SPI Podcast Session #176 -
Backlinking - What's Working and Is it Even Still Important
With Brian Dean from Backlinko.com

Show notes: http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session176

Intro: This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn session number 176.

[Music]

Pat: Where did the music go?

[Music]

Intro: Welcome to The Smart Passive Income Podcast where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and you can reap the benefits later.

And now, your host who keeps track of almost everything, Pat Flynn.

Pat: What's up everybody? Pat Flynn here back again with another session of The Smart Passive Income podcast. You're listening to session 176. And I'm just going to say this right now. This is probably going to be of the most listened to episodes in quite a while. And the reason I know this is because anytime we've talked about this particular topic on the blog, it is – it is just stirred up a ton of comments, it has become some of the most popular content on the blog.

And we're talking about – well, specifically, we're talking about backlinking. But what does that mean? And actually we're going to be defining that really quickly at the beginning of this episode for those of you who don't know what that is. But, essentially we're talking about how to rank higher in Google, how to get more exposure and more traffic by ranking higher in the search engine. So, whatever keyword that is related to your website when peope type in that keyword, how can you get your website closest to the top of that page so you can get more click-throughs and more traffic to your site.

And to help us talk about this topic, we're going to talk with Brian Dean from Backlinko.com. Backlinko.com is one of the premier sites out there talking about all the strategies that are working and that aren't working in the world of SEO or search engine optimization. So, Brian has been a guest in the blog space before here on SPI because he's a written a guest post that has become one of the most popular blog posts in a while. It's called The Backlinking Strategy that Works 2014 Edition and Beyond.

So, I asked him, "Today, well, what still works from that article?" I'll link to that in the show notes obviously, but we're going to get into all the strategies and things you need

to know about what it takes to get your website, to rank high in Google, and also specific articles and blog post that you write to rank high in Google as well.

And literally, as I was recording this episode with Brian, I was opening up web pages on my site to optimize them based on what he was talking and, I recommend you could do the same thing or at least take some notes. The show notes are available at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session176.

And, without further ado, here is Brian Dean from Backlinko.com. And make sure you stay 'til the end because at the end Brian offers you a free download that has a lot of this information plus more that is not mentioned here in this particular episode because there's a lot to SEO and search engine optimization and backlinking and Brian is the man and he'll give you that link at the end.

So, here we go, Brian Dean from Backlinko.com.

Pat: What's up everybody? I'm so excited for this, the long anticipated interview with Brian Dean from Backlinko.com. Brian, welcome finally to the SPI podcast. How are you?

Brian: I'm well. Thanks for having me, Pat.

Pat: Yeah, absolutely, you know, and you've been a very, very popular person here on the SPI blog actually. You wrote a guest post back in 2014 called the Backlinking Strategy that Works 2014 and Beyond Edition. Now, I had originally written one called the Backlinking Strategy that Works a long time ago. You came in kind of updated everybody on everything and blew people out of water. Now, this has been a top resource for people in terms of backlinking you know. And for those of you who don't understand what backlinking is, maybe you can just quickly explain that once I – once we get into that.

But just, you know, this is going to be incredible. I know a lot of people have been wondering, okay, well, you know, things happen and change quickly in the Google environment and with linking and climbing the rankings and there's nobody I would want other than you to talk about this stuff, so again, I'm so excited for this. Thank you for being here.

Brian: Sure. Thanks, man.

Pat: So, for people who are discovering this, maybe they're going through, you know, the lineup of SPI podcasts where they just happen upon this thing called backlinking. Can you quickly tell us what this is and why it's important?

Brian: Sure. So, basically Google's job is to show their users the best result and it's something that most people who use Google don't even think about because it's so good that we don't put any thought onto how they do it. So, when you type a keyword into Google and you get a list of results. I don't know about you, Pat, but me personally the results are great they're usually really, really solid results that are exactly what I want. But, how does Google figure out which ones to put at the top of the first page and which ones to put in other places, how do they order them?

Well, Google actually uses over two hundred different ranking factors to determine which pages end up on the first page, which pages end up on the second page, etc. But, the number one way they figured that out and many of those ranking factors are involved with the links that are pointing to different pages online.

So, in general the more links you have and the more high quality links you have, the more popular your page and your site appears to Google, the more authoritative it appears to Google and it's going to rank you higher, that's basically how it goes. And with the backlink what you're trying to do is basically build those links, so then Google see your site as the authority and they'll want to put it higher in the results.

Pat: Right. Exactly. And thank you for that. And now, back in the day back when I wrote The Backlinking Strategy that Works, I think that was around 2010 or 2011, it was very easy – not very easy, but it was much easier than it is now to sort of "game the system" where you could have essentially create sites and buy sites and create these link networks and all these other things that could point back to your site to help show Google that your site would be ranking higher. Google has since made changes and that's where you came in in 2014 in October to kind of talk about the latest strategies that – that are okay.

Just really simply, what is working now and then we can get into the details of all these things. But, what – how has things changed since October 2014?

Brian: Well, honestly, Pat since October 2014 nothing has really changed because right now from Google's point of view, in terms of link building at least nothing has really changed, they're always tweaking the algorithm. In fact, Google has been quoted as saying they change the algorithm five hundred times a year, so almost twice a day they make a change.

So, it's always changing, they're always turning the knobs changing this and that. But, the fact is when it comes to link building the quality of a link which is or link quality I should say is the same. You want a link from a closely related site, a site that has a lot of authority, and you want that link to appear in content. So, kind of like in an article, they're talking about a topic like passive income and then they link to Pat. That's

basically the crux of how a good link should look is the same as it was back in the day and it's the same as it is now. The difference is you can't fake it anymore like you said.

It used to be basic to be able to manipulate that and make it look like these people are linking to you and make it look like your site is an authority, but now you actually have to bring it and have to really be an authority to get those links.

Pat: Okay. Great. Well, that's good news then because I think Google has been heading in the right direction and we're finally at a point now where it doesn't seem like major changes are happening every single day although like you said the algorithm is changing. But, just to reiterate what you said there, in terms of links that are pointing back to your website, closely related, define that?

Brian: Well, Pat it's tough to define because there is – if you have a site about nutrition and then a fitness site links to you, is that related? Probably, right? So, the way I look at relevancy is a spectrum. You know there's something that's super closely related to you like SPI and I also had a site about passive income building online businesses, affiliate marketing kind of legit affiliate marketing and I got a link from you that will be perfect.

Now, on the other hand, a link from my site Backlinko.com which is more of an SEO and I linked to your site that's about that, it's still related, but it's not as closely related. So, no one really knows how Google is looking at this, but basically what you want to do is really focus on getting links from relevant sites. They don't have to be a hundred percent on topic, you really just want – don't want to get a lot of links from completely irrelevant sites because that's what happened back in the day. Back in the day you just build links from anywhere, it's basically spammy links and this is one way Google sort of separating the weed from the chaff.

And the reason I know this is important is because a couple of years ago an SEO guy named James Norquay found this former Google employee at a conference kind of pulled him aside and did a quick interview with him. And that Google employee said that relevance is the new page rank. So, page rank is basically how authoritative your site is and how authoritative a page is. And he basically said Google is trying to move more towards relevancy and the closer a site's topic is to yours, the more powerful that link is going to be.

Pat: Okay. So, what would the strategy be for somebody to get links from a relevance site pointing back to theirs?

Brian: So, the first thing you want to do is you need to create something that's worth linking to. So, if you don't have anything on your site that's worth linking to, if you have some me too site with me too content that everyone else has. It's going to be really hard to get links, if not impossible, legitimate links from these relevant sites.

So, the first job is to basically say, okay, what could I have in my site that would get these people to link to me and you want to first identify them. So, who are these influential people in your industry who run blogs, who run sites or journalists that cover your industry. Who are these people? Where they're already linking to? That's the best way to go about it, that way you don't have to guess. You basically look at what they're already sharing what they're already linking to and use that as a foundation for the content you're going to create that they're going to hopefully ultimately link to.

Pat: Okay. So, you're going to have to do a little bit of research upfront to find these other influential sites and see what they're linking to and kind of start to picture the patterns and the web that's going on there in terms of the linking between the sites.

How would one go about doing that research? Is it simply just searching for relevant keywords and key phrases in Google and seeing what's out there and kind of exploring through the content of the sites seeing what links are being shared on those posts and articles or are there any tools out there that could help us move a little faster?

Brian: Well, there are three strategies that I use for this particular step which is to see, okay, what are people already linking to, so I can have a foundation. So, the first thing is actually a tool. So, they have a free version, it's not very good and a paid that's great. It's called BuzzSumo.com. I'm sure you've heard of it.

Basically what you do, you type the keyword into BuzzSumo and it shows you the most popular content for around that keyword. So, if you had a site about gluten-free baking, you could put a keyword like gluten-free baking into BuzzSumo and it would show you the most popular content around that topic. And you can sort it by Pinterest pins, Twitter tweets, Facebook likes, whatever social network you want to share – look at which is most important for your industry. It's basically built for the stat.

Now, that's a great tool, the downside is it's paid and the other downside is just because something gets a lot of share, it doesn't mean it's going to get a lot of backlinks. Usually, there's a correlation there, but you'd be surprised how many times the piece of content gets, you know, three thousand Facebook likes and has one link. And you'd be surprised how many times another piece of content has five likes and fifty links.

It's very industry-dependent. If you're an industry that's very B to C, very kind of applies to everyone things like fitness and personal development, you're going to get a lot of social shares anyway and you might also get some links. But if you're in kind of like a medical niche where you're helping people maybe cure an embarrassing condition like hemorrhoids, you're not going to get a lot of social shares in that content, but it may actually get a lot of links because you're helping people.

So, the downside of – that's the downside of BuzzSumo. I still recommend as like a good way to find some content, but the best tool is actually just Google. So, you just Google keywords that are around the topic that your site's around and see what comes up. And usually, the cream rises to the top on Google and you can see what's already done well in terms of links because that's really, really what you want to look for.

Pat: When you say done well in terms of links, I'm not exactly sure everybody would understand what that means. Just Google after we type in and search show us kind of just based on who's ranking higher kind of who's doing a good job and that's how we can infer that?

Brian: More or less, yeah.

Pat: Okay.

Brian: Like I said there's a lot of ranking factors, but most of them revolve around links. It's very rare to find first page results that don't have a lot of links.

Pat: Okay. I got it.

Brian: So, when you see in the first page, you can feel pretty confident that they're going to have links. But, it's a good point because in some search results it may not be the case and 99% of the time of cases it will.

Pat: Okay. So, go BuzzSimo go to Google and find out which ones are kind of ranking and up there and getting lots of shares good links and just make – make note of them at this point, correct?

Brian: Exactly. You just kind of make – you want a like a little Google Doc going with different content that's done well, specific content and then once you look at it, you're going to see patterns. You're going to see, okay, everything about, you know, this topic seems to do really well and I had this idea maybe you have an idea for a piece of content, but you're not finding that it did well. It could be a sign that there's room for it and you can try it, but if you want to stick to a proven framework, you might want to go with the content that already has a proven track record.

Now, the third strategy I like to use is a little bit different, you're not really looking at content is done well. This is kind of what I – this is what I call the speed dating approach to finding what influences like to share. And basically, all these is is reading blogs in your industry and looking at the most popular post and looking at what they talk about recently.

So, if I go to Smart Passive Income, you have in the side bar your top post and you can just see right there what's already doing well in that particular niche and if you keep looking at different sites you're going to see patterns. I also like to read their last maybe eight blog posts and see if patterns come out. And I remember I did this for a project of maybe six months ago and I was looking at Nerd Fitness and a lot of health and fitness sites and I noticed they're talking a lot about intermittent fasting.

Now, this is the topic that I may not even thought to put into Google as a keyword or BuzzSumo, but because I read these blogs I noticed they're all talking about the same thing which is a great sign that you can create something around that because you know that's a proven demand.

Pat: Okay. So, this kind of exercise helps us determine kind of if we have a website already, what other articles we could write about, what keywords to use and how to structure our articles and things like that, correct?

Brian: Exactly. So, you can go into super detail with how to format it and things like that because if you've seen certain formats do well, it make sense that if you created something similar and better, that format would also do well. But, at first at least I like to focus on the topic because that's the hardest part. If you don't have a topic you can't really create a piece of content and this is a great way to find proven topics that have already worked in the real world.

Pat: Okay. That's great. And I love how that exercise helps us find like I said earlier those closely related content potentially sites that we could even guest post on. Is guest posting still a strategy that works today?

Brian: It works all right. I look at it more for traffic generation strategy and a way to get your name out there versus a pure link building strategy.

Pat: Okay.

Brian: Because Google has pretty much been able to figure out what a guest post link looks like. There's tons of footprints that you may not even be able to picture like usually the link is at the bottom of the article in some sort of box that says, you know, this article is written by Pat Flynn of Smart Passive Income and it has your picture there and it's just if you guest post on ten sites it's going to have a similar structure. It just doesn't look like a natural link because it's not. I mean it's not about link to have by any stretch and I think it helps your SEO a little bit, but it's not something I would just do and do a hundred percent guest posting.

And, about a year-and-a-half ago, Google came up basically they warn people not to use guest posting as a link building strategy, use it just as a way to get the – get the name…

Pat: I remember that.

Brian: Yeah. It was a huge bombshell. But it was basically over – it was really overstated, you can still use it as link building, but the thing you want to do is just focus on really the cream of the crop sites that are closely related to yours. The problem is a lot of people are – and I was doing this in back in the day when I was guest posting a lot. I published over two hundred fifty guest posts from my site, so been there done that. And I had a site about let's say marketing or I had a site about insurance and I would write on business sites, fitness sites, whatever and I would have a link at the bottom and it just doesn't look natural.

Pat: Right. Right. And I think this speaks a lot to the fact that, you know, we have to put ourselves out there and actually start building relationships with these other people like actual relationships not just trying to get a link, but actually just have that natural link to that person then puts into their post when they mentioned you, you know, if they don't know who you are and what you talk about and what you have to offer, then they're definitely not going to link to you.

And so, you know, I know for example a lot of people that I've met at conferences and things like that like we're friends now as a result of that, I pay attention to what they're up to and oftentimes they have something really great that I want to link to and share it with everybody else and that is natural link to a relevant site because I wouldn't share that if it wasn't relevant and useful to my audience as well.

So, you know, even though SEO, you know, search engine optimization is very technical and there are algorithms involved and that sort of thing, I think, you know, like with anything else a lot of success involves building relationships and getting to know people.

Brian: Well said, Pat. That's what it comes down to. And a great thing about guest posting, I'm glad you mentioned that is that my experience anyway, when you guest post on a site and you write a great guest post for somebody, not a hundred percent of the time, but pretty close to hundred percent of the time, later down the road they'll link to you as a natural editorial link in a piece of content.

Pat: Sure.

Brian: Because you basically like you said you wrote a guest post for them you built a relationship with that person and when they're going to reference something, they're going to think of you, you're going to be the first person that comes to mind and…

Pat: Just like how I thought of you and why you're back on the show because you delivered a ton of value back in October.

Brian: Yeah, exactly, Pat. So, the guest post is a great way to get your foot in the door if a site accepts guest posts and then you blow them away. If you just sit back and wait, a lot of times that link that is a really good one and a nice one in a piece of a content is not a guest post link will come.

Pat: I love it. Now, you had also mentioned in addition to closely related websites, sites that are authoritative. Now, what is authoritative mean nowadays? Back in the day it was just whoever had the most links and – but that's not the case anymore, quality is important as well. But, is there some mixture of social sharing of that particular website versus, you know, the quantity and qual – like what defines authority now what sites out there could be deemed authoritative?

Brian: Well, it's – they're still based around links pretty much. There are some other variables that go into whether a site is an authority. For example, there are patents out there that Google has filed if people search for your brand in Google, it indicates that you're an authority which just makes sense, right? I mean if no one searches for your brand in Google, how authoritative could you be?

Pat: Right.

Brian: Because people search for Smart Passive Income all the time and I know if I look at my Google Webmaster Tools or a Google Search Console as it's now called, my number one keyword that people find me in is Backlinko, so imagine that. And that's – and I bet it's the same for you, Pat.

Pat: It is. It is.

Brian: And that's how that shows Google that we have authoritative websites, people aren't just linking they're also literally searching for a brand in Google.

Also, one way that Google determines that you're an authority in a particular area is when people search for your brand – your brand plus the keyword. So, for example I have a guy that's ranking -- a keyword research guy that's ranking number three for the key – the keyword keyword research.

Pat: Wow.

Brian: So, I know I said keyword research like a thousand times.

Pat: [Laughs]

Brian: But basically, yeah, and has some good links, but it's ranking above, you know, Forbes and all these huge authority sites. Why is that? Well, one reason is if you search for Backlinko in Google, the auto suggests that it suggests, you know, the keyword is keyword research Backlinko keyword research, so that suggest a lot of people are typing Backlinko keyword research into Google. That tells Google, wow, this guy must know a lot about keyword research because everyone is searching for it and it gives you a bump for that keyword.

So, those aren't super important yet, but I feel like in the future in the way things are going Google is going to use those signals more often because they're a lot harder to gain than links.

Pat: That's cool.

Brian: But in terms of what is authoritative it definitely comes down to the quality of links. So, quantity of links is still important, but like you said, Pat, it's not like it used to be where if you have a thousand links and the other guy had nine hundred ninety nine, you'd rank above him. Those days are long gone, now it's all about the quality of links and the quality comes down basically to three things.

One is the relevancy which you talked about. The other is the type of link which is basically is it, you know, in an article is someone mentioning you those are called editorial or sometimes called contextual links because they're just like in a newspaper, if someone mentioned something and they mentioned it. It's the same thing on the web.

Pat: Right.

Brian: They link to in an article. It's not something that's in the footer of a site like some web designers have like those footer links that go – it's not on the sidebar, it's not in the guest post box some author by the box. It's a true contextual link.

And the other thing is how authoritative the site is in terms of links. How many quality links does that site have? The more quality links it has from huge sites that are authoritative and respected like Harvard and Yale and Google and sites like that, it's going to have more authority to pass on to you as opposed to another site that may have a lot of links, but they're all from tiny blogs that no one reads, it's not going to have near as much authority even if it has more total links.

Pat: Okay. So, are we still at a point where one could for example grab a tool like Long Tail Pro or Market Samurai to kind of putting keywords discover all of these analytics about these top sites in Google for example. You know you type in any – any keyword and then there's all these data about each of those top ten websites in terms of how many links are coming to them, how authoritative those sites are.

Can we still determine by looking at those sort of grids or matrix – matrices if we're starting a brand new site that, you know, maybe this is a niche we could get into ourselves or maybe we should stay out of it. Are we still at that point where we can kind of determine based off of that initial research just on the numbers if we could become – if we can put for example a new niche site in there?

Brian: Well, it's definitely helpful to know that information, but it's not like the old days where I was firing up Market Samurai and basically determining which site I was going to build because the top ten had, you know, a page rank of two on average or something like that.

Because like I said there's a lot of new variables that come into it and these are variables that no tool can measure like how many people are searching for your brand plus a keyword. How many – or a brand plus the keyword. How are people interacting with that page which is huge right now, so if people search for a keyword and they land on your page and hit the back button right away and they bounced, it's a really bad sign. But if someone stays on your page for a long time, that tells Google this is a good – we're giving our user a good experience here and they're going to give you a bump in the ranking.

So, there's just so many variables now. I don't pay too much attention to the competition and like I mentioned before, you can – you can definitely punch above your weight when it comes to rankings if you create the best piece of content on that keyword.

So, the way I evaluate the top ten results is a bit different. I do look at the competition, but I look more at how can I create the best result on this first page, what can I create that's clearly better than the ten that are already out there versus, okay, this has like, you know, twenty linking root domains, this has fifteen, I can easily get twenty five and outrank them.

It doesn't really work like that as much anymore, but when it comes to the keyword selection, it's a great way to be like, okay, should I choose keyword A or B. B is clearly more competitive, I'll go with A. That makes total sense, but in terms of looking at, okay, what concept should I create what site should I create, you definitely want to come in with the attitude of how can I create the site that deserves to rank number one.

Pat: I love that. I love that approach, Brian. Thank you. And you had just touched on some onsite factors, you know, the experience that people have on your website. And I know for example there was something dubbed the mobile get an recently where I think Google had mentioned that if your site is not mobile friendly, they're going to put you lower in the rankings, you know, besides that and if you can just confirm that really quick if that's true. What else is important and what can we do to improve those things as well is something I think we should talk about.

Brian: Well, definitely it's true that Google released the mobile get an update and how much of an impact it had is questionable because I think a lot of people woke up to the fact that they needed to create responsive websites and Google gave people sort of a deadline to do it. And myself, I had some custom pages on my site that weren't responsive and because the deadline was coming, I made sure to get them done. It's one of those things easy to put off because I don't – because – especially because in a lot of cases, you don't get a lot of mobile traffic, like my site is a B to B site, most people are at work on a desktop coming to my site, so mobile isn't a huge priority. So, I was lazy about it to be honest.

And then, this deadline came and I was like, wow, I really need to make this responsive so I made sure to go out and do it. And so, I think a lot of people did that and the mobile get an update wasn't as huge update that was played out to be because people did the right thing and they created a – their pages as responsive. So, that was definitely true.

Pat: Okay.

Brian: Now, other than that, there's a couple of factors that are called that fall under this category of user experience signals and Google is paying really, really close attention to. And I have a quick story to show you how important this is today and how you can optimize for it.

So, last year I published a post that was called How to Get High Quality Backlinks without Guest Posting and the keyword that I was optimizing around was high quality backlinks. Now, this posted really well, I started to get links, so Google started to see it as more authoritative and it started raising in the rankings for the keyword high quality backlinks.

And then, I was looking at my data to see what keywords the page ranks for using the tool called SEMrush. And I noticed it was also ranking for the keyword how to get high, so it's like number twelve for the keyword how to get high. I was like, "Oh, that's weird." Obviously, as you might imagine the page has nothing to do with that and I didn't even know if people search for that. It's pretty obvious.

Pat: Right. I mean I don't know what they're thinking.

Brian: So, anyways but there are quite a lot of people, like more people search for that than high quality backlinks, it's not even close. So, anyway it was like number twelve, number ten, number six, number seven.

Pat: Wow.

Brian: It got up to number five for the keyword how to get high which is insane. So, all this talk about Google being so smart and being able to figure out what the topic of your page, in some level they can do that, but they have a long way to go obviously because they still thought just because they had the keyword how to get high in my title that must – that's where my article is about.

Pat: Right. Right. And for all you kids out there, we're talking about like how high you can jump.

Brian: Yeah, exactly. That's what it is, it's for basketball players.

Pat: Yeah.

Brian: So anyway, then I looked in my Google Analytics because I wanted to study kind of how what was going on here and I noticed that Google traffic to that page was bouncing a lot more than usual and they're spending a lot less time in that page than other pages on my site.

Pat: Of course, I mean that makes sense, they didn't get what they expected, right?

Brian: Totally. So, the interesting thing is because in Google Analytics, they have this thing not provided, so you can't see which keywords people search for and how those particular, you know, that people search for that keyword interact with this. But you can look at it as the page, right? I knew it was ranking high, no pun intended, for this keyword, getting traffic. And I noticed that compared to other pages on my site, just people weren't staying. It made total sense. And, it went from five to twelve in a couple of days.

Pat: Oh, wow.

Brian: And then it went from twelve to twenty. So, this shows how powerful this particular metric is. So, the links were the same, everything else was the same, but in terms of people interacting with the page, it obviously was telling Google, people don't like this page, you know, they are looking for how to get high and they come to this site about backlinks, they have no idea what this is, so they hit their back button.

Now, the interesting part is this, it – the for the keyword high quality backlinks, the rankings continue to move up so they look at it as a keyword specific things. So, if you

search for keyword X and people just – it's not a good fit for that keyword and they look for keyword Y and people love it, it won't – they won't drop your rankings for all your keywords just that specific one.

Pat: Okay.

Brian: So, that was an interesting point that I – that stood out to me. I thought it would drop across the board, but actually for the keyword that it was targeting, people interacting with it the way they should it continued to move up in the rankings.

Pat: It's probably done like that for the specific reason and, you know, yes, Google made a mistake, but they corrected themselves. Like I've noticed Google does that, like a lot of times they'll, like if I keep track very closely, it thinks one thing and then it kind of veers away like, no, that's maybe wasn't the right idea, so it kind of corrected itself. But that's a really interesting story.

So, in terms of keeping people on your site when they get there, what are some good strategies that isn't necessarily SEO related, but it is because you just mentioned how important this factor is. But what are some key factors that people can think about in terms of decreasing that bounce rate and increasing the time people stay on your site?

Brian: Well, there's a few things that I do because I've experimented with this a lot. After this experience I was like, okay, this is a huge signal because I noticed a lot of people will be on forums and they'll say, you know, my site dropped, I must have been penalized.

And now, I have this new perspective that actually maybe not, maybe your ranking in Google just people didn't like the result. And like you mentioned, Pat it's kind of like a quality assurance test like a QA test. You know, if the page might rank based on the other factors, but if people don't like it, that's all that really matters on the eyes of Google, so they're going to drop you like a stone and not think twice about it.

So, once that happens, I was like, okay, I got to like start studying this and see how can I get people to not only not bounce, but to stay on my site. This is something called dwell time, how long they stay in your site. Because bouncing is basically when someone goes to your page and hits the back button whether they stay for an hour or one second, it's a bounce. And a bounce isn't necessarily bad because say you're searching for something, you read an article, you got your answer, so you hit the back button. It doesn't necessarily mean that it was a bad experience.

That being said, you want to reduce them just for your own conversions, you don't want people bouncing. But what they really pay attention to is people who bounce really

quickly and also if people spend a ton of time on the page, it basically tells them, look, people are loving this, they're reading and getting a ton of value from it.

The question is how do you do it besides just providing a ton of value which is definitely the easiest way to do it. And one, is I pay a lot of attention to the above the fold area on my blog. So, when people land on a page, I always think it from their perspective like how quickly am I giving them the answer to their question. So, for example when it comes to someone searching for on-page SEO and they go to one of my pages, I don't have a huge intro about why on-page SEO is important, what it means, dah, dah, dah. I go kind of write into it and I feel like that helps a lot just approaching your content is like a super brief intro and it's just jumping right into the tips.

One mistake I see a lot of people make is they have this kind of long meandering intros about like why this is important and what mistakes people make and it doesn't really match the keywords. Someone searching for tips on something, they just want tips. So someone searching for on-page SEO tips, I just give them the tips. I have a super brief intro and then I jump right into it.

Now, the other thing I do is I -- one thing, it's kind of the don't do category. They don't put a huge image above the fold. Now, you can have a big image above the fold, but it shouldn't take up the entire above the fold area because that way if you do that, people have to actually scroll down to start reading and some people just won't. So, if they land on – they search for something, they click on the result, and they see a huge image and they realized they have to scroll, a lot of times they're going to hit the back button. You want to hit them with some compelling text right away, so I make my images on a smaller size for that reason.

Pat: I got it. Awesome. Yeah, I mean there's a lot – there's a lot of different things you can do. You know I think another thing that helps decrease, you know, increase amount of time is just having things that are relevant to that article. For example other related articles to link to kind of for example after they read and things they can interact with and, you know, that's a big mistake I see a lot of people making is they kind of just here it is and then that's it, they don't ask them to do or click on anything else.

Brian: Right. Definitely. And for example, your podcasting guide that you have, I think your rank is number one for a lot of podcasting related keywords.

Pat: I think so, yes.

Brian: And part of the reason is that you go there and it just boom, you get right into it, right? It's just like here's how to, you know, you particularly have some social proof about how many podcasts downloads you have which is an insane number like two million. And, instant credibility, if I'm reading – looking for podcasting advice and I come

across someone who's had two million downloads, then instantly I'm going to keep reading.

Pat: Right.

Brian: And also you have tons like you said you have tons of links to other resources both on your site and on other sites, you're giving them something to do and something to interact with, so they're going to spend more time in that page.

The other thing you do, well, that I also do is I make sure the article is really long because no matter how great it is if it's three hundred words, people just can't spend a lot of time on three hundred words even if it's, you know, the best writing in the world, even if it's Hemingway, it's not going to make a difference. So, you want these long in-depth articles just because people spend more time on it, you can kind of suck them in and before you know it, they've been on the page for two or three minutes which is actually a long time before they hit their back button or stay on the page.

Pat: Right. Awesome. Yeah. And I just typed in podcasting tutorial in Google, my post is number one and number two is the first video in that post which links to my YouTube video, so I got the first two spots. Yeah!

Brian: Go, Pat.

Pat: Yay! Okay. Now, I want you to help us to walk through let's say we have a blog and we want to really optimize a post. You had mentioned this earlier, you had said the word, I've worked on optimizing for a keyword. What does that – what does that mean? What are the steps we can do? We're starting from scratch on a blog post that we're about to write and we see a keyword out there where we find there's some sort of opportunity maybe we go in and do a little bit of research, we see, you know what? I can make something better than, you know, these articles here. How do we optimize our blog posts for a particular keyword? Does that mean we put the keyword in the title four thousand times? No, obviously not. What's the answer?

Brian: So, let's just break it down how I do it step by step. Is that cool?

Pat: Yeah, absolutely.

Brian: Okay. So the first thing I do is make sure the keyword is in the title once.

Pat: Just once?

Brian: Yeah. That's the most important. If you're not going to do anything else, that's the most important part of on-page SEO. A lot of people say that, you know, meta tags are not important anymore, but your title tag which is basically telling Google this is what my

page is about in general is really important and that's usually just the title of your blog post. So, I make sure to put that in the post – in the title at least once, usually just once because otherwise it's hard to fit it in there more than once.

Pat: True.

Brian: And what I like to do is something that works well for me, one that make sense is I frontload my keyword in the title tag. That just means I put it a little bit earlier.

Pat: Okay. I go it.

Brian: So, I put it in the first couple of words as opposed to at the end and Google – Moz did a study a couple of years ago and found that that correlated with higher rankings. Who knows if it makes the difference, but it won't hurt as long as your title still sounds good. That's the number one priority, you want your title to sound good, but a lot of times, you can just put it in the front.

So, for example the keyword I'm targeting called SEO strategy, that's the keyword. Now, I could have easily put here are two, you know, two case studies about an SEO strategy in action, but instead, I put the keyword at the front and it's SEO strategy case study and then some of the data from the case study like the person want from number six and number one using the strategy.

Pat: Yeah. I'm looking at it right now, I just typed in SEO strategy. Your rank is number three and it says SEO strategy first words case study colon. And then a really compelling part which says 963% more or getting traffic, so you kind of combined some really good headlines strategies, really compelling, but also made your keyword there in the front – you frontloaded your keyword. I think a lot of times people struggle with – with that and they put the keyword in there, but it just sounds like, you know why would I read that, that's kind of boring. Or, they go crazy with the title and then try to make it sound really cool, but then they don't put the keyword in there very well.

Brian: Right. Exactly. And it's more of an art than a science. It's like you basically have to write the headline to be compelling but also have the keyword in there and it's not easy, you have to come up with just like BuzzFeed you have – sometimes you have to write twenty different headlines and one may actually has the best of both worlds.

Pat: Right. I do – I do that, I spend about twenty minutes just on the headline sometimes.

Brian: Yeah. It's worth it because another singal that we didn't talk about which is the user experience signal is the click-through rate of your result. So, like you said, Pat, that's the one that stands out because that person who's a backlinker reader get 963%

more traffic using the strategy that I talked about in that post which is Guestographics. So…

Pat: What do you mean click – click-thorugh rate of your result?

Brian: So, that's basically how many people are clicking on your result versus others.

Pat: In Google?

Brian: In Google. So, if you have for example, you know, obviously the higher you rank, the higher your click-through rates is going to be, so Google takes that inconsideration. But if you let's say your rank is number seven and the typical click-through rate for a number seven result for that keyword which they have that data on, right? Because Google has data and everything is 2%. And for some reason yours is five, you just wrote an awesome title tag, a title that just stands out grabs attention and gets people to click. Basically it tells Google this is a really, really relevant result for this keyword and it's going to give it a bump.

And there's been a lot of experiments that people have done where they've asked people to click on a particular results, so they go on Twitter and be like search for this keyword and click its result. And the impact that this has had is ridiculous. I'm talking going from seven to two in a matter of hours.

Pat: Wow.

Brian: Now, that's with purposely manipulating it, right? So, that's just as a test to purposely manipulate it, so maybe the number seven result in this case usually gets 2% and all of a sudden it's getting like 15% or 20%. To Google that's like, wow, people really want this result and it's going to -- they're going to push it higher. It's obviously Black Hat and I've seen people use Black Hat. It's actually a tool that you can use to do it. I don't recommend that.

Pat: Oh, my gosh.

Brian: But people have done it sort of as experiment or Rand Fishkin for Moz. It was a German guy who did it. I've seen a few others around the web. And a personal friend of mine who runs a big horoscope site recently told me he asked his e-mail subscribers and they signed up to search for the keyword and click on it and I think we're from like the second page to six or seven, something crazy like that.

So, it makes a huge difference, but it's unfortunately something you can't have too much influence on except just creating a great title that people want to click on and I

wouldn't do this manipulation stuff. That's just to illustrate how important this ranking factor is. And even if it…

Pat: I'm sure you got a lot of people interested though, can you talk about, you know, there's a lot of obviously "BlackCat" strategies out there that can manipulate the ranking such as this and I'm sure there's others that are even crazier. But what is your – sorry to interrupt you there earlier, but what is your kind of stance on all those kinds of strategies?

Brian: Well, no problem. And I'm glad you interrupted me because it's an important thing to talk about. You know my stance is just to be super safe to air on the safe side. I've had plenty of sites get blown up, I get D index penalized from Penguin and Panda and all the updates that Google put out there.

So, I just had so many experiences where I've seen that the risk isn't usually worth it especially because when you know how to do what a SEO well, it's actually really easy and simple. It's a lot of hard work, but in terms of what to do, once you know what to do, it's actually just a matter of just providing a ton of value and promoting your content.

Pat: Right. Right. That's what I was going to say and thank you for sharing that. I mean for me it's just like this is your business, right? So, why would you put it at risk for something when, you know, there are ways to legitimately get good links, climb the rankings the way it should. And, you know, if you put out a good content, the people are eventually going to get to a point where they find it and Google will figure it out eventually. That's kind of my sort of long term strategies. Like Google is going to figure it out eventually and every time I've just worked on something really hard and provide a lot of value, it's always kind of made its way to the top.

Brian: Definitely. I recommend, you know, a lot of times if you don't have a following or an audience, you do need to promote your content, but the foundation like you said, Pat, is to create something that Google when they do figure it out, puts you as the best because you are. It's not about tricking them or manipulating the algorithm.

Pat: Cool. Awesome. Okay. So, we got the keyword and the title.

Brian: Keyword and the title. Okay. So, keyword and the title, fontload it if possible, if not, don't worry about it. I put mine sometimes in the front like in that case a lot of times I don't because it just doesn't make sense.

So, the number one thing is just to make sure that the title sounds really good not only will that help you get more social shares, people want to read it more often, it will help your click-through rate and the title tag because then people will be like, oh, this actually make sense, this isn't some keywords stuff gibberish they're going to click on it. So

don't sweat the – in the front or in the back too much, but just a little tip that I like to use whenever possible and it seems to – to make a little difference.

The next thing you want to do is make sure your keyword is in your URL. So, when you have a blog post, it'd be like, you know, SmartPassiveIncome.com/blah, blah, blah. Now a lot of people what they do is they have depending on what – if they use Word Press or what have you, that URL will have all sorts of junk in it. It will be like 201415 the dates and then a bunch – and then the title. And the problem with that is that in – from Google's point of view and from a lot of human point of view, the URL is like a good summary about what the page is about. You know it's like a good way of saying like this page is about whatever.

So, for example with my blog post, I like to come up with a top like a keyword that just describes what it's about and it's obviously the keyword I'm optimizing for. So, for example if I have a piece of content or an SEO strategy like that piece of content, the URL is literally just SEO/strategy, no dates, no extra information. And what it does it just makes Google's job a little bit easier. They'll be like, look, my page is about SEO strategy. There's no other stuff to even consider when you're evaluating the URL.

Now, if you want to, you can include the whole title of your blog post in your URL and there's nothing wrong with that. I don't think this is a huge difference either. I don't think this is like – it's like frontloading your title tag. I think it helps a little bit, but it's not necessary. So, if you like to have your URL as the blog post title as long as your keyword is in there once, you're good, don't sweat it too much, but whenever possible I would just create this little short URLs. It's also nice because you can share them on Twitter they don't, you know, they're not too long, things like that.

Pat: Right.

Brian: It's just like a nice short URL and BuzzFeed again to mention them because they're just doing crazy stuff with content marketing. They're experimenting with different URLs to get click-throughs, so they found that a lot of times that the shorter ones sort of summarize the post can get a better click-through rate or when they write it a certain way, it gets a different click-through rate.

So, a lot of times no one will read the entire blog post title in the URL, they're just too long. It's kind of hard to read the URL, but if it just has that brief summary in there and someone's like kind of sifting through the search results, they'll it as super relevant like, oh, this page is literally called SEO Strategy. Boom! And they might be more likely to click on it.

Pat: Lovely. Awesome.

Brian: Okay.

Pat: So, keyword in the title and hopefully frontload and then two, keyword in the URL and kind of the how many other extra things are in there in the URL matter in terms of the numbers in the archive and any sort of category folders and things like that. But, it doesn't necessarily have to be an exact match.

Brian: No, it doesn't. It doesn't. I like to do that because it's easy and I think it helps a little bit, but there are plenty of pages that are ranking that have crazy long URLs. So, it's not neces – it's not a make or break thing.

Pat: One of the two hundred factors.

Brian: Exactly, it's one. So, I figure if you have two hundred to work with, there's only so many you can directly control, this is one of them.

Pat: Right.

Brian: And it can't hurt you, it can only help you, so I like to do that.

The next thing I do is make sure that I put my keyword somewhere in the first hundred words of the content. And, this is just common sense this is a good way to tell Google like my page is about this. Let's go with our SEO strategy example. You know it would be weird if I had this article that was like SEO Strategy Case Study SEO Strategies in the URL and the first time I used the word SEO strategy was like word five thousand, right?

It doesn't make sense at all to wait that long. I mean if you have an article in a newspaper about Obama, they're going to mention the word Obama right away or about congress, they're going to mention the word congress right away, they're not going to wait 'til the word three hundred to start using those words. So, it's just a way to tell Google like, look, this page is about this topic, so I like to put it early on once.

Pat: Perfect.

Brian: It's like a hundred words.

Next thing I like to do is put it in a sub-header to have kind of sub-title throughout your article that break up the content and make different sections. I like to put one of the keywords in there as an H2 tag. So, in Word Press you can just set that as – very easily as an H2 and it just makes it bigger and bolder. It looks good anyway. That's the number one reason I do it.

But also, when you have your keyword in there as a sub-header, it's just another signal. This is getting a little bit old school, but I think this stuff I've tested it and it still works, it still makes the difference because Google does want to show the user the best result, but also one that's relevant. And with this stuff you're not keyword stuffing, you're just basically putting your keywords in strategic places that show Google this keyword is important for this article.

And then from there, I don't do a whole lot, I just make sure the keyword is in there one or two more times even if it's a really long article like three thousand words a lot of times they'll have the keyword maybe three times or four times in an article. Once you have it in strategic places you don't need to go crazy with keyword stuffing.

As a little bonus, there's like two kind of bonus things you can do that I tend to do. One is to have an image in your article that has the keyword in the all text. So, basically when you have an image, you upload an image to Word Press or whatever blog platform you use, they have an option for you to put all the text in there which basically is a way to describe what the image is because Google can't see the image. It's also good for people who are visually impaired and things like that. So, you want to put the keyword in there, but not exactly that, so I put something like SEO strategy diagram, right? So, it's not keyword stuffing, you have it once in there.

And then, another bonus is I put the keyword at the end. So, one of the three or four times, I put it in the last one hundred words. That way it's like a summary. So, you're like, okay, you know, this is – that's all you need to know about, you know, this SEO strategy and it's just another natural way to kind of sum up what you're talking about and also have some on-page SEO in there.

Pat: Nice. I already have a lot of stuff going on in my head in terms of what I could do to improve especially some of my top pages. I think that's a good strategy for people and, you know, we're talking about how to start a blog post from scratch and keyword optimize it or optimize it for a particular keyword, but, you know, we can go back into our archives and kind of reassess what's going on and see if they fit a lot of what Brian is talking about here.

Is it okay to do that to go back into our archives and change things around?

Brian: Definitely. I just have one word of warning about that and that's the URL. So, if you change the URL, obviously when people go to the old URL, it's going to show a 404 page because the page is gone.

Pat: Ah.

Brian: So, one thing – you have kind of two options. One is that I don't usually recommend people change the URL, like if it's done it's done, it's not the end of the world, just keep it. But also, you can redirect it to the new page and Google will follow the redirect. It's called the 301 redirect. That's when you move a page to another URL and Google will follow it and the new page will have all the links and stuff that the old one did.

But, it's just not usually worth it. But, in terms of going back and adding, you know, frontloading your keyword making sure the keyword is in the first hundred words, you can do all that stuff to older pages definitely and I've seen it make a difference.

Pat: Awesome. Great. Okay. So, that's about – I mean it doesn't even seem like very much work in terms of optimizing a keyword it's just from there then I think you had mentioned and touched on this earlier, it's about promoting that content getting the word out there and things like that. Am I right?

Brian: Exactly. So, one thing I didn't mention, Pat, is that I recommend just write an article and not even thinking about keywords. Just write a great article that's just amazing, then go back and optimize it before you publish it. So that way you're writing would just you're not thinking about SEO, you're just thinking about how can I create something awesome. And then you can go back and no matter what you wrote you can do these things, you can add the keyword in the hundred words, you can add in the headline you can sprinkle it in one or two extra times and then make sure it's at the end. So, this is something I kind of do, I go through this process where I write it, then I optimize it and then I publish it.

Pat: Okay. Another question I have and we're finishing up here, obviously this is amazing information and there's some [platter] and a wealth of information over on Brian site at Backlinko.com for more things like this, very, very step by step as well. You know I've read a lot of his content, it's some of the best written content out there on this stuff. So, again, thank you, Brian for being here.

Are there other sites out there that we could post versions of our content on or other things like that to be able to get some, you know, what they – Google juice, you know, get higher rankings. For example, can I post a video on YouTube and then maybe embed that in this article that I'm writing and can that help?

Can I post a slide deck in SlideShare.net and link back to my site from there? Is that going to help? Can you still make links and get authority in that way?

Brian: Well, you can do it for traffic, so if you want to get more exposure to your content you can repurpose it into a slide show deck or a YouTube video or whatever and get exposure that way. People may not found it and then when they see the slideshow

deck, you can say this source is from this article and they go to it and you're going to get more eyeballs on it. That is totally legit strategy for getting more exposure for your content.

But in terms of SEO, it doesn't really help. Anytime you have a link building approach or strategy or site that anyone can create a link on, usually it's not very effective.

Pat: I see.

Brian: Because anyone can do it which means everyone will and that means that it's going to be either devalued or potentially penalized. So, also, a lot of these sites create their links as no follow which is something that you can put in an HTML that basically says Google this link doesn't count for SEO. We say so and Google honors that supposedly.

So, SlideShare has no following, YouTube has no following. So, these links even if they did – even if they were normal links, I don't think would help just because anyone can create them, but especially because the fact that nine times out of ten there are also no follow really means you don't have an SEO benefit.

Pat: Now, do we get penalized ourselves when we link to too many other places sort of discussion on no follow prompted this question. For example I heard that it was good practice to when I share an affiliate link for example on my site to make that link a "no follow" link and you can do that when you're adding these links manually into Word Press for example. Is it better to do that or does that even matter?

Brian: You know I don't have a great answer for that. I've kept my affiliate links normal on one of my sites and I had, I don't know, on one page I had maybe like seven or eight or nine and that there was no SEO issue there. It ranked great.

The reason I don't like to do to no follow most links, it just because it doesn't look natural. And with affiliate links, I think it's okay, but I think sometimes it can look like to Google that you're trying to hide something like, oh, no, this isn't affiliate.

Pat: Yeah.

Brian: That's why people use like Javascript Redirects and all these crazy stuff. Google actually doesn't have an issue with affiliate links as long as you don't go crazy. So, I remember our mutual friend Spencer from Niche Pursuits.

Pat: Right.

Brian: He had a knife site and he had some like auto generated table on the side that had like…

Pat: Right. A directory or something.

Brian: Yeah. And it created like a hundred affiliate links and he got penalized for that and then when he realized what happen and he went back and he put it to some moderate level like ten affiliate links, the rankings went back.

So, it does goes to show that Google does pay attention like if this has so many affiliate links like, come on, we're not – I really want to show user something like this, but if you have ten, that's pretty reasonable I would say and I wouldn't sweat it too much. And I also wouldn't sweat the whole no follow thing because I had one of my best earning affiliate sites that did really well. It had two follow links for all the affiliate links didn't seem to make a difference.

Pat: Cool. Awesome. And then, you know, here's something that's been bothering me and I know it's been bothering a lot of people too. You know Wikipedia just seems to be outranking a lot of people for a lot of different keywords and I'm not exactly sure why but I've heard it was because they're just incredibly authoritative, of course people link to those because they're great resources and also this whole thing about interlinking. They have apparently the best interlink site I guess you could say meaning they do a lot of cross promotion of their stuff within their own website. A, is interlinking important within our websites? And B, what are some strategies to overtake Wikipedia?

Brian: Wow. Okay. Well, the first one is Wikipedia, part of the reason they do well is because of this interlinking like you mentioned. Of course, they're great at it, they interlink everything. Every time they mention a topic that has a Wikipedia entry, usually there's a link there.

But, in terms of interlinking I think in general it's very, very overrated in terms of its importance for SEO because the point of interlinking is really to send authority from one page to another, right? So, when you have your page has a ton of authority and you link to one who doesn't have as much, the authority flows to that other page giving it more authority even if it's – that works with links from other websites, but also your own links.

The problem is a lot of people go crazy with interlinking stuff that don't have any authority to begin with. So, you're kind of going passing nothing to nothing, it doesn't really help that much. So, I don't think – I think interlinking is nice, it can definitely help you, but you want to be strategic about it, you just don't want randomly link around.

Pat: Right. I think from my human perspective, it would make sense, right? So, if you for example are writing a blog post and you have mentioned something that you've written about in the past, it just makes sense to kind of link to that older thing. Or if you have a resource page that deals with the topic you're talking about it's okay to link to that. You know it's kind of just again, this whole theme of keeping things natural, right?

Brian: Exactly. So, that's -- that's the number one priority you should use when linking. So, sometimes I'll have that situation where I have a page that's really authoritative. I have one that's not as authoritative and I want it to rank and I want to add a link to it, but it just doesn't make sense, so I don't do it. And I think that's a good rule of thumb like you said you should link with when it make sense and when it doesn't, don't and when it does from an SEO perspective, that's great.

Now, in terms of Wikipedia, the whole interlinking thing, it's hard to really to pinpoint if that's important or not, right? Because Wikipedia is like one of the most authoritative websites online, so who knows if they got rid of all their internal links, if the rankings will be exactly the same, you don't know, you can't independently look at X, Y, and Z.

Pat: Yeah, absolutely.

Brian: And because Wikipedia is such an extreme case which is insane amounts of authority and trust from Google, I'd say the internal linking thing for Wikipedia also is a bit overstated in terms of how important it is.

Pat: Okay. Cool.

Brian: And in terms of beating them, it's tough. I'm not going to lie to you. They rank number one for a lot of reasons. One, they have tons of authority. Also, they got a great click-through rate because people recognize them in Google. So, if someone is searching for a keyword and they see, you know, Joe's website Jane's website they never heard of and then Wikipedia is there, they're going to link on Wikipedia. I do at least when I'm looking for kind of like an overall information on a topic or a person.

You know a lot of times, I go to Wikipedia because it's like I'm searching for Mike Tyson. I could go to MikeTyson.com, but it's probably not going to be an objective resource about his life, you know, versus Wikipedia is going to say everything; the good, the bad, and ugly. So, I think that's another reason.

And also, Wikipedia tends to have really in-depth content, right? And their content's above the fold, they have great summaries, that people probably spend time on there. It's just a tough site to be and I don't think there's any particular strategy you can be like, oh, do this and you beat Wikipedia. I think it comes down to just creating the best resource online, promoting it, optimizing for an SEO and then, from there there's only so much you can do to beat giant sites like Wikipedia.

Pat: Right. Right. Yeah, it took me five years, but I'm actually ranking everyone for passive income.

Brian: That's amazing.

Pat: The last year I was not.

Brian: So, that goes to show that they're beatable, right? When you have something that's super authoritative for that keyword, people probably interact with your site more than Wikipedia, so Google is like, wow, this is the best result.

Pat: Brian, we've talked about a lot of stuff today, I think this is – I know this has been incredibly helpful, it's been incredibly helpful for me. I've already opened a number of pages that I'm going to optimize as soon as we hang up the phone or Skype actually is what we're on.

But you had mentioned even before we got on the call that you had some sort of bonus or something and you're always very gracious and are always offering stuff to the SPI audience, so I'm curious to know what this is.

Brian: Well, Pat, I'm going to be gracious because I'm gracious to you and SPI. Back when I first started in affiliate marketing in 2008, 2009, Smart Passive Income is one of the first resources I came across.

Pat: Wow. So, I didn't even know that actually.

Brian: Yeah.

Pat: So, you found SPI before you created Backlinko?

Brian: Oh, way before, man. I was an SPI follower from back in the day and I told my girlfriend I was coming on. I was just like, oh, I'm going on Pat's podcast, she knew exactly what I was talking about because back when we first get into it, we would read SPI and I remember the Backlinking Strategy that Works article is like crazy. And we read the whole niche site from start to finish.

Pat: I didn't know that. I'm glad you – you came along for the ride and here you are now teaching me and teaching everybody else, so that's awesome.

Brian: Yeah. It's great. I was so excited to be here. So, yeah, I put together a bonus section for everyone that's listening today. All you have to do to access it is go to Backlinko.com/pat. That's Backlinko.com/pat. I have a ton of bonus resources, things I talked about, extra case studies, my own page SEO checklist that includes the stuff I talked about today and including some more kind of bonus things that you can include if you want to and my swipe file of link building resources that I used to learn about link building.

Pat: Man, you're awesome, Brian. Thank you so much for that and I know I speak for everybody else. You know thank you. We really appreciate that. And, you know, we're

going to have to check in with you, you know, and we'll see in maybe a year, you'll be kind of our unofficial or maybe official kind of SEO guy here on SPI, so you know, we thank you for your help. Again, all the great information you can find at Backlinko.com/pat.

Brian, we appreciate you. Where can people get in touch with you besides Backlinko.com?

Brian: Definitely that's the best place and then when you're there you can sign up for the newsletter and get all sorts of exclusive strategies that I don't share with anyone else. But, you can get all that stuff and the bonuses if you go to Backlinko.com/pat.

Pat: Sweet. Thanks, man. We appreciate you.

Brian: Sure. Thanks for having me, Pat.

Pat: All right. I hope you enjoyed that interview with Brian from Backlinko.com. Again, that link to get that free resource that he mentioned is at Backlinko.com/pat. So, go ahead and check that out, it's going to be awesome and I can't wait for you to implement some of these things.

Again, it doesn't take much it doesn't take a lot of work. You know back in the day, SEO was a lot of manipulation and doing this and creating these sites and do all these things. You don't need to do that anymore, if you follow the basics and create great content, great things will happen. But there's of course a lot of other things you can do to make sure that you give yourself the best chance of ranking high in terms of your overall website and also individual articles where you're targeting a specific keyword as well. And I've already gone like I said in the beginning into some of my articles and corrected some of the things that he mentioned as well. So, again, that link one more time Backlinko.com/pat.

Thank you again so much for listening in.

Now, I want to take a moment o thank one of our sponsors for today and that is CoSchedule. A lot of you have heard me talk about CoSchedule, lately we had the founder on in episode 173, Garrett Moon. And this tool has been a game changer for myself and my team because my whole team is collaborating, I'm using it as well. It's giving me a great overall bird's eye perspective of what kind of content is going out from podcast to blog post to videos when those things are going out.

But not only that, social media as well because I can plan social media post ahead of time as I'm publishing this post so that I don't have to think about them and worry about them later. And obviously it just gives me a great single place on my site, so Word

Press plug in that allows you to interact with this plug in and that and plan and it really what this is all about is planning ahead something that I know I need to a lot of help with.

CoSchedule has been that solution, you know, it's one of those tools that solves a lot of the internal problems that we had with the team and even me personally, my mindset in terms of staying consistent with my content and continuing to understand when exactly things were going out, so I recommend you check it out.

If you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/coschedule SmartPassiveIncome.com/coschedule. You'll get a fourteen-day risk free trial, no credit card required you can check it out see what it's like, play around with it. It's an awesome took and, you know, it's used by over more than ten thousand bloggers and content marketers out there, so check it out, SmartPassiveIncome.com/coschedule.

I also want to thank 99Designs.com for helping, you know, beginning bloggers and people who can't yet afford an individual designer work on their team to make it easy for them to get the designs that they want for their logos, for their websites, anything you need design, you can go to 99Designs.com.

What you do is you put your description of what you're looking for, what style you want, and all those sorts of things and within twenty four hours, you're going to have dozens of designers from around the world who have put in their best effort in terms of creating your favorite design. You get to pick your favorite one at the end and you get an amazing design that person gets the prize money. And if you don't like the designs that come in, you don't have to choose one, you can get your money back. It's awesome. Head on over to 99Designs.com/spi and that will give you access to a $99 power pack of services for free that you can put towards your next design project. So again, check it out, 99Designs.com/spi.

Cheers! Thank so much. I appreciate your time. Thank you for all the ratings and reviews on iTunes. We are still on the top ten of business podcast, but of course your reviews and ratings do help immensely in terms of, you know, the rankings and getting more exposure and more people listening to the show. The more people who listens to the show, the better the more people we can help together.

Thank you so much. I appreciate you and I can't wait to serve you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. Until then, keep being smart, keep pushing hard. I love you guys. Take care and I'll see you in the next episode. Bye.

Outro: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.smartpassiveincome.com.

Links

- **Backlinko**

- **THE Backlinking Strategy That Works – 2014 and Beyond Edition** – Brian's post on the Smart Passive Income blog from October 2014

- **How to Get High Quality Backlinks (Without Guest Posting)**

- **SEO Strategy Case Study: 963% More Organic Traffic**

- **Buzzsumo**

- **Google**

- **Longtail Pro**

- **Market Samurai**

- **Moz**

- **PodcastingTutorial.com**

- **Niche Pursuits**

- For the resources Brian recommends, go to **backlinko.com/pat**

- **CoSchedule** – **14 day free trial!**

- **99Designs.com** – **$99 Power Pack of services, free!**