

COVID-19 SEO Tips with Mike Andrew: Transcript

Tuesday, 7 April 2020 — COVID-19 SEO Tips and Q&A with Head of SEO, Mike Andrew

Introduction (0.00 to 1:05)

Hi everybody. Welcome along. So sorry we're a little bit late. We were waiting for the Prime Minister to finish an update on the COVID-19 event. Now, hopefully you'll be able to see me.

Good afternoon, everybody. We'll just wait till a few people jump on board. I'm Mike Andrew, Head of SEO for Localsearch, and we're going to take you through a few ideas today for surviving the COVID-19 event. So, we'll just hold tight for a couple of seconds until everyone comes on board and then we'll start.

Okay, folks. Sorry about that. We were just waiting for the Prime Minister to finish. And we're ready to go. So, let's start.

First of all, I'm Mike Andrew, Head of SEO. We're going to take you through some ideas today for surviving the COVID-19 event. We've been asked a lot, a lot of questions over the past couple of weeks from a digital point of view and how we go about doing this. And we've had a lot of conversations with some clients. So, what I'm going to share with you today is our thoughts on how you can survive this event.

What is SEO? (1:06 to 2:23)

First of all, what I should do is explain to you what SEO is. SEO stands for search engine optimisation, and what it does, when a website is built and it comes out of production and it goes live, it is search engine friendly. It's not necessarily search engine optimised.

What we do is we take that website, we increase the quality and the quantity of the pages and the content, and then increase the traffic to the website to organic search engine results. And that's pushing it out to Google. And there are three areas that we mainly concentrate on.

One is the technical issues on the website to make sure that coding is fine, to make sure the speed is fine, any other issues that might affect the site technically, fixed broken links, etc. So, we do that.

The second thing is on-page optimisation — on and off-page optimisation. And that is looking at how the page is structured, how the navigation works, how the consumer experience is, how long does it take to get to where you want them to go so you increase conversion.

And the third part of it is the content strategy. Now, that's the area that we're going to look at today because when we look at how your SEO strategy changes from what was a month ago to what is today, one of the big factors in keeping you active and dynamic on Google is the content strategy for your website.

How is COVID-19 SEO different? (2:24 to 3:29)

We actually got asked the question by another SEO company before. And I thought it was quite an interesting question. "How was SEO changed today from what it was a month ago or three weeks ago?"

Well, we've never been in this environment before, so we don't know. The last time this happened was in 1918, and of course the internet didn't exist back in then. So, we've got no historical thing to fall back on.

So, what we've done over the past couple of weeks is experiment, and from my point of view, you've got to think outside the square. You cannot do today, or sorry, you cannot do today what didn't work tomorrow. So, you've got to change things.

So, what we've done, we've had a look at how we can impact Google at this point in time and how we can impact the consumer. And that is through content; pushing high-quality, good-quality relevant content that informs, communicates with people about you and your business. And that's how SEO has changed today.

We still do the basics. We still do the technical side and we still do the on-page stuff, but we change the way we look at content. And we're going to go through that in a minute for you.

Search Trends During COVID-19 (3:30 to 10:34)

Now, first up, at this very point in time where searches on the internet are increasing enormously, a number of people want to stop doing their digital marketing. Wrong, wrong, wrong. Now is the time that you need to increase that digital marketing.

What we're finding is people are searching for information, and they're searching for you. And if you stop it, two things will happen.

One is, people won't be able to find you. But more important Google will stop indexing you. So, in other words, you'll start to drop in the search results because you're no longer relevant to the search terms. It's looking for information. It's looking for updates. It's a solution provider. And it tries to provide a solution to the consumer. You should be the solution, and if Google finds that solution good enough, it'll provide your solution to the consumer.

So, let's just have a look at what's happening. First of all, let's just take tradies, because that's a big part of what we do. When you have a look at the week commencing the 29th to the 4th of April —well, last week right—this is what was happening.

Plasterers search increases up 61% from the previous week. That's people going online and searching for plasterers. Cabinetmakers, up 58%. Fencing contractors search volume, up 23%. Electricians, 15%. Plumbers, 13% increase. Emergency water heating searches have increased over the last couple of weeks. Plumbers near me searches are also very, very high. Roofing contractors, up 11%. Tilers, 8%. And handyman, which is not me, up by 5%.

Now, when you have a look at other types of trades, other businesses, mechanics up 40%. Truck mechanics near me, up 80%. Mechanics near me, up 50%. 'Can I get my car serviced during a lockdown', up 300%. And fixed-price car service, up 300%.

Now, why on Earth would you wanna stop marketing on the internet?

One thing we have realised is that mobile search results, or mobile searching trends, have actually slowed down over the last couple of weeks, and desktop is at a high—higher than it has been for the last 12 months. And the reason for that is that what's happening is that people are sitting on the desktop, like I am now, and they're doing searches. So, mobile, not so much today. More desktop.

So, we're changing the way we optimise sites just a little bit so we make sure desktop optimisation is as spot on as it can be.

Let's just have a look at say another category; dentists. Now, we know that dentists for instance have a bit of an issue, and they've had to close and can only treat emergency cases. But searches for dentists have surged in the past week. And the search term 'are dentists open' have increased in the past two weeks with

Queensland having a high search result and New South Wales coming in second. Now, if that's the case, why wouldn't you turn around and start looking at how you can impact that consumer who is looking for possibly an emergency dentist.

Instead of stopping, you should be increasing what you're doing and feeding that content out to these people and communicating with them. And we'll talk a little bit more about that in a second.

Okay. Wrapping that; we've seen that data and we know there is now an uptick in activity and an uptick in search trends. We also know that this COVID-19 situation is pretty much here to stay with us for the next 3 to 6 months. But, we can use that in our favour if you focus on long-term results for your business.

Now, let's look at if this lasts for six to eight weeks, hopefully. We can still work a good strategy for you. If it's four months or six months, same strategy, we just have to do it a lot smarter.

SEO on your website now means the difference between you're relevant to your consumer or you sit in the wilderness. So, when it comes to your customers and to Google, dynamics are best. So, when this event is over, if you stop now, you'll miss out in the boat. If you keep it going, your website stays dynamic, your content strategy is in place, Google will love you and you will maintain that organic position, which is most important.

So, when you come out at the other end, you'll stay exactly where you were when you went into it.

Now, just open a couple of things here for you. Brands that engage with their customers effectively and empathetically are those who will resonate most during and after a crisis. Do you get that?

So, in times of uncertainty, open and transparent communication is the key to retaining loyalty and trust. In a crisis, and I think this is a very important part, information is only helpful if it's relevant and accurate.

Now, this may range from crucial business announcements on changes to your operations, updates on specific company initiatives, [...] how you're being affected or how a community is being affected by COVID-19, or any concessions made to purchase process to better accommodate the consumer's situation or the customer's situation.

Now, I gave you an example of all those search volumes. So, a mechanic, you've got the prime opportunity to start marketing to that search volume that is on the web, and we do that by content.

So, bearing the above in mind, here are some ideas that can be implemented for our clients that we're working on together now. And that is, first of all, we need to maintain the dynamics of both your website and your Google My Business page. And we need to push these out to Google frequently with information that is relevant to the consumer and is accurate to the consumer about you, your business, your product, what you do, how you do it and most importantly, how you service your customer.

So, we've seen a client's website stop updating content and what happened was their impression share and their organic ranks suffered within about 24 hours. We saw a drop in it. And times like this, Google and Bing are looking for updates to inform and advise searchers. So, sites that provide relevant content will be rewarded and will become more relevant to their customer than ever before.

So, during this event, websites that drop in organic share will have a very, very hard time recovering once the COVID-19 virus event is over, and therefore, it is vital the business maintain organic and impression share moving forward. It will keep you dynamic and keep you alive in Google's eyes. Because remember one thing; your business is only as good as Google says it is.

Google My Business & COVID-19 (10:35 to 12:08)

So, GMB and website. Let's have a look at GMB — what you can do.

First of all, Google My Business is a free product that you can use to push out your business to the consumer. It should always be in sync with what you do on your website. My strategy is always to post website first, and then to Google My Business. Because then we have a synergy between what happens on the website and what happens on the Google My Business page.

So, update your business profile on Google. Update your hours or status. People are looking for you and there's one of the most frustrating things is when you find a business and it's not open, it's not operating, and they haven't updated their Google My Business page.

Google at the moment is really, really keeping an eye on what happens in Google My Business pages. They put a special section in there called COVID-19 Updates

and they want you to use it, and the reason you use it, is to get those announcements out there. Google are looking for it, so use it.

So, edit your hours or mark your business as temporarily closed, if needed. But please, do not close it. If you want to mark temporarily closed, that's fine, because it's a devil-hard time getting it back in line again when you close it.

Confirm your phone number. Double check that your phone number and your messaging—if you want to use messaging on Google My Business, turn them on—and make sure your phone number is correct so people can call you. And, post updates regularly. Same with your website.

COVID-19 Content Strategy (12:09 to 18:12)

So, let's have a look at what content ideas can be posted on both your website and your Google My Business. And this is relevant to either one. It doesn't matter which one you use. These are both relevant.

First of all, how the business is continuing to operate during the next few months. What steps are in place for you to help your customers? Talk to them! Tell them what you're doing.

FAQ — frequently asked questions. These can include, depending on your industry, and you can change these depending on what you are, whether you're a tradie, retailer or a service-based industry, you can change these. And we can help you there.

First of all. Tips on staying healthy at home. What do you do? How do you do it? How do you stop from putting on weight? How do you stop your mental health? What do you do? So, you send these messages out if your company is a health-related company, if you're a clinic, a beauty clinic, a salon, whatever you are, you can use your GMB to push these messages out.

What activities can be done at home that are relevant to your business? What happens if my washing machine breaks down? What do I do? Where do I go? I go to the web! So, how do I know if the tradie is going to come to my home? How do I know what he's going to do or what she does when she comes to the door? What precautions are you taking as a company? How do I contact you? Will you come to my home? What precautions will you take if you home visit? How to keep your skin in good condition.

I mean, I could go on and on with these ideas. I've got hundreds of these ideas. For plumbers, what happens if my toilet blocks up? What happens if I get a water leak? Who do I call? Where do I go? I go to the internet. And then I don't find any relevant information from these tradies. So, what do I do?

So, it's important that we update this information, not only on your Google My Business page, but on your website. Things like, online consultations. Sorry. Do you do them via Skype? Do you do them via Zoom? Can I talk to you? Do you still do home visits? How can you help me through this event? These are all very, very important content ideas you can push out on your website and your GMB page.

Article content should also be included. And what that would be around general topics, depending on the business, and it should be relevant and up to date. Your posting schedule should be varied, but I would suggest, and we've tested this and it worked a treat, at least two to three times a week would be really, to me, my recommendation on keeping that site dynamic, keeping the Google spider visiting your site, getting that content indexed so the consumers can find it. Very, very important. It keeps your website dynamic, posting content. Just normal page content doesn't do it. But pushing it out via your blog, pushing it out via your latest new section, pushing it out through your GMB and synching them and coordinating them.

Even doing EDMs, all of this stuff should be coordinated so that you get a unified message out to your consumer. By doing it this way, you keep the site dynamic, you keep your GMB page dynamic.

We also can use a special piece of markup that goes behind the scenes on the site. You don't see it. The consumer doesn't see it but identifies to Google special content that is related to the COVID-19 event. That's important because that is the search term at the moment that's really, really hot, so as soon as we get that, we push it out and we tell Google and get Google to grab it we optimise it properly. We push it out, we put this piece of schema code behind it, which identifies it to the search engines and in a lot of cases we can get it to rank really highly.

Here's an example. We've been working with a dentist who put some tips out on keeping your teeth healthy and what you can do during this COVID-19 event. By pushing it out, creating an authority figure of that particular dental professional, what happened was they were second under the Australian Dental Association, recommended on a general Google search. How good is that? That's because COVID-19 was part of that content and it was pushed out by Google. They have an authority; perfect stuff, and that's what we need to do. A mechanic can become an authority. A plumber can be an authority. Depends on how long you been in

business, your trust elements, etc. All of these are very very important for you in surviving in business Today

Other things we can do is reach out to customers to see how they're doing. Start conversations. Build connections with them. People will be craving for human interaction and you can do it through a combination of your website and your Google My Business page.

Make sure that you're honest and transparent though, and don't create fear. Your post should show empathy and compassion rather than stress or fear. You're providing a solution to the problem that I have sitting at home and I need you, but I gotta be able to find you.

Look for opportunities to help people as well use GMB to reach out to those in need and see if you can help. How can you help me fix my problem? And I've given you a list of those and we could go on. We can actually design them for each different industry. Get you to push those out and that would last you for between four to six weeks and as soon as that's finished, we get out and then we find some more for you. Content strategy, in this particular event, is the most important part of your digital marketing.

Now, remember that businesses that are proactive during this time will reap the rewards of a well thought out and implemented content strategy. Every business should have at least an update on their GMB be page sharing where their businesses are in relation to the COVID-19 event. Likewise, on the website. Regular and new customers should be able to find information related to; is the business still open? How have you adjusted to social distancing? What measures and what products and services do you still have available? Communication is what it's all about, ladies and gentlemen.

COVID-19 SEO Q&A (18:13 to 19:27)

I think now we should open up to questions. So, if anybody's got any questions, please let me know. Somebody's put a post there saying getting a car service while in lock down is a little bit misleading. It's not misleading.

It's Google telling me that that search term has been an increase of 300% over the previous week. Though historically it can't be compared, I'm comparing it to what we've never had, an event like this. I just look at what happened last week to this week and that search volume has gone up. Search volumes are up. What else can I tell you. Search volumes are up and that's the percentage that they are.

People are stuck at home. Can I get my car serviced in lock down? Where do I go? Who do I go to? People are searching for all sorts of events. We know for a fact last week that blocked toilets was a high search term in New South Wales. It shows people who are locked up at home were obviously flushing things down the toilet and they were getting blocked. So, blocked toilets became a high search term and we know that's changing all the time. So, that search term comes directly from Google, not from me.

What are the first things to look at when doing SEO? (19:28 to 22:16)

Any questions? What I might is, there's a couple of questions we got actually through an Instagram post a little while ago. So, let me just open that up for you and I'll take you through what those Instagram questions were.

Okay, this is a question probably related to how we do SEO. What are the first things we look for when we're doing SEO? What I look for essentially is where the website sets right now on Google. How relevant is it to Google? If it's not very relevant to a search term — and that search term might be car mechanics in Robina, mechanics servicing Miami, for instance — then what I'll do is I'll work out why the site doesn't rank highly, and once we have determined what that issue is, we can then go and have a look at those 3 key areas that I mentioned.

One is the technical aspects of the site. Is it fast? Is it slow? Does it load quickly on a mobile device? Is there any issues with the technical side of it, like coding? And issues such as broken links. Can I get to where I want to go very quickly navigation wise? Is it taking me 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 15 clicks to get an information? Is the phone number readily available? All of those issues we look at.

Then we go to the on-page structure. Where is your product listed? What's the page structure like? Does it fit with Google's best practices? We might change a lot of the original design of your page to make it more search engine optimised rather than search engine friendly.

Most websites today are search engine friendly and the fact that they're responsive, so they look good on whether you're on a small tablet or mobile phone and or a desktop computer. It's not the point. It depends on how relevant it is to the search term. And what we do is, we turn then, the third part of that equation is content. We turn that content around and we optimise it for that keyword search result.

Now, keywords used to be the Holy Grail of search engine optimisation, not so much today. We look at other elements too, such as voice search optimisation. We have a look at how the relevancy of search elements or keyword repetition within a piece of

copy. So, we have a look at how relevant that is to the search. What we do then is we will make a lot of changes to the website, so we improve it. So, that becomes more relevant to the search results. We push it out to Google. We talk to Google all the time. We clean it up. We remove any of those 404 error pages, which are pages not found. Clean up the site technically, move it out, and quite often, when we do that, we will actually see an increase in the organic performance of the site.

So, that's the first thing we look at when we start SEO on a campaign.

What's a common error businesses make that could hinder their COVID-19 SEO? (22:17 to 23:32)

What's a common error businesses are making that could hinder them during this time? First of all, lack of communication and a lack of content being pushed out.

Communication with the consumer is most important at this very point in time. Businesses that don't communicate with their consumer will actually lose in this battle and that's one of the biggest errors that you make — and it doesn't matter what type of business.

We have a business that is closed, he cannot operate, but we have a strategy in place for him to keep him alive with his content. And so far, over the last two weeks, we've had an impression share — that's the number of times Google is serving his website out to search results — has actually gone up. His clicks have gone up. The content on the site is now all related to how he's operating now that he can't open the business. He is still taking bookings for the next six weeks to eight weeks. He's talking to people via Zoom link so people can talk to him just like this and that's how he is staying current and relevant to his consumers. And Google is rewarding for it, and that's one of the things you can do quite easily to maintain your relevance.

Would you recommend pushing reviews? (22:33 to 23:49)

Would you recommend pushing reviews at this stage? As a question, no. Google has actually stopped all reviews at this point in time because the prospect of getting bad reviews for businesses is probably not as relevant. So, they have actually stopped reviews at this stage. Don't worry about them.

How can SEO help a business pivot during COVID-19? (23:50 to 25:13)

Another question was how can SEO help a business pivot in this unprecedented market? Again, sometimes we need to change the focus of the way that a website is set up. What we look at in SEO is the commercial viability of keywords and positioning on Google.

There's no point being number one for a keyword when there's no search volume. It's like building a business up on the top of the hill, having no electricity, having no roads, no signage, no telephone number and then expecting it to survive. It just doesn't work.

We all know that being on the page or page one or the first page of Google is probably the best way of being able to be able to be found by a consumer. Nobody goes to page two. Very few people on page three. So, it's all about getting you on page one, and if we can get you in the top five, even better.

So, essentially what you need to do is basically change sometimes the focus of the campaign, and we've done that.

To me, SEO is dynamic. What we might have optimised for you yesterday, we might change today as the market changes and fluctuates. So, from my point of view, what we do with SEO is dynamic. It's changing everyday, so it's never static. It's always dynamic and pushing content and working relevant content out for your consumer based on your business is the best way for you to take this market by storm.

Why hasn't my ranking changed after doing SEO? (25:13 to 26:48)

Why haven't I seen my SEO improve after making changes? Right, sometimes it takes Google some time to recognise when a website has been improved.

We can push it out. We talk to Google, we get a recrawl happening all the time when we make a change. Now, we have to be very careful in the way we do it. If we make too many changes too quickly, Google knows that a professional SEO person is working on the site and it can go the opposite way. So, everything we do has to be like a mom-and-pop-type environment. It slowly changes over a period of time.

Now, I'm not talking months. I'm just talking that we're going to be careful about how we do it. Sometimes it takes Google a long time to recognise that a website has changed in content quality and quality of the site itself and become more relevant. Sometimes it can happen really quickly, but because we don't own Google, we can't control a lot of the time what Google does. We basically just have to sit there and we just push it out and make changes and make those changes on a weekly basis. Sometimes we will change things around weekly. We'll change elements around. We

will change title tags around. We will change heading tags around. We will make these changes on your website until we find the one that Google really likes and we get that result for you.

So, sometimes it can change and it can take weeks for you to see a result in your SEO. It's patience. There is no Bible to this. There is no guidebook that says if you make this change to a page you will suddenly get to number one. It doesn't exist. I wish it did, but it doesn't.

What can influence my ranking? (26:49 to 20:04)

What can influence my ranking? Well, relevance to the consumer is a big one. Being relevant to the content that is relevant to the consumer search result is of a high quality.

And these days Google looks for three elements; expertise, authority and trust. Including that within your website, your GMB page, and your content goes a long way to Google putting trust in what you as a business do online.

There is a category called the money or your life sites. Now, these are sites that have the ability to change your life, such as doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, insurance, finance, skin clinics, where they make changes, cosmetic surgeons etc. These all fall into a money or your life category.

Now, they, Google had put in place last year basically a bit of a criteria for content. So, we look at expanding content out. Like, sometimes websites have 500 words on a page. Money or your life category no way. You need to go to 1500 words or more.

In fact, in the US last year, there was a survey done and I found that the top ten ranking websites in the US — these are the big websites — had a minimum of two and a half 1000 words per page. Now, we're not saying that every website should do that, but that's the kind of depth of content that sometimes can make a big difference between whether you rank highly or not, in particularly if you're very, very competitive environment.

So, expertise, authority and trust are relevant to all businesses. Whether you're a plumber — how long you've been in the business. What are your qualifications? You know... How many Google reviews do you have, and at the moment they're frozen, but you got Facebook reviews. You've got Product Reviews. You've got a whole bunch of these. Are you trustworthy? These are all elements that Google looks for and if it finds a complete package, you get the reap the rewards for it.

Well, that's about it, ladies and gentlemen, as far as the questions are concerned, unless there are any popping up on the questions. Lauren, Michael and Kayla. Apparently we have a few questions, so I'm going to go through and see if I can find those for you. Okay.

Should you put Facebook posts on your website and GMB? (20:05 to 29:57)

Should Facebook posts be part of the website, GMB posts and is it beneficial from an SEO point of view, Kelly? Um, yes they should be, Kelly.

Any content that is relevant should be on the website and social elements... Facebook doesn't have any impact on organic ranking as far as social signals are concerned, however what it does have is a social network. So, my thought is that we put that content on everything that we possibly can.

So, to answer that question, yes it is beneficial from an SEO point of view with regard to Facebook and with regard to GMB, absolutely. And also, on Facebook, you're talking to your own network, so very, very, very, very important.

Let me have a look and see if I've got...

How can SEO help businesses once COVID-19 is over? (29:58 to 31:30)

How can making these changes now — this is from Lauren — how can making these changes now and constant improvements help business after this whole COVID-19 situation is over? Okay, yeah, Lauren. Thank you. Good question.

What we will do once this COVID event is over, by posting content improvements and changes right now, you keep the site relevant and dynamic. So, in other words, you keep that Google spider coming into your site.

After this event is over, we change that strategy back again to where we were. The idea of this change is to keep you in front of Google as much as we can. If you're in front of Google, you're in front of the consumer.

When we finish this event, which we will eventually, what I don't want to have to do is go and take a website that's now sitting on page three, four or five, and try and get it back on to page one.

One of the clients said to me the other day when the penny dropped, she said, “You know something... If I keep doing this aggressively content wise and everybody else stops, you know what? I'm going to come out of this very, very strong while my competitors fall away.” And that's the way to look at it.

So, Lauren, will it forever help their ranking? Yes, it will, but we need to change once this event is over. We need to take you back to a normal SEO strategy again. The content strategy, pushing it out is to help business through this event during this time. Hope that answers that question for you. So, let me go and see...

How can you get a quick SEO turnaround? (30:31 to 32:33)

What would you recommend for, say a café restaurant who wants to launch delivery takeaway service? How could you market that for a quick turnaround? Thank you, Michael Russell.

Um, great question! I don't think it matters what sort of business you are if you're still servicing a consumer. People are looking for food.

I know we've been talking to food companies like Uber Eats and we've been looking on searching online for where we can get food delivered in our local area, we're online. So, from my point of view, it would be taking content that is relevant to what you do and then pushing it out to your Google My Business page, and pushing it out to your website, and changing their content on a regular basis.

What do you supply? Wow do you supply it? Do you do hands-free deliveries? Where do you leave it? What can I get? What is your menu? When are you open? All those points are still relevant. It doesn't matter what business you're in, all of those questions are still really, really relevant.

So, I would be pushing that content out and I'd be pushing telling people every day that I'm open and what services I have to offer.

Note About Localsearch Digital Marketing Specialists & Recap (32:34 to 33:46)

Also, by the way, you can also touch base with the Localsearch digital marketing strategist in your area — specialist. Because they're the guys that will help you initially get in contact with our SEO team. We have a team seven people working with Localsearch and we're all there and we're all here ready to try and help you get through this event.

Now, you know to me, it is all about again content, content, content, pushing out content. SEO will keep your site fresh. It will keep your site relevant. It will keep your site dynamic during this event, and we've changed our strategy and will change it again when it's finished.

So, let's have some more questions, because I'm sure you've got heaps.

Let me just recap for you, because I think this is important because if you're a business owner and you're on this live event right now, I think it's important that you understand several things. One is the web is dynamic, which means it changes from day to day. What is done today will need to be redone again tomorrow, and will need to be redone the day after that. And we've always got to remain relevant and that's why the content strategy is part of this SEO update is really, really, really important for you.

Are blogs better for SEO than page changes? (33:47 to 36:19)

Would a blog article trigger the same response from Google as a page from the website structure itself?

A blog post tends to be more dynamic, where a page is more static. Blogs, I mean, like a little while ago, and let me say 12months ago maybe, but there was a lot of rumours going around the web that blog posting was irrelevant, and that content etc. was not helping websites at all. I disagree with that.

I've found over the last few years blog content and adding blogs into the site allows me to change a lot of the time the direction I'm going with the SEO on it. I can optimise it for different keyword, say for instance. I can turn that content around and look for different areas that I can focus the business on. It's a lot harder to be making changes to a static website on an ongoing basis or static page.

I mean, bear in mind that Google indexes pages, not websites. So, the more pages we have on your website...

Now, there's a little bit of a miss reporting going around for a lot of people who think that thin sites are better. Thin sites are not better for Google. Google likes resource-heavy sites. Those sites that give people take away.

So, one of the things we like to do when we post the blog, say for instance, it's created into a PDF so that people can download a PDF version of that piece of copy.

That's another good idea for you during this event is turning those blog posts, those suggestions of what you can do at home into takeaways PDFs for people to download. Putting your logo on. Putting your business address on that and then creating a PDF take away.

You get two things. One is that you get the page indexed in Google and second thing is the blog is indexed on Google, the second thing is you get the PDF indexed into Google. So, you get 2 bites at the cherry.

A website that's got 1, 2, 3, 4 pages has a small chance of coming up in the search results. A website that has 200 pages has 200 opportunities of being found for different search results in different keywords.

For me, I think in this event, changing your static pages to reflect your business is important but updating more regular content on a blog post and or your GMB is just as important, and in fact, I think at this stage, it keeps your site dynamic because it creates an URL structure. When you add a blog post to a site, we push it out to Google and it builds those URLs with those pages when you site, which increases your value in the Google index. So, I hope that answered that question for you.

What is the best keyword research tool? (26:20 to 38:24)

What do I use to get your keyword searches? Right, okay, lots of tools out there.

Keyword Planner is probably an easy one, because it takes information directly from the Google search so you can put that in. The other thing you can do is use Google Trends as well, so you can see what's trending around the place. And some of those steps I used at the start of this presentation come from Google trends.

You can see what's happening with trends on different products, different services, within different states within Australia, different countries and you can see how things change over a period of time. You can go back a few years and you can see what happens with searches, so you can get a good idea of the way that the people that are searching for product and/or services are changing and how current events and current news stories impacts what you do on the web.

For example, one of the things that we can do, and this is why this COVID-19 event is so important, and I should of mentioned this, I forgot about it, just remembered that. So, what we do is if we find an event that's being covered by the news media and there's a lot of searching going on by adding a blog post in your website that captures that target keyword phrase, we quite often can get you a high ranking on

Google because you're tapping into a high search volume keyword. And we've had a lot of success.

As an example, there was an A Current Affair story that ran a little while ago about the lady that had the injection into her lip and it caused a bit of a problem. We put a post on Google from a doctor client of ours and we actually hijacked the actual headline that A Current Affair had used. Within about a day to two days, his post sat at number two under A Current Affair, and we'd hijacked the doctor that originally made the point. We hijacked his story for our client. That's how powerful tapping into what media search can take and where it takes you and how it can take you is very important. That's why COVID-19 is a very interesting term to tap into at the very moment. That's where content helps.

What is the best platform for SEO? (38:25 to 39:24)

What's your preferred platform to perform SEO on? Are there any that are not worth it? No, there's no site that's not worth it.

We tend to find we have the best results when we're using websites that we can actually get into and manipulate the code on the back end, so we can make changes dynamically without having to worry about, you know, templated sites etc. Which is why we find you know the sites like WordPress are really easy for us to work on. They're really easy to perform changes on. They are quite search engine friendly. Google likes the URL structure and things like that. So, we find it easy.

The only sites we find really difficult to work on are template-driven sites where we can't manipulate the code. We can't make enough changes in the backend because it's restricted to us. We can't get enough and we can't get access to it, we really are limited by what else we can do, but in saying that, we can do SEO on any site at all. Thank you, Kevin.

Does Google My Business count as duplicate content? (39:24 to 40:45)

Content. Should the wording be changed when carrying the content over to GMB from your website? No, there is no duplicate content penalty when it comes to things like that.

Duplicate content penalty is a bit of a misnomer, because there actually isn't a penalty for it. What happens is, Google just doesn't index when it finds a duplicate, so it disappears. So, there's a perception that it has a penalty but it's not.

Duplicate content on a website should be avoided at all costs, but there is no duplicate content at all problem with having it on GMB and having it on your website. It's a consistency element. So, we'll look at...

This is from a Tash to Kevin. I've always heard that content is bad. Yes, it is. I think I've just answered that question.

One of the things too, I think you can do first of all is if you subscribe to the Local Digital [Localsearch Digital Newsletter](#), you'll get a rundown of all these tips for you. And if you do want to have a chat to us any stage, just contact your digital marketing specialist in your area, and those guys are really, really good at being able to contact us and we can have a chat and happy to help out in any way we can.

Can I get to the top of GMB? (40:46 to 41:43)

Can I get to the top of GMB? An interesting one.

Okay, at the moment, what if... let me put it this way. Google's looking for updated information. We talk about Google as if it's a living thing and it is because your business is only as good as Google says it is. So, if we can work it really, really cleverly with content, we can get you the change.

I think at the moment, the way that Google is working is if the GMB pages very, very active with content, you're using it, you're posting information out and using it, yes, I have seen an increase in where a GMB page come from number five, number ten, say for instance, up into number three, number two. And particularly, if your competitors are dropping off.

So, all of those people that are not on this event today will not get this information. So, the world now is your oyster SEO-wise. You can go out and talk to us and we'll help you, or you can do this for your own business and just start pumping that content out 'cause it will help you.

How can I take the ranking of a business with the same name as me?
(41:44 to 43:51)

There is another business with the same business name as mine, but based in the USA. And they're ranking above me. How can I take that first position?

Okay, first of all Chasca, what we need to do is have a look at what's in the backend of your site. Sometimes there's a language tag that sits there, which it just has EN or it might have EN-US, and we need to go in and change that.

There are geographic tagging we can use to tell Google to basically only serve it to a certain area, which we can have a look at. And yes, you can actually get it ranking above yours, because Google will always serve a country top-level domain, which is dot.au for instance, over a .com in the country of origin. Where it can't find a relevant .au it will always serve .com because .com is a top-level domain. A .au is a country top-level domain.

One of the things that I always suggest to clients, now they always forget this, is that when you're thinking of buying a domain name, and thinking of business name, always buy both versions; .com, dot.au and .au. Redirect the .com version to the au version because if someone searches in mikeandrew.com, I've got both versions and one redirected, the .com redirected, what will happen is it'll go straight to my .au version. And it's an easy way of solving that problem.

The other thing is to it stops another digital specialist advising a client to buy a domain name that you've already got and riding off your shirt tail. Because if I got mikeandrew.com.au and somebody else buys mikeandrew.com because I have a high ranking website, that's probably bad example, but it's a business one, you know what I mean, then what I can do is I can actually ride off that. Because if people forget the .au and I've got a redirect, then because there's no rule to stop you buying a .com. You have to have an ABN to buy a .au but not a .com. So, buy both versions and redirect the .com, but Chaska, yes there is a way you can fix that.

Do social feeds get indexed? (43:52 to 45:00)

Do social feeds, such as by using a WordPress plugin, get indexed? Yes, you can do that.

Google doesn't automatically index Facebook pages as much as what it used to. They used to be all over the place, if you remember, and what happened; there was a big argument between Facebook and Google. Facebook wanted to be a search engine, Google wanted to be a social network. So, they came out with Google+. As a result of that, they stopped indexing a lot of pages from Facebook.

There are some in the system now, but yes you can get a WordPress plugin to get them indexed. More importantly, what will probably happen first though, is if the actual post is on the page itself, that will be indexed as a priority. But social, and don't get me wrong, social, GMB and your website should all be a part of, and your

EDMs are very, very important. Four parts of that equation should all be sent, you know, have a synergy that should be all synced so that you're sending a uniform message out to your clients all the time and do it often and that's one of the secrets I think to surviving through this event COVID-19 event.

Conclusion (45:01 to 45:57)

So, if I can sum it up, it doesn't look like there are any more questions here, ladies and gentlemen. If I can sum it up, content, content, content. It's most important.

Don't forget, if you want to get a list of the suggestions that I've put forward today that I've talked about sign up to the Localsearch Digital Newsletter and we'll have a chat to Sarah, and see if we can get this put up in a format that you can understand, and will send you a complete rundown of what I've talked about today.

I hope that you've got a lot of really, really helpful tips out of it today, that it helps you in some way survive the COVID-19 event. If you need help, you can reach out to Localsearch. We are happy, really happy to help you. In fact, it will be our honour to be able to go and help you. So, thank you so much. Take care, stay safe and stay virus free. Thank you. Bye bye.