

## Do one-page websites hurt my SEO?

**Joe Hage:** Hey everybody, this is Joe Hage and I've got my buddy Chris Sharp on the line.

**Chris Sharp:** Hello.

**Joe Hage:** And you may remember that Chris helped with a video about SEO a few weeks ago and it got such a reception that I invited him back, and I also invited him back because I have more questions and recording this is a kind of way for me to get free consultation. There, it's been said.

**Chris Sharp:** [Laughs]

**Joe Hage:** No, I have a really big SEO question for you and I'm really eager to start this conversation with you. So what I have on my screen right now is the site for my 10x Medical Device Conference. Just by way of background, it's the third annual one that we've done, and two years ago I had this website, which to me looks just flat out archaic now, and last year—so this was year one. I had no social proof. There had been nothing before. In 2014, I had a video saying, “Hey, look how great it was last year,” and I redesigned it and it worked quite well and I was quite pleased with it. I had a slideshow in here and everything and it was much clearer, and there were lots of pages here to go to the individual for the agenda and for the speakers.

And this year, I've completely upended the design. This is in my view extremely contemporary. As I do medical device websites for clients now, I'm thinking about this kind of one-page design which is...it

seems to be where things are going especially with mobile, how you can scroll down. And while you can jump around to the various sections, you can also see the whole page, the whole site basically, on one page. There are things you can click that give you more information. Here are the speakers. You can click here and it opens up where all the rest of the speakers are. Here's a price table. Here's more information that you can click to other pages. Here are some testimonials, etc.

So here's my primary question for you and the reason why I had to get you on the phone today: As I understand it, one of the tricks of getting a search engine like Google to find you is for you to have the words that people are searching on the page and in the meta tags, and you as I understand it improve your chances of being found the more pages you have on your site because there are more individual meta tags that you can put in, there are more pages for you to have content on. And so I'm wondering, Chris, if by adopting what I believe, and I'm interested in your perspective too, is the latest in website design by having everything on one page as a jumping-off point, having it really rich so you can see everything right there, am I hurting myself from an SEO standpoint?

**Chris Sharp:** The answer is yes.

**Joe Hage:** I hoped you would say yes.

**Chris Sharp:** [Laughs] Yeah, there are quite a few reasons why, but it is a complicated answer partially because there are several different ways that you can have a one-page website. So what we'll do is we'll go over what those problems are and how the different ways you can go about having a one-page website, the good ways to do it, the bad ways to do it, and really what it all means. And also, I did some

research looking at Google, Google spokesman Matt Cutts, for example, to get his opinion, what he talks about. So in my answer—this will be a complicated answer—we'll make sure that we reference Matt Cutts and we have an answer straight from him.

**Joe Hage:** As you know, I'm going to transcribe this call, too, so be as complex as you want and viewers and listeners can read the transcript to parse what you have to say.

**Chris Sharp:** Yup.

**Joe Hage:** I'll try my best to follow along.

**Chris Sharp:** Very good. The very first thing that I found from Matt Cutts said, “I wouldn't bet your SEO legacy on a one-page website.” So that pretty much sums up where he's coming at. So the complicated portion of it is there are two ways...well, there are more than two ways but there are two mainstream ways that people have a one-page website. The way that you have yours is doing internal indexing. So if you scroll down a little bit, you'll have your navigation links.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** They'll start to pop up.

**Joe Hage:** Yes.

**Chris Sharp:** Okay.

**Joe Hage:** And then...

**Chris Sharp:** So we have [00:05:20]

**Joe Hage:** Just for a moment I'll log out. Actually, no, I won't log out. Just know that this line, folks, is not something you would typically see. So while

this is kind of harder to see, most people would see it like this. Just for reference.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah. And so when you mouse over your navigation, at the very bottom of the screen it'll show the path to the URL that you have. So, for example, mouse over that about navigation at the top of the screen.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm. Oh, up here. Uh-huh.

**Chris Sharp:** Yup, yup. There you go.

**Joe Hage:** Okay.

**Chris Sharp:** And so you can see at the very bottom of your browser it says...has the pound sign and [00:06:07]

**Joe Hage:** Yes.

**Chris Sharp:** When you see that pound sign, it means that it's indexing content within the exact same page. It just means go down further to where that about portion is. So now it says "tab one," things like that.

**Joe Hage:** Right. Now it says [00:06:24] Schedule and I could click on that and it would take me to...

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, further down on the webpage to where the scheduling...

**Joe Hage:** Speakers. Okay, so I changed the URL accordingly.

**Chris Sharp:** Yup. Yeah.

**Joe Hage:** Okay.

**Chris Sharp:** But really it's not changing the URL. I mean, it is changing the URL but you're actually on the same page, hence the one-page website.



**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** So what's going on here, this is something that's been around for a long, long time, being able to have those internal page links. We see the one-page websites really just repurposing that and in more modern style than it's been done in the past. And it looks great, it's easy for users just to scroll down and not having to go for a page-by-page basis. What this does is this puts Google in a position where your entire website is one page. There aren't any conflicts, Google can find all of your content, but your drawback in this situation is you have one webpage to do everything.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** All the keyword rankings, everything that you're going to want this website to accomplish has to be done on one webpage. So if you're on a very narrow subject, a very narrow set of keywords, you can get away with it because one page can cover a small assembly of keywords that you want to target. But if you had a more complicated website, say for example, [00:07:49] **offered** 10 different services, we'll use a plumber, for example—they have toilet repair and different kinds of drain repairs, water heater tank installs and various things like that—to have that webpage ranked for all of those different types of keywords would be a daunting task. In fact, you'd have to say it's virtually impossible for one website to have so much relevance for so many different services that you're really not going to rank well for all of it.

So if you have a narrow focus, you can potentially do it. Maybe if you're only going after plumbing repair, that's the only keyword you want to target. One page can do that. But one page isn't going to target the whole portfolio of services that a plumber can do. There's

just...all the links and all the things that you have coming to that one page, it would tell Google different things – oh, here you're saying you're plumbing repair, here you're saying you're toilet repair, here you're saying you do water tanks, and here you do commercial plumbing. Just one page is not going to be able to rank for all of this, and that's where having individual pages gives you that capability of specialization where each webpage can be targeted to a very narrow set of keywords.

The other thing that you have is websites with multiple pages are all internally linked. And so the page rank from those internal pages can all link to the homepage and other pages, and so Google sees these links that are internal that can get [00:09:20] **passed** on page rank from page to page to page throughout your website.

Other people who might link to your website, the same sort of scenario. They might want to have an internal link to your website and give like special page rank link juice and things like that to that particular page where it can really be specialized...

**Joe Hage:** So to be clear then, if I go from [medicaldeviceevents.com/speakers](http://medicaldeviceevents.com/speakers) and I go to About and it does change my URL, in Google's eyes I'm on the same page.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, it's all the same page...

**Joe Hage:** Alright. Let me ask you a related question because I thought this was the trick that [00:10:07] was going for. So here's how to...this is just the first article that came up, okay? So here is LinkedIn Pulse article, very long, lots of things, okay? And I noticed this is a trick that they've been doing. So here this next story is saying "I quit" to Google; when I get to the bottom of here and I get here, they just took me to the next story, which has a different URL. Now, I thought

that this was a Google...pardon me, a LinkedIn trick to earn more page views. Does the fact that I'm on this story saying "I quit," which has changed the URL, I go up a little bit, now I've changed the URL again back to the first story, did just show that I gave LinkedIn two page views or one?

**Chris Sharp:** The way that it's changing here in your example is not the way that it's changing on your website.

**Joe Hage:** I suspected.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, there's not a pound sign here, which is an internal content reference.

**Joe Hage:** Ah, okay. [0:11:29] **Now it's fine.**

**Chris Sharp:** And so the URL here is changing [0:11:30]

**Joe Hage:** [0:11:30] and they did get another page view.

**Chris Sharp:** Right. So on yours, if you view your source code of that homepage...

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** ...all of the content of all of those pages is really going to be on your homepage [0:11:45]

**Joe Hage:** Actually, I don't think that's true, and let me show you...

**Chris Sharp:** Okay.

**Joe Hage:** ...from the way that I set it up on the back end, and I'm interested to know if this has an impact as well. So in fact this site has many more pages than what is shown because I kept all of what preceded 2015 on the site. So while they're not easy to find, I do have all the content from here and here on 2015. So that's one thing we'll talk about, but

if we go to Home and Edit, you'll see that I have nothing here at all really. I just have some links and things for the homepage.

What we did is, for speakers for example, each of the speakers does in fact have their own page. So Rhonda has her own page. She's our keynote speaker. If you go to the Speaker section and you go to her, you could hover over her face. This is an outbound link. It opens to her LinkedIn profile.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** Here's a link that takes us to her homepage, and clicking on her takes us to Rhonda's page which, if I Edit Speaker, is a real page that I could send people to. I have my own meta description, my own SEO title for Rhonda. Your thoughts on this?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, that definitely is a separate page. When you visit it, you can see the URL change.

**Joe Hage:** Uh-huh.

**Chris Sharp:** See how the URL...

**Joe Hage:** Yeah. No pound sign.

**Chris Sharp:** ...there's this slash-speaker-slash-Rhonda.

**Joe Hage:** Right.

**Chris Sharp:** So that is a separate page and it makes this not really a one-page website.

**Joe Hage:** Right.





**Chris Sharp:** And what I was referring to is when you're on that homepage and you're scrolling down, you've got a section, the Services section or Schedule...

**Joe Hage:** Right.

**Chris Sharp:** ...your navigation [0:13:55] it's going down. So you do have some links internally that are jumping to URLs. But this page here, for example, that you're at, this About the 10x Conference...

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** ...it is really part of the same as your main homepage, and the way that you can tell that is if you view your source code you'll see that the content here is included in the content of your source code. I just did a search here. If you do a search for the phrase “inspiring,” you can see one of your...”the content was terrific with informative and inspiring speakers.”

**Joe Hage:** Here's “inspiration,” here's “inspiring speakers.” Yes, clearly, everything's on this one page and what you're telling me, and I get it but just for the benefit of our viewers, that despite the fact that when I went to the homepage—it's an easier way for me to find it—when I went to homepage here and saw a lot of nothing, I don't know what the technical way is that I might code or set this up, but in fact it doesn't matter that I had all these ways of entering the data. When it came to the source code, everything is in fact showing up on one page, is that correct?

**Chris Sharp:** Exactly.

**Joe Hage:** And this is what matters, not anything else?



**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Exactly. It's a compilation of all those other pages that are kind of being included into that homepage, and then what Google looks as the final page and how it's actually resolved. So regardless of how it's assembled it in the [0:15:34] **architecture** behind the scene, the end result has all of that content just on the homepage. Therefore, in Google's eyes, it's one page.

**Joe Hage:** Okay. Alright.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** Alright, let me... So what I've done for my one-page site is it's not a one-page site, it's a hybrid and there's plenty of other places to go. In fact, each of my events which show up on the site in one place, so here's Schedule and this opens and this opens and it has all the words there...

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** This is interesting. I'll be interested in your perspective on this. So here's me viewing—no, I need to take this out. That's silly. It doesn't make any sense. But clearly, I have no pound sign here. My event on day one is there's a workshop for contemporary marketing strategies. Now, you taught me on the last call that sometimes, like this for example, this is duplicate content from this. They're identical words.

**Chris Sharp:** Correct. Right. And the URL is different, so it would be considered duplicate content. And this is an issue that I'd like to cover in more detail when appropriate.

**Joe Hage:** Okay, good. Yeah, well, I think now is appropriate. So I'm thinking you're going to tell me to not index one of these two and you're

probably going to tell me not to index it here so that it has its own page that counts.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Yup. That's one way to go about it, but I'll outline some other ideas that could work too. Depending on the person, one might be a better way to go about it. I'll give you my opinion though of what I think is best for SEO...

**Joe Hage:** Okay.

**Chris Sharp:** ...rather than, you know, cutting corners or making things simpler. So as I mentioned earlier, there are two separate ways that you can have the one-page website. Yours is one of those ways. Another way is to have like either an AJAX or a JavaScript system that as you're scrolling down Google identifies that you're scrolling down, then it loads another page and we scroll down further, then it loads another page and just...

**Joe Hage:** Like what LinkedIn in.

**Chris Sharp:** Like what LinkedIn did, correct. That is actually the worst way to have a one-page website.

**Joe Hage:** Ow.

**Chris Sharp:** The way that you would [0:18:13] **design it, your designer.** The reason why is a lot of search engines...

**Joe Hage:** I really thought you were going to finish your sentence the other way.

**Chris Sharp:** [Laughs]

**Joe Hage:** I really did.

**Chris Sharp:** Your way is better because search engines can visit your code and even though there's so much content on one page they can still easily access all of that content. For the other ones that do the automatic scroll, kind of the infinite scrolling concept...

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** ...many search engines have a difficult time invoking that scrolling process. They're not humans...

**Joe Hage:** So when they [0:18:44] **roll to unscroll** it they don't get to the point where it scrolls?

**Chris Sharp:** They can't stop... They can't invoke that behavior, right? They don't have a mouse that's scrolling down. They can't actually force your website to scroll, so it just loads up the homepage and it can't create that. Now, Matt Cutts of Google says that "Google's getting better at reading JavaScript trying to force that infinite scroll."

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** I believe that they can do that. They can start to mimic that and getting down further.

**Joe Hage:** And if you were to look at the source code of a page that invokes AJAX or JavaScript instructions that when you scroll, load the next page, the source code on the page on which you land would not have any of the words or terms from the subsequent pages.

**Chris Sharp:** Absolutely correct, yes.

**Joe Hage:** Okay, got it.

**Chris Sharp:** Right. The problem is invoking that scrolling event and reading that JavaScript or AJAX content is very difficult for search engines to do. In

fact, a lot of that streaming AJAX is invisible to a search engine, whereas a lot of them can't read the JavaScript. So it depends on how that's done.

Here's the problem: Most websites that have that infinite scroll, what you do is you have multiple webpages and as you're scrolling down it takes that webpage and of course puts its content there, but then that webpage also exists on its own as well. So you'll have navigation like you have and you can click, for example, Speakers, on your side it'll jump down to the Speakers section, but on many other of these infinite scroll types that Speaker page will also exist as its own individual page...

**Joe Hage:** Which is what I had before.

**Chris Sharp:** ...so you can scroll down...so Speakers exactly...

**Joe Hage:** [00:20:33] a page that was about the speakers.

**Chris Sharp:** Right, right. But anytime you're in that situation where the homepage is loading content and then that content also exists on a separate page, now we're looking at a duplicate website, so you're in a very bad situation where 100% of the content on your homepage is duplicated versus other pages of your website...

**Joe Hage:** And what I did here is I only have...these are the only words on the homepage about Rhonda.

**Chris Sharp:** Right.

**Joe Hage:** Well, I have stuff about her in this section but there's definitely more content about her here. And actually I'm going to meet her this afternoon for the first time for lunch, that's funny.

**Chris Sharp:** Uh-huh.

**Joe Hage:** There's more information here than there is on the homepage about her, which I'm thinking you're going to say good job.

**Chris Sharp:** Oh no, absolutely, that's a good job, but it looks like, yeah, [00:21:36] **as long as** it's a unique page in that page, content is unique. So the point is that the way you can go about this in this scenario is, it's kind of [00:21:46] but what you need to do is as you're loading content into your infinite scrolling website, basically you need to create two pages for every one topic. So say you have Rhonda...

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** ...and you want Rhonda, this content, bio, for example, to be on the homepage, that's okay and it can infinite scroll [00:22:05]. But then if you have a separate page where you actually click and go to her dedicated link, that needs to be completely unique content. So you need two versions of every webpage – what's going to load up in your infinite scroll, and then what's going to be like a dedicated page at the same time. So basically you have the exact same message just written two different times to say a different thing. That way Google doesn't say, "Okay, this page content is exactly the same as another page; therefore, I'm going to ignore it."

**Joe Hage:** Okay. So let's go back to this example then. It just so happens that the way my coder set this up was that as I wrote the other page that it would be populated here, and so I think you're saying by design I set it up by...from a coding perspective, if I had your insight before, I would have written it two ways so I would get twice the bang for the buck of the same content basically.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, but it's even a bigger deal than twice the bang for the buck. What you're kind of getting is neither page can do real well because they're duplicate content. Google might look at one and say, "This is

the original content. I'll pay attention to it and I'll ignore the other one," but what you don't want is Google to decide that it's your homepage it's going to ignore because it's nothing but a compilation of duplicated content...

**Joe Hage:** So—I'm sorry to interrupt—does that mean that because I've run afoul of duplicate content [00:23:43] **in full** schedule I'm penalizing the whole damn page?

**Chris Sharp:** No, it has to be more significant than just a chunk here or a chunk there, but if Google does find that your whole entire website, say your whole entire homepage is nothing but duplicate content, it's going to start to ignore your homepage...

**Joe Hage:** So you have these pages exist as well somewhere else. I could open all of these pages and have exactly that, so I'm hurting myself.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, you're hurting yourself. What you would want to do is the infinite scroll process to load a different page than what this is...

**Joe Hage:** That of course sounds exhausting to me and everybody listening. You're asking me to write the same thing twice.

**Chris Sharp:** Exactly, right.

**Joe Hage:** Man, I wrote it well the first time. This is me taking the very best way I know how to represent this information and putting it on the page, and now you're saying if you can come up with a secondary way to be really a good way to talk about this content, that would be great, and I'm like, "[00:24:51], I don't want to do that."

**Chris Sharp:** [00:24:52] **It's daunting.** What you can do is just some word substitution, you know, change different adverbs and adjectives and a little reworking...



**Joe Hage:** So let me ask you that. That's a great jumping-off point. How different do you have to make something so there's not duplicate content? Let's say I have a hundred words, do I change three adjectives and I'm done?

**Chris Sharp:** No, you'd have to change several words in every sentence. What you don't want is a large [00:25:20] content...

**Joe Hage:** [Laughs] What you just said is rewrite the whole damn thing.

**Chris Sharp:** Well, not...well, it's sort of like...

**Joe Hage:** Several words in every sentence.

**Chris Sharp:** Right, but, for example, here you have, you know, “[00:25:34] **complementary** skills you need [00:25:35] your business.” You could have, you know, greater company instead of greater business; people with similar skills or compatible skills instead of complementary, or compatible talents. So it's just a matter of what you can think in your head real quick to pump that up. I'm not saying it's effortless, and I guarantee Google always rewards the people that work the hardest on their website. This is one of those scenarios.

This is one of those scenarios where we actually recommend against the one-page website concept. I understand the [00:26:15] **trendiness** of it, the [00:26:18] **human** factors. All that are good. It just happens to be one of those evolutions that is not real good for Google, and Google openly mentions that. Google talks about the problems they have with one-page websites, but there are deeper things than that which a lot of people overlook...in some of Google's comments, overlook the fact that you do have duplicate content issues that are inherent to this process. So Google has outwardly said, publicly said, “We have problems with these one-page



concepts,” and as Matt Cutts stated, “I would [00:26:52] **legacy** on a one-page website...”

**Joe Hage:** It's really just a warning because I think of Google, and maybe they just haven't caught up yet, but I think of Google always doing what's best for the user experience and rewarding those companies that do what's right for the user experience, and I'd argue that this site is best for the user experience relative to what I had last year. This is better. It's easier to read, navigate, understand, and unfortunately I'm going to be punished for it unless I make the herculean effort of...

**Chris Sharp:** Rewriting. [Laughs]

**Joe Hage:** [00:27:37] we don't like that.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah. Well, it's a thing that kind of I think in some ways snuck up on Google. It's one of those innovations that happened without Google really planning for it and I think Google will adjust. I think when things like this happen Google will see it and they'll address it. They'll have better insights on how to do that. Google's been very good at adapting to technology trends that evolve independently from Google and a great example is JavaScript. Google at one time could not read JavaScript and they've done a fantastic job at being able to do those sorts of things. So maybe we're in just kind of a funny time period where we have this technology that's happened and Google has done the best they can do to adapt with it. It's a lot change that would have to happen with Google in order to...

**Joe Hage:** Okay, that was an exhausting answer I didn't like but I appreciate your insights. Now, I'm going to ask you a different question and it's another important one for me [00:28:37] **do this**. I don't know if our faces are recording but here's a book that I'm all about right now. Have you seen it? Don't make...

**Chris Sharp:** I have not seen that. Stephen King? Oh, Steve Krug.

**Joe Hage:** It's a fantastic read.

**Chris Sharp:** Yes. And is it a fairly new book? Is it [00:28:55]?

**Joe Hage:** It is fairly new. He wrote one years and years ago. It desperately needed to be updated. Here's another one, Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** Highly recommend both books. You can see I have it on loan from my library at the moment but I'm probably going to end up having to buy them because they're that valuable.

**Chris Sharp:** Content and content quality, there couldn't be a bigger topic in SEO right now...

**Joe Hage:** Well, here's the interesting thing, and I don't think you read this one either, right?

**Chris Sharp:** No.

**Joe Hage:** I haven't gotten that far through hers. I'm almost done his. I'm paraphrasing something that I think read or certainly when somebody told me about the book he said, "Steve's approach to words on websites is think what you think need, cut it in half and then cut it in half again, and that's how many words you should have on your site."

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** And I buy it. I buy it from a usability standpoint, from a, you know...I wish I had it handy, maybe I can find it real quick, but one of his examples that really, really stuck with me was, "What you've put on



the page, what you, the designer think people see and what they actually..." Oh, here it is. Here. Real close.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** There. "What designers build is...here's everything you need, click on all these things, and what users see is this, this and that."

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** And what she says over here is, "Be ruthless, absolutely ruthless. Stop all of this 'welcome to my site nonsense,' 'we are proud to blah, blah, blah,' 'our vision is blah, blah, blah.' I'm here at your site, I'm searching for something that I need, I'm not reading any of your puffery, do you do what I need or not, let's go." And so, you know, when I think back at my cardiac science days when things were different and we were in earlier stages of SEO and more words, more terms, use the term over again, anchor text, all that stuff which [00:31:25] is fading could get quite wordy for the sake of, "This is really helping us," and now that I think about it, boy, you know, "Here's why you should attend 10x," this is a sentence and here are two others just to wash it down. That's it. I have something about the group, this is what the group is about, here's helping people identify whether or not they belong and they can ask for the guest list. I have given them enough information, in my view, to say, "Huh, this is interesting. Let me go ahead and ask for the guest list," and then they send me an email, I send it to them. I don't need to go on and on and on and on and use every C-level term, every director, every vice president, every medical device, ways of coming around to this to try to win for the terms of relevant [00:32:24] **compasses** for these people. I don't think that's the right user experience. And yet Google grades on the words on the page and people linking to those words

on the page, and so here's another I think direct conflict with if I want to win the SEO game, how I need to compromise on my user experience. What do you say to that?

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, the way you have to look at it is you have two masters. Humans are definitely one of your masters, Google is the other master, and to be successful you have to satisfy both. Google, the only thing it really has at its disposal is a content on your website and the link relevance, the PageRank of the websites that link to you. That's all you have. Now, it's a little more complicated than that, but those are the two broad categories. So to satisfy both I would suggest an opportunity where you do have a very brief abridged summary of what you do at the beginning, and then down below that you might have a more detailed explanation.

**Joe Hage:** Right.

**Chris Sharp:** I go very much the same way. My eyes settle, I want to in see one or two sentences what you do and if I don't see it I'm off the website. I don't have time to read everything on every website. So you need to satisfy two different types of people and in doing so you can also satisfy Google, and that is right-click content to satisfy the impulsive person...

**Joe Hage:** Right.

**Chris Sharp:** ...and then have bulk content to [00:34:02] more investigative, research type of person.

**Joe Hage:** So what I did here is I have Read More...

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.



**Joe Hage:** ...and that takes you to a page that has lots of words about lots of things. I need to redo this page, but basically that's the concept.

**Chris Sharp:** That concept's fantastic, either having a separate page for it or just having it expand on the same page or you just read further down. However you want to do it, it's going to work. The way that you have it is my favorite way though. You did that right because more webpages is a bigger Internet footprint, more opportunity to gain secure ranking. So have a quick summary and then Read More where you could get those people that are really mining for information, and then to satisfy Google...

**Joe Hage:** So let me give you a quick opportunity to tell us about your value prop, what you guys do at your company. Let's say, for example, I don't want to rewrite why you should attend a different way. Could I hire you to make my duplicate pages somewhere else and reword stuff in a way that will help me?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, but we're more into the SEO campaign, sort of the soup to nuts solution, so we don't typically get hired for individual [00:35:25] content writing projects. We can entertain some of that. We have staff content writers, that sort of a thing, but we're more individual in the long-term thing. Obviously, for you, Joe, [laughs] we would be happy to help if you needed us to help you out do something like that. But yeah, we're kind of more involved in the campaign, long-term growth aspect rather than the individual components and a la carte sort of a thing.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm. Okay. Alright, let me ask you, what did I write here? Oh, so I told you that before I discovered you I had a friend named Mark McLaren. He does business under the name McBuzz Communications and he does some good SEO work. He's taken a full-time job, he's not

available as he once was, and he did me a favor and did some initial work on this site and he gave me some feedback which I'd like to share with you.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** One of the things is, this is a legacy from last year. I had a blog which I know gave me the opportunity to show previous videos and I'm going to add the videos from 2014 on the 2015 site. I've yet to do it. I love the opinion that if somebody comes to this page and they're already searching, you know, learning about the event, I think that visiting the blog is secondary or even tertiary to them deciding to move forward with asking for more information and identifying themselves as potentially being interested. So this here is the only way I made it obvious to reach the blog. [00:37:36] another way...I don't have blog in my primary nav at all because it [00:37:42] I don't have anyone else to answer the phone [00:37:47]. Hold on, everybody.

[Side conversation]

**Joe Hage:** So Mark wrote that he thought that I really need to make it more obvious for the blog to be shown and, let's see, [00:38:38] **“Blog: How important is linking more?” obviously to the blog I wrote him. “I don't believe blog content will be a registration driver. Instead, I'll add content and link [00:38:47] visitors who once they arrive can discover the rest of the site. Your thoughts.”** I'm interested in your thoughts. He writes, “There are a few good reasons to link to blog page. It's good to link to a selection of pages on your site rather than just a few. This is especially true for links from other sites.” Okay, I understand the other sites linking and I plan to do that anyhow. “Blog pages will tend to show up in specific search results for long-

tail keywords.” Agreed. “They do contribute to the user experience because they offer more than just the about page.” Okay. “You have some very good topical content with video. You might try this plugin, yet another related post plugin, it's nice for connecting various...” Okay. Alright.

So, two things there. One is he recommends putting the blog in the primary nav. Do you have a point of view on that?

**Chris Sharp:** Well, honestly, this comes down to human factors rather than SEO. As long as there's a link to the blog Google's going to be fine, so SEO is out of the equation for this answer.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** So really it comes down to what your purpose is. I think you're seeing it as the blog being out there, gain some ranking and driving people to this event, those individual pages, where he seems to be thinking that people come to the website and then find the blog and then make that decision to actually attend this event based on that...

**Joe Hage:** I don't think that's true.

**Chris Sharp:** Oh, you don't think so? Okay. Maybe I misunderstood.

**Joe Hage:** No, no, I agree with what you said.

**Chris Sharp:** Oh, okay.

**Joe Hage:** I disagree with that notion. I don't think that somebody who's now visiting the site to see a conference, should I go to a conference, is going to go as deep before they make a decision whether or not to contact me, because I have this chat box that'll open, I have ways that they can click for more information all over the site.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** Might 2 to 5% choose to go to the blogs, start watching the videos and say, “Wow, that was really good, I should think about going?” It's possible, but I don't know that that's going to be a primary driver, and I'm trying to keep the primary nav items to a manageable number and I don't think that there's any here that I would sacrifice...

**Chris Sharp:** For the blog.

**Joe Hage:** ...for the blog.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** I mean, I theoretically could stretch this out yet a little further and fit in another, you know, however many characters these four plus the space is; I just think at some point it's overkill.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Well, I tend to agree with you. The main reason is there's so much information about this event. The blog is just supporting content. The blog's purpose really should be to attract people who don't already know about this from some good article, bring them in there, then get them interested here. You do have a path where they can find that content.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** The sort of person that's really hunting for more, they're going to find it. By definition that's what they're doing, is hunting for more.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** And so I think you're okay. You know, if you had a way to get the blog up in that top portion, it would hurt you that you have so much stuff





up there now I think, like you said, it's starting to get a little busy and [00:42:06]...

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm. Do you think I have in fact gotten too...you know, I should figure out one of these to sacrifice?

**Chris Sharp:** Um...no. No, I think you're fine. Your eyes can scan up pretty quickly.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** The Alumni – that one I'm not sure. That is just who's been...

**Joe Hage:** Right. I recognize that.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** I thought alumni was more compelling than testimonials. I understand that you get what testimonials is.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** I don't know if people go to a testimonials page because everyone expects a testimonials page to say, "This was effin' great," and that's not going to give you anything incremental. Now, it just so happens, I mean for what it's worth, I think my testimonials page is better than an average testimonials page because I have video that I added, so here's a 40-second thing, so there's interactivity there, and unlike most certainly conferences that I've seen, I'm willing to let people know who came with their actual names and their actual titles as opposed to "important person, GE," it said, "The content was spectacular." No. These are like the individual "what this conference meant to them," and I tell you who they were for social proof. So that's how I feel about this section and I thought that at least the 100 to 200 people who are my alumni would self-identify and come here. I don't know.

So I get it. It's not a perfect solution for my primary navigation. That's why I kept it there. I'm open to a better recommendation if you have one.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, well, my recommendation would be to keep it there, but I think I would name it as testimonials, and the reason why is testimonials are still actually a really big factor for driving sales and the best of that is the video testimonial. I think it is a really good selling factor, something that could do your website really good to be noticed. My [00:44:29] was when I saw alumni just didn't [00:44:31] **me to** what that really meant. I thought maybe people that have enrolled or participated in the past as part of the event rather than **participators in** [00:44:41]...

**Joe Hage:** Okay, it's changed.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Oh, there you go, yeah.

**Joe Hage:** That's how quick it is.

**Chris Sharp:** I think it would be a good sales tool for you, and especially as well done as they are I think your site would be better for it now.

**Joe Hage:** Okay. I appreciate that, thanks. Going back to blog, Mark recommends actually two things. So this is really, really long. It's got a lot of words. What I've done is I've transcribed the video. I did it for two reasons. One is not everyone has time to watch the video and people could scan. Savvy people could use the word "find" and then find tax and find out where they're talking about the tax instead of reading the whole thing, for example, on that particular one. So while this is an absurdly long post, I get that, I also did it because it has every possible word I could possibly want for Google to find it.

Rob recommended two things at the bottom. One of them is, as many websites do, they have basically, “If you enjoyed this post, you'll also enjoy link, link, link, link.” I've done that before on other sites. It feels...I don't know, it works for me, I guess. You'll probably say it's a good idea. It's incremental links. There are more clicks, etc. So am I right on that guess, “You like that idea, go ahead and do that?”

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, certainly. And do you mean just links that are internal to your own webpage other than articles and...?

**Joe Hage:** Yeah.

**Chris Sharp:** Okay, yeah. Yeah, definitely, a benefit especially since all of that stuff isn't really accessible through a navigation path.

**Joe Hage:** Okay.

**Chris Sharp:** Having those links would be beneficial.

**Joe Hage:** The second thing he recommends, and I actively dislike this but you might tell me, “No, it's a good idea,” is he...I've started to basically blow off any tags here and, you know, like categories, and having them show up at the bottom of the page so that you know... I don't have so many articles, like on Medical Marcom I have 140 articles. Maybe it makes sense there. On this one, I don't. But he was saying how it'd be good if at the bottom I said, “Tags, medical device tax, innovation, whatever the terms are, categories.” I can't think off the top of my head what the categories would be, but that would be a way to group like blog posts together so that I could click on medical device tax and serve you a page on every article I have that includes that term so that you can read other articles that are related to it. You're probably in favor of that, eh?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, it would be, again, just being able to get the links there so everything connects. Otherwise, you have a tremendous amount of content that just can't be found. Google's going to find it but human experience could be a benefit there. I wouldn't get carried away with it though. Short, simple, consolidated, but be ample.

**Joe Hage:** You make work for me, Chris Sharp, but you know what? Like you said, the ones who do the work get the rewards. In fact, things are going pretty well I'm going to go [00:48:31] **to it** incognito and let's see how I'm doing. Medical device conference is an important term for me. Who's the man? I'm the man. I'm number one.

**Chris Sharp:** Oh, man. Why are you calling me? [Laughs]

**Joe Hage:** Because it all helps, and you know what? It's not just about me, I also want my listeners to learn about what you do and how you can help them.

**Chris Sharp:** No, I'm just teasing. No, you're doing a great job and you're a fantastic listener.

**Joe Hage:** Ha! Thanks. I don't want to keep you too much longer but if you don't mind, let's continue. Tag pages do well...results...outbound, these should be... Okay, so he was saying—I'm interested in this. I find this really interesting. For those of you...instead of me explaining it as an amateur, explain to our listeners, please, what the concept of rel="nofollow" means.

**Chris Sharp:** Okay. Well, what rel="nofollow" means is there will be links on the webpage and you're telling Google that you do not want it to crawl those links.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** So it knows that they're there but it won't follow that link and then begin to index and crawl the content that those links lead to those pages.

**Joe Hage:** And who should use rel="nofollow" and when? Why is it good?

**Chris Sharp:** Sure. An example would be—this is kind of a funny thing—there is a situation that happened a long time ago where there was a company that nobody liked, they did bad things, and everybody was writing articles talking about how bad they were and everyone had a link to their page. Well, people saw these links and thought, "Oh man, everybody loves this guy." And so this company that everybody hated was now starting to rank very, very well and encouraged him to be even more and more obnoxious because he was getting all these links. Rel="nofollow" would fix that scenario where, you know...

**Joe Hage:** [00:50:39] get the inbound juice.

**Chris Sharp:** Exactly. Right.

**Joe Hage:** And I understand...the reason I started using rel="nofollow" is every time you give away some juice you're giving it away from yourself.

**Chris Sharp:** True. However...

**Joe Hage:** Is it still true?

**Chris Sharp:** No, that's always been true. They're not receiving it but you're still losing it. It's a funny thing with Google. You have links on your website; you'd think if you have 10 links [00:51:07] **it seems** each link's giving away 10% of its page link juice, we'll call it.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** And if you have one that is being blocked it still takes that one-tenth. You're like passing 90% of what you have rather than 100%. So it kind of like counts...

**Joe Hage:** When I do the transcript of this call, I am going to mention Chris Sharp, I am going to link to you, and if I love you, as I do, I won't put rel="nofollow" to give you some love. But if I want to keep it all for myself, I'll do rel="nofollow", and while I'm letting people know about you I won't be giving you any SEO benefit.

**Chris Sharp:** That's absolutely correct, but because you simply have that link you're only...all of your links that go to yourself would only give you 90% of the juice.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** Even though I'm receiving nothing, you're still losing 10% [00:52:02]

**Joe Hage:** Even with rel="nofollow"?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, yeah. It's a strange thing but that's how it works.

**Joe Hage:** So if that's...oh, okay. So let me understand that. If I link to somebody other than myself, I'm giving away some of my juice period, rel follow or no rel follow.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** And the only decision I'm making is whether or not to give you love or not.

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, it's whether they receive it or not, not whether you give it away. You're losing it no matter what you do. That will depend on whether they receive what you [00:52:38].

**Joe Hage:** Huh.

**Chris Sharp:** In other words, that's lost. Lost in space.

**Joe Hage:** Wow. Okay. So really only if I actively dislike someone should I use rel="nofollow"? It didn't always use to be this way though, right?

**Chris Sharp:** No, it's always been this way.

**Joe Hage:** Oh, it has. I didn't know that.

**Chris Sharp:** Yup. Yeah, it's just a complicated thing to understand...

**Joe Hage:** For example, I always rel="nofollow" anything on LinkedIn because I think LinkedIn doesn't need any more juice than it already has and I'm not giving it any of mine, but in fact I'm giving it anyhow? I'm losing it anyhow. I'm losing it anyhow.

**Chris Sharp:** Exactly, right. Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** So it's a lesson for folks. Be judicious on how many outbound links you give on your site.

**Chris Sharp:** Absolutely. The reason why is just like you said. I would be very, very stingy on what I give out.

**Joe Hage:** Okay. I'm still going to give you one.

**Chris Sharp:** I would appreciate that.

**Joe Hage:** You're welcome.

**Chris Sharp:** And I can reciprocate.

**Joe Hage:** Fine. Thank you. So McBuzz was telling me that I benefit when I link to somebody better than me. For example, if I send a link, if I say, "Everyone, go check out FDA.gov," that my medical device conference site will benefit in absolute. Agree or disagree?

**Chris Sharp:** Disagree. That's a rumor or just like a myth but it doesn't really work that way. In other words, you could just have a webpage that links to the biggest websites on earth and all of a sudden your website gets super-super-popular. So, no. The benefit is it kind of helps a little bit with light content like through linking to other things. So the myth is that Google wants you to link to other websites so that it can crawl and it can find out what is and isn't popular. So it benefits Google...

**Joe Hage:** Is that a myth?

**Chris Sharp:** Oh no, that's true. It benefits Google in helping them to rank and index the websites. So you could say you're contributing to the Internet or you're contributing to Google by casting your vote on the websites you like by linking them, but it's not actually helping your website. It's hurting your website because you're...

**Joe Hage:** No matter who it is?

**Chris Sharp:** No matter who it is. And here's the key, is—and this is through Google's words, not mine—the perfect website would be a website that every single other website in the world links to it and it links to nobody else. It's the selfish website. That's the way you could absolutely have the maximum amount of page rank. And by that definition, therefore you're automatically know if you have a link going out, you're going to lose some of that page rank.

**Joe Hage:** Hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** And so it doesn't matter what the website is you're linking to, you're going to be losing page rank and it's not going to be benefitting you at all. It benefits the Internet, it benefits Google, because they know what's popular and what's not by who has the most links and the



most relevant links. So as a whole we all benefit, but as an individual you would lose.

**Joe Hage:** So I'm going to put this in a block quote when we do the transcription, "All outbound links are bad for you." True or false?

**Chris Sharp:** From what I know I would say that is true.

**Joe Hage:** Wow.

**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** And now I'll clarify and not block quote that it may not be bad for the user experience and your credibility and you're referencing something that you want your users to find out about like I do...I want to find out about you, but I'm not helping myself SEO-wise when I do it.

**Chris Sharp:** Well said except you understand that user experience is also a factor in SEO. So if people find your website to be unresourceful and they don't like it...

**Joe Hage:** Then they don't come and Google doesn't care, right?

**Chris Sharp:** Exactly. So where do you win, where you do lose, it's a balance. It's a juggle.

**Joe Hage:** So if I were to link to the least reputable site on earth and I were to link to FDA.gov, the impact on my website from an SEO standpoint except for the fact that one of them is completely irrelevant and therefore worse user experience, it would have the same impact on my SEO?

**Chris Sharp:** That's correct.

**Joe Hage:** Thank you. We'll move on.



**Chris Sharp:** Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** So let's talk about directories. I wrote, "Directories, the prospect of listing my event in directories exhausts me. If I outsource it to someone overseas on the cheap, how can I get them to decide which sites are worthwhile for directories? Is it by page rank? Because I am not going to do it myself." So, my first question is, how important are directories still? And second, if it's worthwhile, what's the least expensive way I can outsource it and not have people linking to every site under the sun, some of which might actually hurt me? Are there sites that if I get an inbound link from westinkterribly.com, is that going to actually hurt me?

**Chris Sharp:** It certainly could. You have to know the quality of what you're linking to. You definitely don't want suspicious websites. So the bottom line here is **rank** [00:58:37] through directory submissions is actually a very good way to link-build. There are a lot of just fantastic websites out there which have excellent navigation structures and localization or industrialized sort of a thing. An example would be Manta.com, MerchantCircle, Hotfrog, SuperPages, those types of things. A lot of those will have no follow links but a lot of them will allow links to go directly to your website. The way that I would go about it though is going from page to page to page and doing the submissions, would be daunting at the very least. I would use a business directory submission service. There are ones out there, UBL.org, for example, that'll automatically create a webcard for you that will be submitted to Manta.com and MerchantCircle and various things...

**Joe Hage:** But is MerchantCircle, for example, relevant for medical device conference?



**Chris Sharp:** It's going to have a category and everything in that category, you know, the drilldown structure would be getting more and more medical-related as you drill down. However, the content on your individual page will be the content that you provide it, your description and your services and things like that.

**Joe Hage:** Mm-hmm.

**Chris Sharp:** So it's completely relevant. What I would recommend though is not to copy-paste content on your website, actually write it unique for that particular submission so that it is unique content, you know, [01:00:05] **into you.**

**Joe Hage:** Let me understand. You said UBL? Is it UBL.com?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah. Yup, exactly.

**Joe Hage:** Okay.

**Chris Sharp:** Universal Business Listing is what that means.

**Joe Hage:** Okay. So you're saying that I shouldn't copy content from my site for my listing but I can prepare a listing that goes to all directories?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, it'll cover, depending on the service level, maybe upward of 200 different business directories including all the good ones...

**Joe Hage:** But how much would I have to pay for that?

**Chris Sharp:** I think they have basic services that start around 40 bucks, going to go upward of hundreds and hundreds of dollars depending on exactly... They'll even do things like creep Facebook pages and stuff like that, but the bottom line...



**Joe Hage:** So I'm going to spend 40 dollars and I create a directory submission that my event will be listed in potentially 200 sites, all of which are relevant for listing a conference about medical devices?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, absolutely. Your situation might be a little bit different because you're trying to market a conference rather than a business and these are business listings. So they may not accept your listing. Medical Marcom, for example, could be in there, but this conference...

**Joe Hage:** So for my viewers, most of whom are medical device manufacturers and the industry that supports them with various services relevant to the medical device community, you'd recommend they use directories?

**Chris Sharp:** Absolutely, yup.

**Joe Hage:** Now, is that something I could ask you to help me with and they ask you to help them with?

**Chris Sharp:** Yeah, we can help with that. Mm-hmm.

**Joe Hage:** Okay. Alright, so directory is good, and Joe lazy, ask Chris. Got it.

**Chris Sharp:** [Laughs]

**Joe Hage:** We've been on for just over an hour and you've answered all the questions I had today and we covered a lot of good stuff. Very illuminating for me, I'm confident the same for our viewers, so I'll thank you again.

**Chris Sharp:** You're very welcome.

**Joe Hage:** I am going to put this up on the web, I'm going to get a transcription of it, and Chris Sharp, ladies and gentlemen.



**Chris Sharp:** Thank you for your time. I appreciate the opportunity.

**Joe Hage:** No, this is great and...

**Chris Sharp:** It's been fun for me.

**Joe Hage:** You taught me a lot. Thank you, Chris.

**Chris Sharp:** Absolutely. Any time.

**Joe Hage:** By for now.

**Chris Sharp:** Goodbye.

[00:62:40]