

### How to Build an Affiliate Website - With Perry Rosenbloom

Watch the full video at:

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/perry-rosenbloom-seosherpas-interview/>

Three messages before today's interview educates and motivates you.

First, if you're a domain name investor, don't you have unique legal needs that require domain name technical know-how and industry experience? That's why you need David Weslow of Wiley Rein. Go search for David Weslow on DomainSherpa, watch his interview and you can see for yourself that he can clearly explain issues, can help you with buy/sell agreements, deal with website content issues and UDRP actions, and even help you write your website terms and conditions. David Weslow is the lawyer to call for Internet legal issues. See for yourself at NewMediaIP.com.

Second, managing multiple domain name marketplace and auction site accounts is a pain. Inevitably, you forget to sign into one and lose a great domain...or worse. Now imagine using a single, simple-to-use and comprehensive control panel to manage all your accounts. That's Protrada. You can setup search filters, analyze domains, automate bidding, list domains for sale, and buy domains across all major marketplaces. Protrada also has a new semantic engine that builds Google-friendly websites with rich content and network feeds. Sign up at Protrada.com to get 20 free credits and start building and monetizing your domains today.

Finally, if you have questions about domain names, where should you go to ask them? The answer is DNForum.com. Not only is DN Forum the largest domain name forum in the world, but it's the best. You can learn about domain names and the industry, buy and sell domain names, talk about domain name news, and meet other domainers just like yourself. Register for a free DN Forum account and begin advancing your skills and knowledge today. And when you do signup, send me a friend request so we can connect.

Here's your program.

Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the website where you come to learn how to become a successful domain name entrepreneur directly from the experts.

Today we're going to learn about search engine optimization and affiliate websites, and we're going to learn from someone who has real world experience in both areas.

Joining us is Perry Rosenbloom, the Founder of SEOSherpas.com. No relationship to DomainSherpa.com. Perry is an SEO expert and has built a portfolio of affiliate websites allowing him to quit his day job and do what he loves doing. In 2010, his affiliate marketing company sent over three hundred thousand dollars in sales to leaders in the outdoor industry; including REI and BackCountry.com. In 2011, Perry's website sent more than half a million dollars in sales.

Perry, welcome to the show.

Perry Rosenbloom: Thanks for having me, Michael.

Michael: Perry, how many fully developed websites do you have up and running today?

Perry: I have ten websites that are fully developed. Not all are as profitable as I would like, but most are doing a great job.

Michael: Okay. And are most of them in the outdoor equipment space?

Perry: Yeah. Most are in the outdoor industry. I have a few in like the online EDU space, but primarily outdoor industry.

Michael: Great. So we'll focus majority on those because it sounds like the EDU ones you have are sort of in the side of your main focus for your affiliate websites. Of our outdoor equipment affiliate websites, what's the largest website you own in terms of readership per month?

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Perry: My largest website is the one I started about four years ago. It's on Glacier National Park and it's Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide.com. Great domain name for sure.

Michael: All right. So if somebody types GlacierNationalParkTravelGuide.com that's not your domain name?

Perry: It is actually. I have that redirecting.

Michael: Oh okay.

Perry: I acquired recently just to cover all my bases.

Michael: Got you; but the domain name that you have built out is Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide.com?

Perry: That is correct. Yeah.

Michael: All right. So what is the readership per month of this website on that domain name?

Perry: That website gets about twenty-three to twenty-five thousand visits per month from Google of organic traffic. In total, including organic, direct, and referral visits, it gets close to thirty thousand visits per month.

Michael: Wow. So you've got thirty thousand visitors per month coming to learn about Glacier National Park, travelling there, hiking there, products they may want to use there, and a majority of those visitors are coming via Google referrals.

Perry: That is correct. Yeah.

Michael: All right. How many page views are those thirty thousand people viewing?

Perry: Page views. They get, on average, about sixty-one to sixty-three thousand page views per month. The pages per visit are like around two

pages per visit. Something we've been working on increasing over time, but it's a static HTML website, so it doesn't have the flexibility that WordPress has to help you increase your pages per visit by just adding a widget really easily.

Michael: Right. Yeah. I was going to ask you about that. I did a technology search. We're going to chat a little bit more about technology during this interview and I was going to ask you what you're using because it wasn't WordPress and I was amazed that there are websites going up nowadays that aren't using an automated content management system like Joomla or WordPress, or something like that.

Perry: Yeah. So that site is built on a platform called Site Build It. It's a platform that essentially teaches you the basic tenants of SEO while providing hosting. Email list forms and capabilities, and everything like that. And it's a good platform, but I only build on WordPress now for all my sites.

Michael: Got you. All Right. So we'll talk more about that. So these thirty thousand visitors that you have coming to Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide.com; how much revenue do you produce with that website per year?

Perry: That website generates around fifty thousand dollars in revenue each year, and that's primarily through advertising and affiliate marketing.

Michael: That's fantastic. And how much do you own across all of your affiliate websites?

Perry: I'm sorry. How many websites do I own?

Michael: I'm sorry. I didn't phrase that very clearly. How much do you earn across all of your affiliate websites?

Perry: In 2011, my affiliate websites generated around seventy thousand dollars in revenue and this year, we are shooting for around six figures in revenue.

Michael: Awesome. All right. So we're going to go back in time, Perry, like we usually do because I like people to figure out how you got to this; because I know a lot of people who are working day jobs, making fifty or seventy thousand dollars and working long hours who would rather be doing what you're doing, which is sitting behind your computer, writing articles about products that you use on a regular basis - when you go hiking; when you go camping; when you're enjoying the outdoors - and would much rather be contributing to the growth of their own affiliate network, or their own website, or the value of their own domain name portfolio rather than somebody else's. So, let's go back in time. What were you doing just prior to starting your network of affiliate websites?

Perry: Well, I had graduated from college. I had a film degree. And I moved to New York and I was working for a film producer, and absolutely hated it. So I packed my bags up and moved out to Colorado. I had spent two summers working in Glacier National Park and just absolutely love the place. And while I was in Colorado, I was working on screenplays and writing screenplays. And it was my goal to generate revenue from my screenplays and make a career as a screenwriter. I quickly found out that that's very, very difficult and the percentage of people who succeed are very few and far between, so I started researching other ways to make money and I found Site Built It, which is where I host Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide. And I saw some great success stories there of people who have built successful revenue generating passive income websites and I went ahead and just bought a package for a year. And I actually bought it with George Bush's stimulus check. So I received a three hundred dollar check from George Bush and I used that to pay for hosting for a year - it actually comes out to \$299 for a year at Site Build It - and I just said, 'you know, I'll do my best and hopefully I can make that money back in a year and we'll see where it goes'. And that's what started it all.

Michael: And did you make your money back within the year?

Perry: I did make the money back within a year, yeah, but just barely. But things started snowballing after that and it's a great resource on the Internet for people who are planning a trip to Glacier.

Michael: Yeah. So did you have a day job when you started building Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide on Site Build It?

Perry: Yeah. When I started Glacier, I was working the food industry. I was working at a bar here, in Boulder, Colorado; and shortly thereafter, I started working as a copywriter for an SEO company out of Colorado. And I'd write about cosmetic dentistry and cosmetic surgery for all their clients, and it was a great learning experience getting to understand just some more of the basic tenants of SEO. And shortly thereafter, about a year after starting Glacier, I got hired at Examiner.com's Corporate Office, where I was managing the recreation channel. And my job there was focusing on training a very large network of mediocre reporters that were passionate about recreation, and teaching them SEO, and sort of monitoring Google trends and getting articles written about popular topics going on, and optimizing them and fighting for page views essentially.

Michael: Yeah. And I'm sure they probably wanted all the page views because they were probably getting compensated based on how popular their stories were because they were displaying more display advertising and things like that. So, they wanted your help and you learned a little bit more about search engine optimization, I'm sure, in that role.

Perry: Yeah. I certainly did and especially with news optimization. And by that point, I had started a second website on camping tents.

Michael: What's the URL for camping tents?

Perry: That is Camping-Tent-Review.com. It was doing really, really well for quite some time and over the last six months, it's taken a little bit of a fall, but it still gets about four to six hundred visits a day of organic traffic. And from there, after about six or seven months at Examiner.com, I started worked at a startup in Boulder that was developing a new form of in-line text advertising. They are called LinkSmart. And I was in charge of developing a large number of niche websites to test the advertising platform on; and so, I built a team up and we developed a lot of sites. A lot of spammy sites. I think we developed around forty to fifty different websites in various niches, from skiing, to cameras, to baby nursery rooms, and just sort of testing what limits

we could push. And I learned a lot about SEO and various ranking factors, and how far you can really push Google without them biting back.

Michael: Yeah. I bet.

Perry: And just know, I don't do any of the pushing on my own personal website.

Michael: All right. So you learned where the gray area was and you learned what was white hat and what was black hat. What did you take away from those fifty or sixty websites that you developed that you do use today?

Perry: Scalability, especially in terms of link building. When you are managing so many websites, you don't have the luxury of passively link building. You need to have a strategy in place that can be scaled out across a large number of websites. And learned and developed a lot of unique strategies to acquire high page rank links from great resources in a relatively economical fashion and timely fashion as well.

Michael: Awesome. All right. I'm going to ask about that strategy for scalable building links across different sites. So you were working at LinkSmart; you built out these websites. It sounded like a great job getting to cut your teeth on all these different forms of website building and search engine optimization. Why did you end up leaving that position?

Perry: That's a great question. It was a lot of fun and I had a great time working there. It was a great job, but ultimately, every since I started Glacier, my wife and I dreamt about the day where I'd be able to work from home. And my wife is a teacher; and so, we wanted to be able to travel over our summers. And I worked hard for about three and a half years at that point building up my own network of websites and eventually they surpassed the income I was making at my fulltime job. And so, we got to where we wanted to be and I finally got to take the dive into working for myself.

Michael: Yeah. The day that you quit your job at LinkSmart and was going to work fulltime on your affiliate websites like Glacier and Camping-Tent-Reviews, were you nervous?

Perry: Oh my goodness. Yeah. I was terrified. I remember the office was great. It was right in Downtown Boulder, and Boulder had Boulder Creek running through it and a nice hiking path along it, and I just went and sat down by the creek at a bench and ate my lunch and just sort of was trying to get my head on straight. It was a great day though. I was nervous, but ready to move on.

Michael: Yeah. And since that day, how many days have you thought, 'oh my gosh. What am I doing? I should've kept my job'?

Perry: There has been a few. It's certainly not easy being a startup solopreneur, especially because there are a lot of things that are just out of your control every day; but ultimately, at the end of the day, I love what I've been doing and I wouldn't trade it in anything in the world.

Michael: Yeah. All right. And we are going to talk about some of those things that are out of our control, like Panda and Penguin, and some of the ways that you get traffic so you could get the sales, but you're so tied into other people's ecosystems like Google. When you decided to quit your job and focus on Glacier and your Camping Tent websites, did you know other people that were doing at the time? Did you have a network of people that you could rely on to bounce ideas off of or ask advice of?

Perry: Not really. I mean Internet personalities and people who blog about it, but not anybody that I could pick up the phone and be like, 'hey, what do you think about this idea? What do you think about adding affiliate links here and doing this and that?' It was pretty much just me and on my own, and I think that's definitely a drawback in this industry; that there is no circle like that. At least none that I found. I'm sure going to conferences, you start meeting those people and have those people to bounce ideas off of, but it was just me and trying to learn from what other people have done. At one point, I hired a virtual assistant just because I thought that would be a good use of my time and be able to keep allowing me to invest my time wisely. And that didn't work out so well.

Michael: What were you having the virtual assistant do for you?



Perry: A variety of things. With my Glacier website and my Camping Tent website; they are both hosted on Site Build It and so, they are both static HTML website, so there is a lot of work that goes into every post in terms of formatting properly. So basically, formatting HTML posts, doing some keyword research around parameters I had given, doing link building around parameters that I had given; but the big program was that - at least in my experience - you needed to give very precise instructions. If you don't tell them to dot every [I] it's not going to get dotted.

Michael: Right.

Perry: And so, I needed people that would be a little more creative in their thinking.

Michael: And you found that person in yourself?

Perry: Yeah. Myself and I also have a great girl who works for me three days a week coming in and helping out. And she does a lot of those other tasks that I tried to outsource to another country that just did not work.

Michael: Yeah. All right. So, let's talk about technology for a few minutes. You said that you built your first two website on Site Built It. Is that at SiteBuiltIt.com? If I go there, will I see it?

Perry: I think they are actually SiteSell.com technically.

Michael: SiteSell.com?

Perry: I believe so. If you go to Site Built It, I'm sure it redirects to the right page.

Michael: All right. Would you recommend, today, that other people that are starting up websites use that service?

Perry: I'm very grateful for everything that I've learned through that service and for the opportunities it has afforded me. I think it hasn't adapted to the

times as well as some other platforms have. However, their keyword research tool is really phenomenal and that is worth the price alone in my mind.

Michael: Do you find yourself using their keyword research tool on the sites that you have there for other sites that you are using on WordPress?

Perry: I can't really say. No.

Michael: No. You only use it for those sites?

Perry: Those sites. Correct. So their keyword research tool is fantastic and if somebody doesn't know anything about the Internet or anything about web development and SEO, then yes, I would recommend going there. It has a lot. It sort of forces you to put blinders on, and so, you don't get stuck reading about, 'oh well, do I need to have my headline two tags like this or like that'. It's just what they really focus on is teaching you to deliver fantastic content in a specific niche and then marketing it. And in the end, that's really what all of SEO boils down to; is picking your target market, picking the keywords, developing epic content, and marketing to people.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So you're using Site Build It, which is actually a content management system. I said that it was static, but it is a content management system; but it doesn't allow you to go in and add plugins like you can on WordPress to circulate content around the website, find related posts, and get people to read those after they get to the bottom of one page. Things like that.

Perry: You can't even add 301s.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So if you want to do a redirect from one page to another, you can't even do redirects. So it's limiting from an architecture standpoint. And since you developed those two websites, you've added more websites.

Perry: Yeah.

Michael: What kind of websites besides products that people might want to use in Glacier National Park and Camping Tent Reviews? What other websites have you added?

Perry: I have a website on binoculars. That has done very well. It's been very well received in the bird watching community. And that's AllBestBinoculars.com.

Michael: No hyphens?

Perry: No hyphens. Let's see. I have two sites in the online education lead gen space, but those I wouldn't develop again and I wouldn't recommend people looking at in terms of a good model to follow.

Michael: Yeah. Let's leave those on the side.

Perry: Yeah. So, there is Binoculars sites, there is a Glacier; I recently acquired a website on Bicycle Touring. And what else is there? There is also OutdoorEquipment.com; is a website that I've been developing lately.

Michael: Yeah. All right. Awesome. So it seems to me that you are picking domain names, or picking websites really, that you are passionate about; that you spend your personal time doing; that you and your wife enjoy doing during the summer and so, it's synergistic. You get to actually get to know the industry, get to know all the products, figure out some trails and how to use the products best, and you write about those, which other people need all around the world. People from other countries as well as the US coming to these locations. And it seems like it is a great way to make a living doing the things that you love.

Perry: It is. Yeah. I've been very fortunate. And I love the outdoors. Both, my wife and I, go backpacking, and hiking, and rock climbing whenever possible and to be afforded the opportunity to be, essentially, an online publisher about things that we love and we do all the time is just the best of all words. And I really don't think that if I chose a topic in the beginning that I wasn't passionate about, I don't think I would be here. I think that is really the key because I mean I wrote over hundred pages of content for Glacier. Each page

being between seven hundred and two thousands words. And if I didn't love Glacier National Park and I didn't love the outdoors, I never would have been able to sustain that. And still, at this point, a lot of the content is user generated, which is great, but it's important, I think, when developing an affiliate's website to have some passion that will drive you through the times when those ten cent, fifteen cent AdSense clicks aren't really doing much for you.

Michael: Yeah. They're not really creating a viable business. So, at the end of your very first year of Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide, if you didn't love what you were doing and you barely broke even on the three hundred dollars you invested into the website hosting and content management system for the year, you probably would have stopped. You would have said, 'I broke even. It's a waste of my time. I'm done with this' and like many other websites, maybe it would've continued to live dormant or not had any updates. But you continued that and now you are making a solid five figures, growing to six figures.

Perry: Precisely. Yeah. You hit the nail on the head there.

Michael: All right. Great. So how do you pick the topics that you are publishing about? How do you pick that you are going to publish a website a Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide.com, versus TheBestBackpacks.com, versus TheBestHikingTrailsInMontana.com, versus SomeRockClimbing? How do you pick whether it is a website unto itself, or whether it is a topic under one of your other websites?

Perry: There is a lot of flexibility from the search engines. With Glacier, it's like, okay, well, there is getting there, there is the lodging and accommodations, there are the trails, there is the activities, the restaurants, and then there is the gear people would use; and that falls under it as well. When people are planning a trip to a National Park - a pretty remote National Park -, they are searching for the kind of gear that they need. What kind of hiking shoes? What is the best tent to use in Glacier? What is the weather like, and do I need to bring a down or a synthetic sleeping bag because of the weather? So those sorts of things and basically, anything that could be related to Glacier and be used in Glacier, I write about on that website. It is my

primary publishing platform and its got my voice, which I think is a huge element of it. I started when I was just a baby, essentially, and I focus on writing through that voice still. And I think people really identify with it and it has helped propel it to the level of success that it is at.

Michael: Yeah. So how do you decide whether you are going to publish an article on Glacier about tents or an article on Camping-Tent-Reviews.com?

Perry: With Camping-Tent-Reviews what I've done is, I focus specifically on tent models. Sort of aggregating the information that is out there on the web about them and providing a resource where people can find specific reviews of tents. So when somebody is searching for a tent, they could be searching for a specific model and they will do like, '(Unclear 26:06.3) tent review', and that is where Camping-Tent-Reviews come into play. With Glacier, it is more like, okay, well, what are the best five backpacking tents that you could take into a National Park? And so, that is sort of how I differentiate. Glacier definitely gets the meatier articles. The better articles. A lot of articles on the Internet are just rehashed and Glacier doesn't get any of that.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. Why not take the model that you have at Glacier, where I would say maybe fifty or sixty percent of it might be evergreen - the kind of shoes you should pack for a National Park; the type of tents you would want in thirty to eighty degree weather - and go out and do all two hundred National Parks within the United States based on that model?

Perry: You could. You certainly could. I think that could be interpreted as a little spammy to the search engines. Unless your articles are adding additional value, you are not going to get indexed well; at least in my experience because I had tested that on the Glacier and my Tent site. And a phrase that my Glacier site ranks really well for and is one of the highest revenue generating pages; I tried to rewrite with a different spin on my Camping Tent site and it didn't perform well. And it could be for a variety of factors, but Google knows everything that you own and that you do and if you are going to spin the same articles across every single National Park website, I don't think you are going to see a positive return on your investment.

Michael: Got you. All right. So you don't believe that you can take articles and just spin them enough to change them, but still have good value and put it on other websites as well. So you are focusing your efforts on your one main website to produce great content.

Perry: Right. And it is hard to build a brand on a website with four dashes in it, but it has been done. It has a nice Facebook following - a nice Facebook FanPage - and we get a lot of direct navigation. So I wouldn't want to compromise the brand that has been built there by spinning articles essentially to put on other websites similar in nature.

Michael: Got you.

Perry: Plus they wouldn't be genuine. I eat, breath, and lived in Glacier National Park for two summers. I couldn't fake it and say I've done the same thing in Zion and in Yosemite, and people relate and identify with that. People want experts and Google wants experts in their field to be writing and publishing.

Michael: Got it. Yeah. And the site is very much about you and your experiences. You've got pictures of you right there on the website. You are saying, 'I've done this, I've spend time there, and I'm your personal guide through this National Park'.

Perry: Exactly. Yeah. And I've even had a lot of people contact me and say, 'hey, can we hire you to be our tour guide through there?' That would certainly be an interesting way to spin that business, but at this point it hasn't moved in that direction.

Michael: Yeah. Nobody has choppered you out over to the National Park and dropped you off with a tour yet, huh?

Perry: No. Not yet.

Michael: I can see that happening.

Perry: And I'm sure its cost for that would be through the roof I'd imagine.

Michael: All right. So let's talk about a little bit of SEO and first I want to start with your keyword research. When you are writing new articles, do you pick the article based on your keyword research?

Perry: Generally yeah. I'll have a keyword that I am targeting per page.

Michael: So, per article, you will target a keyword phrase.

Perry: Yes. Anywhere from one to five keywords. Let's say we are writing an article on lightweight backpacks. We would target lightweight backpacks, ultra-light backpacks, lightest backpack, and just sort of try and incorporate those in a natural way that reads well and that flows well for the readers.

Michael: Okay. And so, you have done your keyword research, you see that lightweight backpacks is a phrase that gets searched a lot; do you see those phrases when you are searching for outdoor equipment, or Glacier National Park, or how do you become aware that lightweight backpacks is a phrase that gets associated with your area of expertise?

Perry: Sure. SEO is a lot like building a house - is the analogy I like to give - and keyword research is your foundation. And so, when I do keyword research, I mean I dig in and I could spend a full week on keyword research. Figuring out the supply of every single keyword related to a niche and the demand. The demand being how many times it is searched for and supply being how many pages are optimized in Google's index. And so, I'll have a spreadsheet of anywhere from ten to thirty thousand keyword and I then filter it through based on parameters that I found to be successful. And just highlight all the great keywords that I want to target and make sure that they are related to my topic of choice, and essentially, begin writing.

Michael: All right. So let me back up and see if I understand this. So you'll go onto a tool like the Google Adwords Keyword Tool and you will type in outdoor equipment or you will type in Glacier National Park and then you will get a list of all of the keywords that have been searched that are related to that, and then you will just output it to Excel with quantity of searches per month?

Perry: Not exactly. So that's certainly one method. I use Market Samurai a lot to research keywords and competition of various keywords in niches. And so, I'll use Market Samurai primarily as a tool. And Market Samurai works really well for like the head phrase; like phrases that are two to four words long. They don't do so well with the long tail, so I'll generate a list of keywords off my head and input them in there as well. And from there, they give the information for how much competition there is and what the search volume is. So it's pulling the search volume from the Adwords API, but then the actual competition had their own modules that they use.

Michael: Got you. And what is your sweet spot? Are you looking for search phrases below five hundred searches per month with a certain competition level, or how does that work?

Perry: It sort of, again, varies by niche. If I'm working with a real estate agent, a few searches a month is enough; but for like my personal websites, I look for search phrases that have around two hundred and fifty to three hundred phrase match. I don't pay attention to exact match all that much. And competition. I like looking at phrases that have the keywords in the title. So how many times, let's say, lightweight backpack and tens is mentioned in the title of a page indexed in Google and how many times it is mentioned in the URL. And those two things, together, usually paint a pretty clear picture of how much competition there is. And there are some other things you can do such as expanding the search results to one hundred per page, searching for all in title: "your keyword phrase", going to last page and you'll see how many pages are actually indexed in Google's main index as apposed to their supplemental index. And use those, that is sort of a Swiss Army Knife approach to find what keyword I am looking for to target.

Michael: Got you. All right. So let's say you found a phrase called "lightweight backpacks" and you want to write an article about your top three lightweight backpacks. So you write the article. How do you search engine optimize that page to get to the top of Google, or Bing, or other search engines? What are the actually mechanics that people should be aware of when they are writing good content and they want it to get to the top?



Perry: Just basic tenets of SEO. Include it in your title. Include it in your META description. Including in your Headline 1 Tag. And include synonyms throughout. And use Headline 2 Tags and Headline 3 Tags to make the content easily readable. I like to put in a good number of bolded or numbered lists to keep the eyes scrolling down the page. I focus on creating content, first, for users. I think that is really important; to make sure the content meets somebody's needs. That it is not just regurgitated content that you can find anywhere. And then, implementing just the basic tenets. Get the keywords in the right places and then just write an awesome article.

Michael: How many times do you want to use that phrase - Lightweight Backpacks - or synonyms of that phrase throughout the seven hundred to thousand words that you are writing?

Perry: Whatever is natural. I don't focus on percentages like that. I make sure that it is included. The whole point is, I mean I'm not trying to manipulate the search engines and I don't think anyone that is trying to make a living through, essentially, Google should try to manipulate Google. I just try to create great content that the search engines can easily know what it is about, so by putting it in the title, and a META description, and a Headline Tag, and sprinkle throughout with synonyms; and then, making it easily readable for the user.

Michael: All right. Well, it sounds like you are doing white head SEO. You are not like moving into that gray zone, where Google can't really say you are doing anything wrong, but there is a gray zone there.

Perry: Exactly. Yeah. I'm not moving into that gray zone at all. I think where people start getting into that gray zone is when they are starting to spin articles with like article spinners; when they are submitting articles to article directories. Whenever you build a link with a pure purpose of manipulating a search engine, it is not going to work out well. Eventually I feel like they will find you.

Michael: All right. I'm going to come back to some of those links. So, I'm understanding that SEO is just plain SEO. Let's talk about Penguin and Panda; and I'm not even sure if that is the order that they came out.

Perry: Other order. Panda, then Penguin.

Michael: Panda, then Penguin. Okay. And Penguin has had multiple iterations. Have you websites been impacted by these? Have you seen a loss of traffic as a result of the updates on Google?

Perry: They have. Yeah. All of my websites were fine until the October update. Ironically, one week after I left my fulltime job. And my Glacier site and my Camping Tent site were both hit with about twenty-five to thirty percent drop in traffic from the mid-October Panda update.

Michael: Wow.

Perry: Yeah. I believe it was like Panda 2.3 or something like that.

Michael: Yeah.

Perry: Since then, I managed to make a full recovery on my Glacier site. It did get hit again recently with, initially, it looked like a twenty to twenty-five percent drop; it only ended up being an eight percent drop. So I mean that is just fluctuation and just comes.

Michael: So why was it hit?

Perry: I performed a really detailed audit on the site. And over the course of, at that point, three and a half years of building a site, something slipped through the cracks. And one of them was, thin content. So I have a lot of user generated content on the website. People will come and write a review of a hotel they stayed at, or they might write a review of a hiking trail. And the way that it was setup with the backend is that, every new user generated content page was creating a new page, so I had three or four one hundred to two hundred word articles of users reviewing Many Glacier Hotel or Lake McDonald Lodge - the hotels in Glacier - and that extended onto grizzly bear encounters. And, essentially, about somewhere around fifty to sixty pages that had very similar themes, so I ended up combining all those pages - the pages that were similarly themed - into one page. So now all the Many

Glacier Hotel reviews are on the same page. All of grizzly bear encounters around Iceberg Lake, which is a really heavily grizzly bear area. Those are all on the same page. And it beefed up the content, made the content better, and that ended up having a very positive result on the site.

Michael: Okay. So is that mainly the user generated content that you have on the website, where people fill out reviews of specific hotels or trails, or things like that?

Perry: Yeah. That was it and then, there was just some thin content that I had written over the years, which I am still working on combining together. When I started off, there wasn't any such thing as Panda. I had no idea what I was doing. If you go to Archive.org and look at the original iteration of my Glacier website, it looks so horrible. So there was some thin content that I had written, like orange wildflower identification and identifying purple wildflowers; and all those things can be combined together. So just oversights that happened over the years.

Michael: So after four years of publishing this Glacier National Park website, how many pages of content do you have right now? Do you know offhand?

Perry: I think there is about two hundred and fifty indexed in Google.

Michael: Okay. So not an enormous amount - two hundred and fifty - and that is producing five to six figures per year.

Perry: Five figures. Yeah.

Michael: Fiver figures. Yeah. That's pretty now. And how often do you write new content for Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide let's say?

Perry: I try and update the site with new content about three times a month; is what I'm doing right now.

Michael: Okay. So, on average, once a week or once every ten days or so.

Perry: About that.

Michael: So you'll write an article that is seven hundred or a thousand words on a specific topic using a keyword phrase that you researched and found to be useful.

Perry: Exactly. And one of them that we are in the process of getting up right now is on the best backpacking water filters to use in Glacier. And we own two water filters and we've used both in Glacier, so we're writing about our personal experiences with them and then, we are also going to be talking about some of the other more popular ones that people use.

Michael: Does it matter if they use it in Glacier National Park, if they use it in Yosemite, or if they use it Zion?

Perry: It does matter if they use it in like Zion or like the Grand Canyon just because of the sediments and the bacteria that is in there; but generally, I mean it is targeting anybody that is searching for a backpacking (Unclear 42:23.3) and it is relevant for anybody.

Michael: All right. Okay. So we talked about the SEO on page. You've got the actual title. You've got the Heading 1 Tag, Heading 2 and Heading 3 Tags that you also want to get that keyword phrase in. The content. You use naturally. You don't stuff the keyword phrase in there. Graphics. Do you use graphics in your articles as well and use the keyword phrase in the graphics?

Perry: I definitely use images in my articles as often as possible. It makes for a better user experience. If you are talking about a hiking trail or a lodge in Glacier, people want to see those images. And I had been using keywords in the titles and the ALT Tags. That, I think, was a little bit of a mistake because I guess it can be seen a keyword stuffing, which was never my intention. But I definitely include images as often as possible that are tightly related to whatever the article is about.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So once the article gets published, Perry, how do you promote - and I don't want to talk about backlinks yet - that article to your readership - the people that follow you?

Perry: Very passively. I'll go and mention it on the Facebook Page. I have a newsletter that I send out once a month and I'll mention it in the newsletter. And that's pretty much it.

Michael: So you don't even send out your newsletter every time you publish an article; it's just once a month you send it out.

Perry: Exactly. Yeah. And so, just once a month with whatever has been updated. Occasionally I try and run contests on the site for users. One that we did recently was to share your favorite photo from Glacier and the story behind it. That one didn't go too well, but the one before that was share your favorite adventure that you've had in Glacier and we gave a fifty dollar gift card to REI for whoever's story has the best response from people.

Michael: And do they e-mail it into you or post it directly on the website?

Perry: They post it directly on the website. That is one of the features behind Site Build It and their content management system; is, they can post it and it creates its own page that you have to then improve. Very similar to how Gravity Forms Plugin would work on a WordPress website.

Michael: Right. Okay. So you promote it out to the readers that follow you through the newsletter and through the Facebook Page. Do you actively build backlinks to your website?

Perry: To Glacier, no. Not anymore. Everything at this point has become very passive with it. Every time there is a moose attack, we get a few links because we have an article on how to survive a moose attack. So we get links there. A really great campaign I did once was when there was, sadly, a grizzly bear attack outside Yellow Stone. There is like a really, really popular article on the site where people are talking about using bear spray versus guns. And so, I'll go and I'll market that article to gun rights websites and they usually will share that with their readers. And so, nothing pushy to people. It is very organic at this point.

Michael: So writing good content on topics you know people will be interested in and people are searching on the web for allows you to have that

content ready and be found when other people are looking for it, like reporters on how to survive a bear attack or a moose attack. And then, that just organically, passively gets more links back to your website.

Perry: Exactly. And I had some Google Alerts set up so anytime Glacier is mentioned, I get that alert and I'll reach out to people just to let them know about the site in case they hadn't known about it.

Michael: Oh so it's just a general Glacier National Park Google Alert. It's not related to your website; it's just Glacier National Park. And when you see that come in, then you may go in and post a comment or writer to author, blogger, or what have you and let them know.

Perry: Precisely. Yeah.

Michael: Okay. So, do you have any websites that you are currently actively building backlinks on?

Perry: Yes. My client websites; we are always building backlinks to. My Binoculars website; we're building backlinks to. Primarily just we're interviewing prominent bird watchers and posting those interviews on our site. So creating a great piece of content and then, generally, those people will just naturally share it with their readers on their site. Link building I like to think of as just marketing. It is just good PR. I have a website - OutdoorEquipment.com - and that website is a little different, which we can chat about. It's primarily a video review website and every week we are writing a really awesome piece of content on it. And we have an editorial calendar set up for the entire year and ten sites to reach out to that are relevant to whatever topic we are talking about, to let them know about the new article. And that is pretty much the link building that we are doing on that site. So like recently we wrote on fire safety while hiking for OutdoorEquipment because here, in Colorado, we were on fire for about a month and we went and we reached out to a number of outdoor safety websites, letting them know about this article and it was very well received. So just marketing and PR to relevant sites.

Michael: So, do you find that those relevant sites are actually writing the same kind of content that you are and so, they are not going to link to you because they want to have that kind of content on their website?

Perry: No. Not really, especially in the outdoor industry. There is competition there, but it is a lot of friendly competition. People like to go out and hike, and in the end, I like to view it, it is the World Wide Web. We link to people when we see great content and we hope that we get linked to as well. A lot of SEOs will try and hog their page rank, but that is not the route that I try and take. And it has been successful so far.

Michael: Yeah. So your Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide seems to have built up enough steam that when you publish something now you get people just naturally finding it. Google finds you to be authoritative to some degree. I can't speak of whether you are a ten or a one, or whatever, but authoritative to some degree so that you don't need to go out and actively build backlinks. But you have clients on SEOSherpas.com that hire you to do search engine optimization on their website and they could be a Dentist or an Optometrist that has a website and they want to show up higher in the rankings for Boulder Colorado Dentist, and nobody is going to link to their website because they don't have enough content on there, so you need to physically go out and build links for them.

Perry: Right. And again, that comes down to creating awesome content. What's a good example? For a real estate client we work with, we have been writing about the top solar companies in Boulder and how the benefits of building green and building a green home. And that is just naturally content that you can reach out to people and share. And then also, a lot of guest posts work well for those more challenging industries.

Michael: Right. Definitely. Okay. And when you need to build links for a real estate company or a dental company, where do you go to look for links that you can add for them?

Perry: A variety of places. We will look at their competitors and see where they are getting links from. Very often, there are shady link networks that we stumble upon. For instance, for the real estate agent we are working with, we

are looking for website that aren't necessarily about buying a home, but about homes in general. So, one link we got was from somebody who focuses on building and living in small homes, like two hundred to three hundred square foot homes. And we wrote an article on the things you have to look for when buying a small home or building a small home to make it up to code and everything. It was published as a guest article and we have actually gotten a few leads out of it. That is sort of the things we look for. Things that will add value to other people's websites.

Michael: So you write good content that you then approach somebody who owns another website with a decent authority value and maybe has some traffic and you say, 'would you publish this and give me a link back to my article in the byline that is at the top or the bottom of the article?'

Perry: Yeah. More or less.

Michael: Okay. And do you put that link at the top or at the bottom of the article typically?

Perry: I always try and get it at the top.

Michael: Okay. Why is that?

Perry: Google had released a patent, I think, about a year and a half ago or two years ago that essentially discussed the fact that a link that is higher up is more likely to get clicked on, which essentially says it is more likely to be organic and natural. So we always try and get our links towards the top of the articles. But in the end, we'll take it wherever we can get it.

Michael: And are guest posts the best way to get backlinks from other websites?

Perry: It is a very effective way, but again, it is important to not be spammy in it. We write very unique content. We are not going and spinning any articles or anything. So, writing content that is targeted toward another website's audience that adds value and hasn't been written about before, yeah,



it works very well and website owners are appreciative of it. It's like, hey, one less article I have to write.

Michael: Well, I look at it and say, 'what is this guy trying to pull?' We get those kind of unsolicited e-mails all the time saying, 'I would love to write an article for you. I'm an expert on this topic and all I ask is a link back in return' and they haven't even talked about the content or the topic, or anything. And I don't even respond. Like, clearly all they want is a link.

Perry: Right. I think you got to pitch it in a better way than that I feel like. Essentially what we do is just marketing. It is getting to know the author behind it; maybe even building a rapport, commenting on the site, and adding value initially. So then they know who you are, so you are not just stabbing in the dark. And granted, I mean you are in a more competitive industry, where you are very familiar with what is going in terms of SEO and why people link build, but outside of our industry, nobody really knows if you have a link. When I talk with clients and we talk about link building for them, they are like, 'well, what does that do? Why do we need that?' and that is how it is for most people, which is good. I think that helps promote the World Wide Web being what it is and people linking freely without worrying about page rank delusion or anything.

Michael: How do you decide whether you are going to take that great piece of article that you have just spent a lot of time and effort, and pulling out that content from your customer and then getting it written and edited, and getting the graphics done? How do you decide whether you give that to somebody else for a link or you just publish it on your own website and hope that people find it and link to you because you are publishing good content on your client's website?

Perry: It depends on what the needs of the site are. If it is a really competitive site, we get content up all the time with our clients. We usually write anywhere from twenty five to fifty articles, depending on the industry, during a six month contract and then we also do the guest posts. And it is just a balance. If we are not seeing any traction just from onsite optimization, we know we have to get links. And the most important thing in the end is showing results and so, a client wants to see their rankings going up and

wants to see a return on their investment. And so, we just sort of factor that into things.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So what tool do you use in order to find out what competitors are doing that are ranking well?

Perry: I use both, Market Samurai and Raven Tools. Raven Tools is awesome. It is the most comprehensive SEO tool I have ever seen. And I mean they include some data from Majestic SEO, so you can see backlinks that other people have built. There is link monitoring and rank tracking built into it. And so, that is pretty much it. I'll use like Link Sleuth and run SEO Spider through it to see how people are optimizing their sites. I'll look at their sitemap if I can find it just to get an idea of what keywords competitors are targeting. I'll optimize it that way.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So you would rather use Raven Tools than Majestic SEO.

Perry: Raven Tools integrates Majestic SEO into their dataset. So you view the backlinks and pulls Majestic SEO's data for historical and freshness into whatever site you are researching the backlinks from.

Michael: Yeah. Okay. So let me ask you about domain names before we get into OutdoorEquipment.com - one of your latest acquisitions. Domain names. You have bought, and please don't take offense because you've done a fantastic job with your SEO, but you've bought really crappy domain names with four hyphens and five words. You've bought them for hand registration. Anybody can go out and buy these domain names. Most domainers will throw them away because you can't build a brand on them unless you do search engine optimization like you've done; at the level you've done it, with good content where you can make a living. People sort of view it as a throwaway. If you had to do it over again, Perry, would you have bought better domain names to start, or would you have done it the exact same way you did it?

Perry: Oh I certainly would have bought better domain names to start and I wish I had, but you don't know what you don't know. And you can build a

brand on a crappy domain name; it just takes a lot more money and a lot more time.

Michael: You are not putting Perry@Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide.com on your business card.

Perry: I mean it is my e-mail address for the site. And it is long. It is a terrible domain name, but it has worked for me and I would have loved to have started with a better domain name.

Michael: Yeah. What would you have if you could buy any domain name that you could right now for Glacier-National-Park-Travel-Guide? What would you rebuild on?

Perry: GlacierTravel. GlacierGuide.

Michael: That's not too generic? People aren't thinking about the glaciers up in Alaska or something like that?

Perry: That is what my thought was initially when I was buying the domain name, but there are lots of businesses. GlacierGuides.com. They are a rafting company and hiking tour company out in Glacier. So I mean it's tough. That's one of the really tough things with such a long-winded theme.

Michael: Right. Yeah. Glacier National Park is a long word.

Perry: GlacierTravelGuides.

Michael: Got you. I actually forgot to ask you about affiliate links. So your entire website primarily make money through these affiliate relationship that you have. Last week we talked about building drop shipping websites where you don't have an affiliate website, but you actually form a relationship with companies that you purchase products for, they mail it out on your behalf, and they use your name on it. But in this case, you are saying, I recommend these three top tents, or backpacks, or water filters and here is where you can buy them, and you will provide links directly to REI.com or BackCountry.com, or what have you.

Perry: Exactly. Yeah.

Michael: So how do you pick which affiliate sites you are going to work with?

Perry: There are a variety of networks you can use. Commission Junction is one of them. ShareASale. PepperJam. Google Affiliate Network. And I've worked with all of them. The one I primarily use on my websites, since they are all in the outdoor industry, is called AvantLink and I've been using them from the start. And they are fantastic. They focus primarily on the outdoor industry. And they have really great reporting. They are very transparent. And so, when you login to one of these affiliate network websites, you can then see all of the merchants that you can work with. And all of the merchants have a specific cookie duration, which is if somebody clicks from your site and goes to REI, how many days do they need to purchase something within for you to get a commission out of it. They will have commission rates and average reversal rates. So you sort of just pick and choose and if you know the industry really well, which you should if you are going to build a site around something, you know where people shop. I mean my wife just bought a Patagonia jacket a few months ago and she refused to buy it from anywhere except REI and that is because REI provides a lifetime guarantee on their products and fantastic customer service. And so, we only link out to the merchants that I personally buy from.

Michael: Yeah. Now, do you create a relationship to REI through AvantLink, or do you do it directly with REI?

Perry: I do it through AvantLink and every affiliate program has an affiliate program manager. So REI has a program manager, BackCountry has a program manager and over time, it is very beneficial if you are going to enter this industry for you to get to know your affiliate manages very well, and exchange e-mails, and ask for advice from them because every affiliate program just gives their base affiliate percentage. So if you sign up for an affiliate program, there is a base percentage they will give to everybody. But as you develop a relationship and send them sales, you can work on getting your percentage higher up.

Michael: Okay. So how do you get to know your program manager? Are they program managers at AvantLink, or are they actually program managers at REI and BackCountry.com?

Perry: REI has an in-house program manager who works there. And then, there are some companies that maintain affiliate programs for other companies. So like BackCountry, I think, works with companies that manages a number of affiliate programs.

Michael: So how do you get to know the program manager that is in charge of those programs?

Perry: Their e-mail addresses are there and you give them permission to communicate with you. They will communicate with newsletters and promotions. And so, whenever I start up with a new program that I want to promote, I will get their e-mail address, e-mail them, introduce myself, say hello, say what I'm about, talk about my history, and just say, 'I'm looking forward to working with you'. And people do business with people.

Michael: Yeah. So Amazon carries pretty much everything in the world. Why not just go to Amazon and then not have to work with any other affiliate networks?

Perry: Amazon has a very short cookie duration, so you only receive a commission if somebody purchases something within twenty-four hours. Also, their commission rates are lower compared to the outdoor industry's standards, so they are just not a preferred merchant to work with.

Michael: Got you. All right. And at Amazon you may earn two and half or five percent - somewhere in there - whereas at REI or BackCountry what kind of commission rates can you, on average, not you specifically if you renegotiated or anything? What might you expect in that?

Perry: Anywhere from five to twelve percent, I think, is the standard with a thirty to a hundred and twenty day cookies.

Michael: Nice. Definitely desirable over Amazon's twenty-four hours.

Perry: Yeah, very much so.

Michael: All right. So let's talk about the game plan for OutdoorEquipment.com - arguably, the best domain name you own?

Perry: Oh yeah. Definitely the best domain name.

Michael: All right. So it is a great generic domain name that people are actually going to Google and searching for. Are they finding OutdoorEquipment.com yet when they do a search for a generic phrase like that?

Perry: No. I mean if you search for .COM, yes, they'll find it; but not coming up anywhere for outdoor equipment. I actually had launched it in sort of a model to compete with TrailSpace initially. And that was doing really, really well. We were getting about five hundred visits a day, but there were some major flaws with the website and I didn't think it was sustainable. So we tore it down and started from scratch. And we actually did get onto the front page for outdoor equipment when we had that model. So I tore it down and started from scratch, and we are building it now into a video review website where all of our content are video reviews. And my wife and I actually spent some time every weekend, whenever we are hiking or climbing, we bring our camcorder with us and we will ask people if we can interview them about the gear that they are using.

Michael: Oh nice.

Perry: And so, people will chat about their backpack, or their hiking boots, or anything that they have on them for the day. And we post that online and transcribe the videos. We've been doing it for about a month and a half now. The going has been slow because it is really, really high quality content. You can't fake that kind of stuff. But that is the direction we are moving in with it right now.

Michael: Nice. All right. And are you make any revenue off that website right now?

Perry: Not right now. No.

Michael: Not yet?

Perry: When I had the original incarnation, it was making some money. Enough to pay back what I paid for the domain for and now, it is not making anything right now.

Michael: Are you cross-linking from Glacier National Park and Camp-Tent-Reviews.com to build links yourself?

Perry: No. I don't. I had done that a while back, but since Penguin, I have just removed all those links.

Michael: Why? They are related. They are real sites.

Perry: Yeah. I just don't want to risk my bread. I do have a link on my Glacier site to my Camping Tent site on a very related specific page that is no followed and that actually sends some good traffic. I can see people arrived on my Glacier site, they did a click-through to one of my affiliates, then they go to my Camping Tent site and spend time there, and they click-through to my affiliates and make a sale. So if it is relevant and very, very, very relevant, I might link to it, but it is no followed. I don't do it to manipulate any page rank.

Michael: All right. Well, I'm looking forward to seeing how OutdoorEquipment.com grows over time. If and when it exceeds Glacier as an operating website in terms of page reviews and revenue, Perry, and I hope that you'll let me know so I can have you back on and talking about that because I think videos are clearly the future in a lot of different areas, and I would love to know how that is growing and what you are doing for SEO that is different and things like that.

Perry: Yeah. I would love to come back and chat about in, hopefully, a year when we're getting some good revenue from it.

Michael: Awesome. All right. So here is the last question that I have for you, Perry, and it is a doozy because you said earlier you had a strategy for scalable link building across sites. What is the secret?

Perry: It varies by industry. I actually wrote an article, on SEOSherpas, detailing one of the strategies in great depth, but basically, it is using a combination of all in title searches in Google to scrape and scraping the results. So let's say, the example I used on the site was, if you have a rock climbing website - it is really good for industries that are of hobbyists in nature. So, all in title: "Rock Climbing Clubs". You then use, I think, SEOquake toolbar, expand your search results to one hundred, scrape all those results that are relevant, filter through it so you end up getting three, four, five hundred rock climbing clubs. Do the same with like associations and any other all in title searches. Then you take those URLs and outsource them through Amazon Turk to get the e-mails and contact names of the people in charge and then you use Thunderbird and Mail Merge to mass mail everybody with a personalized e-mail letting them know about your site. And that is it in a nutshell.

Michael: Wow. And so, you let them know about the site. Do you have an article written about clubs in which they are listed?

Perry: No. It is important to have an awesome website when you are doing this.

Michael: Yeah. Otherwise it is just spam. People are going to look at it and say, 'you are spamming me'.

Perry: Precisely. And there will be some people that respond in that way, but generally, in my experience, when you have a great website, people are happy. Like for my Binocular website, I reached out to all the birding clubs across America letting them know about this site and they were like, 'oh my goodness. My members would love to know about this as a resources' and so, they add it as a resource.



Michael: So when you e-mail them, do you suggest that your members may want to know about this; I'd appreciate a link on your resources page? Do you tell them what you consider to be a useful reply, or do you just say, 'hey, I've got this website that focuses on binoculars that your members might find useful. Thanks'?

Perry: Yeah. Let's go back to the rock-climbing example. "Hey, my name is Perry. I've been rock climbing for five years and absolutely love the sport. I love it so much that I started a website on it at [www.WhateverRockClimbing.com](http://www.WhateverRockClimbing.com). I'm just getting started and I'm trying to gain traction, but it's a great resource that provides reviews on shoes, and harnesses, and climbing areas. Do you think that members of your site might find this to be a valuable resource? If so, let me know. I'd love it if you can add me to your resources page." And give them the HTML for a link with a branded anchor text.

Michael: And that's it.

Perry: That's it. Yeah.

Michael: And it works.

Perry: It works. Yeah.

Michael: Because they are looking for good content to share with their resources.

Perry: Exactly.

Michael: Okay. Excellent. Well, a great tip and I'm going to link to it. If you have a follow-up question, please post it in the comments below and we'll ask Perry to come back and answer as many as he can. Perry, if people want to follow you and what you are up to, can they do so on Twitter or on Facebook?

Perry: Facebook is the best place to keep in touch with me at my SEOSherpas' page. So, Facebook.com/SEOSherpas. I'm happy to answer any questions in the comment section. I'll try and do so in a timely fashion.

Michael: Excellent. And we'll provide a link down to the Facebook Page, so if people want to follow you and see when you post new articles and what you are up to, they can do that. Perry Rosenbloom, Founder of SEOSherpas.com. Thank you for coming on the show, sharing your strategies and tactics for successfully building affiliate websites, and thank you for being a Domain Sherpa.

Perry: Thank you so much for having me. It was a pleasure. Thanks a lot.

Michael: All right. We are going to have you back in a year when OutdoorEquipment.com is up and running, and breaking new barriers for affiliates and SEOs, and would love to have you back.

Perry: All right. Well, thank you so much, Mike.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. We'll see you next time.

**Watch the full video at:**

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/perry-rosenbloom-seosherpas-interview/>