



David Jenyns has hunted down the greatest minds in various industries.



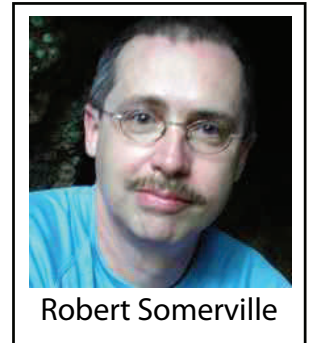
- Internet Marketing
- Web 2.0
- Personal Development
- Trading
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- SEO

And he's asking them the questions
YOU want answered...



Name: Robert Somerville
Industry: Online Marketing
Website: www.gurubob.co
Product: www.challenge.co

Robert Somerville's Bio: Robert Somerville (affectionately known as 'Guru Bob') is a man rarely seen in the spot light and, although he's [Ed Dale's](#) right hand man in the 'lab', he's very much an expert in his own right. In fact, Robert's the co-creator, strategist and head of research and development for the [Thirty Day Challenge](#) (30DC).



Robert Somerville

In a nutshell... The Thirty Day Challenge is about making your first \$1 online. For a full 30 days you're shown exactly how to start your own Internet business and generate your first income online without spending a dime. It's a great place to start your internet marketing career – that is to say, I highly recommend it!

This year around 75,000 internet marketers (both newbies and experts alike) took part in the challenge – clearly a huge success! Suffice to say, Rob's one smart cookie.

Interview Transcript Below.

David Jenyns: Welcome guys for another call for the www.seomethod.com. David Jenyns here, and I'm actually very privileged and lucky to be joined by one of the leaders in the SEO world. I suppose you'd say he is one of the main guys behind what Ed Dale's SEO lab, or his lab as he calls it. He does a lot of testing for Ed and really is very much an expert in his own right as well. So I'm very excited about this call and I'd like to welcome you to the line Rob.

Robert Somerville: Indeed David and it is a pleasure to be with you. And welcome to all your listeners.

David Jenyns: Fantastic. We'll jump straight into it because I don't like to muck around. My first question straight off the bat is just to find out a little bit about this. If you are to launch a new site, what's the process that you go through for launching a new site? Do you have stages, or how do you systemize it, what the plan is that you use for promoting a new site.

Hopefully we'll draw some parallels to the way the SEO method works. I know a lot of what you do is based in those good solid fundamentals for SEO. That is across the board. I'm sure our plans will be quite similar. You've got a new site – what do you do?

Robert Somerville: Well I mean that's a very big question you're asking – a promotion plan for a new site. There are so many different focuses for what that new site might be targeted towards. I assume you want me to make reference to what I represent, which is the Thirty Day Challenge. For that, we're about testing niches. We teach people how to get started on the internet, so how to break into a brand new niche for the first time. That's what we teach. Why don't we talk about it in relation to that and if you've got some other niche targeting areas you want to talk about, then perhaps I can offer my opinion about that.



David Jenyns: Yes, that sounds good. Let's really try and focus it in to the actual promotion side of things. Because the Thirty Day Challenge goes through so much stuff and is fantastic for anyone who's getting started because it goes right from building all the way through. I'm really interested to hear the nuts and bolts of the actual promotion side of things.

Robert Somerville: Yes indeed. Although it would be remiss of me not to actually make some mention of keyword and market research. Because if you don't have that under control, if you don't absolutely know the dynamics of the niche or market that you're entering into, then your promotion strategies could be way off the ball. If you're going to be targeting a very competitive niche, then you need to apply a different marketing strategy, or certainly a more aggressive marketing promotion strategy than if you're targeting a rather non-competitive niche.

In the Thirty Day Challenge, we teach that principle. We use Market Samurai to assist in getting your head around the dynamics of your niche or market. This is so you know the level of competition you're going to be facing but also the quality of competition you're going to be facing.

I guess right from the outset, the type of website that you develop may or may not assist you in your ultimate promotion. Now in the Thirty Day Challenge, we recommend blogs, and specifically we recommend WordPress blogs. We believe across the breadth of functionality that you need, but also in terms of the ease of installation, ease of maintenance and ease of publishing, WordPress blog represents the most efficient website structure to get something on line. You can target it to a set of key niche words and the blog site structure, the website structure assists you ultimately in your promotion.

So having the right website, or having a website system that assists you in your promotion can benefit you in terms of your long term promotion for your site.

David Jenyns: Do you have any plug ins for WordPress that you definitely think of as must haves? Obviously there is All In One SEO which my guys are familiar with. Are there any others which you think are helpful?

Robert Somerville: We do. We have tried to make this easier for our community by utilizing a service called WordPress Direct which makes it very easy for people to install a WordPress blog with all the plug ins that we suggest. The main thing about a WordPress blog though of course, is setting up the naming structure of the blog correctly, so that the category and the host's keyword is relevant, so you are actually getting your keywords into your urls or your pages, is critical. Properly setting up the pinging function of the blog, so that every time you make a new post, all of the various search engines are pinged by the blog itself, and you attract the spiders to your new content are also critical.

Things like the All In One SEO plug in is very useful. There is a fantastic Google Analytics plug in to make it very easy to track what's going on with your blog. We use a plug in called Pretty Link which makes it easy to create masked and tracked redirection urls, to promote affiliate products or whatever off your domain. We try and simplify that by using WordPress Direct. We have our community use WordPress Direct to make that very easy.

David Jenyns: So once they've set up a WordPress blog and they've done the keyword research and they're starting to load some content into the site and they're doing all the things that they



David Jenyns (continued): know as far as optimizing that article with appropriate titles, and optimized throughout the article, then from a promotional standpoint, where do you go from there?

Robert Somerville: I see it as a three phase process. The first phase is to get that initial attention on your new content. There are two things here. One is the blog will be hosted on a domain. We preferably suggest that people put their blogs onto a primary domain where the primary domain name includes, or is, the main theme keyword that you're trying to target. That primary home page or domain page is very important because probably 50-60% of your links over the longer term will point to that page. That page itself has to have a promotion strategy which might be a little different to the promotion strategy for individual posts that you have on that blog.

Let's say for instance we've started off, we've got our blog, it's got a single article on there and that first article is optimized for your main keyword, the keyword that you want to target because it has the best traffic potential relative to the competition within your niche. Having published that, it's now online. The first thing we suggest that people do is to do the low level but high leverage activities that get initial attention onto that blog. That includes social book marking of course, submission of the RSS feed of your blog to various RSS directories and aggregators, directory submission and search engine submission.

In the past, that work has been largely manual. There were services like www.socialmarker.com to make it a little bit easier to do the social book marking. In previous years we suggested people use OnlyWire but haven't in the last several years because it has declined in its value. This year in the Thirty Day Challenge we've integrated a service called www.traffic-bug.com. Traffic Bug automates that process of social book marking, RSS submission, directory submission and search engine submission.

This is going to get you some links over time but those links are going to be relatively low value. The link juice, the authority value of the links you'll get from these Traffic Bug submissions is fairly low. What it will do is get your new content or your new domain noticed and hopefully indexed as quickly as possible.

David Jenyns: With the directory submission, a few of these lower level traffic things I think you've hit the nail on the head as far as you want to go for things that are very high leveraged. This is something which doesn't take much work where you use a service like Traffic Bug or even for directory submissions, Directory Maximizer, or however you're doing it. These initial things are fantastic to set a whole lot of links back to your primary money site using the url as well.

When we go and try and do some targeted looking back to our site through EzineArticles or some of the other methods we'll talk about, blog networks etc, and you're really targeting your, keyword using these strategies you're talking about here, it's excellent. It mixes up to make sure we're getting links back to the site with the domain name which is very natural looking, really building things that would appear quite organic.

I know we chatted before about Traffic Bug and it sounds great the fact that it drips out these links. It's not something that almost overnight you've got hundreds of thousands of links.

Robert Somerville: That's right In addition to which, these sorts of submissions, it generally takes a while for the search engine spiders to find the submissions as well anyway. A lot of these directo-



Robert Somerville (continued): ries are relatively low authority, low page rank so it may take the search engine spiders a week or two weeks or even perhaps sometimes a month to find the submissions and then ultimately give you credit for the link.

So this is the sort of thing that will give you some sort of long term value, but what it really gives you, is the potential to get this new content noticed quickly and hopefully indexed quickly.

David Jenyns: That's phase one, and it's all about getting attention. How do you go from there?

Robert Somerville: Well, now we have to talk about the site relative to individual content on that site. Let's say you've published a post on that site and that post has been targeted to a very specific keyword, it's got a very specific competition profile. Depending what that competition profile is, that Traffic Bug submission might be all that you need. But that's probably definitely only the case if you're looking at keywords that have got sub 5000 competing pages phrase match.

If we're talking about the blog itself, your main site, your main ranking vehicle, what we suggest to people is they start to build a network of related sites on other domains, preferably on other authority domains which link back to that site to that blog. By this I mean creating a series of Web 2.0 sites where you can generate an authority link from that site back to your blog but you also have the potential for that Web 2.0 page to rank for the keyword in its own right. So you've got multiple ranking opportunities for the keywords that you are targeting.

David Jenyns: Just to give a little distinction as well, because my guys are familiar when I talk about own network as well, building our multiple sites on your own domain name. So you're talking about building your own network of these authority type Web 2.0 properties because effectively you are controlling that network. It's a similar effect but you're leveraging off the power of these Web 2.0 properties. It's just to have that distinction as opposed to building your own network, this might involve building more WordPress blogs through WordPress Direct or whatever and then linking those back.

Robert Somerville: Correct. Now in essence it is the same thing. The difference is the reason why you want to build pages on Web 2.0 domains is because they already have authority. The root domain of many of those Web 2.0 sites is PR6s, PR7s, some are PR8s. So even though your particular page on that domain is going to have low authority in true sense, in terms of page rank, just by virtue of the fact that your page is sitting on an authority domain means that the link you get from that page to your site, your blog, will have a higher value than a link that might come from another WordPress blog on a domain that has zero authority.

So we're effectively borrowing the authority of these Web 2.0 domains to give us some links that have authority. This improves the potential for our blog to rank for the keyword that we're targeting. We're also attempting to have additional ranking vehicles in the search engines for the keywords that we're targeting. Those Web 2.0 pages will have the potential to rank in their own right.

David Jenyns: Are you looking to rank for the same keyword that is the primary keyword on your domain so ideally you want to own the top five positions for a particular keyword? Or are they going for secondary keywords or how do you do that?

Robert Somerville: Again, coming back to your keyword marketing research, the way we teach it in the Thirty Day Challenge, is you identify a theme keyword, your most important keyword within



Robert Somerville (continued): your micro niche and then a handful of what we call category keywords. Category keywords are simply keywords that meet the competition criteria that you're using to filter out your activity. They have sufficient traffic potential to justify the work that's going to be required to rank for those keywords. There's no point spending hours and hours targeting a keyword that has no traffic.

So eventually you'll have a range of pages that are optimized both for your theme keyword, your main keyword but also you category keywords as well. Ultimately you want your main ranking vehicle, your blog to rank for all those keywords and you need to get links coming in to that blog for both the theme and the category keywords.

Now every time you create a Web 2.0 property, you're going to be submitting that to Traffic Bug as well. Every new piece of content gets submitted to Traffic Bug. Or if you are doing it manually, you book mark it. If you've got an RSS feed for that Web 2.0 property, you'd submit that to the RSS aggregates and directories and so on.

David Jenyns: Excellent. Some of the Web 2.0 properties that you guys identify as really strong, I know you've got Squidoo and Hub Pages. They've been around for a long time. Are there any new ones that you're seeing coming through the ranks that might have the same sort of strength? I know Squidoo has been around for ages, but are there any other ones that you could identify?

Robert Somerville: Well you can't go wrong with EzineArticles of course. That's also been around for a long time. But you want that because what generally happens with these Web 2.0 properties is that they get some initial Google love early in their life, then for what ever reason the spammers get on these platforms and Google starts to reassess the ranking value of these pages. Then they go through a bit of a down period where their ranking in the search is reassessed. But then if they apply good management practices on these pages as Squidoo and Hub Pages have done, then eventually they come through that period of Google attention and their pages start to recover in the search engines again.

This has definitely happened for EzineArticles which has a human moderation practice and Squidoo and Hub Pages have both gone through that cycle as well. So they are very powerful domains and they have survived and been around for a long time. So EzineArticles is definitely the big daddy if you're doing articles submissions. Scribd is very powerful. They have no follow links; I don't know what your position is on no follow links but that seems to be weakening as a limit in terms of the value of that link. I quite like Scribd.

David Jenyns: With the no follow links, just to add on that. There was an interesting thing that came up at a recent StomperNet event. Leslie Rohde was talking about it. He stuck his head into some conference and Matt Cutts was talking. There was a little bit of miscommunication as to whether no follow links have now been dropped by Google or if they're still there. I still use it for standard practice as far as directing the page rank, funneling the page rank on my site to the appropriate site. So I'll no follow my contact us page and different pages I'm not really looking at ranking.





David Jenyns (continued): But I won't, like you guys, not post something because it has a no follow link. I think all links have value. I know some other search engines don't necessarily look at the no follow thing. It's more of a Google thing. What Bing or Yahoo does I don't know, and those things change over time. I think every link has value. If Scribd is a really strong Web 2.0 site, then I think the more links the better.

Robert Somerville: Yes. I certainly agree with that. You might want to reconsider your practice of page rank sculpting using no follow. Google has reassessed their practice for that. What they're doing now, if you use a no follow tag on a link the page rank that would normally have been attributed to that link gets lost. It just doesn't get sent it gets basically subtracted.

Let me give you an example. Let's say you have a page with five links on it and four of the links have no follow tags. Let's say that was a page rank five. Normally, in terms of the page rank algorithm, each link would have received the equivalent of a PR1 juice. That's how page rank works. If you use no follow tags on four of those links then effectively the one link that is a follow doesn't get all the PR juice, it just gets the one juice and the other PR4 juice gets lost.

David Jenyns: I'll have to do some testing on that. I haven't seen that yet, but then again I tested this many many years ago and I know rules do change. I'll jump in and give it another test.

Robert Somerville: There's another Matt Cutts post on this which actually explains this very carefully. That's how Google is handling the use of no follow tags now. So page rank sculpting using no follow tags is no longer really an effective strategy.

David Jenyns: I'll definitely have a look into that. Some of the other sites, I know you mentioned Scribd, I suppose you do it even though it's got the no follow so clearly there they're changing the rules on the no follow. Are there any other Web 2.0 sites? I think we've got four really solid ones that we talk about in the SEO method. Are there any others?

Robert Somerville: I quite like Weebly as a Web 2.0 property. The problem I have with most Web 2.0 sites is the competing attention for the human traffic. There's so much distracting content on the pages. You get the SEO value of course because what you really want from an SEO perspective is the link.

The other purpose for setting up a Web 2.0 page is hopefully to attract some human traffic to your domain. So I quite like Weebly because you can set up some very simple sites that have very little distraction to your site. Obviously we can't ignore sites like Twitter and FriendFeed and Facebook these days. They're very powerful not only for their SEO potential but by sheer virtue of the fact that there are a lot of people looking at those sites. So you'll get the potential to attract human traffic to your site as well as the SEO value.

David Jenyns: Yes. That's one thing I do like, that you guys do over at the Thirty Day Challenge. You do talk about putting out good quality content. I know on these Web 2.0 properties, and what made me think of this was those final three, Twitter, FriendFeed and Facebook, because you're not necessarily going for the SEO benefit. It's more about the user experience, it's really important to have that content. I know it calls it champagne content, for having that really high quality stuff definitely on your main primary blog. Also for these pages as well, you do want to have that high quality content.



David Jenyns (continued): You talked about quite a few of those Web 2.0 properties there. I know it depends on the market you're going after, how much you'll end up posting on these. Let's say someone's just starting out. They're through the first phase. They've done their keyword research. How many posts are you doing, at least on the ones where you're making posts, as opposed to Twitter, Friendfeed and Facebook, more the Squidoo and Hub Pages, Ezine, Scribed, Weebly etc? Are you just doing the one post or those secondary keywords you identified for the categories, do you look at doing a post for each of those, or how does that work?

Robert Somerville: Initially you're doing the minimum number to meet the terms and conditions of the site. So for instance, to publish a Squidoo page, you can't just have a single post, you've got to have several. I think you have a minimum of three modules to have that page go live. So those modules might be an RSS feed module, it might be some sort of survey or poll module that you might use, you'll have an article module where you've got some keyword optimized content relevant to the keyword you're trying to target.

I like to make my pages fairly keyword focused. I don't want to mix too much the keyword focus of the pages. Ultimately you want those pages to rank as well for the target keyword as your main site does over time. Initially what you often find is your Web 2.0 pages will actually outrank your main site. Why is that? Those pages have more relative authority because they're sitting on an authority domain.

But over time, as you build up links to your blog, your main site, then you should begin to outrank you Web 2.0 sites. As you're acquiring authority, your ranking potential will increase.

Don't forget the free blogging platforms as well, wordpress.com and Blogspot. These are still very powerful domains. There are certain terms and conditions that you need to be wary of. With wordpress.com you can't promote a commercial product, but there is nothing preventing you from creating a keyword optimized page and linking from your page to a main site, which might promote a product.

David Jenyns: Yes. So we're looking at quite a few different sites here. Of the ones where you're actually building pages, there are a good six or seven properties that you're building these pages on. You're going for the minimum obviously to get the page published. You're doing one on each one of those to start and then you're using your Traffic Bug or whatever method you use, manual or otherwise, to get attention to that. Hopefully you'd slowly build some links to them organically. Obviously they're all linking back through your WordPress Direct or WordPress site. That's like filtering down from the SEO point of view. Hopefully you're snagging up some of the positions on the search engines as well for your Web 2.0 properties.

We're starting to see at this point some good ranking. What's your third phase then?

Robert Somerville: Ok. So at this stage, once you've completed this exercise, your main site will have anywhere from ten to fifteen or so links. Hopefully, depending on the competitiveness of the keyword that you're targeting, you should be on page two or page one of Google for your respective keywords. Now that's not going to be enough to get you any significant ranking over the longer term. It's not going to be enough to sustain that ranking either.

At this point I would suggest moving into what I call phase 2, link building activities. We are still using leverage. Because you're applying leverage you're only getting low to moderate authority



Robert Somerville (continued): links. The sort of leverage I suggest in phase 2 is submitting keyword optimized content to either blog networks or article directory networks. There are services now that you can use to automate this process. I myself use Article Marketing Automation from the PLR Pro guys for submitting to blog networks. I use Unique Article Wizard to submit to the article directories.

By doing this, you're giving yourself the potential to acquire a hundred, two hundred, three hundred links, it's that sort of order, to whatever it is you want to build links to.

David Jenyns: When you do that, do you also build links both to your Web 2.0 properties as well as your initial main WordPress site?

Robert Somerville: Yes. Some of these automated services do allow you to spin the links. For those that do, yes, I do. I'll always build a primary link to my main site but I'll spin the link to a range of my secondary sites. So I'm actually using the process to build links to both sets of sites. In the end, you're always going to get 50% of your links pointing to your main site.

David Jenyns: There are plenty of services out there, like you mentioned, that do achieve those goals. I think for each one of these stages that Rob's going through, as long as you have something in place for each one of these, I think you should pretty much be on the right track, no matter what service you use. We talked about a few. The key really is just finding a plan that makes sense for you and your budget and where you're at. Then make sure you follow through these steps. Where do we go from here?

Robert Somerville: That's phase 2. At this point, we've still applied leverage. Making a traffic submission is a five-minute exercise. Having an article written and submitting that to these various blog networks and article networks, with an hour's work you can achieve that. Over a period of four to six weeks that might net you several hundred links, so whatever page or domain you're trying to build links to.

Now at this point you'll be monitoring of course your SERT positioning and ranking relative to your keyword. Market Samurai has a fantastic module now called Rank Tracker, which I was party to the development of, so that makes it very easy now to track your relative ranking in the SERTS for your keywords.

At the completion of this point you may have two or three hundred back links but they're all going to be probably relatively low PR links. They're going to be 0s, 1s and 2s at best. So you've got a fair volume of low quality links but you probably haven't got any decent PR links, 3s, 4s and 5s and so forth.

I don't really know of a highly automated leverage way of getting high authority links. So at a certain point, if the link building activity that you've undertaken to this point hasn't given you the ranking you desire, then you need to go into phase 3. Phase 3 is to cherry pick authority sites where you can engineer a link, simply for the purpose of getting a high authority back link. Market Samurai has a module called the Promotion Module which allows you to find high page rank Web 2.0 sites, high page rank blogs, high page rank forums within your niche, that are keyword relevant. You can then engineer a back link from a high page rank page on that site.



Robert Somerville (continued): So you might target a blog post and it's a PR3 where you can engineer a comment or place a comment on that post which is relevant to the post but where the comment allows you to link back to your site. Or you find a high page rank thread in a particular forum where they allow you to have a link in your signature, so that when you post on that thread, you've got a link that points back to your blog.

There's no leverage here. One piece of work leads to one link. That might be five minutes of work, it might be ten minutes of work, whatever it is, but it is one for one. The only reason you would do this is simply to get page rank, to get authority. For you to rank well for a keyword over the longer term and sustain that ranking, you're going to need a spread of links across a range of authority. Most of the leverage link building activities only give you the low authority links. It doesn't give you high authority. To get high authority links you've got to do some manual link building.

David Jenyns: I'm thinking about those three phases. You're obviously using your Market Samurai or however you're checking the rankings of your site and you're monitoring as you're going. Once you reach something, you're going for a particular keyword and you start ranking for that, do you continue sending links to it for building up the domain name? Or do you say, right now I should start focusing on these other keywords that I'm trying to get ranking, perhaps for the primary keyword in your domain name which might be slightly more aggressive, rather than some of your longer tail more category type keywords?

Robert Somerville: Your main keywords, your theme keyword which is your most important keyword, and your category keywords, you're going to want to do link building on an ongoing basis. Ranking, SERP ranking, is like fitness. If you stop doing it, you lose it. So you need to continuously acquire links to those parts of your site that are optimized for your most important, high traffic keywords. I think the article strategy, have one or two a month written and continuously submit those to directories, so you are continuously acquiring links from blog posts and submissions over the longer term.

For your longer tail keywords, which have much lower competition basis, you might be able to get away with just doing Traffic Bug and one or two article submissions. You might not have to do the manual link building.

David Jenyns: Perfect. That sounds like a very solid strategy. Obviously there are quite a few different steps here and for someone just starting out I think they really do need to do this themselves. That way they can understand each step of the way. I'm interested to get your thoughts on outsourcing this, and is that something you guys look at at the Thirty Day Challenge? I know it's not part of the Thirty Day Challenge, but behind the scenes, because I know you guys do a lot of testing in the lab and a lot of different things. How does outsourcing play a role in implementing a lot of this?

Robert Somerville: Some of the stuff can be outsourced. Now that a lot of it has been coded into Market Samurai, if you train someone to use Market Samurai effectively you can do this. Good quality link building is actually a very hard thing to outsource. There's no grey in link building. You either get it right or you get it wrong. If you make a comment on a forum or a blog post and you get the anchor text slightly wrong or you get the link url slightly wrong, then any value that that may have created has been lost.



Robert Somerville (continued): So I've found it very difficult to outsource the high value link building. The low value stuff, yes that can be outsourced, or making a submission to Traffic Bug or having an article written and submitting it to these various automated services is relatively straightforward.

David Jenyns: So we talked about that strategy and the outsourcing. It's always hard to say one single thing is the biggest factor. But I'm keen to get your idea of what you'd say is the biggest factor in ranking. There is on page, there is off page...

Robert Somerville: Back links. Back links are the sledgehammer of SEO. You can rank for anything if you've got enough back links. However, Google is of course, over time, making it harder and harder for people to get easy back links. A lot of the leverage strategies we had in the past, reciprocal linking, buying back links, these strategies are losing favour in Google and therefore they're no longer available to us. They're not considered to be linking strategies that meet their terms and conditions. So it gets harder and harder.



They're after quality relevance over the longer term. My personal view is that you still need to focus on your back link building. What you want to be doing is closing the loop, making sure that everything is consistent. Let's say you want to rank for a particular keyword, then it's in your interests that that keyword is in the url or the domain name or the page that you're trying to get ranked for that keyword. It's in the title, it's in the description, and the anchor text of the link is consistent with that keyword so that you've actually got internal consistency in the eyes of Google.

It's knowing what you're doing to maximize the probability that the spiders will give you a high relevance score for that keyword and therefore increase your authority in the SERTs.

David Jenyns: I think that makes perfect sense with the off page and on page. You mentioned some of the things as far as the on page. Obviously the single biggest ranking factor you were saying was the back links. Then it is important to close the loop. For your on page, what do you see as the key things? You talked a little bit about the title. Are there other areas you think, yes, these are the single biggest on page factors?

Robert Somerville: The single biggest on page factor is the keyword's preferably in the domain, but if it's not in the domain, it's at least in the url. That's the single biggest on page factor. The next biggest on page factor is that the keyword's in the title. Those two alone, are by far and away the two biggest on page factors.

David Jenyns: The other thing as well, clearly getting links is the biggest factor for getting a website ranked and we talked about lots of different ways to getting links. It's important, I think, to build up a variety of links because that's what happens naturally and you don't necessarily want to go for one particular method. I'm interested to ask, if you had to pick one method for building links, and only one method, and I'm not suggesting that people should only do this, but I'm interested to know where you think the best biggest bang for your buck is on getting links?

Robert Somerville: Article submissions. It's a no brainer.



David Jenyns: With the article submissions. To a particular site? Like Ezine we mentioned is the granddaddy.

Rob Somerville: What I always do, I treat EzineArticles very carefully because they have a human moderation process. So if I'm having an article written, I'll create a variation of that article which I'll only submit manually to EzineArticles. Having then got through their approval process because that can take, as you're probably aware, anywhere up to a week or ten days, once that has been accepted and is live on the EzineArticles domain, I will then submit to the other article directories using an automated service.

But I won't do that using duplicate content, I'll attempt to spin that, to create sufficiently unique variations. So each article submission is at least 30% unique.

David Jenyns: I think you're really tying it all together there. I like the way you do have a system and a process and a systematic way you approach it. I think that is the real key. With the different people I have been chatting with, a lot of them have a system that they're applying. It's all about creating that system and that feeds to your out sources to get really big results. To get results you want to break down what it is your doing.

There is no exact method for getting a website ranked. There are some good fundamentals that you need to follow and the individual needs to find a plan and system that works for them and then just start applying that in a systemized process. You talked about the system which is step 1 do this, step 2 do that. I also like the way a lot of it correlates and very closely meshes with what we do to rank in sites as well. You're following the good fundamentals of what it takes to get a website ranked.

Mindful of what you guys do for the Thirty Day Challenge, I know you really do help people go after, when you're starting out you might not go for a really competitive niche. I'm thinking from your own stuff, what you do, where do you go? Do you go after big niches, or do you go after little niches?

Robert Somerville: I like going for niches that have got a sense of vertical integration, where there is a huge traffic reward for the most competitive keywords in that niche, but where I've got to weigh into the niche. I'll always start small. You've got to get a foothold, create a little crevice for yourself on the cliff face. Once you've got a foothold, then you can start building from there.

It's much easier to start ranking for a competitive keyword within your niche if you've already got some semblance of authority within that niche. But if you just suddenly start going after a very competitive keyword from brand new, with no authority in your favour, then you're really starting to make it very hard for yourself.

The other thing which we haven't talked about yet is the reason why you're doing this. What is the reason why you're trying to rank at all? Most people have commercial outcomes in mind. But not everyone has a commercial outcome in mind. They might be doing it for charity, for ranking a charity site or for just building an organic community because they're passionate about that community without any intention to make money from that community. So your outcome may also need to be considered as you're going through this process.



Robert Somerville (continued): In the Thirty Day Challenge we focus on this of course, because for most people who are doing the Thirty Day Challenge, they're looking for a commercial outcome, they're looking to make money from this activity. So you want to be confident that as you're beginning your initial niche testing, that the traffic you generate actually has a commercial outcome in mind, it will actually buy something. If you can't get any proof or evidence of that, then why would you spend all this time doing all this ranking work, if ultimately the traffic you're going to get isn't actually going to help you achieve your outcome?

David Jenyns: I think you hit the nail on the head there. A lot of people don't do that first. I think before you do go through the stages of building this network, you're right, you need to ask why am I doing this? We're not building things just for the sake of getting rankings and getting a particular keyword.

You really do need to be clear on the reason you're doing it. Be it a commercial outcome or for whatever reason, just putting up these pages with no backend or no idea of monetization or anything like that, what's the point? There is no point. That's something we do talk about but I suppose don't give it necessarily enough attention. You really need to have that clear focus before you start.

Robert Somerville: Yes. And that way you can put a milestone in place. You can say, I'm prepared to do x amount of work to get a certain amount of ranking, to get a certain amount of traffic. I'll then judge my outcome based on the traffic I'm receiving and make a decision about whether I want to do the extensive continuous work that I need to do to increase my ranking and sustain my rankings over the longer term.

I'm all about having a strategy that works and then scaling that strategy to create the outcome that I desire. But it's at the point where I decide to scale. Scaling requires time and money. You can do a little bit to get some result but to get a big result, you've got to do a lot more work. It's getting to that point where you can justify that work.

Even if you're outsourcing it to somebody else, all you're doing is actually converting time to money. Have a strategy that you know works. Have a series of clear milestones that you need to meet in order to continue the implementation of that strategy. Once you've decided, yes, this is the niche I want to go for, the traffic that I'm getting early, looks like they're giving me the outcome that I desire, then you go into scaling mode.

Once you're fully into scaling mode, there are two aspects to that. There is the off page aspect of that, i.e. link building and then there is the on page aspect. Once you've decided your niche is valuable, when you were doing your initial testing in that niche, you were probably only targeting a handful of keywords. Those keywords will probably be, if you followed a reasonable sort of filtering strategy, your highest traffic keywords relative to their competition.

But once you decide to go deep, to go seriously into a niche, you're going to want to have a representation on your site or sites across a very wide range of keywords to try and attract as much potential traffic in that niche as you can. So when you decide to scale up and go deep in a niche, you're going to be publishing across a wide range of keywords that have traffic within a niche and then doing the concomitant off page link building work to actually get ranking for those keywords.



David Jenyns: I'm interested to get your thoughts, because ok, now we're looking at scaling it because this is a viable niche. We're looking at going after this. I'm curious to know your thoughts on the ethical point of view of what we're doing. This is what I really love about what you guys do over at the Thirty Day Challenge. You're all about pushing good value products that you're adding value to the user. That's why you're not just scraping content and then dropping it onto these Web 2.0 and effectively spamming the search engines.

What are your thoughts on where SEO fits as far as, are we gaming the search engines by doing this? How do you see what it is SEO is?

Robert Somerville: My definition for search engine optimization is optimizing your website to increase the search engine ranking position of that website in the search engines for keywords that you believe that website to be relevant for. Now Google sets certain terms and conditions about what we can do on our websites in order for our websites to survive and prosper within their search engines. They themselves provide recommendations for what is good practice and what is bad practice. In effect, by doing that, you create a whole concept of search engine optimization. Google have done that.

If we use those suggestions to improve the potential for our site to rank, then I think that to be perfectly sensible and good practice. Now where we differentiate though as marketers and Google, is that Google doesn't really care about the concept of time. Google is quite happy for you to take a year to get a decent ranking for your website for whatever keyword you're targeting. They only care about relevance and authority. However long it takes you to acquire that, they don't care.

But as marketers, time is important to us because time equals money. So we're always looking to shortcut the process of getting ranking and acquiring authority. It's how you actually push the boundaries of those two different positions where you might run into trouble.

David Jenyns: I think the real key is, as long as you're coming from the right place and you're promoting something of value and you're not doing techniques where you're doing bait and switch through cloaking or whatever, it's ok. In the early days, I have tried some more aggressive techniques. But I'm learning over time. Google is smart, it is evolving.

The best you can do is follow, like you've got here, the outline of the Thirty Day Challenge, a system which is what I'd say, white hat, adhering to those rules. You're coming from the right place, looking at promoting something hopefully of value. Then you can't go wrong.

The thing is I think most people know when they're doing something wrong. As long as you pay attention to that internal radar, I'm sure people will stay on the right track.

Coming the end of this call, are there any other things from an SEO point of view that you see, like new trends that are developing, or new opportunities or things that you can see because you're on the cutting edge of SEO, that this is something that is coming and you need to be paying attention to this?

Robert Somerville: No, I don't think I can tell you that I see any fundamental new techniques appearing. I think people should be very mindful of the use of RSS and RSS technologies. I think



Robert Somerville (continued): they're very powerful as a way for promoting a site and also creating an interlinkage between a number of different platforms. That is very powerful.

I think the main thing people should be aware of though, is that Google is smart, and they have some very smart people working for them. They are as aware of the strategies that marketers are using to get sites ranked as we are. But they of course have to find ways of filtering out the inappropriate strategies, such that it doesn't affect quality sites that are ranking in the search. But they have time on their side.

Eventually the only way to survive on the internet is to produce good quality, unique content.

David Jenyns: That right there I think is the key. I know natural search engine good optimizations stuff happens from good content. If you put out good content, people are going to link to it. So you've hit the nail on the head there.

Rob: That long term is the only thing that's going to get you to survive in the SEO game.

David Jenyns: The final question I did want to ask Rob was to find out, who do you watch in the SEO world? There are a lot of different people and you are on the cutting edge and I'm just wondering who are other people who you consider to be people definitely worth keeping an eye on, as far as SEO is concerned?

Robert Somerville: The SEO guys behind StomperNet I think are very very good, you know the Leslie Rohde's of this world, and so forth. I particularly like two other SEO guys. One's a guy called Jonathan Leger and the other fellow is a British guy called Dr Andy Williams. I'm a scientist by background, I come from the science world so I look at things very quantitatively. I want to know why something works, not that it works.

What I like about those two guys is that when they publish about SEO things, they always do so from a platform of fundamental quantitative research. They're not just publishing opinions. They have actually compiled a series of facts and have then deduced some reasoning behind why those facts might have taken place.

David Jenyns: Yes, I think in the world of SEO that's worth its weight in gold Especially in my early days of SEO, we've all heard the different methods and theories and myths that people have. When someone can turn around and say, here are the facts, here is my testing, here's where I can show you what I've done, they are the people you need to listen to. That's definitely one of the reasons I listen to what you talk about, Rob.

If people want to find out more about you, what's the best way they can get in touch?

Robert Somerville: I'm just about to start my own blog. The url for that blog will be www.gurubobsblog.com. But my main activity is the Thirty Day Challenge, which is at www.thirtydaychallenge.com. Pretty much all we've talked about today is there. I'm largely responsible for the strategy behind the www.thirtydaychallenge.com and that's now encoded in a series of very high quality lessons that are available free at www.thirtydaychallenge.com.

David Jenyns: I can't recommend what you guys do enough and I can't thank you enough for jumping on the call today, Rob. Look forward to chatting with you again soon.



Robert Somerville: Well I've really enjoyed it David. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about what I think about SEO.

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