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| **How to use this script** | **This script will:*** help you follow along with the tweets that Melinda and her team send out through out the interview
* Allow you to cut and paste your responses into the tweet grid do you can easily participate in the “fast-paced” grid conversation
 |
| **Notes** | * We put out a link to the transcript on @SmallBizChat tomorrow a.m. so don't worry if you miss a tweet or two.
* The Last 5 minutes of the chat will be available for pitches or your 140 character commercials. So be ready.
* A more detailed Q & A with our guest comes out on Thursdays on @Smallbizlady’s blog: http://bit.ly/3x5Gm2
 |
| **Preparing for the chat** | To prepare for the chat cut your original paragraphs into tweets of 126 characters or less (you can use the character count feature in word to help). This will make it easy to copy and paste your tweets on Wednesday. * Tweets need to be shorter than 126 characters to allow room for the #SmallBizChat tag.
* Include the question number in your character count.
* Feel free to use abbreviations such as & for and, or 2 for too or two - to save space.
* Your tweets do NOT need to include the #SmallBizChat tag - the site we use to do the chat (tweetgrid.com) adds it automatically.
* Please include the A1 A1b, A2 A2b A2c etc when you paste your answers, so people can keep track of what question you are answering. (see example below)
 |
| **How to format your answers** | **This is an example of how you can breakdown your responses:**A1:It’s a combination of many things but with the small business owner, it’s usually due to where we place our priorities. A2b: Many of us put our work at the top of the list. This usually means that our health and wellness gets pushed to the bottom of the list. |
| **When you are done** | Once you have added the tweets, you can delete your full answers and send the script back to us.  |

**Script**

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| **Standard Intro Tweets****(SmallBizChat team will enter)** | Tonight on [#SmallBizChat](https://twitter.com/#search/%23SmallBizChat)– we’re live with Central.ly founder Chris Bennett @chrisebennett http://bit.ly/sbchat117 |
| How 2 participate in #SmallBizChat: http://bit.ly/S797e; try our prepared @Tweetgrid and join us now at 8p ET http://bit.ly/sbchat118 |
| Welcome to #SmallBizChat, a weekly conversation where emerging small business owners can get answers to their questions. |
| Welcome to my co-host for the night Social Media Strategist and Launch While Working advocate @TaiGoodwin |
| Q: What's the focus of #Smallbizchat? A: To end small business failure by helping you succeed as your own boss  |
| Right now on [#SmallBizChat](https://twitter.com/#search/%23SmallBizChat) : @chrisebennett small business advocate http://bit.ly/sbchat118  |
| We are tweeting live with @chrisebennett of [www.Central.ly](http://www.Central.ly) about the New SEO join us http://bit.ly/sbchat118 |

**Your Interview**

**Note: Melinda will enter the questions. You are only responsible for the answers and any adlib responses you’d like to add in response to the chat audience.**

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| Q1: What is the biggest problem small business owners face when it comes to websites? |
| Small business owners typically are passionate about their business and love running them. With that said, they do not have strong design or technical backgrounds so creating websites is tricky for them .You can sum their problems up with four things. Small business websites do not have the correct information for the consumer, they do not leverage social integrations, they are not mobile ready, and their sites are not visually unappealing. If you are looking for a small business and you are out and about on your smart phone, if you cannot access the company’s website than you are less likely to do business with them. If you can’t find their address, you are less likely to visit. If their website is poorly designed then you are less likely to patronize because their message is that they do not care about their image, so they likely do not care about their product or service.Also the lack of education, people do bad things because they don’t know any better.  |
| Q2: What should a small business owner have on their website? |
| You need to clearly state what your business does: What service or product do you provide. If you provide a service, share your portfolio, if you provide a product, give screenshots and descriptions of the product. If you are local business, it’s imperative that you have your address and your phone number readily available. For a restaurant, a menu with store hours is very important.Looking professional is important so you definitely want to start by having a custom domain name. The same goes for email. It looks unprofessional when your business email is name@gmail.com, what you want is name@yourbusiness.com.gMail (Google Mail) is one of the best web based mail systems. A misconception though is that you have to keep @gmail.com in the address. You can reserve you @yourbusiness.com through Google Apps to ensure a professional business email address.Videos and pictures are very important to show on your website. Communicating with pictures and videos is more effective than with words because consumers are less likely to read text. If you have videos on Vimeo or Youtube, it’s important to embed them in your website and the same goes with photos hosted on Flickr or Picasa. If you do not have photos, iStockPhoto.com is a great solution to finding photos that pertain to your business.Your customers are interacting with you your brand and business today on social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook, and Foursquare. It’s imperative that you have links or display content from these third party services on your webpage. By having direct links, your customers are more likely going to explore your brand and purchase from you instead of going to Google to search for your other profiles and get distracted. |
| Q3: What do small business owners need to know when it comes to SEO – search engine optimization? |
| Let me first start off by defining what is SEO. SEO is an acronym for Search Engine Optimization. By that I mean, improving the ranking of websites in search engines. SEO refers to using techniques to help your website appear higher in search engine rankings so when they search for your product, they have a higher chance of finding you.The key to improving SEO is garnering more links to the page you want to improve. 75% of SEO are comprised of inbound links to your website while only 25% is comprised of what you say on your site. So if you want to improve your SEO, reach out to friends, family, and complementary services to yours and get links to your website.  |
| **How to participate in #SmallBizChat** [**http://bit.ly/S797e**](http://bit.ly/S797e)**; join in via tonight's tweetgrid: http://bitly.com/sbchat118****Live right now - Interview with tech startup Central.ly founder Chris Bennett @chrisebennett http://bitly.com/sbchat118Do you need a Small Business Makeover? http://shar.es/HCroM**  **It’s finally available on Amazon! The “Are You Ready to Become Your Own Boss?” workbook. Emerson** [**http://t.co/DvHRQQ8**](http://t.co/DvHRQQ8) |
| Q4: How does a website or blog help with SEO for small business owners? |
| In different ways. A website that you do not operate can help your SEO by linking to you. For example, if you are a new business in a metro area, having local newspapers and blogs write about you and link to your website improves your SEO because you have inbound links.Having a blog is fundamental to having great SEO because you are able to produce content with keywords in it that will people find you through search. Once you’ve identified the keywords that you want to target for your business, write blog posts with the keywords in the title and in the body of the blog. You want to produce engaging content so users comment and share your post. The more that occurs, the better your SEO. |
| Q5: Lots of small business owners get ripped off, how much should they expect to pay for website development? |
| We have spoken to people in tears about their experiences paying someone to create a website for them. It can be very stressful for a small business owner, especially if they don’t know the technology or even the vocabulary of website design and SEO. Small business owners should expect to pay anywhere from $1000 - $1,500 to receive a complete website built for you on the Wordpress platform by a developer, depending on the complexity of the site. If the price you pay is far below that range you will likely get a poor result, if it’s too far over, you are paying too much.  |
| Q6: What are some questions to ask when evaluating someone who claims they can help me with my SEO? |
| **SEO is somewhat of a black art and because of this, there are a lot of people out there taking advantage of unsuspecting small business owners. Don’t end up in this group! To avoid this ask anyone offering SEO services these four questions.**1. How can I measure the effectiveness of your services? What you want to hear is that they improve the number of leads you receive. Traffic, rankings, and domain authority or great, but at the end of the day, you want more businesses and that’s measured in leads.
2. Can I speak to some of your past clients? It’s imperative that you speak to prior customers and gauge their opinion of the services. If they cannot produce past clients or if you hear bad things, walk away. If you hear great things, then sign them up.
3. Can you show me some of the work you’ve done? Don’t only ask to speak to past clients but also ask to see some of their prior client work as well. Take a look at the blogs and websites they have worked with and ask to see what the sites looked like before and what changes they made to improve SEO.
4. What website building platform do they plan to use? If your website is being built from scratch, ask what platform they are using. Once they name it, either do your own research or ask if it’s a flash based website. If it is, walk away! Flash is SEO’s enemy.
 |
| Q7: What is Google +1 and why is it important to SEO? |
| Google +1 and Facebook are the new SEO, stop hiring SEO consultants and start getting social. Content is important, its why people will share but social media is going to dominate the way things show up in search results. When you and your friends +1 pages, those pages will rise to the top of the search rankings of those in your network. Whatever platform your site is built on, it needs to be fully compatible with the social graph as well as local social networks. |
| **If you know a small biz owner who could use some advice tell them to follow @SmallBizChat and join us every Wed 8-9 ET****Promote upcoming event:** **For tips on #smallbiz success subscribe to Melinda Emerson’s blog at http://**[**www.succeedasyourownboss.com**](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.succeedasyourownboss.com&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFuFKqzU4YM8KvotUhfki00Xm8IoQ)**Who’s On #SmallBizChat this September: http://bit.ly/m6BDYK** |
| Q8: How important are Twitter links and Facebook Likes to SEO? |
| Twitter is also a strong SEO play when it comes to Google search. Google indexes tweets. Their search tool is smart and wants real people’s opinions on your goods and services. It knows what your friends like and makes suggestions to them assuming they are similar to you. Your friends trust your opinion more than a generic ad. Your friends also trust you won’t do things, like spam them, so provided your service or product is a good one, your social network is a source of [free peer reviewed press](http://blog.central.ly/66858255). And Twitter links are great for backlinks to improve SEO. Facebook Likes are powerful because they improve your SEO for Bing and they allow you to spread messages to your followers on Facebook. |
| Q9: You mentioned backlinks – what are the best ways for getting relevant backlinks that can help your sites rankings? |
| The most effective way to get backlinks is press coverage. When a local, regional, or national publication covers you, you will benefit from their high PageRank, but others will post the story on their blogs for their readers thus generating more links for you. Other ideas are writing opnion posts and getting them covered in blogs and putting your business name in all of the directories that pertain to your business.What you want to avoid are link exchanges. A lot of link exchanges are link farms and Google frowns upon link farms and being in one could get you banned from search results, which can really hurt your business on the Internet. |
| Q10: What are three things small business owners can do to drive more traffic to their website? |
| Firstly, provide information, products and services that people want. If you do that, people will naturally share it. Secondly, ask your friends and family to review it and ensure the message is clear. Ask people to tweet about it and people will pick up on the site and traffic will come. Plus, as a reward the search engines will point people at the site.Lastly, buy Adwords. You can search for the keyword terms that best fit your business and write ads to drive traffic to your site using Adwords. You can also do this on Facebook and Linkedin with their advertising platforms.I think the best quote is that “success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must first set yourself on fire.” |
| **A blog post with a more detailed Q & A with our guest comes out on Thursdays on @Smallbizlady’s blog: http://bit.ly/3x5Gm2****We’re always looking for small biz experts to share...Here’s how to be a guest on #Smallbizchat http://bit.ly/4r5KEZ**Back at the Blog: My post - [Building A Team For Your Small Business](http://succeedasyourownboss.com/08/2011/building-a-team-for-your-small-business/) - http://bit.ly/pvUZ6G**Get your FREE chapter of Become Your Own Boss in 12 Months: http://bit.ly/eM4XTR** |
| Q11: We all know about google analytics, but what kinds of things should we be measuring through web analytics? |
| There are a ton of things to measure but what’s most important is how it’s improving your business. You need to make sure these objectives are clear. It’s great to get lots visits, but remember the end goal is to convert visitors into buyers. With that being said, start by tracking where your visitors are located geographically – If you are a local business but 80% of your traffic is not from the area you serve. Then your website traffic will not help you get sales.On the other hand if you sell products online or work with clients virtually, it may be more important to track what part of your website are they interacting with? Are they clicking on your Facebook Page link? Your About Me page? Your phone number? By gathering this type of data can help you decide what information you need to make most prominent and what you should hide. If people are just browsing or are they looking for information to contact you for your services If no one is looking at your services, or your contact information, how can you add your contact information to the places where they are looking. |
| Q12: How important is PageRank to SEO? |
| It’s very important to SEO. PageRank essentially tells Google the quality and the number links to your website. Along with lots of links you need strong content so Google knows what keywords to index. As I have mentioned in this article, PageRank is just one part of SEO and there are many other factors. Remember, SEO is 75% backlinks and 25% content. If you able to do well on both fronts, then you will have high SEO. |

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| **Standard Closing Tweets** | Special thanks to small business collaborator Chris Bennett @chrisebennett of http://www.Central.ly |
| Next week business development expert **Brynne Tillman @BusDevU** on **Successful selling in this new economic environment** |
| Roll call, who’s on @Smallbizchat tonight? Give me your best 140-character commercial. |
| Tomorrow get the full interview with Chris Bennett @chrisebennett on http://www.succeedasyourownboss.com |
| Was this interview helpful? Join us every Wednesday 8-9p ET follow @SmallBizChat on Twitter for info.  |
| Thank you to my co-host Social Media Strategist and Launch While Working advocate @TaiGoodwin |
| The mission of #Smallbizchat is to end small business failure by helping you succeed as your own boss.  |
| Up next week >> business development expert **Brynne Tillman @BusDevU** on **Successful selling in this new economic environment** |
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