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Jaime: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I'm Jaime Masters, and today on the show, we have Stephan Spencer. You can find him at StephanSpencer.com. He is a genius at SEO. I just came on his show. He has a podcast called Get Yourself Optimized, another one called Marketing Speak, and he has had amazing clients. You should check out his testimonial page. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Stephan: Well, thanks for having me.

Jaime: And it's funny, when I was on your show, we were both debating because you had worked with Stephen Spangler, who had a really big thing online, and the people that I worked with, the Diet Coke and Mentos EepyBird guys were online at the same time, and you totally beat us in online marketing. Just as a side note, I was new. You totally did. I'm so glad you came on the show and we could talk about it, but you are sort of heralded as a SEO whiz. SEOs change like crazy, especially from back in the day to now. So, do you think back then it was better, or do you feel like we still have lots of opportunity now?

Stephan: We have, I think, more opportunity now than ever before because —

Jaime: I was so glad you say that. Because why?

Stephan: I mean, if you think about where things are heading with AI, machine learning and all that, and how you can just be on top of the cutting edge of stuff, if you put the time in, and you've got the interest, it's not so much the gaming that used to work and doesn't anymore. It's that you have to outsmart an AI to win. And I think the best way to outsmart an AI is with your own AI, so you gotta kinda get familiar with artificial intelligence and how to utilize these things in order to win the game. But I'm excited for the future.

Jaime: So, we geeked out on your podcast before. So, you are a futurist and love singularity, and so when we talk about AI, I love this stuff. The thing is that I know my audience is a little like, "I am just a small business owner, just staying in my lane. I only have minimum time. How can I actually optimize and use SEO?" What would you say are the core things that they can do besides getting their own robot? No.

Stephan: We did geek out a lot. That was really fun. We talked about your

sword wall and everything. So, the basic fundamentals for SEO that anybody who's gonna have a website needs to do is they need to identify the keywords that matter, and those are the words that are relevant in your business, they are **[audio cuts out] [00:02:26]**, and they're attainable to rank on **Page One-Four**. So, that's one piece of it. You gotta identify the keywords. And those keywords, you're gonna create editorial calendars out of those lists, you're going to optimize existing product pages, landing pages and so forth around those keywords.

So, there's a lot of utility you're gonna get out of that keyword list. So, next you're going to look at your content, and you're gonna look at it from a lens of, "Is this content remarkable? Is it worthy of remark?" So, if you're familiar with Seth Godin and the Purple Cow – one of my favorite books. It's awesome, and Seth is a marketing hero to me. I actually had him on the show on Marketing Speak on the other show about six months ago. It was a fabulous interview –

Jaime: That's awesome.

Stephan: – so definitely check that out. But if you have something that's worthy of remark, then you've got something that is spreadable, that's linkable, like link worthy, and can perform well on social media as a nice bonus. Just as an FYI, as an aside, if you have something kinda go viral on social media or do really well on social media, it doesn't mean that you're gonna get any SEO benefit out of it, so that's an important distinction because all these social sites like YouTube, and Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, even Wikipedia – all the social sites they know follow their external links, meaning those links don't count for juice, like for SEO juice, Google juice.

I'm oversimplifying it. It's authority, it's trust, it's importance, but you need that in terms of links from other sites, and you're not gonna get any of it from the social networks.

Jaime: Thank you for saying that because no offense, but I have clients that have SEO guys, and they're like, "Let's build out the social profile, and we're gonna do this," and I was like, "Is that how they're trying to do the SEO? Because I don't know if that's gonna work for you." Now, don't get me wrong, you can start to know what goes well on those sites, and that's good, but like you said, the backlinks don't actually matter. Thank you.

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- Stephan: Not that you should not do social media marketing, it's that you need to plan appropriately and think of this as an indirect channel, an indirect means to the end of getting to the top of Google. You could get in front of influencers who have powerful blogs as far as Google's concerned because of your social spread and Facebook and so forth. That can work. That can be very effective, but it's an indirect way to get to the top of Google. So, you got remarkable content, you've got the keywords identified, and now you've gotta get out there and network the heck out of your amazing, remarkable stuff because you can't just build it and they will come. What was the movie? Field of Dreams.
- Jaime: Field of Dreams, yes. I know. Everybody wants that to –
- Stephan: You have to outreach.
- Jaime: Tell me more about this because I feel like everybody figures on-page SEO. They're like, "I did the keyword stuff. I did what I'm supposed to do," and then they sort of leave it, and it just goes into the ether, and they're like, "It didn't work for me." So, tell me all of the things on trying to actually get –
- Stephan: So, the high value links that you're going after are ones where the sites are trusted by Google, they're important, they're authorities, they're authoritative. And the way to identify these influential websites and blogs is to use a tool, one that identifies authority and even trust as individual metrics like Majestic, for example, or LinkResearchTools.com, or AA Trust, although they don't have a trust metric. I love that tool, and their authority metric is DR, domain rating. So, there are tools out there. MAZ has a domain authority, or DA, etc., etc., and you're gonna get a sense for which are the more important, and trusted, and authoritative sites, and which ones are not worth your time to chase after. And then –
- Jaime: How do you know what level that is though? I know each one has its own category but is there a metric that we can go on that would be like, "This and above is really good."
- Stephan: It depends on the metric. But let's say it's Trust Flow and Citation Flow from Majestic.com, let's say that it's a single-digit number of Trust Flow and/or Citation Flow, that's probably not worth your time to chase after. If it's domain authority, and let's say it's under 30, maybe if it's really niche-specific to your industry, okay, but probably more in the 40s-50s and up is a domain authority that would be much better.
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- Jaime: Awesome. So, you're really, really just trying to get the high quality stuff? Okay.
- Stephan: Yeah. Because it's the 80-20 rule, but it's more like 90-10 or more. The Pareto Principle.
- Jaime: So, the question though then is those bigger sites are harder to get on, so that's what everyone is saying. They're harder to get on, so yes, they definitely weigh more, but maybe we could get a whole bunch of little sites. So, how do you actually Trump that?
- Stephan: So, the little sites that have lowest authority and trust scores could actually hurt you. So, you gotta be very deliberate, very picky about which sites you target because they might have toxic links pointing to their sites, and that toxicity passes onto you, and then you need to use a detoxing tool like Link Detox to try and find all the toxic links and remove those, do a disavow, to submit a disavow file to Google through a search console, reach out to these spammy websites, insist that they remove the link. It's a real mess.
- Jaime: That sounds hellish. Nobody wants that. All the people that don't know SEOs are like, "Oh, my gosh. That's why I didn't get into SEO. I don't wanna screw it up." But how do you get the links from the big guys then?
- Stephan: So, here are a few different powerful strategies. I used this very effectively with a client who owns, I don't know, a billion dollars or more in real estate. They specialize in Section 8 housing – really nice Section 8 housing. They're not slum lords. And they were rehabbing and doing a grand reopening of a building in downtown Denver. It was gonna be beautiful and really high end, and it was Section 8 housing, and they were gonna send out a press release. I'm like, "No, journalists hate press releases."
- Jaime: They do.
- Stephan: It makes them feel so not special. It's the opposite of a scoop, right? And so, I found a recent article on the Denver post website that related to rising rents in downtown Denver. So, it was recent and it was spot on as far as the topic. Of course, the journalist was listed there as the author of that article and their email address. So, now we have our in. We're gonna comment not on the article itself – it was like a Facebook comment or a WordPress comment. No, we're going to send an email. And the first version of the email
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that he sent me, thank goodness I asked him to send me the draft first, it was a mini-press release.

Jaime: Oh, no.

Stephan: He took his press release and made it two paragraphs. Oh, my goodness. So, I'm like, "Don't do that. Back the drawing board. Make it insightful, thought provoking, and you with your status as the general manager of this big company with an insightful thing to say about his great article, he will probably respond," and sure enough, he did. So, the version that he came up with as Round 2 was amazing and sent it off. He got a response within minutes, and the journalist sent a colleague from the paper to cover the grand reopening – a full page article that week in the Denver Post.

Jaime: Wow.

Stephan: And of course, it went online on the DenverPost.com as well. So, this stuff can work. It just requires some outside the box thinking, so that's one example of a strategy. You don't need to hire an expensive PR firm.

Jaime: So, you're really good at this. He had hired you, thank goodness. He was gonna screw it up and send out a press release, right?

Stephan: Yeah.

Jaime: And this is what I feel like business owners do. They're like, "I think I heard something like this." But just to recap, you made the journalist job easier. You hand-delivered – especially because you're great with copywriting I'm assuming – hand-delivered some marketing that was a hook that all they do is take it and run with it.

Stephan: The thing is, I didn't write that piece. I just asked my client to write something insightful or thought provoking from his standpoint as being in that industry. He read the article, he had some thought provoking things to say, I reviewed it. I'm like, "This is awesome." I didn't have a hand in writing it at all.

Jaime: Really? Oh, good. Because other people would be like, "Well, of course. He hired you, and you're amazing, so therefore –" So, he actually wrote the article and within minutes, he got it too. That's amazing. What else do you have because that's great?

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- Stephan: So, he wrote the commentary about the article, yes.
- Jaime: Perfect. I adore that. And I want more of your tactics and tips, but what came up to me is how do you pick? If we've got a humongous content calendar and a humongous list of keywords, how do we pick which ones we go after for especially journalists because that does take effort to research if there's an article and all fun stuff like that.
- Stephan: Well, I would say sort the list of keywords by popularity, so that's the search volume – monthly search volume typically – and then which ones can give you an opportunity to say something worthy of remark that's kind of either controversial, or a little bit counterintuitive, or makes people do a double take if they see that keyword in a thought provoking, interesting headline. Kind of the cognitive dissonance sort of angle.
- So, you're looking for a hook. And whether that hook allows you to write a great piece for your own blog or to pitch it to a journalist, or what Andy Crestodina calls the evil twin strategy where you do both with the one piece of content that you've done all the research on and you just flip the headline essentially. So, you're saying, "These are the seven best practices to – " whatever the keyword is, and then the evil twin is the – what?
- Jaime: Mistakes?
- Stephan: Biggest mistakes. And it's the same research. You're just kind of rewriting the piece of content with that new headline.
- Jaime: So, question because I actually wrote a post. When there was a whole bunch of buzz online for Napoleon Hill, and was he a fraud or was he not, I was like, "That's a really good hook, and I've interviewed almost 500 millionaires." So, I looked up the keywords, and I found one specific one. We ended up giving away the PDF for free, and we ranked No. 1. Tons and tons of traffic. The problem that I wasn't totally paying attention to is that is not my audience. So, wholly, it's not my audience. It's a lot of people from India who are coming from a bunch of different places.
- So, do you actually try and vet keywords per what you think that avatar would be or you just write the article and try and rank it in hope that – like I was getting I think 50,000 visits or something crazy, and I was like, "I'm paying for a lot more server space for this now. That's very interesting. I'm gonna let that one go low and
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not worry about it.” But all I was trying to do was hit the No. 1. How do you manage that?

Stephan: Great insight because when you have something that is not meant for your target audience, it can actually still help you to reach your target but in an indirect way. So, that article about Think and Grow Rich, or maybe it’s from a contrarian angle like, “No, it’s hooey,” or whatever, right? Incidentally, I just had John Shin who’s running the Think and Grow Rich world tour and made the Think and Grow rich documentary possible as a guest on the Get Yourself Optimized podcast.

Jaime: That’s amazing. I’ve talked to them too about all of this stuff. No, mine was a wonderful piece about it. I don’t think he’s a fraud, but yes, it was hilarious. I was going on this spin. But you’re right because I needed a hook.

Stephan: And it’s a great hook. So, what if it’s not gonna bring in a single person that’s your exact avatar? That’s totally fine if you’re going to reach the linkerati, the influencers that authoritative, and highly trusted, and important as far as Google’s concerned because then it’s the rising tide that lifts all boats. Every page of your site, every landing page, every sales page, every product page, your homepage, they will all rise in the rankings because of that one article.

Jaime: I love it. And the other thing that I did is I went to the affiliate people that did the documentary for Think and Grow Rich, and I chatted with them. They wanted to know because I had this highly trafficked page, and now I’m an affiliate for them on the thing. And that was the thing. I was like, “Ooh, I got to meet them at least,” because I was like, “I don’t know what to do with this. Let’s see if we can optimize something,” because I care about optimizing too.

So, I appreciate, though, that it rises everything instead of me going, “Well, that wasn’t worth all the time and the effort,” so thank you for that. So, I don’t know that you can predict this, but can you predict if keywords are going to be good or bad? Is there any way that you can kind of know who would be good for your avatar or not or you guess?

Stephan: As far as which keywords your avatar’s actually typing into Google, you could do focus groups, you could do online surveys of your audience, of your customer base, of your email list

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subscribers, things like that. But if you're laser targeting in on certain demographics, psychographics, clicker graphics, actually, the best place to start then isn't with Google, it's with Facebook.

Jaime: That makes sense.

Stephan: So, if you think what is an ideal avatar or persona in terms of their hobbies, their income brackets, their gender, age group, all that, you can laser target in on Facebook, get those folks on your list, and then create a lookalike audience in Facebook and get an even larger audience of those people, and then you offer some sort of quiz or fun game, or survey, or contest with some prizes so that now you get the data from them.

Jaime: That makes sense.

Stephan: They're your avatar, and then you got a whole lot of them, so you're gonna get statistical significance, and now you understand how they think, what their buying criteria are, what the buyer journey looks like.

Jaime: That makes so much sense. It's interesting though. So, I was thinking that you'd test it in sort of PPC, like Google PPC or something like that, to try and see if it's actually converting for you instead of wasting – not wasting the time but taking all the time to try and rank for SEO. You can sort of test the keywords before?

Stephan: Well, you're gonna be wasting money though.

Jaime: Exactly.

Stephan: That's even worse.

Jaime: But that's why I like your Facebook idea. That makes a lot of logical sense, though you're still spending a lot of money, and it's a long process, but you'll get actual data that you can actually vet and use, which makes sense.

Stephan: I think of Facebook as part of the whole ecosystem, and if you're not doing Facebook advertising, you're missing the boat.

Jaime: Really?

Stephan: Yeah. Well, let's say that you just have a website that's doing well

and so forth, and you're neglecting Facebook, that is an asset that you could've built up. I think of assets in terms of Rich Dad, Poor Dad. An asset puts money in your pocket, and a liability takes money out of your pocket. So, the house that you live in is probably a liability, not an asset, whereas that house you bought and renting out, that's an asset.

Well, there are lots of online assets. There's your email list. There's your retargeting audience on Facebook and on Google – although Google calls it remarketing instead of retargeting, but it's the audience that's been to your website that you've pixelated, and now you can follow them as they're scrolling around on Facebook or as they're surfing the internet if it's Google in the display network or in retargeting for search – remarketing for search is what they call it with Google.

Jaime: Isn't it hilarious that you have to change the name? Same thing.

Stephan: I know it's just silly. So silly. But it's like this is an asset that you can nurture, and you're neglecting that asset by just not doing anything with it. If you're not even collecting that data, if you're not building a retargeting audience, even if you're just spending a little bit of money, that's just a waste. When somebody goes to buy your site, and they're like, "How big's your email list? What's your retargeting audience look like?" and you're like, "What? What? We haven't been doing much as far as email. We didn't really ask for email addresses, but we got some sales. We got some affiliate revenue." It's like, yeah, you've got a piece of the equation, but you've missed a whole bunch of the other things.

Jaime: Looping back around to the other tactic, so I still want some of those, but how do you deal with – because this is what all the people say, especially when they're not doing Facebook marketing. They're like, "Facebook is dying, and the costs are going up like crazy, and you have to pay just to boost anything so anybody sees you at all. Or email is the other one. Open rates are going down," everybody is Chicken Little. What do you say to all that?

Stephan: Just, I don't know, tough it up.

Jaime: Suck it up, buttercup.

Stephan: Yes. Suck it up, yes. So, if you think about what Facebook needs to do in order for them to succeed, they need to keep people on the platform, they need to keep them happy and engaged. So, if your

ad is drawing people off of the platform to a landing page, and it's an opt-in, it's some sort of lead-gen form or something, that's not a great experience. That doesn't make for happy Facebook users, whereas if you keep them on the platform, and they're watching videos natively on the platform that you've uploaded and that you're spending money advertising to expand your reach, that's great.

And then you can do a retargeting ad as a follow-up to people who watch let's say 75 percent of the video or more. You can upload your customer list and create a custom audience from that and target those people. You can create a lookalike of your customers based on that custom audience of the customer list or your email subscribers. There's so much opportunity. The key here is you gotta make sure these people are happy, and one of the keys of that is the share to reaction ratio.

If your stuff is so darn good that your ads don't even really look like ads, you look real, and human, and like you're part of the ecosystem, it's not all professionally shot, you didn't do all your makeup and everything, you look human, right? And you're sharing a valuable message or you're saying something that's worthy of remark, an idea we're spreading sort of thing, then you'll get a lot of shares. And if that's at least as high as the amount of reactions, the likes, the wows, the loves, and so forth, you're winning. You've got something that Facebook wants you to get a lot of reach out of, so a little bit of –

Jaime: Because they like it too.

Stephan: Yeah.

Jaime: Because they've got a lot of self-interest, which makes sense. They're in business also. It's funny because Stu McLaren posted one of his ads, and he's in a pool making a crazy face, and I follow him anyway, and I just thought it was a regular thing of him. And you're right, it feels like people – especially advertisers – are getting better and better at making it look native.

But to me, it's only not a liability if you have a funnel that converts. If the people that are on Facebook don't have a funnel that actually converts, then it is a liability, and I feel like that's where people would go like this, do you know what I mean? And because they've done it for so long or they've tried it and it didn't work for them, what do you say to them to try and test it again

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because it's an asset, like you said?

Stephan: Well, the funnel that converts isn't the only way that they can turn that into a positive ROI. Let's say that you are targeting let's say journalists – no, let's say even the editors or editorial managers of big magazines and trade journals in your industry. So, there's no funnel you're gonna send them through, but you wanna reach them. You want them to get to know your brand and your personality and see the depth of your subject matter expertise. So, that might seem like a waste of money from the outside looking in, but it's not because –

Jaime: That's so good.

Stephan: – what if you contact them in three months after they keep seeing all your brilliant stuff, your thought leadership pieces that you're pushing out to a laser targeted audience. So, maybe it's 300 people, and you're spending, I don't know, \$400.00 a month on that? That is a very wise investment.

Jaime: Totally worth it.

Stephan: Totally worth it.

Jaime: So, in that case though, having somebody that is a Facebook ad manager on your team would be really helpful also, right? Or do you feel like it's easier to train somebody on your team to be up to speed on marketing tactics or higher agencies? What do you think is sort of the best way? Because agencies are expensive, and that's why it's sometimes hit or miss.

Stephan: My preferred model is working with an individual consultant because if it's a jack-of-all-trades sort of agency – oh, yes, we do SEO, we do Google ads, we do Facebook ads, we do copywriting, conversion optimization, analytics, social media – like, is there anything you don't do? And of course you're awesome, Grade A, top shelf on every single one of these things, right?

Jaime: 80-20 rule, totally. You're great at all of them, totally.

Stephan: Totally don't buy that. So, if you work with a consultant who gets the internet and the marketing mix, like I do, for example, you work –

Jaime: That's what I was gonna say. You either have to tell me you or

somebody. You have to refer us, so we'll put links and stuff like that too because it's hard to find somebody – no offense – it's hard to find somebody good, especially if the person that's hiring them doesn't understand SEO, or Facebook, or whatever. I just have had so many clients who are like, "Well, I just signed up with this guy, and he's not – " okay, no. And it's hard to vet if you don't actually know, so besides you and that too, give us links so that way we can put them in the show notes for everybody, okay?

Stephan: Yeah. And one of the things I do for my clients is I help them vet people if they're looking to hire and in-house SEO or an in-house marketing manager or social media manager. I will grill that person in a nice way as a second interview and make sure that they are not blowing smoke.

Jaime: I'm laughing because that's what I do too. I love that part.

Stephan: In fact, I have an SEO B.S. detector worksheet that has all these trick questions that you can have available in the interview process. You just pick some questions from that, slip those questions into the interview process –

Jaime: So good.

Stephan: – and there's one right answer to each. So, then you know if you got snookered or not. There was a question in there, "Tell me your process for optimizing meta keywords." That is a trick question because meta keywords never counted in Google ever, not even on Day 1.

Jaime: Oh, my gosh. I love this. I want that list.

Stephan: So, if they say anything other than –

Jaime: I so want that list. I literally have a call in two days with an SEO guy that's working with one of my clients, so thank you. I want that list. That's killer. But that's the stuff –

Stephan: Well, I'll tell you what, I'll put that on a special page just for your listeners. It's gonna be at [MarketingSpeak.com/Millionaire](http://MarketingSpeak.com/Millionaire).

Jaime: Perfect. So, to bring it back, the tactics that you said about the journalists I loved. Do you have any other tactics like that to help build up those big site links?

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Stephan: So many. So, let's say that you wanted to become a contributor – ideally a columnist somewhere big. I just got published for the first time on HBR, Harvard Business Review.

Jaime: That's a good one.

Stephan: That was huge. And of course, I got a link with it, so they published my article, which was all about travel hacks for business travelers, and then in the byline portion that gives my old bio, it links back to my site. So, that's a really high-value link from a very high-trust website. It's hard to break into. It's not likely you're gonna have any spammy links coming from that site.

Jaime: Definitely not. How did you get that? Are you allowed to tell me?

Stephan: No, I'm not. It was a lot of work and a lot of back and forth, and it took about four months, maybe five. But I pulled some strings, I leveraged some friendships/connections that I have.

Jaime: See? It's all networking though, like you said before. But which site did you link to because you have more than one site?

Stephan: I linked to StephanSpencer.com.

Jaime: And that's the other piece. One of my clients was just mentioned in all sorts of places – Yahoo!, and NBC, and all these things, she got mentioned – but I was like, “Do we ask for a link?” and she has two sites. One's local for her local offices, and one's not, and we mentioned the local offices. So, that's at least we got it, right? Darn it. I should've said something beforehand, but how do you pick? Do you have one site that you're really building up the SEO for? Is that how you decide?

Stephan: Yes. In fact, this is a bigger question really around do I consolidate all of my remarkable content under one brand, one domain, or do I spread it out across multiple ones? Now, in some cases, I consolidated around one site, and other cases, I set up a separate domain and separate brand. Like in the case of my podcasts, MarketingSpeak.com is the website for Marketing Speak the podcast, and then Get Yourself Optimized has GetYourselfOptimized.com. Why did I not just do StephanSpencer.com/podcast/MarketingSpeak? It's because it looks clunky. It doesn't look as legit and as big of a brand.

There are books that are New York Times best sellers that have

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been on huge talk shows and so forth. The author's talking about their books. You would imagine that a book that's a big deal like Rachel Hollis' book, which should have a website dedicated just to the book. And if it doesn't, it makes you question how big of a deal that thing really is – that book, or that podcast, or that show. If you have a YouTube channel, and you don't have a microsite dedicated to that YouTube channel and that YouTube show, like for example what Blendtec did with the “Will It Blend?” videos.

Jaime: Blendtec, I remember them.

Stephan: Well, they're still around. I just spoke to their customer support the other day.

Jaime: I have a Blendtec. No, I love it.

Stephan: I have a Blendtec too. I love it. And the “Will It Blend?” videos put them on the map. They were already a very successful – I'm guessing eight figure – business by the time they came up with this campaign, but the idea was let's jam two-by-fours into the blenders, golf clubs, rake handles. Let's put lightbulbs in there.

Jaime: The iPhone one made me hurt. I was like, “Don't put an iPhone – oh, God.” It was really bad.

Stephan: And iPhone, I know. I'm an Apple fan. So, this made for really good TV, right? Really a clever idea, and if you're a journalist and you're writing about the latest “Will It Blend?” video, do you really wanna link to the YouTube channel, or would it be better to go to –

Jaime: But would you redirect? So, that's the question, right? So, for the podcast, you wouldn't actually have the domain so you could say go to whatever it is, WillItBlend.com or whatever the thing is, and then have it redirect to their actual site. I mean, I guess it doesn't really matter either way, but then you have everything on the one site, so you can technically point things. Or does it not matter?

Stephan: I think it matters, and I think it's a positioning play. If somebody sees that you redirected them from MarketingSpeak.com to StephanSpencer.com/podcasts/MarketingSpeak/index or whatever –

Jaime: .page, no.

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- Stephan: All right, what just happened here? They're going to copy and paste that URL, and that's gonna be the link, and now when somebody mouses over in that article that talks about the 10 best podcasts on marketing, and there's Marketing Speak, and they look at the link, and it's a mile long, like, "What's that?" Is that so legit that they don't – why don't they have just MarketingSpeak.com?
- Jaime: Well, if you own it, but then you redirect that URL, then at least they type it in or they feel that – I get it. So, we're talking nuances here. I totally get it, but I love this stuff. Especially because I've been talking a lot more about doing my own personal brand because everyone knows me as me and Eventual Millionaire is the show, but I built up SEO on Eventual Millionaire, and I'm like, "Well, I can't lose that." And I had a coach that told me to just SEO and switch it over. I have heard horror stories from doing that, so you don't recommend it either, right?
- Stephan: No. I recommend building up both brands, like the Jaime Tardy brand is a brand you're gonna take to the grave.
- Jaime: Well, actually, Jaime Masters because Tardy was my married name. But yes, the one that I have now is the one I'm gonna take to the grave.
- Stephan: Scratch that. So, the Jaime Masters –
- Jaime: There you go.
- Stephan: I just saw your name on something.
- Jaime: It's my old one.
- Stephan: With the old name.
- Jaime: So, question then because you're a geek, and I like this. But I don't own Jaime Masters spelled wrong. So, Jamie is spelled weirdly, but I've been trying to buy it from this lady forever, and she doesn't respond, so everybody should email her and tell her to sell it to me just as a side note. But what would you do?
- Stephan: Actually, I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't do that. I would have a domainer contact her because they know how to persuade people, and they buy domains all the time, and they sell domains and everything, so you get a domainer or domain broker to contact this person on your behalf.
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- Jaime: I followed up so many times. I've tried the nice route – anyway, we'll talk about this. I will look for a domain broker and just let them try and ride with it because the one reason why I haven't switched over to that is because I know everybody – even my first-grade teacher – spelled my name wrong and told me I was lying when I was a kid, so it's kind of a big deal, everybody spelling URLs right.
- Stephan: “You're lying,” wow, that's extreme.
- Jaime: Right? First grader lying is great. But I have issues with my name, as you can tell, so I really appreciate your info. So, I'll probably wait and then build up that other brand. So, give me some other tactics and tips for getting more of these links.
- Stephan: So, you gotta think outside the box in terms of campaigns that are worthy of being spread, and these could take the form of personality tests and quizzes, infographics, viral videos, worksheets or workbooks, checklists, planners, guides, how-tos – anything that's really gonna add a lot of value and differentiate yourself and your content from everything else that's out there. You can do contests as well, competitions. They could be video competitions or image competitions, even scavenger hunts. Lots of different ways that you could do this.
- Jaime: I've talked to a lot of people who've done a lot of challenges, which brings a lot of backlink specifically to certain things for the challenge side, but what would be a video competition or what type of competition? Can you walk me through what that would look like for getting links?
- Stephan: So, Intuit has their TurboTax division, and they did a contest, a competition, called the Tax Rap Contest. And you had to create a video –
- Jaime: So, it doesn't have to be cool. I can be very uncool. Okay, good to know.
- Stephan: So, it's cognitive dissonance. Who's ever heard the words taxes and rap in the same sentence unless it's like a –
- Jaime: Those videos.
- Stephan: – a rapper who'd gotten in trouble for tax evasion, right? So, if you
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capitalize on that cognitive dissonance, and you require that people make a music video that is a rap music video, and they have to rap about doing their taxes and ideally using the TurboTax software to do it, you're gonna get some pretty remarkable entries. They might be remarkably bad or they might be remarkably good. And the ones that were remarkably good were so good that they put up a prize purse out there of I think 25 grand was the grand prize, which is substantial.

And the winning entry was really, really good. It was a great music video, well done, nice post-production. It was great. But even the second and third prize entries, really, really good as well. And what made it stand out as being remarkable even more than the cognitive dissonance of taxes and rap music was this, they got a spokesperson, spokesman. And who do you think they got as their spokesman that would make this really, really remarkable?

Jaime: Some great rapper or bad rapper.

Stephan: So, counterintuitively or, again, riding on this cognitive dissonance sort of surprise thing, a bad rapper would be better than a good one. So, who do you think they got as their spokesman?

Jaime: I have no idea.

Stephan: Think back to years and years ago, the early days of rap.

Jaime: I was like 9, so I don't know.

Stephan: I'm sure you heard it on the radio.

Jaime: I used to listen to Dr. Dre. He's cool, but he's not bad. Who would be bad?

Stephan: Yeah, he's cool.

Jaime: He was cool. Ice-T? I don't know, I guess he was cool.

Stephan: He wasn't bad. He was cool.

Jaime: Who was bad? You have to tell me. I'm bad at this game.

Stephan: Well, the word "ice" is in his name.

Jaime: Ice Cube?

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Stephan: Nope.

Jaime: No. I don't know. Who is it?

Stephan: He's a white guy.

Jaime: Vanilla Ice?

Stephan: Vanilla Ice, yes.

Jaime: I loved Vanilla Ice. I thought he was good.

Stephan: Ice, Ice Baby.

Jaime: I thought he was good, besides stealing from –

Stephan: Well, we're all entitled to our opinions.

Jaime: I love that. Don't even – that's why I wasn't up here.

Stephan: Anyways, so he's pretty well-known. He's got lots of name recognition –

Jaime: So funny.

Stephan: – but nobody takes him seriously, especially not these days.

Jaime: No kidding.

Stephan: So, he's very available.

Jaime: He's a real estate guy or something like that now, right?

Stephan: He's got a DIY show on the DIY Network, yeah.

Jaime: That's awesome.

Stephan: So, he was very inexpensive to buy a couple hours of his time. The video team from Intuit flew down to his home in Florida, and they shot videos of him introducing the contest and introducing the winner even though they didn't know who it was gonna be, dah, dah, dah, dah. They leave, and for a very small amount of money, they had Vanilla Ice as the name to really make this contest, this video competition pop.

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Jaime: Good. I'm gonna hire Vanilla –

Stephan: And it did really well.

Jaime: – Vanilla Ice next time. No. Well, it's so funny that you say that. So, the Diet Coke and Mentos guys, EepyBird, the reason why they made their initial video was a Coca-Cola contest, and that's the only reason why they even did the entire thing, and it was viral, but it was because they only made it for the contest. So, go them. So, question though, how do you get backlinks on that? Are you just looking for high quality videos that you know will get shared a lot, and then that's what gets the backlinks?

Stephan: So, in the case of Intuit, they created a separate microsite dedicated just to the tax rap contest, and I think they put it as a subdomain, so TaxRap.Intuit.com or something like that.

Jaime: That makes sense.

Stephan: The silly thing they did was after, I don't know, a couple of years, they took the site down, and it's not redirected anywhere. It's just basically a broken image and a copyright of 2000-whatever. So, they really blew it after building all these great links inadvertently by having a very successful, remarkable contest that people were like, "Oh, my God. You gotta check out these entries." So, instead of linking to the YouTube channel or linking to individual videos – I mean, it's still good to embed individual videos, but there's only so many.

What if there are 200 videos that were submitted, and you don't wanna embed 200 videos into your blog post, maybe the winner and the one you thought was the one that should've won, and then here's a link to watch all the other videos, and it happens to be on the microsite, not on the YouTube channel because the YouTube channel's got all the distraction devices in there, like shiny object over here, squirrel over there, right? And you're suddenly watching, I don't know, music videos from Katy Perry and all of these show spoofs, and three hours just kinda – you're in the Twilight Zone. You're like, "Where'd I go?"

Jaime: The vortex that is YouTube. I know. It's like, "Wait, where am I?" My children get into that way too often. So, the goal though with that is to create such a viral campaign by using everybody, sort of a wide array of audiences so that you could potentially get it

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distributed and picked up everywhere and get all the backlinks?  
That makes sense.

Stephan: Yeah.

Jaime: That's awesome.

Stephan: And you need to proactively go out with outreach to the folks who would care about this contest or about this whatever it is – infographic, viral video, workbook, whatever.

Jaime: How do you find those people that care about this stuff, and what do you write to them?

Stephan: Well, there's this really great search engine; it's called Google.

Jaime: Wait, how do you spell that?

Stephan: I'm being cheeky, but a better answer would be use a third-party tool that's designed to do the outreach, so it's not just gonna find you these influencers, the influencers who matter as far as Google is concerned with the high authority and high trust, but also that will do the outreach for you. You load in templates, and then it does the mail merge with the information in the database on these people, and maybe even holds those messages in a moderation queue before they get sent out so you can add an additional sentence, like, "Oh, my God. This is somebody I know." I know this blogger, so I'm gonna say something in the P.S. or whatever.

Having a moderation queue that you can look at and then hit send to all these emails, and then it comes into an SEO inbox instead of clogging up your regular email inbox and tracking –

Jaime: What software is that? Tell me all the things.

Stephan: Pitchbox.

Jaime: Pitchbox.

Stephan: Pitchbox, yeah.

Jaime: I didn't even know that. Because we use Mailshake, but for cold email outreach, and it doesn't integrate. So, you're saying you can actually find the influencers and email them all in Pitchbox?

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Stephan: Yes. And it tracks the work flow and gives you pipeline reports instead of like Salesforce.com gives you sales pipeline reports, but this is an outreach pipeline report. Isn't that cool?

Jaime: That's smart.

Stephan: So, Pitchbox.com.

Jaime: That's awesome. Give me one more. I know we have to start wrapping up because we are going over, but I really like your tips, so give me one more.

Stephan: So, let's go back to this idea of getting a column or a contributorship. You might wonder how the heck do I get that? It's fine for Stephan to get –

Jaime: It took him four months, and he knew people.

Stephan: – HBR –

Jaime: Exactly.

Stephan: Exactly.

Jaime: I'm not him, yes.

Stephan: So, you start small. Start with sites like Business 2 Community or YourTango or whatever your niche covers, and as you build your way up, you're building your reputation, you can apply this strategy not just to print or to digital magazines but also to TV or radio. I was just interviewed on a radio station in Ireland just three hours ago, so that's gonna air in a week. It's pretty cool. They reached out to me from one of my websites. So, let's say you start small, you go for a Business 2 Community dot com. It's not that difficult to get into. And let's say you're in the productivity space, so then you parlay that into getting a columnist gig for LifeHack.org or LifeHacker.com, right?

Jaime: LifeHacker.com is harder than LifeHack.org I remember because I got into LifeHack.org, and I kept thinking it was LifeHacker.com. I was like, "No, I thought it was the other one." This is back in the day.

Stephan: I know. I got in for LifeHack.org too. It was –

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- Jaime: We still have backlinks. We're still happy. We still like you too. It was just not as much domain authority as the other one for sure.
- Stephan: But it was pretty good. If you looked at the metrics, it was pretty darn good for a dot org that I had never heard of before.
- Jaime: Well, do you spin your articles? That's the other piece then too. Can you take the content that you had – because that's the other thing I'll tell clients about. I have had tons and tons of journalists contact me, which is amazing because I've built up relationships, but writing new content for all these things was a pain, and so when I tell my clients, I'm like, "We can just take it and spin it." But SEO-wise, where are we at now?
- Stephan: That's black hat territory.
- Jaime: I don't mean *spin it* spin it. I mean, like rewrite –
- Stephan: Like article spinners?
- Jaime: No, no, no. Oh, no, I wouldn't use those.
- Stephan: Okay, good. Okay, good.
- Jaime: Where they replace the words. Sorry, I use the terminology.
- Stephan: Like, synonym goes here and synonym –
- Jaime: I know. That was where those would come out, and you'd be reading it, and you'd be like, "Oh, you don't speak English very well. That's awesome." So, not those. I mean rewrite, but similar style of content. Does that make sense?
- Stephan: Like paraphrase it.
- Jaime: Yeah. Like have your ghostwriter just make a couple articles that look very similar but not.
- Stephan: I'm not a big fan of that because it's pretty obvious that that's been done, and then if the editorial director who has the policy that you can't republish the same content, and they see that there's a paraphrased version on your blog or some competitor site, they're not gonna be happy with you. They might kick you off the contributorship. So, again, back to the beginning of our discussion, I had mentioned the evil twin strategy. So, instead of the seven best
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practices, now it's the seven biggest mistakes.

Jaime: That's not the same thing though? I feel like that's the same thing by just tweaking it, but it –

Stephan: No, it's a –

Jaime: Because it's a different headline?

Stephan: It's a different article. If the headline –

Jaime: So, that would be a different article, okay.

Stephan: – the headline is different, and thus the hook is different, and thus the article is different. It's still all the same research.

Jaime: These are so nuances. That's interesting.

Stephan: So, let's take something that you've recently written about as an example. Give me a topic. Give me a headline.

Jaime: I don't even remember. I don't even write the headlines. Somebody else does. Sales work flow stuff.

Stephan: Give me a topic.

Jaime: Sales work flow.

Stephan: Sales work flow, okay. So, "Sales Work Flow is at Work" might be the headline – I just made that up. And then the evil twin would be "Sales Disasters That Happened Because of Bad Work Flows".

Jaime: So, to you, that's different hook?

Stephan: So, it's not the same exact – well, it's a different hook, and you're gonna bring in different stories from your research because these are the bad examples that you didn't use. You used the best practices, now you're using the worst practices, and you're kinda deconstructing what those are. You're still giving the best practice tips in there, but you're saying, "This is another screw-up here. Do you see what they did wrong here?"

Jaime: So, we have ghostwriters now, but when I used to do it, I hated writing, so I would have templatized things. But it would be like this, "What is the main keyword and hook?" And then I would go,

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“Millionaire 1 says this about that topic. Millionaire 2 says this about –” but it was all different. All I could do was just go, beep, here’s another little thing. Oh, there’s another little thing. Every single one was different, but at least I had a little format that made it easier for me to write all of them. But if I spun it and made it different, would that be good enough for you and your X level of excellence?

Stephan: I think it matters only to the editor who makes the decision whether you played by the rules or you tried to skate around them.

Jaime: It’s not writing an article. Okay, I get it because there’s a lot of people that’ll just make crappy, crappy articles, and that’s not what they’re looking for. As long as it’s well-written, and it’s not just swiped from somewhere else, and you did a really good job, then that makes sense. But to each his own.

Stephan: If you got a gig or column writing for HBR, you’re gonna **[audio cuts out] [00:50:14]** your very best stuff there, and you’re not gonna hold back, and you’re not going to try and just paraphrase that HBR article and post that to your blog. You don’t wanna take the chance that the editor is gonna see that.

Jaime: That makes sense.

Stephan: And remember, you’re starting at the bottom, and you’re working your way up with the smaller media outlets that say yes to you as being a contributor or columnist, and then you work your way up. And again, back to this idea that you’re working your way up but in other media like TV, you start with small TV stations, local markets, really small local markets – Albuquerque, for example, or Tucson, or Reno. They’re a lot easier to get on, and you can make mistakes. And some even pre-record so you could mess up, and they’re like, “Can we do another take?”

And then you earn your chops because you’re not gonna end up first time out of the gate as a newbie on TV doing Good Morning America. That would be a disaster for everybody, so you gotta work your way up. And you can cold call TV producers, pitch them at 4:00 in the morning. They’re up, and nobody else is calling them.

Jaime: See, this is great. I love how you intertwined the old school and the online new-school because it does make a difference. That stuff still works, and it’s even more rare now than all the people that are

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just trying to go the conventional route, which I really appreciate. But what if –

Stephan: And guess what happens with these TV appearances. They end up where? Online.

Jaime: Everywhere, right? And then they'll distribute them to other networks. I had no idea that it was so interconnected.

Stephan: With links.

Jaime: Yes. I was on Yahoo!, and then I was like, "Ooh, I'm on Business Insider's homepage. Oh, I'm on this. I'm on –" it just went crazy because it was part of the network, and I had no idea at the time. I was like, "Shoot. I should've prepared better." But if we did it on purpose, it makes a lot more sense. Now, for the people that hate writing – I know we have to wrap up – but for the people that hate writing, do you still suggest they write? I hate writing. I'll do TV shows all day long, but I have ghostwriters. For the people that have ghostwriters, what do you suggest? Should they just go down the TV route instead or really try and get the backlinks to the articles because it's easier-ish?

Stephan: It is easier-ish, but here's what I do, and I think it works well because I've identified myself as a speaker who writes, not a writer who speaks. And I got that distinction from Bob Allen who wrote a whole bunch of fabulous books like *Cash In a Flash* and *The One Minute Millionaire* and so forth. So, he says either you're a writer who speaks or you're a speaker who writes. Figure out which one you are, and then focus on that. And then the other piece that you're not as good at that's not as much of a natural state for you, you convert the stuff that – let's say you're a speaker who writes – the stuff that you spoke, you could get that converted into writing.

So, you have a ghostwriter, you'll have an editor, you'll have a transcriptionist, you'll have all these people who will kind of follow along and take that stuff, that raw material that you're speaking either from interviews, or TV appearances, or you're on stage at a conference speaking, or in a panel somewhere – take all that content – or even you're just getting interviewed by your executive assistant, and then they're turning that into a draft of the article. I hate looking at a blank screen or a blank sheet of paper, like, "What am I supposed to start writing?" I hate that. If we can just have a draft in front of me, I can do something with that.

Now I've gotten to the point where my team gets my voice, they get my vision and my values. I don't even review the stuff that gets posted. They ghostwrite articles for my blog on StephanSpencer.com. Every week, a new post makes its way to the blog. I never even see them. I don't even know what I've been blogging about for the last six months. I have no idea what I'm tweeting on my Twitter. I'm tweeting apparently seven or eight times a day. My team is handling that. I have 158,000 followers, 1.2 million reach – impressions and reach on Twitter. I have no idea what I'm saying there, but I know it's awesome, and I'm also doing a newsletter every week, which is amazing.

I am so proud of this newsletter. It's the Thursday Three, so something that I found challenging, something I found exhilarating or inspiring, and something I found interesting or surprising. So, I put this out every week. Well, I don't. I don't even write it. I have no idea what I've even published on the last X number of weeks or months of the Thursday Three newsletter, but it is amazing, and I get positive comments everywhere I go, networking functions, conferences. "Hey, I just loved your last Thursday Three. It was awesome." I'm like, "Thank you," and I hope they don't ask me for details.

Jaime: Right. Well, when you asked me the blog post name, I'm like, "I don't even have a clue what we just posted." But I so appreciate you saying that because I'm not like that either. And I know a lot of people, they use that as the stopping ground, but no, that you can do this way easier. Thank goodness we have the technology that we have now and have voice recorders, and we can have content everywhere, even if you suck at grammar like I do. I know we have to start wrapping up. This went way longer than I thought because you're awesome. What's one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of a million?

Stephan: So, I would recommend identifying things that are gonna make them stand out in a crowded market. How can they be remarkable? Maybe they start by reading the book *The Purple Cow* or the new book from Seth Godin, which is *This is Marketing*. So, that would be a good way to think in terms of remarkable content, or they could start with my book *The Art of SEO* in Chapter 7, that's all about content marketing. And in fact, I'll include that in that special page of gifts for your listeners and viewers. So, MarketingSpeak.com/Millionaire. I'll include Chapter 7 of *The Art of SEO*, and this is a big book, so I don't expect your listeners to read all of it. I'm gonna look at this thing. It is 1,000 pages almost.

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Jaime: That's insane. They're gonna give it to their team and be like, "Here, this is gonna be fun." Wow.

Stephan: This is daunting. You might get people quitting on you if you hand it to them.

Jaime: And you're not a writer, and you wrote a book that's 1,000 pages. I love that.

Stephan: Well, I had coauthors and I had ghostwriters that helped me, and I had a whole raft of many, many dozens of articles already written for search-engine land that we were able to use as raw material. I had stuff that I had written as guides in white papers over the years and everything. All raw material went into the book too. But that's not my only book. That's just one. I've got three. I'm working on a fourth.

Jaime: Are you really? We'll have to have you back on the show when you have the next book come out. I so appreciate this. Where do they find your podcast, even though I think we talked about the microsites, but say them again? And where can we find more about you online too?

Stephan: So, GetYourselfOptimized.com, which is all about biohacking, lifehacking, productivity, personal development. That's a passion of mine, and so that's GetYourselfOptimized.com. My marketing podcast is MarketingSpeak.com, and not only Seth Godin has been on that, but also Dan Kennedy, Jay Abraham, some of the big marketing legends, some of my heroes, and just all sorts of subject-matter experts in everything from YouTube to Facebook, and SEO, and paid search, and all that.

And then my main site is StephanSpencer.com. You can find a whole raft of helpful guides and materials on SEO and online marketing there as well. I've got a whole learning center. And you can follow me on Twitter. I got apparently good things to say there that'll add lots of value. I have no idea what it is, but it's @sspencer is the username, and I hope you follow me and say hi to my team.

Jaime: I'd be like, "Do you know that you just tweeted this?" and be like, "Oh, is this you?" No, I'm kidding. But I love it. I loved your site, especially because you had a list of business problems that you would click on, and then you got the answers for each one of them.

I thought that was really helpful and eye-opening. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. I really appreciate it.

Stephan: Well, thank you. This was a lot of fun.

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