking about an introduction to local search engine optimization, or SEO for all the cool kids out there, and our expert speaker today our guest speaker is Melissa Ryan from digital agency John Doe in Glasgow.

We are going to kick off now so if you don't mind putting your mics on mute that would be grand. We will take questions throughout the session and answer those at the end once Mel has run through her presentation. And we will be recording this session just to make everybody aware.

So, first things first I'm Greg Smith Head of Marketing at Seafish. I won't bore you with a lengthy intro about me today instead I'll tell you a bit about what we're going to bring you. We've been collaborating with seafood businesses to understand where we can add more value and facilitate knowledge sharing. Together we've identified a gap and an opportunity for Seafish to host a collection of these masterclasses to help businesses across the fishing industry with their own marketing efforts, which in turn supports and drives an increase in seafood consumption. So that's why we're here today, it's about providing businesses with tools ideas and skills to engage consumers across the UK. So that in time those consumer attitudes towards seafood change and people start eating more fish and shellfish more often - that's what we are all about.

As you may or may not know we launched our new consumer brand Love Seafood in 2020. It's an ambitious long-term initiative, which has been built to unite a diverse seafood industry under a single common message and goal. It's ultimately all about inspiring our wonderful nation to fall in love with fish and shellfish. With Love Seafood we'll help consumers across the UK reconnect with buying and eating seafood by promoting three pillars and those are choice, convenience and balanced living. So, how on earth are we going to do all of that? Well we will encourage consumption of seafoods at home and outside of the home when that's possible, hopefully very soon, 365 days a year. Love Seafood is ultimately a 20-year always-on approach to seafood campaigning, which highlights industry champions and provides audience relevant advertising or content to inform and inspire the nation. We've also built a platform to provide seafood businesses with support too, and tools to help communicate directly with consumers. That's a kind of nice segue into today's guest speaker, so it's Melissa Ryan from the John Doe agency in Glasgow. We're here in the background supporting businesses with our Love Seafood assets and brand, but Melissa is going to connect you with access to her insight her ideas her knowledge and will support your own search engine optimization marketing efforts. So Mel thank you very much for joining us a warm welcome and over to you. I'm going to stop sharing my screen just now so you can bring up your presentation

03:17 - Presentation intro from speaker (Melissa Ryan)

Thank you very much Greg and thank you very much for joining. I don't know if it's the same for you but in Glasgow it's ridiculously warm and sunny today for the first time ever and so I really appreciate if you've got the same there actually taking the time to come here. If it's chucking it down

then I don't feel happy for you at all, you just have to hide from it anyway. So Greg has already introduced me in part, but just to give you a little bit of a snapshot of the types of clients I get to work on. I cover everything from brands like Tesco Mobile to even brands like Facebook and Instagram, we end up doing marketing for them which is a bit ironic when you think about it. We get to work on our favourite client of course, Love Seafood. A lot of these brands often tend to be focused on speaking to people on a very broad national level, what they're trying to do is speak to lots and lots of people. But a passion of mine and something I've worked on ever since the very start of my career, before my hair had a lot less grey hairs and I had a lot less frown lines on my head, is connecting with people on a local level. Although it's really exciting to talk to brands on a big, big scale, actually I think there's something so satisfying in terms of being able to speak to people that you know will actually come into store, come to your business and actually buy the products that you're looking to sell.

To give you a little bit of an example of when my passion first started for this, I used to do the marketing for a chain of healthcare clinics across the UK. Part of what we had to do was obviously brand building, you know you want we were based in Harley Street so we had to make sure everyone knew how highly regarded we were. But let's face it when someone's looking for skin treatment in Birmingham they don't really care what we're doing in Harley street they don't care what we're doing elsewhere, what they want is a skin treatment in Birmingham and they want to be able to get their hands on it straight away. SEO has been one of the most critical factors in all of us being able to do that whenever you're speaking someone on a local level it's perhaps one of the best tools, in my mind at least - I am a little bit biased.

05:09 What is SEO?

But, I also find it one of the least understood practices I get marketing directors constantly saying to me can we do some SEO when they don't mean SEO at all, so I thought it might be quite useful for us to begin with just to go through what SEO actually is.

So if I Googled seafood and I saw these lovely results in my local area come up, this is SEO. When I Google seafood and I get a lovely Wikipedia or a TripAdvisor article that is SEO. But when I Google seafood and I get a nice collection of ads on the side that is not SEO.

Put simply, what we're here to talk about today is organically helping your presence online. It's not about putting paid advertising anywhere, it's about making sure that you're seen on search engines, so whether you prefer Google, Bing, Safari or something a little bit more left-field it's making sure that you get seen on them. Quite simply the way that I like to explain SEO, and I always find it tends to make people click with it a little bit more, is how we tell Google that you're an authority on a topic. Essentially Google has tons and tons of information that it needs to be able to pull through. SEO is making sure that they choose you rather than your competitor as the expert on what you're good at. So if someone is a seafood store for example basically saying I know more about the next guy to do with seafood.

As an example I've put in a little thing that we are number one for as Love Seafood ourselves, just because why not, seeing as we're here. Essentially Google's listed us as number one here and it's giving us what we call a little snippet of information as well, because what I've typed into the search is how many portions of fish and chips are sold in a week and we've answered that exact question. Hopefully by the end of the day you might feel a little bit more confident to be able to know a what your search will be at the end and to make sure that you're there and not only competitors.

06:54 – What is local SEO

So how does this link to local SEO? Obviously what I've just spoken about there is a little bit more broad, like I was speaking. There is some crossover with a general SEO, but there is a key difference when you're talking about local SEO. Results are always based around a specific physical location. It's about helping people in your local area connect with your products and your business, whether it's on a literal map or whether it's your website. Basically making sure that they can find you when they need you.

I've got a little example here, because I'm feeling a bit fancy I've not been out in a while, when I search oysters in champaign I don't get recommendations for somewhere in London, I get recommendations for somewhere in Glasgow. Essentially it's providing me the information that it knows is relevant to me. Unfortunately as you can see they're all temporarily closed as we all know, but as soon as everything opens again I know straight away where to go when it comes to oysters and champagne.

07:43 – Why is it important?

Quite simply, it's absolutely critical when we're looking at this and you'd be surprised at how much it can actually add to your business when you consider how you can actually optimize your page for local SEO.

What I found quite mind-blowing, and like I say I work with this every single day, but 46% of all searches across the whole of Google are looking for local information.

And people actively looking for terms which include 'near me' - so that could be a fishmonger near me it could be an oyster supplier near me. Over the last five years they've risen 408% as more of us want to connect with local businesses, which is fantastic you know great opportunity.

However, it is quite terrifying that 92% of searchers will pick businesses on the first page of search results. I'm sure that won't surprise you because I'm the same I kind of got time to be able to go through 10 different pages.

So if someone's going there before you it can be quite concerning, especially when you consider that 88% of consumers who do a local search on their smartphone will go and visit or call a store within the space of a day.

Basically it's a really great tool, it's fantastic and you need to make sure that you're ahead of your competitors when you're doing it.

08:49 – What does Google consider in listing a local business?

So what does Google actually look for when it's listing a business? And again although I'm talking about Google here, the same principles tend to apply across all different search engines – so if you get these principles in your head then you won't have to chop and change things depending on what you use.

Before we actually look at this, you need to remember that there are several kinds of local listings on Google. The first is maps. So when I type in fishmonger, for example, you can see two different types of searches on the map. The first, I've just typed in the word fishmonger but as I've pointed out several times with the beautiful weather that we have that we never normally have, as I'm in Glasgow Google can read where I am. It reads my IP address and it essentially provides me with really hyper local recommendations close to where I live. However if I tweak that slightly and put fishmonger in Glasgow, you can see the area is much broader and I get a few recommendations

there. What I thought was really interesting with this was the first result on both is the same person who's, clearly I hope, invested a little bit in their local SEO because it's fantastic for them to be able to show off both times.

09:58 – Types of local listings

I can't stress enough how important it is for you to be able to consider these things. Because someone's searching on a local level, a lot of the time the first thing you'll see when you go on Google, and if you try it yourself as you'll notice, you'll have a map come up so it's the first place that you'll see. But second of all, I'm always much more willing to click on something on a map when I'm ready to buy - I'm not in that kind of browsing stage I want something and I want it fairly quickly so being able to connect with someone using that map is really, really important. Shortly I'll show you how you can set up, and if you haven't already set it up you'll kick yourself because you'll know how easy it is as well. Unless you look at how you can optimize in terms of the area that you're in, Google will tend to be really hyper local so you kind of need to be able to tackle both in terms of connecting with people.

The second type of local listing, which I know we're probably all really familiar with, is just the general kind of search quality that you'll be able to see when you type in a term. So the first is the word fishmonger and as you can see again I'm still in Glasgow, I'm still sitting in the same box room I've been in for over a year now miserable, but the results - as well as getting something some that's national like the Cornish fishmonger - I also still get Glaswegian results coming through, despite the fact I haven't specified that. Again this Google knowing what's relevant to me and feeding that to me. The other type is if I look for a fishmonger in Glasgow, you'll see suddenly the results I'm getting completely changed. Some of them like Wilson's catch of the day are consistent, but they completely transform.

So essentially today we're going to try and make sure that you can tap into all of these searches and make the most of them too. I'd say when it comes to the different types of searches, so obviously we've said about how maps someone's probably very willing and ready to buy. When someone's looking for the wider Google, and again you'll know this from your own behaviour, you're probably looking a little bit more broadly. So you're probably thinking perhaps I've searched something before, but I haven't been able to find it or you're planning in advance. You're not necessarily as willing to buy but it's still really, really important and to connect with them where you can.

11:54 – What are the factors that impact search results?

So what are the factors that impact search results? There's quite a few, as you'll see listed, and we'll go into a little bit more detail shortly. I also think it's quite useful to have in your brain just generally what Google is actually considering. I showed this to someone in Google, I think they probably put their head in their hands as it's so simplistic there's so many things, but ultimately these are the things you need to know.

First of all it's how close your business is to that person searching. So when I type fishmonger for example I get recommendations down the road because Google knows exactly where I'm sitting.

The second, and we'll get onto this in a little while, is keyword use. And so essentially the way that search engines have always worked is crawling the words that you use. They look for the content they try and match it with that person who's searching for it.

Something that people don't always consider is the consistency of information across different platforms. So say if I have a website and I say I am a fishmonger, if I then had a listing on another website or I set on my Facebook profile for example linking there and I called myself a luxury food

outlet. I mean that's a bit of a simplistic example, but essentially I'm being quite inconsistent in terms of telling Google what I'm actually saying, so as a result it perhaps doesn't know. It doesn't necessarily think, going back to that original point about being the authority on a subject, it's not quite sure what I'm the authority on.

Google also looks at things like mentions of your business on other websites, so getting links back to your website, we'll touch on this a little bit later but it's absolutely key.

It'll look at things like online customer reviews, so if you're getting great reviews or you're not managing your reviews it will take that into consideration and push you further down the line.

It looks at things like your social media, so anywhere that you're talking and you're linking to your website it looks at.

And finally it looks at your Google MyBusiness listing, which I'm going to show you how to set up. That's exactly what I was mentioning before in terms of your map, how you can actually get seen on that.

13:44 - What are the factors that impact search results?

So there's quite a few different factors and they vary in terms of how, basically how it manages each of those. Whether you're trying to get a ranking on a standard thing, like we saw before we saw Wilson's catch of the day, or if they're trying to get a listing on Google maps. I'm not going to go through every single one of these, but what I think is really telling is, it kind of tells you the different ways that you can connect with consumers. If you have a local website and you want people to come to it that you want people to be able to find it. If you look you can see that links and on-page keywords are by far the most popular ways. Basically they're the most important things in terms of what Google actually look for to push your website up. A few other factors, there's quite a few things going on, but links and keywords are basically half of what Google will look for when you're trying to get seen.

If you skim across to Google maps, there's one thing that stands out which is about a quarter of all of the importance in terms of what Google's looking for, which is your Google MyBusiness.

14:44 How to set up a google MyBusiness account

That conveniently takes me on to my first segment that I've spoken about a couple of times which is setting up a Google MyBusiness account.

So Google MyBusiness is a free tool that allows you to appear on Google maps. It allows you to include tons and tons of key information. First of all, like I've shown before, it shows you on that map. But it will also allow you to include things like your website and directions, your phone number, your opening times. Essentially lots and lots of different bits of information that save a consumer a lot of time when they're searching for it.

I've put a little example of us there and you can see again I've managed to, in terms of our Google MyBusiness listing, instantly you can see a little bit of snip of information. But you can also see the three owners of the company as well, you get a Google street view. Essentially get all the information that you could possibly need to get in contact with us in the first instance, without it being too heavy.

I've put these in here, I'm not going to kind of run you through each step now. I was thinking of perhaps doing a live session but actually it really, really is simple so what I've instead done is when I send this presentation to you afterwards, if you haven't got a Google MyBusiness account, if you just

follow these steps here essentially it will guide you through the whole process and it will probably take you a maximum of about five to ten minutes if that. The only stage that takes a little bit longer is the very last one, which is finished and verify, and it's exactly the same as if you were setting up an email account for example the types of questions it will guide you through until that very last stage. Essentially what Google does to check that you're legitimate, it will send you a little postcard in the post with a code on that allows you to verify yourself. So once that arrives at your business what you'll do is you'll get a little code you'll pop it in your Google MyBusiness account that you've set up and right away it will set you up, get you on the map and make sure that you're seen by everyone.

What I thought would be more useful with our time today, because we haven't got a huge amount, is actually talking about some of the elements that once you set up this account and you can do to make sure that you're seen and that you beat your competitors. So again I've got a little screen grab here, or if I typed in marketing agency you can see the amount of different people that start to appear linked to the terms. It's all about standing out from your competitors and encouraging someone to choose you over them. You can add photos to your listing and again when you're in there you'll be able to see how simple - it's all very intuitive it wants you to be able to add these things. If you've ever set up something like a Facebook profile, I'd actually probably say hopefully this is a little bit easier to be able to manage because it's all in one place and you're not dealing with constantly changing algorithms in the same way. You can add things like photos, you can add in your opening times and you can add a business description and you can add Q&A's. So say if you get lots of people phoning you with a specific question, for example do you sell oysters, can actually list those common Q&A's there so you already skip out a stage for that consumer to be able to engage with your business before you even start.

I mentioned before how Google looks at reviews, so Google MyBusiness also allows you to actually manage and request reviews from consumers. If you have a little experiment afterwards and Google some of the businesses that you know and what you'll see is they'll have little five stars or four stars that link to it. You can then read all the different reviews around that. Once you've set up your profile it's absolutely critical that you manage those reviews, the good and the bad. The good obviously just basically help you to show off your customer service. The bad just means that if someone does see something you've instantly addressed it you've addressed the problem. Hopefully if you deal with it you can actually help them you can encourage the person to take it down. That is absolutely critical that you manage your reviews and it just gives you some context, you probably won't find you get a huge amount, you'll probably get maybe a few a year max. It's not a common thing that people would use, it's not going to be a day-to-day thing that you have to add to your list.

The most critical aspect of your Google MyBusiness account is making sure that you keep it up to date. I've mentioned about how you can have your opening hours, I don't know whether you've experienced the same, but during Covid one of my biggest bug bears is when I go to a business that's normally open at a certain time and they're closed because their hours have changed. But because Google has told me that they're open I've ended up making the effort to go there. This essentially gives you a place that you can keep fully up to speed with that information, like I said it will take five minutes to be able to change the times. Again all of this is positive signals for Google, all the people that will then click on your profile, click for directions and return in the future, all of this will send positive signals to Google to make sure that you stand out above other people.

19:06 – The basics of SEO for your website

The next element I want to speak about, it's a little more tricky I think than Google MyBusiness, which is why at the end when we've got some Q&As, if anyone has any then we can have a chat about them. The basics of SEO for your website.

So like I say it is a little bit more complicated and then you tend to find with Google MyBusiness but it's not as difficult as you would think. A lot of people when I speak to them they seem to think that you perhaps need to get a developer to get started. There is an element of technical SEO when you're working for a company, like Argos for example, who's a multinational company they'll have you know 20 people in their SEO team who are all competing all these specific keywords. When you're starting out with local SEO you don't need that at all. Essentially what you often need to do is apply a little bit of your common sense and a little bit of your business acumen that you know you have basically to your website and make sure that you address things.

The first thing is just thinking about the copy that you have in there essentially what will someone be looking for when they find you. Say for example I'm a fishmonger, it sounds so stupid but actually making sure that you have that word in there is absolutely key first of all, because you'll be surprised about how many people don't actually say the business that they are and the most common words that people will be looking for with it. You also need to then start thinking about what particular products or services might your consumer be looking for. For example are they looking for plaice and again making sure that you mention this within your website. It sounds really obvious but it's not and I know that I've made websites before and being like 'well why aren't I ranking for this word?' and then I'll have a nose and realize that actually it's nowhere to be seen on the page.

One thing as well it's not you'll often read things like this and it's not completely true, but it is to a certain extent, it's also about making sure you think about where you put these keywords. The higher you can put them up on the page, so if you can have them in your first paragraph that will often make a difference. But likewise if you can have them in page titles they're absolutely key as well.

And then finally the third thing that I'd say is quite critical to think about when you're considering your copy for your website is whereabouts you're based and where your consumer will be looking. So say for example are you in Glasgow, like I am, or am I in central Glasgow, or should I go as narrow as the street?

Just to give you a little bit of context I put a few examples here about how this applies. So going back to our lovely Google search bar. If I type in the word Glasgow fishmonger and you can see these results pop up, which we saw a little bit earlier on. If I then change that to Shawn's fishmonger, which is my specific area, you can see that instantly the person that pops up is completely different from the search before. If I then go even deeper into that and type in Cathcart Road, which is the road just down the road from me, you can see that it's a completely different fishmonger. So it sounds so silly, but actually again thinking about the types of places and the types of searches that people will be doing to be able to get to you can actually make a massive difference. If you go as broad as Glasgow for example there's going to be a lot of people talking about that. And actually someone who lives 10 miles on the other side of the city to me isn't as relevant as someone who's actually down the road from me. That doesn't mean you should ignore Glasgow, but actually considering small considerations like your road or your very local area and can actually make all the difference when it comes to people being able to find you.

So I've already kind of touched on this, but a couple of the basics of SEO in terms of your copy, make sure that you include the most important keywords in page titles and the first paragraph of text. One thing that is absolutely critical is don't cram all the keywords that you can ever think of onto one page. It might be really tempting to list absolutely everything that you do, every single synonym that you can think of, every single word. Actually less is more sometimes. So although you need to think about specifics, what are the few things that you'd like customers to know you for? What are the things that you do better than anybody else? And the things that they will find with you that they won't find with anybody else? Then link to that think about the user experience.

So first of all say if you want to be able to rank for oysters. Where are you taking people from these keywords, are you taking them to a big blank landing page that just has lots of information has your address? Or are you taking them to somewhere where you have a little bit of copy explaining that our oysters are freshly caught and brought in every single day? Are you giving them the information that they're looking for at that time. And will their search actually be met by your content? If not, can you provide content that does or should you consider removing that keyword. So I'm not saying that you have to have a landing page to absolutely every species that you stock, we all know that would be absolutely impossible. But actually having a little bit of consideration about having perhaps groups of landing pages. So what you might want to do, if someone who has oysters for example, is could you perhaps make a shellfish landing page, so you can explain a little bit about that. Or, if you provide a huge range of services, can you kind of group them in different ways. Just making sure that you're providing people with them a really easy access to what they actually need at that time.

24:05 - Links

The second element of local SEO, and like I say this is a real crash course trying to cram what could take months and months to learn into a very quick chat, but it's something that a lot of people don't necessarily think about, a lot of people don't really understand but it really is the bread and butter of trying to get your website seen and it's links to your website. So it's what we call backlinks when we're using marketing jargon but essentially and going back to what I said at the very beginning about how Google wants to know that you are an authority on a topic more so than anybody else. When you think of us as consumers, or us as just anything that we're doing in life there's one thing that we trust more than anything else and that's somebody that we already trust. Someone that we know is an expert in something telling us that someone else is an expert in that and Google is exactly the same. So essentially what the way that Google works though, rather than word to mouth recommendations like we normally get, essentially the way it will work is that a link from a website that it already trusts back to your website essentially tells Google 'hey this website's pretty great, it knows what it's talking about when it comes to this topic, and you should trust it'.

So how do you actually go about getting links? We'll kind of chat about it a little bit in a while but a really great example is any local press that you might get. So I don't know whether you've ever experienced any kind of small scale press, if you've had a new offering, if you've been featured anywhere and every time you get a link back to your website I can't tell you how much that will do to help boost you on Google.

There's a little principle called domain authority, which is one of these scary words that people often talk about and again it sounds a little bit like jargon, but essentially it's a principle that Google uses or that a platform uses and to basically say how likely you are to rank on Google out of 100. So essentially 100 is the best you could possibly get, one means that you're not very likely at all. To give you a little bit of context a website like the BBC for example has a domain authority of 96. That's because it produces quality content every single day lots of people link back to it lots of people trust

it. Most websites will be lucky if they can perhaps get to around 25 or 30 as a maximum, because unless your game is to be a website, unless your whole business is based around websites, and the odds are you're not going to be able to provide all the content that you'd like to get there every single day. However when you first build your website, you will find your authority is one for a very long time. It takes quite a while to be able to build up.

But what our aim is always to do is to try and try get a higher domain authority than your competitors, because again that's a signal to Google that even if you're trying to compete for the same term or the same word essentially you know more than the person next to you. So I've already mentioned this but one way of doing this is local press, so if you ever have any opportunities to be able to do that don't turn it down and if you can, if you're speaking to a local journalist, always ask if you can get a link back to your website. The odds are they will say yes unless they've been told that they're not allowed to do that at all and the amount that will help lift you cannot buy, you know you cannot pay for impacts like that.

Also one way could be working with your partners, so say if you are a scampi provider for example, actually do you have anyone any restaurants that stop you for example? Or do you have anyone who uses your ingredients or uses you in how they serve dishes anywhere? If they can link back to your website again all that's doing is helping Google know that you're authoritative on that subject and helping lift you up.

One final thing that's probably worth mentioning, which again is free and really easy to access, is local directories. So obviously back in the good old days we all used to get the yellow pages through our door and that'll be how we found everything long before Google took over our lives. However these directories still exist online, so if you are a shop for example getting in the yellow pages online yell.com is a great way of being able to get links back to your website and help lift you up on Google. Or if you're a restaurant it could be something as simple as getting a listing on TripAdvisor which most businesses will be on. All of these help you in terms of your rankings, so any opportunities you see like that make sure you make the most of them because they will have a massive impact on what you're doing.

One last idea which, again it requires a little bit more time but it can really be worth it, is to write guest blogs and add value to other websites. So if you have any friends, anyone who you connect with in any format who has a website, actually sometimes if you can provide a really great blog for them just maybe talking about your services or anything like that again that can help lift you up a little bit and make sure that Google trusts you all the more. It seems like a really small thing I know that whenever we speak to people about getting coverage for example in the local press they think the most important thing is the eyes that see it straight away, but actually you can't underestimate what it does to you in the long term so make sure you really maximize any of those opportunities that you can.

29:03 – [The basics of SEO for local searches](#)

Just to kind of sum up in terms of your SEO for your local searches, I think this is probably the most important thing that you can consider just make it easy for searchers to get what they need. 97% of people learn more about a local company online than anywhere else. 61% of mobile searches are more likely to contact a local business if they have a website that's accessible. So one half of your job is to be able to get people to come to your website and use the right content, but the other half is getting people to stay there and make sure that they know what they're getting from you. Don't just send people to your website for the sake of it, make sure that they actually have a purpose there and more than anything. I thought like a nice stat to kind of leave this section on is the fact that 78%

of location-based mobile searches result in an offline purchase. Which is absolutely staggering when you think about it and it just shows you the amount of opportunity you have to connect with different people and encourage more consumers to purchase.

29:56 - How to find what your customers are searching for

I thought it would be useful to kind of talk a little bit about how you can actually find out what your customers are searching for. Again this is something that you could have about five hours on just chatting through to all the different tools that you can use. But there's four most close common types of local searches are, I've already kind of touched on this before but 'near me'. So basically the location is implied, so I might search for fishmonger near me. 'Geo modified' so using a location name. Going back to my specific example earlier you know I might say fishmonger in Albion Street - I'm in a particular area right now and I want to be able to get access to it. 'Non-geo modified' so the location is implied but it's based on Google essentially knowing a lot of information about me, rather than me giving any information. So if I just typed in fishmonger it would then base it around where I am. And then finally 'business type' so this is the specific service that someone is looking for. So are they looking for a 'luxury food provider' or are they looking for a fishmonger. I always think this is quite a useful thing to keep in your mind whenever you're coming up with content and what you're thinking of customers are looking for, because you all know much better than I do in terms of how people tend to find you. Do they tend to be kind of down the road? Do they tend to live you know five miles 10 miles down the road? Are they the same people that come in? Are they people that have never been in before? Actually considering all these different elements and the type of people that will be using them and applying them to your website or your Google MyBusiness listing will make all the difference in terms of people actually coming up to you.

So there are a number of tools that can show you what people are looking for. So the first and most common to use is a free tool which is provided by Google ads. So I've put a little screenshot of it to the side (and I'm just going to move everyone's head so I can see it as well) but essentially what you would do is you're putting a keyword called for example here I've stuck with my same example fishmonger. You'll then put in the location that you're looking at and what it will do is tell you how many searches it has in a month and then similar searches linked to it and that you could perhaps consider. This is really useful it's a fantastic tool, but on a local level I personally don't find it's necessarily always the best.

The second tool that you can use is Google Analytics, so I'm not sure if any of you have your website set up with Google Analytics, but again it's a free service and it's all designed for you to be able to monitor how people come to your website? How long they spend there? And what they do on it? It can be a little bit confusing when you first use it, but again as a free tool you can essentially see how people are finding you. So what keywords people have looked for in Google and how they then come to your website, so I recommend both of them as something that you could perhaps try with caution.

But I genuinely believe the best tool on a local level is your knowledge and I think the easiest questions to be able to ask yourself are these three in terms of: If you were looking for your service what would you type into Google? What I was find quite useful is getting a big piece of paper in front of me and just jotting down everything I can think of and then kind of working out which the most relevant. Once you've done that then modify your services based on people's unique needs. So what do you do better than anybody else? And what type of thing might someone be searching for? It's quite surprising how many people might search for something like 'best fishmonger in Glasgow' for example or 'cheap fish near me'. Again what you can start to think about is what do you do best in

your competitors? Or what do your competitors do worse than you? Essentially and make a list of those and start thinking about which of those is most relevant to your needs? Which of those do you think represents you the best and would you like consumers to know you for the best? And then again think about your location, not just your town but the specific area or road. We've already seen an example of that. But essentially it can't be underestimated in terms of how you narrow these down how you think about yourself and how you think about your business.

33:50 – Free tools to get you started

That is essentially, like I say, a whistle stop tour through the world of local SEO. But what I wanted to do was kind of touch on some free tools before we go on to questions and things like that because I because I'd much rather have more time for us to actually have a chat about stuff and help with any queries that you might have. But I've put a little snapshot of some different tools here.

I've already mentioned Google ads and Google Analytics. Another tool that's free is Moz. So when I mentioned about domain authority earlier, which is that ranking out of 100, Moz gives you access to what your website's domain authority is and also you can have a nose at your competitors. There's no there's no kind of limit in terms of who you can look at, you can have a look at someone big you can have a look at someone small. But essentially there's a part of the website, there's a free SEO tools part, and if you put your website in there you can see how likely you are to rank at the moment. You can also see previous websites that have linked to you so if you had any press in the past, if you've been featured on a friend's website or another business website you can see all that information listed, as well as how authoritative those websites are - so how much they've helped push you up Google. It's a really fantastic tool that's free and great to use and great for snooping at other people as well I'd say.

I'd also say never underestimate using Google itself. You can use all the tools around it, but the moment that you type you know fish longer or you put your service into Google, you can see your competitors come up you can see what words they've used what keywords they've used. Whenever you can if you have a spare moment do that because it might be surprising what you see coming up and who you see coming up. I always find that actually the best tool sometimes to have a nosey and work out what you want to do.

Then the last free tool that I thought probably was worth mentioning was Love Seafood's website itself and as you as you'll kind of hopefully hear a little bit more about anyway, and we're always looking for businesses to work within various forms and actually we can provide links back to your website when we do feature or when we feature you on our social media channels. So please do feel free to use us and try and utilize our kind of impact and our presence online to be able to make the most of, because we are here for that and if we do feature you it all works back like I mentioned before in terms of helping lift you through the Google rankings. And that is I think when I hand back over to Greg

36:23 - Resources from Love Seafood

Greg: Hello again Mel and everyone. Thank you so much, that was brilliant that was a whistle-stop whirlwind tour, wasn't it. And there's so much there to pick up and to mull over. We are recording this as we've mentioned, and somebody had asked in the chat as well. We will make this available, your presentation and the recording of the webinar after this session so people can rewind pause think fast forward rewind etc.

It's such a competitive space isn't it Mel and I think for small businesses there's an amazing opportunity to use some of those tools. To even do some of the kind of simple step-by-step stuff just

to get up there and get in the face of consumers. I cannot believe 88% of searches and smartphones go to or contact that business within a day, that's insane. That shows the power of SEO and obviously technology in your pocket as well. And while we were listening to you and seeing that Moz is a good tool for supporting I checked out our loveseafood.com UK domain authority and it's ranking at 24 just now, which isn't bad at all after six months of going live. Anyway less about us more about you and the dark art of SEO. We'll open the floor. No questions so far, but I have four already Mel that I'm going to bother you with. And as we chat I hope other people will feel confident enough just to stick a few in there. Any questions on SEO whatsoever.

First of all Mel what are, I mean you've touched on some of this perhaps, but what are some of the biggest mistakes that businesses might make with management of their own SEO in the early days, before they kind of got their heads around this stuff

38:07 – common mistakes by businesses

Mel: I'd say 100% kind of keyword cramming. So I think obviously it's really tempting to want to be everything to everyone and there used. Essentially the way that search engines used to work, way back in the day, was they literally just went off keywords they didn't go with any of these quality signals. What you used to have was people cramming every single keyword they could possibly think of into something, they just go to thesaurus.com find everything they could. So although I mentioned about trying to think about all these different keywords and thinking about how they're relevant, don't just cram for the sake of it. I think if you can really try and filter down what you want to be known for and essentially why someone will come to your website, it can make all the massive amount of difference. Yeah basically don't cram, don't try and put everything in one page, don't try and put everything on your website if you can really filter through what makes you unique then that will make a massive difference.

Greg: Great okay thank you for that Mel. What, so here's another one a daft question for me as ever, what's this PPC thing all about and how does that work with SEO? if I've got my head around and SEO and I'm ready to move on to the next stage, think about spending a bit of money on advertising, you know what's PPC and how does it all tie up

39:19 – What is PPC?

Mel: so PPC is when you when you Google and you see something that says ad in the corner, that is a paid advert that you can essentially buy on Google. And hopefully none of have you encountered it, but what can often happen is people bid on people's business names. So say if I'm called Melissa in enterprises and when someone then Googles Melissa in enterprises, you will sometimes although you might have the number one position on Google you might see a little post above that that says ad where someone has decided to pay to get above you on Google. It's not to be underestimated, PPC is fantastic and it is a really great way of connecting with people and it also does ultimately help your SEO as well. If you pay for adverts on particular keywords essentially it helps bring people to your website and Google can then use that information to understand which keywords you should rank for organically as well. Essentially it's a way of it's a way of using money, using paid advertising, to connect with keywords that you perhaps wouldn't necessarily rank for otherwise. Like I say if you have the budget it's a fantastic tool, we use it for tons of our clients, it's not a dirty thing to use or anything like that. But in terms of people looking on a local basis, I think so often - even in a big city like Glasgow – I'm always amazed at how much opportunity there is for local businesses to be able to make the most of without paying a penny. To be honest actually making a few small changes to the copy that you have on your website actually means that you don't have to you don't have to spend that money. You might then find someone gets a bit competitive and pushes in or you might

live in an area that is slightly more competitive or work in a business that is slightly more competitive in terms of your sector. But otherwise I'd always say to any business before they start any paid advertising, if you get your organics in line if you get your Google rankings without any pay spend in line, then ultimately you're only going to benefit even more when you do paid spending.

Greg: Thanks Mel. It's good to know it's good to hear your feedback on the order and it's always nice to start off with the things that are more accessible, free and or cheaper to manage. We've had a great question from John, or a point from John that I'd like to link to on this. With some of the stuff it does feel like you'd be you'd need to do it full time and not all of the businesses, the industry stakeholders that we work with have that sort of time. So what are the top three, what are the three things that people should pick up that are relatively easy and quick to do that won't involve lots of day-to-day management and maintenance.

41.54 – Top easy things to do

Mel: I'd say first of all you Google MyBusiness listing. Also when you get this presentation sent over just follow those steps. If you can create that and you don't even need a website necessarily, because instantly someone can find out all the information that you've got on there. I'd say first of all create that. Although I've said make sure you keep up to date and respond to reviews, like I say hopefully you won't need to change it every single week and it should be you know a couple of times a year that you update anything if there's any major changes. If there's not, don't worry, I mean even my organization we've left it running kind of for ages we've not had to change address or anything like that. Get that set up, get a few photos a little bit of information that might kick start you and leave that and it will look after itself or ultimately as well take time away from you getting calls through. The types of questions that people might ask or things that you know, essentially when you can list them there you take away a lot of admin time there.

Secondly I'd say the key thing that I think you should do is think about what one thing would you like to be known for? What one thing can someone find at your organisation? And what one thing might someone be searching for that that will ultimately bring them to you and convert to a sale? And if you only have a few lines on your website and you have that one thing in there, that will be worth 10 times more than having you know every single thing under the sun. So I think for me, I know it can seem like a time-consuming exercise, but getting that piece of paper having a think about essentially who you are, what makes you unique, and what you provide and just writing those things down and then narrowing it down. You do that once and ultimately it will have such a benefit on your business. To be honest as well Google doesn't want you to change every five minutes it wants you to be consistent, it wants you to be the same thing always. So if you can do that once, you're right it can be a full-time job, but it doesn't need to be. I think particularly in terms of types of organization that you are, and when you're looking on a local level in particular you don't need to, because actually everyone else is in the same boat. Nobody has the money to be able to spend on someone doing it full-time, nobody has the time to be able to spend on it all day every day. So actually just doing it once can make a massive difference and last you for a very long time.

Greg: Thank you Mel and that kind of covered off one of my other points or queries which was around you know how often should I look at my SEO? And, you know, what are management resources expected for it? We've had another great question from Lucy, and this is the million dollar one, so there's so much available online now there really is. These guys do oysters online and trade sales, but they don't have an outlet for people to visit. Do you have any recommendations about keywords to use and so on. Bearing in mind that the local bit is probably less relevant for them they

still want to be found, but that local bits less relevant. And it's the million dollar question because it's kind of what keywords should I use? but where could you get support and coaching for keywords?

44:55 – How to find what keywords to use

Mel: I would say your best bet would be to set up a Google ads account, so it can be a little bit daunting when you're first doing it, but Google ads do have a live chat first of all a live phone number as well that where someone can basically phone you and guide you through. But not for the paid ad side of things. Essentially they have the tool that I showed before, where I showed the different words that we're looking for in the different search volumes and how many people are looking for them. That's essentially a completely free tool that you can use called keyword planner. What that has basically is the most up-to-date data that you can access from Google in terms of keywords, in terms of what people are looking for. What you'll probably find as well is, and what we've seen a lot during Covid is, basically whether you're doing local SEO or you're doing the whole of the nation it's how people can actually get to you. So is it that you provide a door-to-door delivery service for example, and what I'd advise is essentially rather than just kind of looking for oysters, think about how people can get your product how people access your product. Is it that they have to phone you, is it that they have to order online. And start to have a play around with keywords like that as well. Like I say it's a completely free tool, I will say Google ads can seem quite daunting the first time you go on there and it can seem like quite a lot to have to deal with, but if you if you speak with their live chat they'll hold your hand massively throughout all of it and they'll hopefully also give you a few pointers in terms of what to search for.

Again I think what I'd also say, beyond even that, have a nose at your competitors. Think of the people that you think are doing stuff really well or think they've you know they've perhaps got a 10 times bigger marketing budget. Type their name into Google and then have a nose at how they describe themselves. I haven't covered it today because essentially wouldn't have time but when you first type a keyword into Google, all the results you'll see, what you'll see is a little title and then a little description and they're called your SEO title and your meta description. They are some things that you can change with behind the scenes. It does require a little bit of knowledge in terms of the back end of your website to change, but if someone's doing it really well what they would have done is, in that title and in that meta description, they will have the keywords that they think are most important. So I'd have a nose essentially at what they've got and if then if they're not doing it then that's fine, you know you don't have to worry about them but essentially I think sometimes the biggest tool you can use, the best tool you can use is a little bit of snooping on your neighbours and working out what they've done and stealing yourself. Especially when you're first starting out and you don't have the time to be able to spend watching search trends change on a daily basis and work out which ones are most relevant. Cheat a little bit, I'm never against a little bit of cheating and to be honest that you'll find the biggest SEO professionals do most of the time.

Greg: I'd I don't think that's cheating, that's good advice. Was it Vito Corleone who said keep your friends close but keep your enemies closer, so why not have a handle on that. That's great advice and I think, you know, the meta stuff's really important too. And it I think five, ten years ago it may be felt a bit more frightening to get your head around and your hands on but now with so many user-friendly content management systems to build websites, you can get into that back end element quite quickly and easily yourself and have a play around with it.

Mel: I'd say I mean again if whether you use something like Shopify, there's normally that downside you'll have a little SEO section. If you click on that it'll guide you through it. Or if you use something like WordPress, which is a really common website tool, there's a plugin called Yoast SEO and

essentially again all it will be is a little bar down the side that you click on and then you add your information in as you go through. So Greg is completely right. It's not as daunting as it seems and it's not as scary as it seems once you actually start playing around with it. And again a lot of these providers as well do you have hands-on live support as well. Don't be afraid to use it because that's someone's job, they're there. You're paying for that in terms of your hosting fee as well, so if you do have access to any of these kind of bigger providers that might have live support they'll be more than willing to help you and more than happy to help you as well.

Greg: Thank you Mel. We haven't had a question from Nigel, but we've had Nigel using the chat space as a bit of an optimized opportunity to connect with other businesses, so why not Nigel if anyone wants free link to their fishmonger website from a Coventry fishmonger London fishmonger give Nigel Smith a shout.

Mel: Link building practice

Greg: Yeah there you go in absolute practice. We've had some questions on the direct message to me Mel that I'm going to read out just now, so if you don't mind we're going to spend another few minutes on these because there's some great stuff coming ad hoc here. How could fish and chip shops benefit from SEO, there's a broad question.

49:52 How could fish and chip shops benefit from SEO

Mel: That is, I think for me and I never normally say this to many businesses but I think again it because you have a specific location and you're connecting with but I think again it's going back to your Google MyBusiness listing. Not to repeat myself too much, but essentially when I am trying to work out what I want for dinner, when I'm fancying some fish and chips I'm probably not necessarily going to spend too long researching it. What I want is something that I know is tasty, that I know that I like. I'd say for you, what I perhaps say is probably more important than other businesses, is trying to get some reviews from regular customers. Because everyone has their favourite chippy you know everyone has their favourite local, if I'm going to change I need a little bit of coaxing. So what I would say is if you set up your Google MyBusiness listing, some of your regulars who come in just ask them if they'll pop a five-star review for you, or don't have to tell them how many stars I'm sure they'll give you five stars anyway. But ask them to pop a little review on your Google MyBusiness listing, which is really easy they just literally look for you and they can just click the stars and once they've searched for you. Because to me, that's the thing that will tell Google, when you search fish and ship shore a shop shorelands for example where I live, that's the type of thing that will lift you higher than your competitors. But also if I'm the person who's in the in the business of wanting to change fish and chip shop - I've perhaps not had the best experience for my local I normally get. When I'm thinking about it if I then see a review saying 'best chips for a country mile' you know and the tastiest sauce, or the best selection of fish - I'm going to be like well I might as well try that. I kind of said it earlier, but one half of SEO is helping people find you and the second is what you provide once they're there. To me I think if you did one thing it's using some of the people that are already passionate about your business that already love you and seeing whether they wouldn't mind, maybe if you throw in an extra portion or something like that for them to throw up a review and I think that would really make a massive difference to you.

Greg: Well said and again you know that's a key part of our strategy and next steps with Love Seafood is connect and engage with you guys, with businesses across the industry to create advocates and champions. To then work that kind of symbiotic relationship, which I think is so important. We've had a great question here from somebody who works in social media for a seafood

processing business and they have asked how do social media sites or profiles platforms work with SEO? what role do social media sites have on SEO and how do they kind of interrelate?

52:30 – How does social media interrelate with SEO

Mel: What a very brilliant question, that's really great question. Essentially this kind of goes back to Google wants to know that you're an expert. Whenever you put a link to your website on social media, or someone else puts a link to your website on social media, that's essentially saying that you are that expert in that topic. So Google reads how many people are sharing it, what type of engagement should you get up from it, and also how long people spend on your website after coming from social media. And essentially knows that if there's quite a few people clicking on that link that you've posted or that someone else has posted, or if lots of people are talking about you there's a reason that people are talking about you and there's a reason that people are spending that time on your website. So essentially it takes that as a really positive signal, it essentially says well this person's producing content that people want to read and that people are actively sharing okay well that probably means that it's worth boosting up a little bit. Like I say it doesn't have the same benefit as having a website linked back to you for example, or making sure that the content on your website is optimized for what you want to be found for. But it still has a mass it still can make a massive difference and I think if you're already doing social media and actually linking to your website, when relevant, can make a real difference. You don't have to double up on the things that you're already doing or try anything new, it essentially just gives a really positive signal to the search engine, I keep saying Google but like I say is pretty much the same principle across all of them, that you are worth kind of maybe boosting up a little bit compared to someone who isn't getting the same sharing on social media. Essentially it's a little bit of secret sauce a little bit of extra work that you can do that ultimately does help your rankings and Google admits it helps your rankings and countless people have found and it does help their rankings as well.

Greg: Okay, thank you Mel. We've got probably time for maybe a couple more. This is I think quite a quick one potentially, how long does it take to get results? You mentioned that the domain authority can sometimes take a long time to build, and that's understandable. But if you're updating your keywords, if you're producing that metadata and tagging, you know, how quickly - and forgive me if I'm getting the terminology wrong here - Google crawls your site doesn't it. Is that right? How does that work and how quick does it happen?

54:45 How quickly can you see results?

Mel: Yeah it can be a, it's a little bit of a case of how long is a piece of string? But I've learned through many years of telling clients that I'm not allowed to say that. Essentially as a rough, like a very kind of rough figure, I tend to say to people don't expect to see huge results before three months. That's not the case for everyone and sometimes it can happen much, much quicker. Actually I know that we've put, obviously as you can see with Love Seafood for example, we've gone from a brand new website to having a domain authority of 24/25 in a relatively short period. I'd say that you probably start to really see the biggest impact within about three months, especially if you're going from ground zero. However, some of you might not even realize what presence you already have and how strong your domain authority is. If you change keywords on your website and you've already got a fairly strong presence if Google already trusts you, but it's just not sending the right people to you at the moment from search those results those changes can be within the space of a week. It goes down to things like how often you publish content on your website. So if you post regular blogs, going back to what you said Greg about crawling on the website, Google knows to crawl your website fairly frequently because you often have new content that you're adding. The word crawling essentially what it does is, actually everyone refers to it as a spider basically, but what

it does, it goes through all the pages on your website and looks for new content. It's not going to waste time doing that if you never post anything new, so if you only post every so often or you don't really ever post at all and it'll probably take a little bit longer because Google will only check it maybe once every couple of months. If you're posting fairly regularly it can check it every single day, or in the case of something like the BBC it will be checking it you know within hours a lot of time. So actually it does depend on how active and how much content you're producing, but it could be as quick as a week, it could be maybe more like six months sometimes. But I'd say three months as a kind of ground rule that you'll really see the impact and you'll see a massive difference. Though I have to admit, I think on a local level that probably could be a little bit less. If you are optimizing for a local level I reckon if other people aren't tapping into those keywords again I think you'd probably be within a month or so and that you could really see the impact of it.

Greg: Brilliant thank you Mel okay and that kind of that links to the final question that I've had from we've got fishmonger in West Lothian here who has said how often should they update? They've got they've got a blog, so you mentioned updating a blog. If they've got old content on there like outdated information does that matter, will it affect the results should they remove old stuff?

57:19 - [Should you remove old content](#)

Mel: I'd say never remove old stuff keep it up there. And actually, I don't know if you have access to Google analytics or another program to look at what's bringing people into your website, but you might be surprised at some of the content that is actually bringing people. Some of that old stuff that's technically out of date, as long as it's clear that it's out of date, and there's no date on there and it's saying 'come to us on Saturday for this event'. I'd never actually remove anything I think, actually the longer it's been on Google often the better. Because basically Google knows to trust, it knows it's there, it's not spam that's being put up just for a short period. What you might want to do as well, like I said if you can have a quick nose at your Google analytics and see whether any of these old pieces are coming through.

Like I said, we wouldn't even have time to touch on it today, there's also something called internal linking. So where I was saying about getting links from other websites to your website, actually if you link internally, if you link from content that's been around for a little while to new content where relevant. Not just willy-nilly, don't just do it for anything, but say if you've got a piece that's three years old about a particular species for example, and then you publish a new piece on the species. If you actually put a little line at the end saying 'read our latest about this species here' and they click through, that will tell Google that new page is quite authoritative because of this old page. So I say never delete any content unless it's really you know not worth keeping. Because actually it can actually help you in more ways than you'd imagine in terms of pushing your website further up as well.

Greg: Mel, you have outdone yourself thank you so much.