

*This is the transcript of an interview conducted on April 28, 2006, where our CEO Chris Biber was interviewed by Janet Eastman, host of Ottawa Citizen Business TV on the subject of 'Googling for Dollars – Using Search Engines for Business Success'*

Janet Eastman: When it comes to using search engines are you using them to the maximum benefit of your business? Are you just Googling or are you are Googling for dollars? Are you doing search engine marketing and PR? Chris Biber is the President and CEO of Searching Works. He joins me in the studio now with some tips so on how you can get googling for green. Good to see you Chris thanks for coming in.

Chris Biber: Thanks. I am pleased to be here.

Janet Eastman: Are most business actually using search engines to the maximum benefit of their business?

Chris Biber: In my experience: 'No'. That's the simple answer. While many people of course have websites now, in many cases these websites are definitely not optimized for the benefits of both users and search engines so there is a lot of opportunity there.

Janet Eastman: Ok let's talk about those opportunities. What should you be doing as a business? What could be doing?

Chris Biber: Sure. As a business owner there are a number of opportunities that you could pursue with regards to search engines. Of course many businesses are using search engines today to actively search for things. They research competitors or news stories or what have you. What they are not doing - in my experience anyways - is to look at the other side of the picture. How do people, such as your potential customers, find you? How do you insure that you can be found online? And given that most businesses are not operating in a vacuum, they are operating with a lot of competition out there; they really should undertake efforts to be found online and to help customers find them when they are looking for them. And there are a number of things that these businesses can then do to be found in fact.

Janet Eastman: Ok my understanding with search engines was that the best place to be is among the first top three when you do a search. How do you get there?

Chris Biber: Well that's the million dollar question.

Janet Eastman: Yeah

Chris Biber: Clearly, there are a number of things that you can do. First of all, you have to make sure that you understand what your audience is actually searching for. And there are a number of tools and tips and tricks and that you can

pick up to identify what people are actually looking for when they are searching for what you have to sell. And that is a critical aspect because that understanding can then drive how you position your website. If your website has the sort of generic, “we are the leading provider of e-commerce software...” language out there....

Janet Eastman: Right.

Chris Biber: ...and if that is not something that your clients are actually actively searching for as a terminology, then your website will never be found. You will never be in the top three. So the trick first of all is to analyze what is it that your audience is actually using as a search terminology. And then to use that terminology in everything you do. Search really is not just a siloed activity. As far as marketing is concerned, search really should be pervasive. It touches on all kinds of aspects of your business because it should influence how you position your website, how you write your press releases, how you write your e-mail newsletters, everything is driven by that. And how do you get to those number 1, 2 or 3 positions? That is really the difficult part. So first of, you have to have a website that relates to the terms that are being searched for, and that’s lesson 1. Lesson 2 is, you have to identify a number of other sites that are related to your business that should link to your business. The way Google and all the other search engines actually determine how well you rank as a business, in a search, is by how relevant is the content of the web site, or how relevant are the “on-page factors”. And then, how many other sites and references can I find that point to this website, that also talk about the same subject. So the more links point to you that are relevant in the eyes of Google and of high value in the eyes of Google and Yahoo, the more beneficial for your own position in search engines. So that’s the avenue of going after organic search results.

Janet Eastman: Ok. How do you find out though what is it that your customer searches for? You just call them up and them ask them?

Chris Biber: That is certainly one of the best ways to go after this information. Clearly: ask your customers. How did you find us? What are you actually doing with our product at the end of the day? You can also look at your web site analysis tools. Many people have a website but don’t realize that it can reveal a lot about the behavior of site visitors as well. There is log analysis software and site analysis software available, much of it for free or for fairly low cost, which allows you to look at your website behind the scenes as it were to see how many people visited my site? Where did they come from? What search terms did they use to get to my site? And then there are the third party tools like Wordtracker, Keyworddiscovery or - inside of Google - Google AdWords capabilities that let you identify the terms that people are searching for when they search for LCD TVs for

example. What other terminology do they search for when they search for this particular phrase? Because again: what you want to end with is that you want to identify exactly the language that your potential audience uses. If you don't use the searchers' language - and that's Marketing 101 really- you will not be reached by them when they search for you or when they do any other investigation on-line. The tools that are out there are either free or fairly low cost.

Janet Eastman: So it is worth that investment?

Chris Biber: Absolutely. The amount of learning you can derive from these tools even in and of itself is already worth a great deal because it allows you to hone your message, to be much more specific in how you position yourself. By extension, this allows you to be easier found online in search engines. This insight can then also drive all the other marketing efforts you are undertaking, whether that be online or offline.

Janet Eastman: Ok. Are people using search engines to do PR?

Chris Biber: Absolutely. To determine your web sites' relevance, search engines look at the totality of your online presence. So what you can do in PR with search engines is to first of all use the language that you have already identified. Repeat that language in your press release. To the search engine this is yet another indication of what your company does. But it also lets you do things like identify 'where should I post my press release?', 'Who should I send my press realize to?' There are a number of vehicles – online of course - that allow you to distribute press releases via wire services, for low cost or no cost and I believe in low cost it is excellent... But you can also identify which niche directories exist that you may not know about but that you should know about, that are allowing you to post press releases for free. And you can also find out who has written about your industry, who has written about you or your competitors and go and contact these people. Since these writers are already familiar with the genre and the industry that you are in, they are much more receptive to writing about another green widgets manufacturer....

Janet Eastman: Right.

Chris Biber: Because that's their business - right? So using search engines to actively promote your business through PR is a great vehicle to be found on-line.

Janet Eastman: Ok we said 'googling for dollars'.

Chris Biber: Absolutely.

Janet Eastman: What can this actually do for your business financially? If you get it right?

Chris Biber: Well if you get it right, the **ROI** stories are tremendous. One of the statistics that are out there is that 80% of traffic to a website begins with a search. So even if you cut that number in half – which is what I do with most statistics - that still leaves 40% of the traffic that you potentially get for free. So if you get in the organic side of search engines, and you are being found when people search for what you have to sell, then that is free traffic. That is free business coming to you. The other side of that coin is, of course, that you can buy your way to the top of Google and Yahoo so to speak. You cannot do that in the organic side, but you can do that with the paid side of Google and Yahoo. When you search for anything like our ‘Green Widgets’ example, you as a manufacturer or provider of Green Widgets, can say, “whenever somebody searches for Green Widgets, within 50 kilometers of my business and only on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I want an ad to show up in the search engine results”. And I can have the ad say something very targeted, such as “looking for Green Widgets in Ottawa? Special Pricing Available.” And you only pay for this when somebody actually clicks on the ad.

Janet Eastman: Ok

Chris Biber: The ad itself cost you nothing! ‘On-line advertising for free’ - I believe in that story. And again, once you understand what people actually look for because we did that analyzes already....

Janet Eastman: Right

Chris Biber: You can, then, buy these key words and basically say ‘ok I am willing to pay say a dollar per click that drives people to my website’ and here is the next good thing about these pay per click ads. And that is, that you can actually drive people, not just to your home page, but drive them to this specific page that talks about your Green Widgets and that you have on sales specifically to the Ottawa area. So you can tie a very tight story together. And so if you don’t show up in the organic rankings, you can insure that that your listing shows up in the paid side of things. And easily measure how often do people search for how successful are they when they come to my site, do they actually do purchase what I want them to purchase on my site or fill out a form for white paper or what you have you. So there is a tremendous amount of business that you can derive from both the organic side of Google and the page side of Google and or Yahoo.

Janet Eastman: Ok it's fascinating Chris. I am sorry we are out of time. Thank you very much for coming in. Chris Biber is with 'Searching Words', where he is president and CEO. We will be right back.

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