Michael Cowen:

This is Michael Cowen and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation.

Voiceover:

You are the leader in the courtroom and you want the jury to be looking to you for the answers.

When you figure out your theory never deviate.

You want the facts to be consistent, complete, and credible.

The defense has no problem running out the clock. Delay is the friend of the defense.

It's tough to grow a firm by trying to hold on and micromanage.

Michael Cowen:

You've got to front load a simple structure for jurors to be able to hold onto.

Voiceover:

What types of creative things can we do as lawyers, even though we don't have a trial setting?

Whatever you've got to do to make it real, you've got to do to make it real. But the person who needs convincing is you.

Welcome to the award-winning podcast, Trial Lawyer Nation, your source to win bigger verdicts, get more cases, and manage your law firm. And now here's your host, noteworthy author, sought-after speaker and renowned trial lawyer, Michael Cowen.

Michael Cowen:

Trial Lawyer Nation is brought to you by LawPods. LawPods is the company that produces these podcasts. They make my life so easy. All I have to do is show up and talk and they do all the recording, making sure it sounds good, editing, putting out clips for social media. If you are thinking about doing your own podcast, I highly recommend LawPods.

We're going to start a new feature on this podcast. It's Ask Michael and Malorie Anything. If you have anything you'd like to ask, either Malorie or me, we're going to start doing an episode every couple months where we're going to answer your questions, so just send them into me at Michael@Cowenlaw.com and Malorie and I will answer them. Anything from legal strategy, marketing management, anything else in life you want to talk about, we'll be glad to talk about it with you. Again, Ask Michael and Malorie Anything. Just send us an email. We'll be glad to answer your questions.

Today on Trial Lawyer Nation. I'm excited that we have one of the top minds in digital marketing for lawyers, Jason Hennessey. Jason, how are you doing today?

Jason Hennessey:

Michael, it's such an honor to be here, man. I really appreciate you having me on the show.

Michael Cowen:

For those listeners who don't know you already, tell us a little bit about your background and what you do.

Jason Hennessey:

I got into this world of digital marketing SEO back in 2001. So I've been doing this for most of my adult life and I came into the legal industry in about 2008 and have been working primarily with attorneys, mostly personal injury lawyers since that time and working to drive more leads and more cases to some of the biggest law firms in the country.

Michael Cowen:

How did you learn to do SEO? Well, first of all, let me take one more step back. What is SEO?

Jason Hennessey:

Okay. For those that might not even know, SEO stands for search engine optimization. My entire life is predicated upon an algorithm that I don't control. That's the Google algorithm. And how you learn SEO is by truly just practicing and testing because there's really no book that you could read. It's not really something that they could teach in college. And so it's self-taught for the most part. And then you just learn by practicing and building a case study and a lot of the things that you apply in one market, like if I'm doing an SEO campaign in Dallas, the same kind of rules apply if I were competing in Atlanta. And so you just continue to test out theories and once you prove the hypothesis, then you just continue to execute and you scale it.

And so this for me started out as a need back when I was in college. I was in the US Air Force, I got out of the Air Force. I was going to college at UNLV, contemplating going to law school, actually, Michael, myself, and I shadowed a district attorney for 30 days and I realized I didn't want to be a lawyer. I was an entrepreneur I guess. And then I found this whole world of SEO just because I had a side hustle that was paying for college. It was a DJ company where I'd DJ weddings on the weekends. And that's where I learned this SEO stuff. And again, it started as a need. It turned into a curiosity. It turned into a passion, and eventually it turned into an obsession. And so fast-forward now 24 years, and I'm still doing the same things that I was doing back then.

Michael Cowen:

That's awesome. Now I'm having you on here. There's a lot of hucksters in your industry. I'm going to be real frank. And first of all, before I talk to you about the possibility of doing business with you, but also before I'd have you on my podcast, I really checked you out, talked to other people that have worked with you for years, would give you a thumbs up. But in contrast, I get, I don't know, five, 10 emails a day from someone promising for me to be page one of Google, whatever that means if I just give them money. We as lawyer consumers who I think are the biggest suckers in the whole marketing world, how do we differentiate between someone like you that can actually get it done and the hucksters out there? What can we do to protect ourselves?

Jason Hennessey:

To be honest with you, Michael, that was the reason why I wrote my book. I wrote actually two books, but the book for legal is a book called Law Firm SEO. And it's really like me taking 20 years of practical experience and jotting it down so that someone like you maybe that doesn't know what SEO is or how to do it or how to hold somebody accountable, but I want to basically lay it all out so that you are educated and empowered to make the best decision for your firm regardless of if you hire me. I just truly want to set the record straight so that people don't get taken advantage of. And that was really the goal of writing my book, so much so that I actually mail out about 400 copies every month-

Michael Cowen:

Oh, wow.

Jason Hennessey:

To attorneys. I'll just pick a market. If I want to focus on, I don't know, South Florida, I might find 400 personal injury lawyers in South Florida, I might mail them out books. Or I've got Facebook campaigns where I'm spending like five, $10,000 a month to basically attract people to want to get a free copy of my book, and I cover the cost of shipping and handling too. And that's truly it. That's like me giving back is if I can empower them to either do it themselves, that's good. Or if they don't want to do it themselves, if they want to hire an agency, knowing what to look for and how to hold people accountable regardless of if it's my agency. So that I think is one of the things that I think separates me is I'm a very open book and I spend a lot of time educating people regardless of if I work with them or not.

Michael Cowen:

I want to go to some of the things we can to provide value for our listeners. Before I do that, I guess if someone wants to get a copy of your book, how could they ask for one?

Jason Hennessey:

Let me double check here. It's FreelawfirmSEObook.com. If you go to FreelawfirmSEObook.com, you'll be taken to a page where you just enter your name and your address and then we will get you a copy of that in the mail.

Michael Cowen:

All right. Well let me ask you, you've helped a number of law firms grow and I know I want to grow my law firm. Other people are just getting started in their law firm. What are the most important investments you think a personal injury lawyer should be making early in their career when they're trying to set up a practice that's going to have a long-term success?

Jason Hennessey:

There's two pieces of that. I think A, if you need to make the phone ring immediately, SEO is definitely not the play. SEO is one of those things that the seeds that you plant today will eventually turn into crops, which will eventually turn into fruit. But in some cases you might be six months away from generating a phone call, in some cases you might be 18 months away depending on how competitive it is, and I'll talk about that 18 month one in just a second here. But I think there's things that you could be doing right away. For one, setting up a Google my business listing for your office, getting as many reviews as you can possibly get, trying to compete in your local market. I'm doing some consulting right now with a personal injury lawyer that doesn't have the budget to compete with the Morgans & Morgans of the world-

Michael Cowen:

Who does?

Jason Hennessey:

In Los Angeles. So I said, "Don't worry about that. Let's just compete locally in Burbank, California. Let's just build out a strategy there, do pay-per-click there, LSAs there, try to get reviews there." So I would say really try to focus in on your specific market where your office is, and don't try to be all things to all

people and try to compete with a lot of the bigger firms because you're setting yourself up for failure at that point.

Michael Cowen:

You've talked about, one is trying to compete with, if you're a new startup and you're going to say, "Well, I'm going to go Los Angeles and try to go head-to-head with Morgan & Morgan, which has a thousand lawyers and who knows how much budget, what are some other common mistakes you see in younger lawyers and new firm owners? Because not all new firm owners are young, but what are some of the common mistakes you see?

Jason Hennessey:

Sometimes I see A, moving into marketing campaigns without really being educated on that or even doing things themselves, trying to execute a paid campaign for yourself without really knowing how to operate an AdWords account. I see people waste a lot of money because you're having to learn with your own budget. And so sometimes it might make sense to have a professional that comes in and just does that for you. Same thing with SEO.

That's the reason why I started coaching law firms is because if they didn't have the budget to hire my agency, I would hate for them to try to go out and execute and waste a lot of time and money implementing the wrong strategies. So at least if I can provide an hour and a half per month and steer them in the right direction so that this way they're not wasting their time, they're not wasting their money and they're basically doing things that make them progress over time. So I think the most important thing is realizing what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are. Maybe try to outsource or delegate your weaknesses to people that are competent and educate yourself on the process. Maybe watch a couple YouTube videos about digital marketing so that not so much that you have to do it, so that you know how to hire somebody to do it for you.

Michael Cowen:

I think that's so important. One of our recent guests, Brian Glass, he's done consulting. It's no secret, he said it on the podcast.

Jason Hennessey:

Oh, yeah?

Michael Cowen:

They have the great legal marketing. They wanted do a lot of their own stuff. Whereas I was talking to my COO and she's like, "Well, I'm talking to these people at other firms that do their own SEO in house." I'm like, "We don't have the expertise." If we hire someone that says they've done it before, have they done it right, you won't know for a year or two whether it's working or not. And it's just every hour I spend on SEO is an hour I'm not spending on a big case at this point in my career. So if you look at the value of my time, for me to learn SEO makes zero sense. Whereas I've got a referral partner who was a digital marketer before he went to law school, so he might benefit from some coaching because he's also spending a lot of his time practicing law now. But he has a much greater ability to do things on his own than I would have any desire.

Jason Hennessey:

I think I know who you're talking about too, by the way.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, you do? Okay. I'll ask you afterwards and see if we're

Jason Hennessey:

I'm pretty sure I do. Yeah.

Michael Cowen:

Okay. Wow. And I love the guy, but he probably would get better results if he had someone that was more up-to-date helping him on that stuff.

Jason Hennessey:

That's right. No, I agree with that. Ben and Brian are great people. Same thing. They have good intentions, they execute, but they just needed somebody to tell them what to do, what strategy should we be doing? And since we started working with them, you've really seen the growth as a result of that.

Michael Cowen:

Even though they never talked about a podcast and I never had a discussion with Ben Glass about it, this podcast would not exist if had I not gone to some early great legal marketing things and been inspired like, well, how can I do things? And honestly, part of my problem was like, who am I to have a podcast? Who am I to hold my own bootcamp or seminar? And then just realizing you just have to have the guts to do it. Ben's really big on you don't do anything unethical, but you don't have to play by everyone else's roles.

Jason Hennessey:

Oh yeah. A true pioneer in the space, an icon and somebody that takes action for sure. Yes.

Michael Cowen:

Other kinds of marketing markets, how competitive is personal injury as a marketing space?

Jason Hennessey:

That's a good question. Before I got into personal injury, I was doing a lot of work in the online poker space, which some would argue is the most competitive space on the internet. And so the strategies that I were using and deploying in that space were working and it was great. And so when I pivoted and I went into personal injury, personal injury was also competitive. But back in 2008, it wasn't as competitive. Over the years, Google has made it harder. It's not as easy anymore. You used to see a lot of lead generation companies just come into a market and just apply advanced SEO strategies and start to dominate regardless. Google has changed the algorithm. People that are more capable, that have more trust, authority and expertise actually takes over some of those SERP results instead of a digital marketer that's just a little bit more savvy. So that's actually in the favor of most of the personal injury lawyers. But at the same time, it does require a strategy. It requires skill and it requires a budget.

And so the one case study that I was talking about, it's a site called Birthinjurylawyer.com. You know as well as I do how much those cases are worth. So I had a client of ours that came to us and wanted to take a website, Birthinjurylawyer.com, which is a site that he had, and he was basically starting from

zero. He didn't have a website, he didn't have any content. It didn't have any authority or links. And he came to me and said, "Hey, I want to build a website, a national website that competes for birth injury lawyer." And I looked at that and obviously it's going to be very competitive because those cases are so valuable. And I told him, I'm like, "If we get started today, it's probably going to be about 18 months before we even see our first lead."

Michael Cowen:

Wow.

Jason Hennessey:

And so he made a pretty significant investment into building out this website to the tune of $500,000 into an SEO campaign before he even seen any ROI. But now the website is generating leads and cases every single month. And some of these cases, one was just the $5 million case that he got from it. So in the end, he ended up making his investment bet and he's got this incredible asset now, but it took a risk. It took an investment. It's just like anything that you invest in, whether it's the stock market or whatever you do, it takes investment.

Michael Cowen:

And there's, I think a mix. SEO, like you said it's long play. It could be 18 months for you to get a call. It's kind of like doing a TV or billboard campaign where you're branding, it's multiple years before you get any kind of return on investment.

Jason Hennessey:

Sure.

Michael Cowen:

Are there things that people can do and maybe they do a mix in the short run to make the phone ring now?

Jason Hennessey:

Sure. A couple of things right away is A, try to find referral partners. You're great at that. I think that's a good use of their time. Take a lot of people out to lunch and generate a lot of phone calls. There's definitely things like that that you can do.

But from a digital marketing perspective, LSA's, they call those local service ads. That's where you're paying Google for more of a lead or a phone call. I think those are a good use of budget. Again, setting up a Google My Business listing in your local market and making sure you're getting reviews. You can experiment with some paid social as well where you can run social media campaigns that are targeting specific people. And then right now, I think even YouTube marketing is pretty cheap as well. The eyeballs are pretty cheap.

But you have to definitely start with something and then just measure it. So if you're spending $5,000 on marketing, whether it's a combination of everything that I just talked about, try to measure what is the average cost per lead and what is the average cost per sign case? And if one of those channels is producing a little bit better than the others, just maybe lift the budget in those channels and then just continue to optimize it and tweak it. And hopefully you're growing the amount of leads that you're getting and the amount of signed cases almost to the point where it's like, okay, now the other problem

is not so much the marketing, now I got to deal with the operations. I got to hire another attorney. I need to hire another paralegal. I need to hire an intake team. If a good SEO company does their job right, we create intake problems.

Michael Cowen:

That's what you want. I'm partners in a firm in New Mexico, and that's our issue where being able to process the number of cases we're getting. There's a lot of things you have to do right up front. It's a operational challenge. It's a great one. I'm thrilled to have that challenge.

Jason Hennessey:

It's a good problem, but it is a problem.

Michael Cowen:

But if it's not solved, you've wasted all that money because not only do you lose the clients, you signed up, but then they go give bad reviews and all of our five-star reviews get taken over by the-

Jason Hennessey:

There you go. Exactly.

Michael Cowen:

Why are Google reviews important?

Jason Hennessey:

Well, Google reviews for one thing, it's the perception, because somebody that's never heard of you, that's the first thing that they're looking at when they're doing a search for a personal injury lawyer. Even if they saw your TV commercial and they're Googling you, if they see that you have a 3.5 star rating and other attorneys have a 4.9, the perception is that maybe there's a better solution for my legal needs. That's the first thing is the perception.

The second thing is in order to rank competitively in the local listings in your market, there's only three spots there. Google is not going to reward a firm that has a 3.5 rating when there's other options that have higher reviews. That's the second thing.

And then the third thing is the keywords that people put in the reviews is also part of the algorithm too. And an obvious example of this is if I ever go to Texas and I want a good brisket sandwich or something, I'm going to go and I'm going to be in Austin, I'm going to type, 'Best brisket in Austin,' and you're going to see the Google My Business listings are appearing for barbecue joints that have reviews that say, "This was the best brisket." So those keywords that people put into the reviews are also part of the algorithm as well.

So if there's one thing that people are listening and they take away from this is A, get reviews consistently and just make sure that you're keeping your services up to a level so that people are actually posting positive things about you on the internet.

Michael Cowen:

I guess I never knew about the keywords in review. I guess if we're doing campaign to ask our clients to review us, maybe suggest here's some words you could use. Could you use these terms?

Jason Hennessey:

Yeah. That's exactly right.

Michael Cowen:

And you can't pay your clients for reviews or you'll get blacklisted really quick.

Jason Hennessey:

Yeah. That's the rule of Google, but you can incentivize people. I see a lot of firms that are incentivizing their staff. "Hey, listen, we want to get 200 reviews by the next six months and any review that you get, I'll give you a $50 bonus." So there are things that you can do.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, we incentivize staff, but we just tell them you cannot share the incentive with the client.

Jason Hennessey:

That's right.

Michael Cowen:

Because that will get us in trouble.

Jason Hennessey:

That doesn't look well. And here's the other thing about the reviews too, is some people think that the only time to get a review is at the end of the case. It's two years later, three years later, and you give them this big check and here's the link and you leave us a review. I would argue that you can get a review at the beginning of the case. So if somebody calls your firm and they get a great experience and it's a good first impression and you answered all their questions, there's nothing wrong about saying, "Hey, listen, if I answered your questions and now you feel comfortable signing with us, can I just send you a link to maybe leave us a review? It's very helpful for us." So don't wait until the end of the journey. Maybe start at the beginning.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. There are different parts in the course of a case where people tend to be happiest.

Jason Hennessey:

That's right.

Michael Cowen:

The check is often not always because there's sometimes unrealistic expectations or it took longer to fund than you had a lean. So you have someone who's thrilled with the number and then it's two months later when you finish negotiating with the medical bills, they're not happy anymore because it took too long.

Jason Hennessey:

Sure.

Michael Cowen:

So you look for other times when they're going to be happy. So let's say I have a smaller firm, more limited budget. I'm in a competitive market. Do I want to say in my marketing message that I do all kinds of personal injuries so I can try to capture as many of the possible leads I can? Or do I want to specialize in one narrow area to look like a specialist in that area? What does better?

Jason Hennessey:

That's a good question. There's two ways that you can go about that. You could limit it based on the geo coordinate of where your office is. We talked about a law firm that's just strictly in Burbank, and they got a Burbank personal injury lawyer page, a Burbank car accident, a truck accident, it's just everything is about Burbank. And a lot of cases you'll actually rank competitively even if you have big people in the market because Google looks at something called topical relevance. And so if there's a law firm and everything is about Burbank, regardless if the website is as powerful as the site like Forthepeople.com or some of the other big players, that site is going to get a preferential treatment because they want to serve up content that people are local in Burbank. That is one approach.

The other approach is yes, there's nothing stopping you from if you just want to be the Uber and Lyft lawyer specifically in a city, even as big as Los Angeles, you could. I see firms that all they do is lemon. There's nothing wrong with that. Again, the topical relevance of all the content that you're creating is making you a subject matter expert in the eyes of Google in that. And then if you go and you write a book about being a lemon law attorney or being the Uber and Lyft attorney, now that's also sending a lot of signals as well. They call that EAT signals, your expertise, authority, and trust. Those are other signals that are being sent as well, because now you're published, you're an author.

And so that's also stuff that's going to help feed not only Google, but a lot of these chatbots like your ChatGPTs. So if somebody types in, "Who's the best lemon lawyer in Los Angeles?" Well ChatGPT is going to look at, okay, well, who ranked for this? What does their content look like? Who has the most reviews? Anybody write a book on this subject? And so then boom, now ChatGPT is going to say, "Hey, Michael Cowen is the best lemon lawyer attorney in Los Angeles." So there's other things in the future that are also going to affect this too.

Michael Cowen:

And on the books, does it matter whether it's a self-published book that you just use, whatever goes to Amazon or whether it has the, I guess the Google juice or backlinks of a publisher? Does that make much of a difference?

Jason Hennessey:

No, it doesn't. In fact, both of my books were self-published. I went through a company called Scribe Media for my first book, and my second book was a company called Greenleaf. And so they end up on Google. We get reviews for that on Google. In fact, I wrote the book Law Firm SEO, and I named it Law Firm SEO as an SEO strategy, because I know my competitors are trying to rank for the word law firm SEO because that's where our market searches. And I wanted not only my agency to rank for that term, but I also wanted to leverage Amazon to rank for that term too. So now if you do a search for law firm SEO, you'll see my agency and then you'll see my book, and then you'll see videos. And so I'm dominating that keyword and it's all by design. And so that's why I named my book that.

Michael Cowen:

So I should think about that for my next book then?

Jason Hennessey:

Yeah, think about the name of it because you can leverage that like, truck accident attorney, something like that, right?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. Big Rig Justice probably wasn't a great name for SEO purposes. You also talked about social media. And one thing that I see, there's things you can do to get views on social media, and I'm going to be a little controversial. I'm just going to be myself. I'm big into everyone being equal, and most of my partners are female. And I see some female lawyers out there posting some stuff that get a lot of guys looking at them, thirst trap videos, skimpy clothes, bikinis. Do those really help you get clients? Or is there a line between, okay, I can do outrageous things, but will those actually hurt my credibility or do they work? I have no idea. I'm just asking.

Voiceover:

Each year, the law firm of Cowen Rodriguez Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us by calling 210-941-1301 to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. And now back to the show.

Jason Hennessey:

It really comes down to who do you want to be seen as? What is your character? What is your legacy? Sure, there's different strategies that you could deploy to as almost like PRs, publicity stunts. Go that route. And sure, some of them will be more successful than others. I know that there was the girl like the Hawk Talk girl, I guess all over the news. That just happened, and next thing you know, she's blown up.

Michael Cowen:

But would someone want to hire her for a multi-million dollar your relative was killed or paralyzed?

Jason Hennessey:

That's what I'm saying, right? Probably not. I would just stay true to who you are. Don't try to be somebody that you're not. A lot of people look at people like Gary Vaynerchuk, Gary V, and they start creating videos as though they're Gary V. And you can tell that they're very uncomfortable in that setting. And so just be yourself. I like when you said that, Michael. Listen, I'm just going to say what I say. I'm going to be myself here, and that's who I am. All of the content that I put out on social media is just me talking about a subject that I have expertise in that I love and take it as it is. I am not going to go and try to be Mr. Beast, and just because I know his model works. That's just not who I am.

Michael Cowen:

Now, on your personal social media, you also share a lot of family stuff, going on trips with your kids, going to Oregon football games. Do you think that's important? I'll tell you a story after you give me your answer on that.

Jason Hennessey:

A hundred percent. In fact, every time I see somebody, the first thing that they say is not so much like, "Oh my God, Jason, I love chapter seven of your book." That's not the first thing they say. The first thing they say is like, "Oh my God, can you adopt me? I wish I would've went on that trip with you to Asia," because I think what happens is at the end of the day, people like to do business with those that they like and trust. And I am my authentic self on social media so much to a fault, I would say. And that's just who I am. And so I like to share experiences. I like to give my kids and my family a life that I didn't have when I was a kid. And I do share that on social, but I think it's important.

And I think that's part of the reason why we are growing as an agency, is because I am my authentic self, and the person that's posting on social media with my family wherever I am is going to be the same person that's on a podcast or is going to be the same person on a sales call. I'm not going to take advantage of nobody. You can Google me. There's nothing bad about me online at all. I take great pride in that, and I'd rather tell people that I can't help them if the expectations are not realistic, rather than take somebody's money and try to finesse it only to make somebody pissed off in the end. But I do think that that's important. If you are going to share, just share with your authentic self.

Michael Cowen:

And I will say before we ever called y'all, and to be full disclosure listen, we're in the courting process with each other right now. We've got a proposal from y'all. We're doing our budgets for next year, seeing what we can spend, whether we're operationally ready. We got a lot of things on our end we're looking at.

Jason Hennessey:

Sure.

Michael Cowen:

But when we were looking to decide who are we even going to call, we were following you on social media. I think you and I have been Facebook friends for a long time.

Jason Hennessey:

We have.

Michael Cowen:

And my co says, "Well, I like him because I see him there with his family. He seems like a good person. He seems more trustworthy than some of the competitors."

Jason Hennessey:

Interesting.

Michael Cowen:

So that was actually, on her vote, that was a big factor driving her vote on who we went with.

Jason Hennessey:

Ah, see, that's helpful. I appreciate that. And that's definitely not a strategy, I guess, if you will, but it's interesting.

Michael Cowen:

It wasn't part of mine. You could have been the biggest scumbag in the world. I was talking to other customers of yours. That's what I cared about because I'm writing the check.

Jason Hennessey:

That's right.

Michael Cowen:

But it is a tiebreaker for me. But for her, it was a huge factor of I want someone I know I can trust that I want to do business with. If they're not a good person, I don't want to do business with them.

Jason Hennessey:

Sure. Yeah, that's fair. And I'm the same way. We hire people as well, and it's the same kind of a thing that we look at too.

Michael Cowen:

I get more engagement from posting a run or posting something I did with one of my kids than I ever do from a multimillion dollar settlement.

Jason Hennessey:

And I love following you on social media too, because there's not that many law firms in the United States that get the results that you do, and some of those referral checks that you post occasionally are just mind-blowing.

Michael Cowen:

I should have another one by the end of the year to post. We're just waiting for the checks.

Jason Hennessey:

I love it.

Michael Cowen:

Keep looking. Another big topic I hear all the time is AI or artificial intelligence. I think there's already people using AI to write content. You can usually tell when you read it, but at least today. It's a two-part question. One right now, what effect do you think AI has? And then two, what do you think in the future AI is going to do to SEO and digital marketing?

Jason Hennessey:

AI has allowed both people and agencies to get a lot more efficient. You can do more with less. But to your point, you just can't take a piece of content from ChatGPT and publish it on a website. Google will know that it's a piece of content directly from ChatGP, and it won't treat it as favorable as somebody that wrote a piece of content that blends in some of their own personal experiences and their stories and their case studies. There's ways to make that a little bit more unique.

However, it is effective. In fact, we had a client in Atlanta, there was an explosion. I think it was a chemical plant explosion. And so it happened, I think on a Friday. My client seen that there were people

running ads already for that, and he said, "Hey, can we get out in front of this?" So we wrote a piece of content mostly using AI. We even created an AI podcast, which sounds like two people that are in a morning show talking about the content that we published, and we put it in there.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, wow.

Jason Hennessey:

It's really impressive. So that'll keep people on the page longer because people might not want to read, they just might want to listen to that. And then we published it, and then literally that same day, we were ranking position number six for this keyword that we're targeting. And then we did some strategies on Monday and Tuesday, and we pushed it up to number one. And again, this is an AI piece of content on a website that is authoritative, don't get me wrong. But I think he signed up like 200 cases.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, wow.

Jason Hennessey:

200 cases from this. And that was just by leveraging AI.

Another example with AI that we're using is we'll take a website that might have 2000 pages of content and we will translate the content into Spanish. And then basically now we have 4,000 pages of content and half of it is in English, half of it is in Spanish. But basically the Spanish content preserves the SEO strategy that we deployed for English. And so now you're basically able to get more traffic, more leads, and more cases by just leveraging the content that you already had in multiple languages. So there are so many use cases where you can use AI, and that's just scratching the surface, but you have to look at AI as an opportunity and not a threat. That's the key.

Michael Cowen:

And what do you thinks next with AI and digital marketing?

Jason Hennessey:

I think it could get really scary. I think at some point there could be Michael Cowen and Jason Hennessey on a podcast, and it's not even us talking. It looks like you, it sounds like you. Same with me. And there could be a lot more scams that are taking place. I think it could go way out of control. Who knows?

Michael Cowen:

One thing I saw that was so impressive, a friend of mine does mass torts, and he wanted to send a video update message to all 3000 clients he had on this one mass tort. So he recorded one video saying like, "Hey, Jason, this is so-and-so, I want to talk to you about this." And then the AI would edit each video and change the Jason into that client's name.

Jason Hennessey:

Wow. See, that's powerful.

Michael Cowen:

In his voice. He just showed the first hundred, "Hey Jason, hey Lisa. Hey," and he only had to record it once. And so I could see that you could do, let's say someone has already reached out to you on your website but hasn't heard you yet. One of my projects right now, I'm doing just a no cost marketing, is I'm sending out three videos to potential or current referral partners every day.

Jason Hennessey:

Sure.

Michael Cowen:

I just make a 20 second video. "Hey, this is Michael Cowen, just calling to wish you a happy holiday. By the way, I just hired another lawyer. We're trying to fill up his docket. If you have any cases where we can help, feel free to call."

Jason Hennessey:

Sure.

Michael Cowen:

But I could just record one and it could just put in once, because I always want to make sure I'm mentioning their name. I don't want to look like I'm sending a generic video to everybody.

Jason Hennessey:

I get it.

Michael Cowen:

But with that tool, maybe I could and it wouldn't look like a generic.

Jason Hennessey:

Oh, yeah. There's a tool called HeyGen where it could make you speak multiple languages too. You could have it up, right. This is literally inning number one of where we will be with AI. So it'll be pretty fascinating to kind of follow this.

Michael Cowen:

SEO, you're planting a tree for one to three years before you start bearing fruit.

Jason Hennessey:

It is.

Michael Cowen:

What's coming up you think in the next three to five years that we need to know about?

Jason Hennessey:

I think you hit it on the head. I think people like to see a lot more video. I think just getting out and creating video content is something that we're going to start to see a lot more of in short video format. That's the TikToks of the world. I think the next generation, their attention spans are six seconds. So how

do you capture somebody's attention within six seconds and then how do you keep them? So I think we'll continuing to see more of that.

The other thing is leveraging influencers to help market law firms. I think you don't really see a lot of that these days. I still think that that is a very cheap and effective form of marketing. My daughter's eight years old. She doesn't watch TV, she doesn't listen to podcasts. She's on YouTube and she has YouTubers that she follows, and these YouTubers have influence. And whether or not for somebody that's an eight-year-old that's opening toys, or if it's somebody that's into video games, there's all these different influencers and you have to start to think about where is your market and where will they be in the next three years? And start to build out relationships with some of these influencers to get them to start talking about you, I think that's really powerful.

Michael Cowen:

I have a thirteen-year-old and most of our dinner conversations relate around him telling me about a YouTube video he saw about Dragon Ball fan fiction or theories about why a Dragon Ball fan fiction character did something that's not even in the anime. It's crazy. But he's just really into it. And then the different influencers and the ones he likes, the ones he hates, and it's interesting.

Jason Hennessey:

Yeah, we'll see more of that. We're starting to see some lawyers that are trying to be influencers, some with more success than others, but it's a whole nother opportunity to just leverage the influencers as well that are just in different verticals. Sure.

Michael Cowen:

And I think if you have local influencers, they may be cheaper than trying to get a big celebrity, for example, that's got a-

Jason Hennessey:

No, exactly. That's my point is there might be an influencer in the real estate market that has a lot of people that follow them and maybe having an influencer event at your office where you have six different influencers. One is a painting influencer and another one is into real estate, another one into video games. And you just have an influencer night at your office, and then they all bring their audience, and now you're giving away free swag and stuff like that.

Michael Cowen:

The one I was thinking of, I'm just thinking randomly, it was like San Antonio foodie I see on TikTok. Maybe I could offer them money like, "Hey, let me pay you money and I will go eat lunch with you and appear on some of your videos, and then with a link to me.

Jason Hennessey:

That's a great idea, Michael. That's thinking outside the box.

Michael Cowen:

That would only work though, I guess if I was posting content on TikTok where they are, because if I'm not posting-

Jason Hennessey:

Not necessarily, because-

Michael Cowen:

No?

Jason Hennessey:

If they're talking about you like, "If you're ever in any accident, you got to call Michael. He's the guy," there's nothing wrong with that.

Michael Cowen:

I just thought of that. But whenever you start talking about these things, the ideas start percolating.

Jason Hennessey:

Oh yeah, I've got no shortage of ideas. I can't sleep at night because of that.

Michael Cowen:

Another question I have, okay, you get a website. You do all the SEO. You get people to click, they search, they see your website. Once they're on there, what do you need to have on the website to get them to actually click or call or email so that they can contact you and talk about hiring you?

Jason Hennessey:

You get them on the website, and that's mostly by way of a strategy, an SEO strategy. And that requires content. That's the food that Google eats. But once they're on the website, like I said, it's the same thing as talking about my personal social media where I'm posting videos and photos of me doing things. You want to build trust with the person that's on the website. For one, you want to have a video on there talking about, "Welcome to my website, my name is Michael Cowen." Don't just get right into, "We're the best lawyers." Have some empathy. If you're on this page, there's probably a good chance that you or a loved one were involved in a truck accident. And listen, we get it. We understand. My firm has handled numerous truck accident cases. If you look below, you can see some of our verdicts. We're considered one of the top 10 trial lawyers in the country. Just build up trust with that person, because that's really what's going to resonate.

And then the other thing is once they fill out a form submission, don't just send them to a thank you page that just says, "Thank you." They should land up on a thank you page that has another video thanking them for filling out a form and then managing the expectations and letting them know exactly what's going to happen now. You filled out a form, here's our intake team. They're going to process this. You're going to receive an email from us. We're going to set up a call, manage the expectations so that they don't go to the next attorney. They feel like, "Okay, great. I know what's going to happen now. Let me just wait for them to give me a call." So I think that's really important is just building up that trust in the form of video and some of your verdicts and case studies.

Michael Cowen:

How about chat features? Are those important?

Jason Hennessey:

Those are important too. I would argue though that I think a lot of people make mistakes by putting chat on their mobile device.

Michael Cowen:

I can't stand that.

Jason Hennessey:

Yeah, I'm the same way. It covers up. Some of these chat providers, I won't mention any names, but they're financially incentivized to get you to click on the chat because they make $35 for every chat. And so sometimes what they'll do is they'll cover your phone number with the chat, and then when you click on the X, it doesn't exit out. And anyway, so I am a big fan of not putting chat on mobile. I want to get phone calls. However, on desktop, that's fine. It could sit in the bottom right corner if somebody wants to chat with you. But it is important. It helps to generate leads. If somebody's in the office and they're working and they're looking for an attorney, they might not be able to make a phone call in that given moment. So they might be on the website and they might be asking questions. So it is definitely important, but definitely not on mobile.

Michael Cowen:

And the one thing I do hate about it, and maybe it converts. You're the expert, I'm not. But I'm often on a lawyer's website because I'm trying to find something out about the lawyer, or sometimes they have an article that's interesting, but then I get this pop-up in the middle of the screen that then I have to go click out of, waiting to know if I want to chat with them. And it's worse on mobile because as I've aged, my eye's aren't as big, and sometimes I don't know what it is with my iPhone, it will put the pop-up where the X is not visible on the screen and I can't move around to it, so I can't get rid of it, and I just go to another.

Jason Hennessey:

That's a strategy, by the way. That's their intention to do that so that you can click on it.

Michael Cowen:

But the net result is I go to another site.

Jason Hennessey:

That's exactly right. So if you are the consumer and it's happening to you, just imagine what it feels like to be the consumer as well. Yep. Same thing.

Michael Cowen:

And another debate we're looking at moving into there, we haven't asked you yet, so I'll just ask you online, chatbots versus paying a human being to chat?

Jason Hennessey:

Well think chatbots are probably the more efficient way to go, and I think that's probably the future. But making sure that they're following the right script and then you're optimizing the script and that you're just trying to get them to leave their name, email, phone numbers so that you can call them back. I've

seen some really good examples of that, and then I've seen some pretty horrible examples of that. So it all really predicates upon the scripts that you're having them follow.

Michael Cowen:

One last question. This is my audience. We're so glad to be learning from you. What is one last thing you want to tell us?

Jason Hennessey:

I think the biggest thing is a lot of people consume a lot of content like this, whether it's podcasts or reading books, but there's not a lot of people that take action from it. I think in life you have the power to create a future that wasn't going to exist. All you need to do is take action. And I wake up every morning and I figure out how can I take action today? Like you, you're going to send three videos every day to somebody that could be a potential referral partner to you. You don't have to do that, but you do it and you take action. And as a result of that, you are able to post those large checks on social media because you're building these new referral parts. But what if you didn't take action? What if you just thought about it and didn't take action? So if there's one piece of advice that I would say here, and everybody knows this, but sometimes we just forget, just take action.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. Thank you so much for joining us. I look forward to continuing to get to know you better. And for anyone that wants to reach out to you it's at?

Jason Hennessey:

Hennessey.com

Michael Cowen:

With an EY, not just a Y.

Jason Hennessey:

That's right.

Michael Cowen:

It's not the cognac, it's the legal marketing people. And the links for both your book and for your agency will be in the show notes.

Jason Hennessey:

Perfect. And again, if you want a free copy of my book, go to freelawfirmSEO book.com, freelawfirmSEO book.com, and my team will mail you out a free copy of the book. Thank you so much, Michael.

Michael Cowen:

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