



## Episode 26

# SEO 101 Understanding SEO for Interior Designers





**Jason: [00:00]**

Hello, everybody. Welcome to Designer Discussions today. We are talking about SEO one on one for interior designers.

**Intro: [00:10]**

Welcome to the Designer Discussions podcast. Tune in each week where we discuss marketing, branding, PR and business advice for design professionals.

**Jason: (00:25)**

Today we are joined by a good friend of mine, Michelle, from Empire SEO. How are you doing today, Michelle?

**Michelle: (00:32)**

Excellent. How are you doing?

**Jason: (00:40)**

Good. So we wanted to have you on today to talk about SEO because we work together. I don't know anyone in the industry that knows SEO as well as you do. So I wanted to have you on today to talk about SEO 101, because SEO, which is search engine optimization, it's been known as overwhelming to designers. And so we want to on this episode demystify SEO and actually show designers how they can start to implement that in their own practice. Just to start. If you can just let everybody know just a little bit about you and your background?

**Michelle: (01:11)**

Sure. So I always put it as I've been battling Google for over 20 years when people ask me what I do, I say that's what I do. I fight Google on a daily basis. Started in just a really small website where all of a sudden Google was a thing. It was like 25% search visibility at that time, and I needed to get to the top of the search engine quickly. So I figured it out. And then I just kept doing it and fell in love with the whole field in the industry and have spent time in Google headquarters, have been on several panels. I'm a certified Google Analytics specialist. I've got my certification and Google Webmaster tools. Google search console. I mean everything Google. So if you have a question, if I don't know the answer, I can find it on Google.

**Jason: (02:09)**

Awesome. So even though I know SEO, you're one of the people that I talk to. If I have a question or you're one of those experts. So that's why I wanted to have you on for this episode. So just to start, what are some of the basics that a designer should know about SEO for their own website?

**Michelle: (02:34)**

Let's just take a small website where you have about twelve pages and you have a contact US form and you have pictures of your work and you have a Gallery and you have a services page. We're stating that those are the simple things that create a website right to get the search engines, because that's what we're talking about. If someone types in a Google search for interior designer near me, the coveted keyword, there are some things that the average website interior designer owner can do that would really help push their keyword.

**Michelle: (03:11)**

That's what I'm going to talk about is keyword movement to the coveted positions of one, two, and three. What a lot of small business owners don't realize that Google, my business is absolutely the most powerful tool. If you do not have. I'm going to call it GMB. If you do not have a GMB account, you got to get one right away. The only caveat is that you have to have a physical address that you do business out of because Google is going to verify it with a postcard that you actually exist there as a business. But the Google My business profile is in many ways for the local business owner and interior designer or anyone in the design space is like another website, and that's how you have to do it. It is almost more powerful than a website because of the coveted space that that profile gets in the map when you type in, let's say what's the keyword? You guys all want to be up on? Bingo keyword.

**Jason: (04:26)**

As you said, interior designers near me.

**Michelle: (04:29)**

Interior designer near me or home remodeling near me. That radius is 5 miles in Google My business. So someone is next to yours. You got to make sure that your location is also in the area that you want to serve. I know that sounds like, well, that's remedial, Michelle, but it's important to know that if I'm sitting within 5 miles of your business, your profile has a shot to show up in my search. Okay, what makes that profile stronger? Here's what I would say. This is like the simple thing.

**Michelle: (03:11)**

That's what I'm going to talk about is keyword movement to the coveted positions of one, two, and three. What a lot of small business owners don't realize that Google, my business is absolutely the most powerful tool. If you do not have. I'm going to call it GMB. If you do not have a GMB account, you got to get one right away. The only caveat is that you have to have a physical address that you do business out of because Google is going to verify it with a postcard that you actually exist there as a business. But the Google My business profile is in many ways for the local business owner and interior designer or anyone in the design space is like another website, and that's how you have to do it. It is almost more powerful than a website because of the coveted space that that profile gets in the map when you type in, let's say what's the keyword? You guys all want to be up on? Bingo keyword. Try to get reviews to it. Comments. If anyone comments, respond to those comments. If people ask questions, respond to the questions because they will ask comments. Reviews, comment on reviews. They'll ask questions. List your products, list your services, post images on a weekly basis. Try to figure out offers. Post offers. Okay, this is what's called a power profile. And you want to make your Google My business the most powerful. Does that make sense?

**Jason: (05:42)**

It does.

**Michelle: (05:44)**

So then that takes me to number. You asked three simple things, right? Is that simple enough?

**Jason: (05:50)**

Yeah, that's a start. That's a start.

**Michelle: (05:55)**

So get a Google My business account. If you have one spend hours, it will take a couple of hours to optimize it. I have a great checklist that I sent to my team works the checklist. But if I'm helping just someone who's just getting started out, I send them the checklist so I can send you guys that you can have this. There's a great checklist. There's a lot of them online. Follow it. Take the time. Do it. Okay. Next is similar to Google My business. But take this one step further and we call it in the industry. Power profiles. Have you guys heard of those?

**Jason: (06:30)**

Yes, but you can explain it for audience.

**Michelle: (06:36)**

Okay, so power profiles are just like a Google My business, but you can do it in Yahoo business. You can do it in Bing. You can create these other profiles that are similar to Google My business because guess what? They all talk to each other. Okay, so on another day where you have two or 3 hours free. Go to Yahoo Business and go to Bing and create a business account there as well. If that makes sense and follow the same kinds of guidelines that you did on Google My business, then you have what we call the top three. Safari uses Google, so it's not a search engine. You've got Google, you've got Yahoo, you've got Bing. There's hundreds of other search engines, but those all follow the same algorithm that Google follows. Does that make sense?

**Jason: (07:26)**

For the designers that are listing that? You just may explain that and said, okay, that's a lot of information. Where do they start? Do they just start with the GMB and just setting up that profile? And how long does that take? What does that process look like?



**Michelle: (07:55)**

Well, to set it up, it takes about an hour. Okay. And you go to the website and then you follow the get started step. It asks your address, your phone number. If you have a website, all of that takes about 30 minutes, but then optimizing it. So you have every area, like optimize and information on every single section that they give you because it is kind of like building a website when you're in that platform. Okay, so think of it kind of like that. It's going to take a good three or 4 hours. My team does it in less time because we do it over and over, but it's going to take some time. Then you've got to build it into your weekly routine. I don't care what you post, but it has to be something related to your industry. Just think mobile pictures are an amazing tool. You can connect your mobile app to Google my business, and you can upload a picture straight from your phone. So think of Google my business. Also, as a social media, an active Google My business account shows Google that you're an active business. There's no better way to show Google that over and over. I tell my clients that you got to look at it. It's more powerful, in my opinion. If you are a local industry and need local traffic, it's more powerful than Facebook. It's more powerful than Twitter. The Google My business account is like your lifeline to search.

**Jason: (09:21)**

Now entering into 2022, and video is one of the hot topics right now in social media SEO world. Can you talk about video in terms of how designers can use that to really amplify their SEO efforts?

**Michelle: (09:45)**

If we are going to talk video, we have to talk YouTube and we have to talk TikTok. I don't know how many people use TikTok, but it's the latest thing and it's huge.

**Jason: (09:57)**

We actually have one here. Three is being quiet, but yes, she uses TikTok.

**Michelle: (10:05)**

The Google algorithm now will show TikTok videos. They were debating doing that in September. They have figured it out. As of November 17, we have TikTok in the search results, which means TikTok is going to explode even more. Okay, because it'll get new viewers.

**Maria: (10:26)**

How do you know there's not a lot of space on TikTok to type words you can put in, like, five hashtags. You could type in one sentence, and then you have the three little blurbs in your bio. So how is Google searching these TikTok videos to understand who's on them and what it's about?

**Michelle: (10:49)**

Okay. Search engine read hashtags. Okay. When Twitter came out, Google and Twitter joined forces, and hashtags are part of the algorithm. So you need to use the keyword in a hashtag. So if it's before and after your hashtag is before and after bedroom, right. Use that keyword. So it starts showing up. If that answers that question. Now, the TikTok algorithm and the Google algorithm are completely different. TikTok algorithm is designed for everybody that is inside the platform of TikTok that has shown an interest in that topic. Speaker 2 (11:33)

It doesn't discriminate everybody. It will blast out with such speed that almost everybody who has TikTok open that has had an interest in that. That's why TikTok things go viral quicker. Have you noticed that? Because it will show to everybody in a span of 20-30 minutes, if that makes sense. So Google is picking up on that. So time is of essence. If you're going to do TikTok, you got to do it regularly. The same thing with YouTube. You have to do it regularly. You can't just post one video and then six months later say, oh, it's one big, you know, I need another video. You can't do that. Does that make sense?



**Michelle: (12:17)**

And there are best practices when posting videos in YouTube that we optimize and implement. So there are things you should have. I mean, that's a whole nother podcast, I feel like. But in TikTok, it's still new. So we haven't figured out what makes a TikTok video show up in a Google search, but they are showing up. So they have started. So when we figure out what makes that happen, believe me, we'll start seeing people out there writing about it, especially in the SEO world, because it's going to be critical for the marketers that are using it.

**Maria: (13:00)**

Yes. Because Google's not doing reals. They're not pulling the real videos and listing them in searches. But I know they are doing the TikTok videos. And so I'm just really curious, because right now I'm still at the beginning of creating my content for these platforms. So I'm trying to figure out how do I keyword them so that they are going to pull up where I need them to. And so I would assume that if you're an Insured signer, you want to be tagging it with the city name and what it is that you do if you're trying to sell into your design services locally.

**Michelle: (13:36)**

Yeah, that's exactly right. So that's your best bet on that now with YouTube, it's different. Okay. When you're thinking about YouTube content, and I don't know, this may carry over to TikTok. Answer a question if you can answer a question to a problem because 98% of searches are a question, people don't realize that. So think of a question that you're going to ask or get asked and do a video on that.

**Jason: (14:12)**

A good place to start is with your own clients. Just look at the projects that you worked on and all of the questions they've asked you throughout the process. Those are all questions that you can do a video.

**Maria: (15:00)**

Well, for example, I can't tell you how many times people have wanted to search for the perfect white to paint the outside of their house or for the inside of their house. I mean, that's like the one video everybody should have available that has an interior design business is my perfect whites or my favorite cabinet colors or the best blank whatever the trendy color is of the season to use in your home. And because people are searching for, like, green cabinets or pictures of green cabinets or white exteriors or whatever those color palettes are. And they're just constantly searching for paint colors. So it's like paint colors is the universal language of design, right?

**Michelle: (15:16)**

Yeah. And if you ask the question or solve the problem, like what white is white? That is a problem that you can solve in the video with your content. Does that make that makes perfect sense? There's tools you can also use. You can do keyword searches and find. Ask a question. There's some free tools that you can use that help you word as you're trying to craft the video. But those are like the basic guidelines I suggest to my clients just to make sure that you're kind of thinking of what the person is searching for, not what you want to talk about.

**Jason: (15:58)**

So, Michelle, I hear all the time with SEO. Content is King. Can you explain to our audience why content is so vital for SEO? And how can they use content to amplify what they do?

**Michelle: (16:13)**

Okay. So in our cell phone. So it's important to know content is King. But content on a cell phone is like the Grand Emperor. Okay, so there's a difference. You could sit and write a 5000 word article that talks about everything to do when you're choosing and painting your whole house, like you could write what we call a cornerstone content piece. But if people go to it and don't stay on it and don't read it and bounce and leave the site, it's not going to do anything for you. You have to have in the age of cell phones, you have to have mixed content. So what I mean by mixed content is yes, you got to have some words, some text, but it's really critical to have videos. It's really critical to have lots of images. It's critical to lay out the content. So it's easy to read on a phone. And this is a MobileFirst world. So always look at your website on the phone. If you're looking at the way something's supposed to be laid out, look on your phone. And if it doesn't look good on the phone, change it until it does.

**Jason: (17:28)**

I like that. I like that. And I've never heard the term where you said on the phone. It's the Emperor. So you may have to coin that term right now, but that is critical because we actually here and I actually hear a lot from designers. How do you create the content that you need? Because we're talking about blogging. We're talking about adding extra pages, and they're just like, how do I find extra time in the day to add more content to my website? And I barely have enough time for my own client. So what would you suggest in terms of time management in terms of how they add?

**Michelle: (18:13)**

Yes, it's important to step back a little and say, don't put anything on your site. A website is not like social media. Okay. Social media. You can say snippets because you're doing maintenance on the website only put content that is meaningful and has a purpose. The days are gone. One of the myths of SEO is that you need 500 blogs and they all need to be 800 words long. Those days are over. No one reads the 800 word blogs anymore because there's no pictures or videos on it. Okay. They don't work. Plus, it dilutes your keyword strength on your website. When you have 40 pages, that all talk about paint colors. It is more beneficial now for you to have one cornerstone piece that talks about paint and how to choose the correct white, if that makes sense. So those days of little mini post and the reason why I say a website is not like social media is because a lot of times, clients or people will feel like, oh, I need to put a blog up. I need to put a blog up this week. Those days are gone. Nobody has to stress about putting up a blog every week.

**Jason: (19:29)**

Does everybody remember that we have some hand raising over there by Mirjam. She loved what you just said there.

**Mirjam: (19:38)**

Okay. That's amazing news. Really. Yes. Thank you.

**Michelle: (19:41)**

And content is King. It really think good on the website. Really good content is King, and then it's mobile first. Always. That okay.

**Jason: (19:54)**

So with that content, if you have that long explanatory piece, how do you make sure it stays relevant? Six months from now, a year from now, two years from now, when everything is constantly changing, you update it.

**Michelle: (20:03)**

And it is a very good practice to update the content on the site. So when you have a true cornerstone piece and I keep saying that because I want to kind of drive that in. When you have a true cornerstone piece, it changes as the industry changes. Right? So let's say there's a premium paint that just came out that has the best white, pure white, wider than white. Right. You need to stay on top of the industry trends and then update that piece of content as it changes or grows as new things or you find new tips. It is really important, because when you update a piece of content that you've had on your website, let's say every three months, you just add a few things to it. All of those little Google bots that scan content for keywords, go back and search it. So I'm getting a little bit ahead of myself, and I don't know if I have enough time, but I was going to talk about Google Analytics and Google Search console. Those are two other things that you absolutely have to have on your website. If you don't, you need to get it done now. Okay. Because that is how Google knows what your site is about, and you're not telling it. If you don't have Google Analytics installed and you don't have Google Search console installed.

**Jason: (21:32)**

So just like we asked about the GMB, how long does it take to install Google Analytics search console? And what is that process and learning that? What does that look like?

**Michelle: (21:45)**

Okay. It takes about five minutes. Okay. But you have to know how to put the tracking code into your website. And if you don't, you need to hire somebody to do it. Okay. Because it's that important to configure Google Search console takes about ten minutes. But again, if you don't know how to do it, you should hire someone to do it because you want it done correctly. So you can go to Golan's Upwork and just hire a web developer. I mean, there's a lot of resources. It's worth it, or you can figure it out yourself.

**Michelle: (22:23)**

If you're handy with your website and then go to Google, just type in a search window, Google Analytics or type in a search window Google Search console and follow the steps of setting it up on your site and it'll walk you through it. If you're tech savvy.

**Jason: (22:44)**

Would you suggest designers learn Google Analytics and Search console or just install it and then just monitor it from there.

**Michelle: (22:54)**

I would just install it, and it's not important. What it does is it shows you everybody that visits your site. It shows you what pages they went to. It shows you how long they stayed on your website. Those are important top level metrics to look at, but it's not something you have to look at every day, especially if you're just one site and you just started. You can look at it on a monthly basis and just kind of see or a weekly basis. Just add it to that, checking on the business duty and really take the time because it will also tell you and get the emails because it'll notify you. If there's an error on your website because Google search console will send you an email and it'll say this page is not Loading correctly in search or this page is Loading slow in mobile, and then it notifies you of issues. Okay.

**Jason: (23:56)**

That's actually good to know. So what are some other myths that has been said on SEO now that we're in 2022, that may not apply this year that have been talked about in the past in 2021 of you.

**Michelle: (24:13)**

Okay, well, one of the myths was the little blogs. So that's a myth. It's gone. We got that right. The other myth is build a website, leave it, and then they'll come. Do you understand what I'm saying?



**Jason: (24:29)**

There build it and they will come. Yeah.

**Michelle: (24:35)**

If you're going to build a website, you got to do something on your website every week. It's not a social media. You don't have to do something every day, but you got to look and work on your website every week, just like you do social media. Okay. And what are the things that you need to do? Put up good content? Work on the images, the videos. I mean, some of the best design sites are nothing but images and videos, right? So just work on the content best you can each week and you will start showing up. Google rotates who shows up in those slots that you are those coveted positions, and it rotates through the sites that are active because that shows that you're an active business. You have to tell them. Yeah, I still hear I exist and I exist on my website and I exist on my Google, my business.

**Maria: (25:37)**

I was just going to say I was going to bring up one thing that I think is very applicable, and it helps people to really register and understand the difference between when you say, use their words, don't use your words. So, for example, anthropology doesn't do any advertising. They don't pay to advertise. They know their consumers so well that they just know whatever they put out there that consumers are going to love it. Well, I have found that if I use interior design terms to search for items on the anthropology website, I cannot find those items. But if I look and use the terms that anthropology uses for curtains, couches, they use a completely different set of words to describe their home decor products that we really need to consider as designers looking at, why are these big companies using these more casual terms and not using the designer lingo for how they describe products on their website? If they have such a deep understanding and knowing of who is buying their product, and I just find that to be such a good example of just go to the anthropology website, try to look up duvet, try to look at draperies, try to look at these items.

**Maria: (26:37)**

You will not find them using those words. And that's how you know you're not using proper keywords for your design business if you're looking to be found by people.

**Michelle: (27:07)**

Yes, that's right. And so there's a lot of really good keyword search tools, and you can see what you think people are typing in might not be what they are typing in. And then you find that out. Really. So I'll ask clients will be like, What's your biggest keyword? And they'll say something really technical. And I'll say, no, that's not your biggest keyword. And it will show you exactly how many people search it per month and it'll show you questions. It's a really cool tool. By the way, that's a great example. I didn't know that about anthropology. Well, do you guys have, like, two more minutes? I'll give you a really good tip. Sure. If you want to see a so the most competitive keyword industry in America is legal terms. Okay. Lawyers hire and pay a lot for SEO. And one of the things they do really well is they do keyword videos for all of their keywords, and they create, like, a whole series of videos like Google Lawyer like big law firms and look at their video strategy. It works. But do the same for interior design. You know what I mean? So it's a great template to look at.

**Jason: (28:31)**

That's a great tip. This has been an amazing talk, and we don't want to overwhelm our listeners at the start, but this was a great SEO 101 talk, and we'll have you detail how you could get into the weeds of SEO in the future. But for now, if anyone had any questions about what you talked about, Michelle, how do they contact you?

**Michelle: (28:54)**

They can email me. I answer my email faster than anyone else. Or at least I try to [MDeleva@EmpireSEOServices.Com](mailto:MDeleva@EmpireSEOServices.Com).

**Jason: (29:01)**

SMichelle, it has been amazing to have you on here and we look forward to having you back, and we hope to see everybody next week on Designer Discussions.

**Outro: (29:14)**

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions. What was your takeaway care to share your thoughts and tag Jason, Maria and Mirjam on social media. You can find them on all platforms at [designerdiscussions.com](https://designerdiscussions.com). Don't forget to, like, subscribe and leave a review or comment for this episode from wherever you are listening.





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