

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

## SESSION 139

### GETTING PEOPLE TO SEE AND STAY ON YOUR WEBSITE

WITH CLAUDIA PENNINGTON

**BETH:** Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky, and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I have Claudia Pennington on with me. Claudia is a digital marketing consultant, and she is fabulous. You're gonna love what she has to share because she knows the magic of Google and things related to search and getting people to your site. The challenge of this call today is when Claudia and I talk, we can go on for hours. So Claudia, I'm so happy to have you on today, and it'll be very interesting to see what we can cover in an efficient manner.

**CLAUDIA:** Thanks for having me, Beth. I appreciate it.

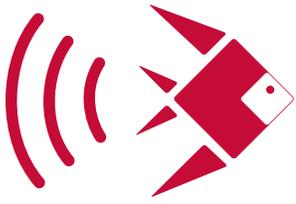
**BETH:** So Claudia, this whole idea of search and Google, I always say it's really funny. My business is 20 years old and so it's a year older than Google, but in the scheme of many people that are working, some people think that's a long time. I think it's not that long. The whole profession that you're in isn't even that old. So how did you get into doing the type of work that you do?

**CLAUDIA:** Well, I had a great opportunity when I was a student at Penn State. In the mid-2000 I went to Penn State and I worked as an intern for the information technology department, specifically for emerging technologies, and at that time, emerging technologies included wifi, blogging, podcasting. If you can believe it that there was actually this time and so I was charged with looking at these technologies, specifically blogging, wiki, social media and how they could be used at the university level, either in the classroom or to market the university.

**BETH:** Wow, and so you used it in the university, and what did you love about it?

**CLAUDIA:** At that time, everything was changing so it was in a dynamic field, new technologies were coming out all the time. It seemed like everybody had a





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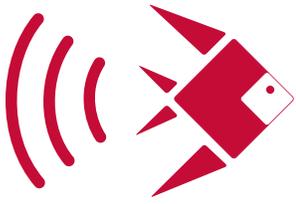
blog at that point. Twitter was a place where other marketing nerds like me hung out and it was just, I was just at the forefront of so much change and I think that that's what drew me in and ultimately why I made a career out of it is because it is constantly changing. There's always something new to try, to learn, to do.

**BETH:** I know and that's something that I love about it and also exhausts me a bit about it. I mean, it is changing so much. You know, it's so hard to keep up, and I think that's why it's such a good conversation to have frequently with people and on this podcast. I have to constantly be bringing people on to talk about it and about what the state is of it. So we're definitely going to be getting into that today, but I always love to kick the conversation off with focusing a little bit on participation. It's a subject that we talk about here a lot. So in the work that you do, how does participation show up? What does that word mean to you as you go through your day?

**CLAUDIA:** For me as a digital marketing consultant, I would say participation is what differentiates growth from stagnation. So I could persist in the work that I did in the mid-2000s and use the tools in the way in which I did 12 years ago now or what I've chosen to do is participate actively in the industry. I'm subscribed to tons of digital marketing publications. I have my finger on the pulse of so many different channels because I am connected and I'm participating not just in my own learning and growth, but I also teach others that which it is that I know in order to I guess share the wealth into what I like to call democratized digital marketing so that others can actively participate and drive their own marketing efforts as well.

**BETH:** I love that. I've never heard anyone describe it that way. The difference between growth and stagnation, but that is so true. When you are active and involved and focusing on something, it moves you forward, and when you ignore things and don't engage, things do tend to sort of settle down to nothingness sometimes.





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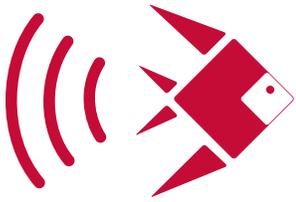
**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely. It's about, in a sense it's about professional development so as a professional in any organization and keeping up on whatever it is the work that you're doing and staying up on the latest news, tips, tricks, trends and tools that impact the work that it is that you're doing or you could stagnate and continue doing things the way you've always done and achieve moderate levels of success and I'm sure that that works for a lot of folks, but what I found particularly in digital marketing is that not only does the industry change, but how people participate in the industry has changed.

**BETH:** Interesting. What do you mean by that?

**CLAUDIA:** So there are like the Facebook live videos and Twitter live. There's so many live video opportunities now that didn't exist when I got involved in the industry and as a result, consumers have changed their behavior and they consume more video, far more video than they did when I started in the industry. So Twitter alone might be effective for some industries, but Twitter plus live video might even be more effective and the only way in which you might be aware of those changes is if you're an active Twitter user, Facebook user, for example, or if you are participating by reading some of the latest industry news. So I think that it could have the potential to take some marketing efforts to the next level, but for those folks who keep scheduling tweets and aren't taking a look at some of the additional tools that are available or scheduling posts on Facebook, there are some missed opportunities there because of that stagnation.

**BETH:** You know, that is a really good point. To think about how technology is changing what we even mean as participation and what people define as it and even if they're not defining it, it's changing the way people interact and what they think is normal. I was just telling someone the other day when my children, my children are in their 20s and when they were 2, 3 years old, you know, I'm a big geek so we used to watch Star Trek, and I remember my son at 2 or 3 years old sitting down at my computer and talking to it and then telling me that Captain Picard says that, like Captain Picard can talk. Even at 3 he knew this, that you





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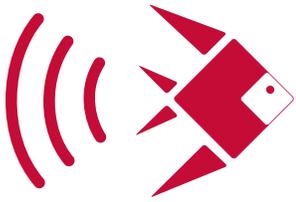
can talk to a computer, and he expected it to respond. We ha-ha, parents laugh and thought how cute and how quaint that is, and wouldn't it be funny if that happened in his lifetime, and now, like he's now 25 and all over the internet, every time I watch Hulu or Netflix or anything, like the big advertisements that's going on right now is that OK Google ad. All I keep thinking is I keep seeing that picture of my 3-year-old son talking to the computer and thinking that 22 years later that exists, that now you can wander around your house like Captain Picard talking to the computer and getting it to answer questions and take action for you. It's literally changing human participation things.

**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely although those technologies that Google and Amazon have introduced into our homes are real game-changers for sure. That's a great story.

**BETH:** I mean it's fascinating, and I think it's important for us as a communication community to be paying attention to that. It's so easy to think, "Well, you know we're in organizations, we work in nonprofits or we're involved in that." We're gonna pay attention to what other nonprofits are doing, and it's so important to be looking at what are the commercials on Netflix that every single one of your potential donors, every single one of your community members is seeing. Like what's the new level? What's that new baseline that the world has come to?

**CLAUDIA:** There's a great resource that Beloit College publishes, and it's called "The Mindset List" and it helps you to assess where it is that an 18-year-old is coming into this world. So what is their frame of reference? It's an excellent resource for any marketing or communications professional to take into consideration. So in thinking about what it is that your target audience is thinking about, what technological references might they introduce in a vernacular? Like what do they have access to? What are they bringing to your organization? What assumptions do they have about that, about engaging with the organization, even what it is that the organization does? A lot of it can be explained by this mindset list. So it's a pretty powerful tool.





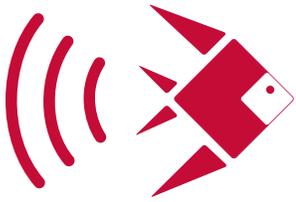
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**BETH:** I love that. That's so interesting. We will put a link to that on the show notes page so make sure to go look for it there. So as we're talking about this evolving and changing and keeping up and Google's been around for 20 years, a good place to start this conversation about what's happening in search and how people can utilize it is to talk a little about like what's going on in your world of search? You kind of live and breathe in this. Obviously I hate to say you Google, but Google is the leader, but they're not the only one. What are some of the trends and sort of future stuff and where is it going?

**CLAUDIA:** I think that we already hit on the two trends that I think are going to color marketing communications for the next couple of years and that is video and voice search. So what I mean by voice search, with respect to the devices that we just discussed using in our homes, like the Amazon and Google have introduced where even Siri thinks of Apple. We ask our, we ask more and more of our devices and these devices are recording the things that we're asking of them. That information can be used by communications and marketing professionals to better understand their target audiences. So I think that we're gonna see more and more how voice search will impact that which it is that we're doing. Then video as well. I think that with the, any iPhone can shoot live video and put it out to the world. I think that it has implications for marketing and communications as well and could definitely be leveraged if you have live video going during an event. It doesn't require complicated live-streaming setup like it did 10 years ago when we were trying to live-stream events. You simply need an iPhone to live-stream an event. So if you have an event or something that it is you want to share with your audience, you can set it up within a few seconds. So I think those two trends will be what impacts the industry for at least the next few years. With Google and YouTube still being the top two search engines, if you'd like to call YouTube a search engine and lots of us in the industry refer to it that way, Google and YouTube being the top two search engines, that they have made it, Google has made it a lot easier to do live video there as well and in the same that you can do Facebook live video and Twitter live videos, you can also live-stream on YouTube now.





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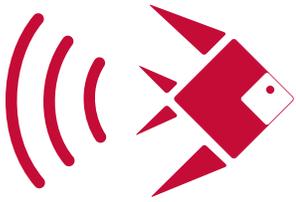
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**BETH:** Yeah, and it's funny. I was also thinking of another way to kind of get a sense of what's trending and where the world is going is to look at what the buzz of the new technologies are all about and that's sort of like worrying about what each individual thing is. I feel like I go to a lot of SEO and social media and content media conferences, everything from like big conferences down to meet ups and sort of unconference camps to hear about all different levels and over the last few years, you know it started with things like periscope was coming out and then you know Instagram started allowing video and then you've got Facebook live and you've got and then YouTube hugely blew up even before all of that and now the other thing that I'm starting to see is sort of this blended space of is it a webinar conference space or is it a visual communication space. You know, everything from Skype to Facetime to I do a mastermind group and we use a video conferencing tool called Zoom. I also follow, right before we got on here to record, I was on something that used to be a tweet chat. It was on Twitter. I would follow it on Tweet Deck and now that chat has gone, it went into video and the host of that chat started out using Blab. Blab failed as a company and now she's on Cloud Cast and I'm thinking this has literally been in the last six months and there are so many different platforms and they're all about delivering this sort of streaming video and there are so many opportunities. You have to think there's got to be something to that, whether you take advantage of it or not, it's important to pay attention.

**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely. I think those are just a handful of the video or streaming opportunities that are out there. There are so many more and I really think that it aligns with what is expected to be exponential growth and that amount of video that there is available. I think it's part of that trying to make social social again in some respects. Social media, with the scheduling tools which are great and make sharing your content a lot easier, scheduling your social media shares all the time kind of puts you at arms length for your audience and I think video is a good attempt to recapture some of that interaction that's been missing.

**BETH:** Yeah, I think that's a really good point. So let's, as we talk about this





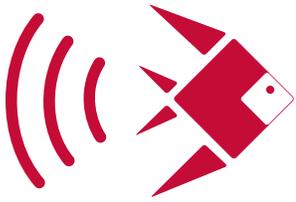
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interaction, one of the biggest things that I get asked, and I'm sure you get asked this, too, what everybody wants to know is how do I get more people to see my website and convert them into whatever. People that sign up to your email list into members and donors. So how do you become findable on the internet? So I figured, let's start off by talking about what is the mindset of a searcher? When people are looking for things, it's so easy to think I want them to come to my stuff, and it's easy to forget like what is their mindset? What is someone looking for when they're searching?

**CLAUDIA:** That's a great question. I think that intent needs to be the number one concern when you are thinking about the structure of a website, the content of a website. It all ultimately comes back to the site. So regardless of the platforms you're marketing yourself on, your organization. So if you are using any of these live-streaming platforms or live video, any social media, you still want to drive your audience back to your site. So does the site, some of the considerations that I have in mind, does the site actually address the questions, comments and concerns that your target audience has? So many times I've landed on a website looking for frequently asked questions, and I was unable to find these frequently asked questions because it's become such a fixture of a website. Frequently asked questions. Well, if I have the question, I imagine somebody else has the question and so I expect that piece of content to be on a website. I expect there to be a contact form for the organization on the website if I do have a question or concern that's not addressed on the website. I want to be able to reach out to the organization or if I want to read more about the organization, I need an about page. For larger organizations, I mean there might even be the assumption that there's a long history and the organization is well known, if you were to say, "Consult the Beloit College list and look at the mindset of your target audience or up and coming audience in this case," but you would find that they might not have that orientation to your organization. They might not be familiar with it. So trading the website as an opportunity to answer the basic questions and concerns of the potential audience might have, what is it you want them to know about you. That's number one. What is your mission statement? Write it on the home



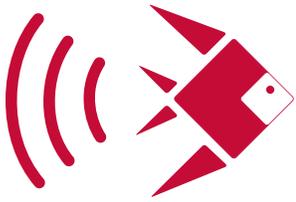


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page and two, what action do you want them to take? Do you want them to get familiar with the brand? So make your social media links easy to share. Put your fact page or your frequently asked questions page in the main navigation or put a button on your home page. Do you want them to take action right away? If so, what is that action? Are there too many actions you want your potential audience to take? So do you have, do you ask people to follow your organization on social media and sign up for a newsletter and make a donation? If I am searching for your organization for the first time, maybe I saw you on social media and I land on your site so I can learn more about your organization, all of a sudden I have three different actions I can take and I'm not even 100 percent sure what your mission statement is. These are the kinds of thoughts, questions and concerns that I have when I'm assessing a website and whether or not it meets the intent of somebody searching online. So treating the website as an opportunity to educate your target audience, number one, for sure. I would make sure you're meeting the needs of that target audience where you're addressing all of their questions and concerns and two, make sure that the call to action is clear. If you have a newsletter and you use that opportunity on the home page to obtain subscriptions to that newsletter, make sure that it's clear and straightforward. So first name, email address, sign up, thank you for the opportunity, here's some more information about our organization or thanks again for signing up for the newsletter. Follow us on social media. So ensuring that you address common questions and concerns and that the call to action is clear on the site, that for sure will increase your engagement. What happens when you increase engagement is that Google especially will reward engagement. So if somebody is searching for organizations like yours and you're competing with several other results in Google search results, Google assesses what is called click through rate. So if a potential, if your target audience clicks through your website and they don't stay on the website very long, that is not, that's not an action that's rewarded by Google, whereas a target audience member who clicks to the site and stays for five minutes and visits a few other pages, takes advantage of the call to action. That kind of behavior is rewarded.





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**BETH:** And by rewarded, you're not talking about advertising yet. You're still talking about somebody has a phrase or question, some sort of a query that they type into Google and somehow your site shows up high up enough in the search results for that query that someone sees it and clicks on it and then staying on that page is sending Google a signal that that item responded or answered that person's question versus all the people that get to that page, no, that's not what I want, and hit the back button right away.

**CLAUDIA:** That's exactly it. You are, your website should meet the needs of your target audience so that your target audience does not hit the back button. When somebody lands on your homepage and hits the back button, that increases the bounce rate and the bounce rate is a signal to Google that your result is not a good match for that person's query. So if someone is conducting a search and your site shows up and your site, you get the click and that person doesn't stay and hits the back button, that tells Google that it's not a relevant result.

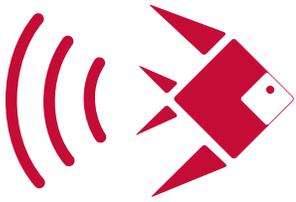
**BETH:** And that specifically just for anybody who doesn't know that term, the bounce rate specifically means they came into that site and left on that same page. They didn't go anywhere else once they got there. They basically came in and went out and one of the wonderful things that that does is it does show up in Google Analytics, but I'm guessing that because Google Analytics is a free thing from Google, they can see that data. They can track and see that stuff and those signals are being sent back to them and telling them what your site is doing.

**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely. It is a tool in the arsenal, but whether the site has Google Analytics or not, it's still collecting information.

**BETH:** Really?

**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely. It's still collecting information about engagement on the search results page. So if you're presented with a list of your typical 10 results and it's assessing that particular query and the results and whether or not they





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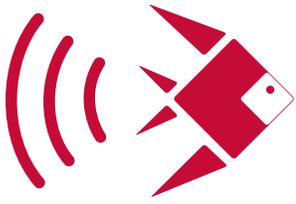
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were effective in answering that person's question. So the click through rate is that metric that determines whether or not that particular result was a good match. So if your website's result is a good match, you'll have a high click-through rate, meaning you get more clicks than another result on the page. So Google is able to assess whether or not you used the free tool, but I imagine that most people who might be listening might use that free tool, but it's assessing whether or not those results are relevant, whether or not there's a tool in place because of your engagement on that page.

**BETH:** So, I mean that's sort of the mecca. We want people, we want our sites to show up when somebody types a phrase, types something that they're looking for, show up in Google for the thing that's like, "Yes! We can actually serve that to you. We can fix that problem. We can provide that," get to your site, have people look at it and go, "This is exactly what I want," and move forward. A lot of time when people want that to happen, they say things like, "Well we need SEO," and I'm not entirely sure that everyone really knows exactly what SEO, what it stands for. I mean, they may know what it means, but what it stands for and the difference between search engine optimization, SEO and search engine marketing, SEM. So can you talk a little about like from a functional basis, what does that actually mean?

**CLAUDIA:** Sure. SEO stands for search engine optimization and it's kind of an umbrella term used to describe changes that you could make to a website in order to increase its ability to be rendered relevant in the search results page. So what I mean by that is if you were for example, add a frequently asked questions page in your website that meets the needs of your target audience, that adds more content to the website and increases the likelihood that somebody entering a question similar to or that exactly matches that on your frequently asked questions page, your result will show up higher in the search results. In this instance I mean relevant to the search query. So SEO are those tweaks that you can make to a website, like the page titles for examples or it's content that you can add to a website that addresses the questions and concerns of your target





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audience, whereas search engine marketing or SEM are those paid opportunities. So that's where you have to pay to play and you're actually spending advertising dollars to appear in the search results. SEO are those free opportunities to increase a website's visibility.

**BETH:** OK. So let's talk about that because that's what people really want to know about a lot of times. What can I do? You look at a site. A web designer designs it. People often think that it's the web designer's responsibility to make sure the site is findable. So let's talk a little bit about that to start. Where does the web designer's job end and the SEO expert's job begin?

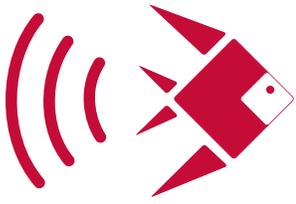
**CLAUDIA:** That's a great question. Lots of web designers out there, increasingly the ones that I have been working with, increasingly aware of search engine optimization fundamentals, but not all. Web designers, I like to use the analogy of the plumber versus the water company. So a web designer is like your plumber in installing plumbing in your house, maybe as new construction and somebody comes in and installs the plumbing for you. The plumber is also not responsible for actually getting the water to your house. You hope that the connections and everything was properly installed, but ultimately you still need the water company to turn on service to your house.

**BETH:** That's a great analogy! That's so good!

**CLAUDIA:** The water company in this sense would be your search engine optimization tactics.

**BETH:** But you know, the challenge is like one of the hard things about that is you know, that search engine optimization impacts website design sometimes. We've done things before. We're designers. We'll design a beautiful website that's attractive and gorgeous and you know might win awards and everybody takes a bow and then the search person comes in and says, "That thing that you have at the bottom, that's got to go to the top. That color isn't going to attract anybody." From a search perspective, the only thing that really matters is not how it looks





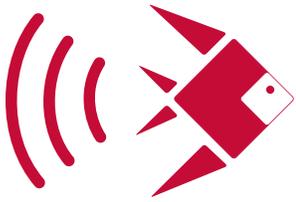
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or whether your executive director loves that piece of content and thinks it needs to be on the top, the only thing that matters is what do people do and there's often that sort of play that you can get to the point where you've finished a site, gotten it approved, then you bring the SEO person in and you've got to make changes. What would you advise to people on the best way to handle the fact that SEO does sometimes impact content and wording and where things go and things that are visible on a website?

**CLAUDIA:** SEO definitely, if you're designing a new website or redesigning a site, having another pair of eyes on the SEO front there right from the get go will help ensure that the web designer is keeping in mind some of those best practices so that the website can be deployed without a hitch. If you have the pair working together, you're gonna increase the likelihood you're not gonna have to go back and redesign the site later, which I encounter so often in the work that I do. I would say for sure you want to be mindful if you're redesigning a site in particular, imagine most folks have a website now so if you're redesigning a site, you can leverage that data and Google Analytics will tell you whether or not your site is converting well today and that data will inform that which it is you change on the site or you add to the site and an example, like a common example is like a frequently asked questions page, and I bring this up because it's a great way to add a content to a site, to improve SEO. It's not the only way, but it's a great way to make a small change to a website today, but also going out taking a bird's eye view, thinking like your target audience maybe even bringing in some members of your target audience and having them help you assess the site through what we call usability test is also particularly helpful. So some web design companies will facilitate this, but to your point that SEO and web design work together is 100 percent the way that it should be. In order to improve the web users experience and ensure that the user is getting what it is he or she expects and they're actually taking advantage of whatever the call to action is. They're participating in what you want them to participate is critical for the user experience so that the two working together to improve the user experience will naturally improve SEO. Think about back to the search results page. If your site shows in the search





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engine's results page, somebody clicks through, lands on your page and the site is designed with the end user in mind, they take action. They sign up for a newsletter. They stay and they read five pages or five posts or five updates on your blog, they stay for awhile, that's a positive signal and you were able to naturally impact your SEO.

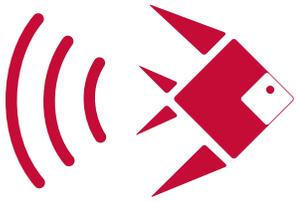
**BETH:** That's so true. That brings it down to something that I talk about all the time is that you really can't be effective at anything that you do unless you know your audience. If you don't understand what they want from your site, what they're clicking for, what they're looking for, what answers they need, it's impossible to serve that to them. You know, it becomes harder and harder to figure out what you should be putting on and you end up making those decisions internally in your department or your executive director loves something and that's what goes out there and then it becomes sort of an exercise in what you like internally, which then doesn't always end up meeting your needs and I've had so many people say things like, "We love this website design. Now the only problem with it is we need more traffic to it." You know, it's actually a bigger problem because you maybe didn't know your audience and create content that is attractive to them.

**CLAUDIA:** Definitely I think that there's a confluence events in that situation. When you design for your internal audience instead of your external audience, you get a website that converts well internally.

**BETH:** That's really great! That's great!

**CLAUDIA:** If you're trying to attract an audience from an external audience, maybe improve your presence in Google search results. That website sadly is under-performing. So right away, I have certainly been dealing with this very issue and I understand the challenges of working with your boards or your executive team or the head or president and while it's not always an easy conversation to have, it is a necessary conversation to have. The site, it really doesn't matter what it looks like to us as long as it aligns with our branding and our editorial guides.





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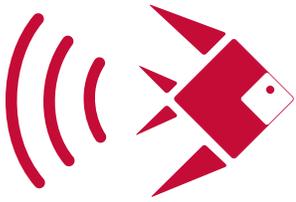
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It has to convert in order for us to meet whatever objective it is that we're trying to meet so whether it's increasing donors or admissions, whatever it is, we have to seek the opinions of our target audience in order to make it the most effective website we can and one of the best ways to do that in a redesign especially is with the usability test where you bring in members of your target audience and you ask them to complete simple actions on a website. So if you want your new website, and this is great if you already have a design under development. If you want users to sign up for a newsletter, you add this task to the list in a usability test and you ask them to simply find and sign up for the newsletter or find the contact page or find frequently asked questions or tell them to even just donate and you can do a little test button with a donate. Ask them to make a donation. Is it easy for them to do these tasks? If it is, it's easy for them to find the information they seek and do the things you want them to do on a site, then it will naturally improve SEO and it's going to improve your conversion rate overall.

**BETH:** That is wonderful. So another thing I feel like comes up a lot is that people are familiar with the concept of keywords, like key phrases. You know, the things that you would type into Google in order to get people to come to your site and some people maybe know or not everyone knows that it's getting harder and harder to know, to easily know like what are the phrases? What are the words that are bringing traffic to my site? Can you talk a little bit about the current status of that and whether or not keywords are still important and if so, where do you go to learn what people are searching for and what's bringing traffic to your site?

**CLAUDIA:** Key words are definitely important, but not necessarily in the way that they were important maybe 10 years ago, especially with the rise of voice search. It's important that key words be of a natural language influence. So you want to naturally answer the questions and concerns of your audience. The way in which you find out what terms or key words that somebody is entering into a search engine and using to land on your website is via Google search console. It's another free tool provided by Google that just provides a ton of information about how Google is indexing and consuming your website and how your target





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

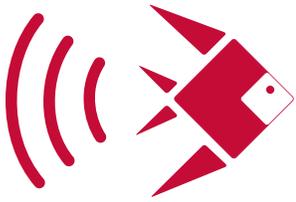
audience is consuming your website. In Google search console you'll find a list of search terms that your website users have entered into a search engine and used to land on your site. So it's a great resource there to start with to assess the terms that your website might need to capitalize on, so if there are search terms that are showing that you could use in the content of the site or there's terms that you didn't even know that you were showing up for that your potential audience was entering into a search engine. You're just going to get a treasure trove of information in Google search console.

**BETH:** So once you find out that, oh my gosh, people are constantly asking for you know whatever it is that it is, that certain phrase comes up a lot or different words, what do you do with that information? Now you know this is a great key word. How can people take that and use it to their SEO advantage?

**CLAUDIA:** A couple of ways that you could use a trendy topic or a keyword that is currently showing in Google search console as a keyword that your target audience uses to find your website includes the frequently asked questions page to come back to that again, but also in a blog post. So if you have news and information and your organization uses that to keep your community up to date about what's happening, that's content that can be indexed by a search engine so you want to use those key words in both of those places and then in general on the static pages of the site, static often being your home page, which probably doesn't change very much or your about page, which doesn't change very much, if there are a couple of words that you're seeing in Google search console that do align with your organization and you think, "Yes, this describes our mission," or "This describes our call to action," I would sprinkle those in on those static pages as well. We want to avoid appearing spammy to search engines, but overusing a term, so I say sprinkle it in a couple of times and that just helps search engines better match the various pages of your website or your blog posts with that user's keywords.

**BETH:** And so you started talking about blogs and the content of your site, the





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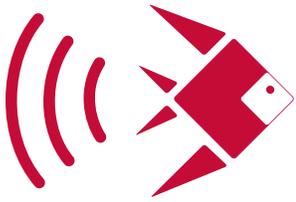
WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

words of your site and so that brings us to the idea of sort of content marketing. How does SEO interact with the idea of creating things like blogs and marketing and other things? What are people doing with that content?

**CLAUDIA:** With respect to content marketing, I like to think of that as off site SEO. So onsite SEO are those little tweaks that we discussed, changing a couple of key words here and there, but content marketing is all about driving traffic to a site. So it's about getting content that describes your organization placed on another website and a link to your site so that your target audience clicks through to your site. So if you have a partner organization and you have a paragraph about your organization on another website, you want to ensure that it includes a link to your site. So if somebody is interested in your organization, they can click through. The more references to your organization that you can get on other websites, particularly websites that are relevant to your needs that might even have a larger audience than your organization where you think somebody might be able to locate that which it is that you do. So somebody is searching for something related to what you're doing or they find this information, they stumble across your information on somebody else's website, you want to make it easy for that target audience member to be able to click through. So content marketing is all about using other websites to increase your presence.

**BETH:** OK, so we didn't talk about search engine marketing today or that paid side, but I'm sure people are generally familiar with the idea of placing Google Adwords ads or Facebook advertising, things like that and what I hear from people a lot are "Well I don't want to do that because that's expensive," "I just want to do all these free things that you can do to increase things," but the free things like you're talking about here, they take time and knowledge and effort to get to that point where you know what you're doing and you know how to make and work through all of these different changes on your own. At what point, like how do people weigh like tackling that task of learning and executing all of that versus saying, "You know what? My goal is traffic," and rather than pay somebody to help me fix my site, I just want to pay for an ad and send them to my site.





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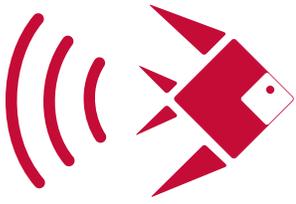
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What's your take on that sort of decision process for people?

**CLAUDIA:** Paid search or SEM, those ads that you pay for are only as effective as the dollars you have available. So if it costs \$5 today per click on your Google Adwords ad, you can expect that price to increase, but if that's all you have budgeted for, at some point you may have to turn those ads off or you may be paying for fewer clicks. So paid search and SEM, it's not always a long term play particularly because your costs will increase over time and your ads will be showing. Your ads will either be shown in a lower position or you'll be able to pay for fewer clicks just because those dollars only go so far. So when you turn off those ads, that's the end. So it's great if you're pairing it with a campaign and you wanted to try a particular ad type and it's for a short period of time, it could be a good way to supplement your marketing efforts, but if you are looking for consistent participation over a long period of time, unless you have an enormous budget, SEM is not often a sustainable investment for an organization, whereas search engine optimization, with a few tweaks your website and some regular content added, even a blog post added a week or every couple of weeks keeps fresh content going on the site. You keep your target audience engaged in what's happening, upcoming events, recaps of past events, things like that and that fresh content is being called by search engines so you capitalize on the free traffic you're already receiving. And you can check this against your Google Analytics data. There's a report in Google Analytics called Source Medium and it tells you the source, Google and the medium Organic, organic being free and it's likely for most websites, that source and medium are the largest sources of traffic. Free traffic from Google is probably your best bet to focus on in terms of marketing efforts. If it comprises 50 percent of your traffic today, then I would prioritize a blog post or some kind of update to the site, some fresh content at least every couple of weeks to capitalize on the free traffic, but not to say that SEM isn't right. It certainly is, but it's more of a short-term investment than a long-term investment.

**BETH:** Interesting. Claudia, this has been so helpful. Every time we talk I always





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learn something new. Thank you so much for sharing everything that you know with me and our nonprofit community here. If people had more questions for you, can you talk about some of the other things that you do? One of the interesting things about Claudia is she knows that it's really hard to learn all this stuff and so she's come up with a way to help people. Can you share a little bit about that?

**CLAUDIA:** Absolutely. Recognizing that digital marketing is ever changing and there is a ton to be invested in, I decided to focus my career on training others in the principles and fundamentals of digital marketing to be able to help themselves and to grow their own organizations. So if you don't have a full time digital marketer and your budget doesn't quite accommodate a digital marketing agency, you can do what I call and do what I call DIY digital marketing and be able to learn and implement the fundamentals of digital marketing yourself. So through my site, SEOAuditGuide.com I have training courses for those who are interested in learning more about search engine optimization through content marketing and a whole lot more.

**BETH:** As you can hear just from listening to her, Claudia is a wealth of knowledge. She's a great teacher and fumbling around this on your own can be really hard. I know I've done a lot of it. You know, if you get to a point where that's helpful, please seek her out. I highly recommend her, and I hope it's been helpful to everyone that's been listening today. Claudia, thank you again. I really appreciate your time.

**CLAUDIA:** Thanks, Beth.

