

Niche Site Duel 2.0 (pre-launch) – What's Working in SEO Right Now with Alex Becker

Pat Flynn: Hey, hey, what's up? This is Pat Flynn from SmartPassiveIncome.com. I'm really happy to have Alex Becker on the show with us today. He has a website at Source-Wave.com. And he's an SEO expert and he's going to help us understand what's working today with SEO and backlinking. So let's get right to the interview.

Hey, what's up Alex? Welcome to the <u>Smart Passive Income YouTube Channel</u>. Thanks for joining us today.

Alex Becker: Hey, Pat. What's happening? It's great to be here. I've been a long-time reader.

Pat Flynn: Well, thank you. And actually, it was Alex that reached out to me because he said that he had some interesting stuff to share in regards to search engine optimization. So Alex, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do and what your website is and why you're here today?

Alex Becker: So, for lack of better words, I guess you could call me, I don't know, an SEO enthusiast. But what I do is I handle the SEO and the search engine marketing for pretty large companies in the past. A long while ago, I actually worked as an SEO Director and SEO Manager of a few marketing agencies. And what that allowed me to basically do was work with a lot of budgets and see what's really going on in the SEO world and just concentrate because I just had all this like test, test going on because of the budget.

But <u>Source Wave</u>, what is that all about? Source Wave is basically my blog where I go out and I share a lot of my SEO knowledge because basically when I got started, it was really hard to find really good SEO knowledge online. So I started the blog. It kind of blew up a little bit. And now, it's like my number one client-getting attraction ever. So, pretty cool stuff.

Pat Flynn: Nice. OK. So you're an SEO expert and you have a blog at Source-Wave.com. And why are you here on the show today? What do you have to offer us?

Alex Becker: All right. So, what do I have to offer? Well, I used to be in Air Force and when I was getting out, I really didn't have any income stream to rely on. It's just basically like jumping off a cliff. And I heard about this SEO thing and how a lot of people were making money. So, I asked a friend who was involved with it and I said, "Where can I go to get some solid SEO information?" Of course, putting your Niche Site



<u>Duel</u>, this was almost two and a half years ago. And basically, that's what got me all started. It's just what has completely fueled me to what I am right now. And of course, there were other things I looked at but it was one of the big things.

So what I wanted to do today is come and kind of give back because right now, I see a lot of people saying SEO is dead or a lot of people just throwing in the towel. And the fact is, with the current algorithms, it's easier than ever to rank. So, I just want to come on today and give your readers some really solid info to just basically allow them to kick Google's butt right now.

Pat Flynn: Well, thank you, Alex. Of course, we really appreciate that. And it's really interesting because I've been hearing a lot of the same stuff. My backlinking strategy, I'm testing it and it still works but not guite as well as before. And when it works versus when it doesn't work, it's not even clear. So I would love to hear what you have going on.

I mean it was pretty much ever since the Google Panda and Penguin updates when things started to go awry. So maybe the first question I should ask you is what should people avoid doing in order to get better search engine rankings or to avoid being slapped by Google right now?

Alex Becker: That's where it really all comes down to. If you can avoid penalties while getting consistent results in SEO, you can basically do whatever you want because you'll slowly but surely get up to the top of Google, which you don't have to go so slow anymore. You can actually rank in a few days or a lot of times, a week if you do things the right way.

But to answer your question, what is really getting people penalized right now and why there's so much confusion is because if you go anywhere, you're going to see people saying, "Oh, it's about quality content or it's about having your site setup this exact certain way or having your links from these exact places." And it's really a lot simpler than that. And this crazy confusion that's going on right now is just because people don't truly understand what Panda, what Penguin and what EMD update did.

And Panda of course, it would go out and would kind of sort of spammy links. But the reason why 90% people get hit right now, it all comes down on anchor text. That's what the Penguin update was all about. That's what the EMD update was all about. The reason why these updates were so effective was because of how Google designed them.

Basically, what they want to do is go out and just take down as many SEO sites as possible. But it's kind of hard to do since there's a lot of websites in the Internet. So they want to look at something that all SEO websites have in common. And back in the day, it was all about anchor text, it's all about anchor text, it's all about anchor text.



So, all Google have to do is say, "Hey, let's just go out there and look at the sites that have an abnormal ratio of anchor text." And that's 50% - at this point right now, it's actually 30% plus. And what you want to actually keep your anchor text on now is about 20%. But back to what I was talking about, what Google did is they looked at all the sites and say a site is BlueSneakerForSale.com. And 50% of its backlinks all have the anchor text blue sneaker for sale. That's just completely unreasonable.

What they're basically logically thinking is that it's completely just ridiculous to think that all the people out in the Internet would be building links to the site. Let's just say, there's 10,000 links to the website. It would be completely insane that 10,000 people built those links all with just the main keyword in mind. They would build more natural-looking link site, click here or this URL links.

So, all Google really had to do was just look at the anchor text of websites and that's the main reason people get hit right now. I'm sure there's other things that hit people right now, having a little quality sites, having really spammy links. But for the main part, 95% of sites right now are just getting hit by the anchor text. That's why you see so many people were got hit by these updates because all Google had to do was just look back and just look at the anchor texts and go, "All right. Well, 60% of your links all say blue sneaker for sale. That's crazy."

Pat Flynn: OK. So anchor text, meaning the link that other sites have – the link that they click on to link back to your site. And you're saying that, and I know this back in the day, it was pretty much, the more you have the better of the exact match of the keyword that you're targeting. And now, it should be – you said 20%, so one out of every five links should be your primary keywords and all those other ones like should it be your primary keywords plus a couple other keywords or should it be things like "click here" or "read this"? What's working best right now?

Alex Becker: And so, that's a really good question. It actually brings up some really cool ways to be making anchor texts right now that really help your site but are not damaging like having the same keyword over and over again. And then it comes down through use of what I like to call synonyms and missed keywords. And the way I like to do this is kind of break the keywords down in three groups. I actually got this from a really good friend of mine, Greg Morrison. But we sat down. He actually told me this and I started using it. It works like crazy.

So, what we want to do when we're building links, as I said, you want to keep it around 20% to 30% for your main keyword.

Pat Flynn: Yeah.

Alex Becker: Let's just say, we build nine links. We want to follow it in this kind of pattern. So, let's just say the first three links were built. Let's just imagine ourselves about blue sneakers for sale. And what they would want to be is blue sneakers for sale,



best sneakers for sales, and maybe place to find sneakers for sale online. Now, that would cover kind of our main keywords and we want to hop into our synonyms. And this is how they work.

So imagine if we had a site out there about blue sneakers for sale. Logically, a lot of the anchor texts would be like shoes, buy shoes online, flip flops, things related to shoes like shoe strings maybe. And what that does is it really tells Google, "Hey, there are a lot of natural links coming in." And it kind of pick – paints like a big picture of what the site is relevant to because of course, the main thing it's relevant to is blue sneakers for sale.

But as we go through, it's like it's relevant to shoes, it's relevant to high heels, it's relevant to flip flops. And this doesn't have to be in the shoes niche. But you see it paints that kind of overall picture of relevance to the overall niche and that's where the synonym kind of branch of links comes in.

Now, the final three links we want to build, so we've got the six links. We got three main keyword links. We got three kinds of synonym relevant backlinks. The next three backlinks we want to build are just what I'd like to call missed links. And these are what most people build link-wise. I'm talking about maybe just "click here" would be the anchor text more info or you just have a plain URL there.

And what that does is it paints a really natural backlink profile. And what a lot of people are doing is just going out there and maybe 60% of their keywords would have blue sneaker for sale in them. And that's just such a dead giveaway.

Pat Flynn: OK. So, how are we building these links? OK. We sort of understand the anchor text and I'm sure there are more detailed ways to go about it and more formulated ways to go about it. And just so you know, those of you watching this right now and listening to this, I'm actually going to be putting this stuff to the test.

Alex has a lot of case studies where he's linked pretty competitive keywords using his strategies in a week or ever less which is pretty ridiculous. And I want to put this stuff to the test and I want to see it working and he's going to kind of show me how this works and we're all kind of going to do it together and see what happens.

But anyway, we understand the anchor text sort of really low percentage using synonyms and other types of keywords within that particular niche not necessarily using the same keywords that matches your target keyword. But how are you building those links? I mean there's obviously - the traditional way is like article writing and social bookmarking and directories, and things like that. What should we do or what's working right now? And also, what are people doing that is not working or that we should avoid?



Alex Becker: All right, Pat. So, like we talked about last time, there are two strategies that are really working right now. And I kind of want to lay out two strategies. One, is kind of more, you have to invest a little bit and the other strategy where everybody can really hop into it. And the first strategy when it comes to building links, this absolutely kills it. If you get this right and you do this the right way, you can rank in days to weeks like I showed you in a lot of case studies I showed you the last time we talked.

Now, the first strategy requires going out there. And before I get into that, you got to understand that the core of SEO is relevance and PR. If you can get more high PR backlinks from relevant places, then you win at SEO. Now, the challenge is those links are really hard to get. If you make a site about, let's just say, dog training. It's going to be really hard to go out there and find a ton of high PR dog training sites that want to link to you. And by high PR, I mean just on the home page, it has all the high PR. That's a really big challenge. You're not going to be able to really do that efficiently.

So what we can then do to kind of get that core relevance plus PR is we can go out there and we can buy high PR domains. And it depends on how much you want to invest. Say, you have a local client who's paying you a \$1000 to \$5000 per month to do that, you can go out there and you can invest in buying some PR5 domains. Say, you're kind of just getting started in this, maybe investing in some PR2 or PR3 domains which you can usually pick up for \$15, or \$20 with some places where they're showing you how to, of course, find the map for that price. It's kind of a steal but there's a secret to getting them.

So say, we have a site about dog training. Now, what we'll do is just simply go out there and we'll buy a few high PR domains just say, PR2 to 3. And what we'll do is, here's one thing to keep in mind, the URL doesn't matter too much. But we'll fill these sites with content relevant to dog training. We'll put in maybe a few articles on there. Make sure the keywords are kind of spread throughout the page. And then we'll simply link back to our site.

And so what happens is we get that awesome core and relevant backlink that's just core PR, core relevance linking back to our site. And that just allows us to see basically almost overnight success sometimes because you just get that core of SEO. And that is PR and relevance.

Now, the strategy works extremely well when you combine it with other types of kind of backlink that I'm about to get into right here. And this is what I'd like to call PR1 backlinking. So what I want you to imagine right now is we kind of stick to the backlinking strategy in the past, kind of building the pyramids we have, kind of the Web 2.0 and so forth point to our sites.

Now, what we need to do now and what Panda really hammered down on was spammy link sources. If you're posting on what I like to call, bad link neighborhoods, then you're going to get in trouble. And these bad link neighborhoods are really, really hard to



avoid if you're just using normal tools or services because no tool right now is designed to avoid bad link neighborhoods. And there's only one real way in my mind to really go about finding these bad link neighborhoods and really kind of completely avoiding them.

So, what you've got to understand about bad link neighborhoods is 90% of sites that have a bad profile with Google might be penalized or might be recognized as spammy link providers. They're usually going to hang around the PR Zero or PR N/A range. And that gives us a very good definition of where we're going to be. Now, not all PR N/As and not all PR Zeros are bad sites. That's not true at all. But most of the bad sites are going to be within that range and all. So, PR Zero and PR N/A links don't really provide you too much value.

So, what we can do to overcome this is we can simply go out there and we can post only on PR1 sites. Now, it's not that every single PR1 site out there is clean. But if we go out there and we post two PR1 plus sites then we can almost completely avoid all those bad link neighborhoods because a lot of times, Google is not going to award a PR2 sites it does not like. So, when we combine that kind of PR linking and that's something easily achieved with tools or just very specific services out there, you can actually just have a very good link profile as long as you keep your anchor text by what we talked about earlier. Then you're basically on fire.

So, those are just two strategies. And the way they really worked together really well is if you combine the first strategy with the second strategy. Of course, some people might not want to invest too much in the first strategy because they're just starting out, that's OK. The second strategy works very well as well.

Pat Flynn: OK. So, few follow-up questions to your strategy one and strategy two, strategy one being where you're sort of buying PR2 to 3 depending on your budget five sites and then – so I have a question on that and also, a question on this PR1 sort of network that you're talking about. So talking about the one that you just talked about, getting PR1 sites. Now – does that mean if you're building links on those sites, is the root domain, the PR1 or bigger or is it – because I know a lot of times when we create articles even on things like EzineArticles.com, when we create an article and put a back link on it, it's a PR Zero article because it's just brand new.

Alex Becker: Yeah, that's a really good point. A lot of times when you post on Ezine Articles, we create links places. They're going to be on PR Zero, PR N/A pages. But what I meant by kind of the PR1 pyramids that we talked about is basically, you want to be posting on sites where the root domain is a PR1 or a PR above like you talked about. As long as we kind of stick to sites like that, we're going to be pretty safe.

Now, there are a lot of tools out there. You can set your tools to automatically post to only PR1 plus sites. It's very, very easy to do. And so, that's basically what we want to



aim to do. Of course, a lot of the pages we create will be PR Zeros at first. It's just we want to stick to that kind of PR1 plus sites.

Pat Flynn: OK. You keep mentioning these tools. What are these tools specifically if you don't mind sharing?

Alex Becker: OK. So there are about three tools you can use. And the first one I really like is **SEnuke** but not the base version, all right? If you just open up any of these tools and press the go button, you're going to get some very mixed results. What I like to do with SEnuke because I like to go on there and you have to set the tools in a certain way to only post to PR1 sites. Sometimes, I'll go and actually edit kind of the files. But a lot of times, you can just kind of select the sites you want to post to. It's very easy doing SEnuke.

Now, two cheaper alternatives to that are Ultimate Demon and Magic Submitter. Now, both of those tools are not as pick up and go as SEnuke but they are good alternatives as you can manage each of these tools to post only the PR1 plus sites. So, that's how we're going to go out and kind of set that up.

Pat Flynn: Now, are you writing articles for those tools? Is that how they work? You're submitting articles to those specific sites?

Alex Becker: Yeah, pretty much. Some of the links you build like social bookmarks and what not don't require an article but a lot of times, when we're submitting to kind of Wiki's PDF or article sites or Web 2.0's, definitely going to need an article. And of course, you want to go through and spin that.

Pat Flynn: OK. Now, going back to your other strategy where you're talking about purchasing PR2, 3 or whatever sites. Now, I remember a bunch of link networks that a lot of people were using, Blog Blueprint and Build My Rank that were blog networks that got just totally killed by Google. Now, isn't that what you're kind of building here by purchasing these sites and creating – you're creating your own little network? Shouldn't we have to worry about that or what are your thoughts?

Alex Becker: That's a really good point. I thought the same thing too when I used to go out there and I started building PR networks when I was working at this agency. I used to think, "Well, that happened to Blog Blueprint. That happened to Build My Rank. Do I really want to do this and invest money?" But the thing you've got to understand about those networks is they were kind of like the link mafia.

Think maybe back in the '20s where like the mafia was just getting away with just murder. And eventually, when they're out in the street just waving a red flag, eventually they got busted because it was just so obvious they were doing it. And eventually, the cops, the government, whoever cracked down on them.



Well, Google is the same way. Back in the day with the blog networks, Google was very, very well-aware of these networks and it was very, very easy to spot who was behind all of them. But all Google had to do was go out there and hop on the forum and just read a few forum posts.

And it's just that – it's just crazy because a lot of people are really paranoid about Google tracking their whole activity online, looking at their analytics, looking all their backlinks and stuff like that. But then they think Google is too stupid just to hop on like Black Hat World or Warrior Forum and see what type of network everybody was using.

And at that point, it's just a really simple solution to go out and nail these networks. So now, when I talked about the Google updates, Google wants to go out there and they want to nail as many SEO sites as possible. And so, what these networks kind of end up being was like a giant fly catcher for Google. They just have to wait for the networks to build up and look at what everybody who was using them and then they slap all of them.

And so basically, when Google goes out there and just looks at the forums, looks at all these networks that are being heavily advertised, it's like they were literally buying billboards all over the internet saying, "Hey, we're breaking Google's terms of service. Come break it with us." That's all they have to do at that point. All they need to do is hop on the network. And it would be fairly simple for even a basic SEO to hop on these networks and track all the sites.

So after they wave their banners everywhere, they made it completely clear they were abusing the Google terms of service then at that point it was just a matter of time before Google hopped on them. And that's why PR networks like that just don't work anymore because the second the network starts to get big, the second a lot of people start talking about, the second you buy a massive banner ads saying, "We're abusing Google." Google is going to crack down on you.

Now, this is almost totally different than what we're going to be doing. When you set up your own kind of private network and it doesn't take a huge investment upfront either. That's what kind of intimidated me at first as well. Basically, when you go out there and you set up your own network, Google has much bigger fish to fry. There are multibillion dollar companies. And so, when go up there and we're setting up a network about anywhere from 10 to 50 sites, maybe way down the road, you really don't have anything to worry about as long as you're not doing what these big networks are doing, which is buying banner ads and going in the forum and telling everybody, "Hey, you can join up now." And basically, just telling the whole world that they are abusing Google.

So with your own little private network, Google just really – doesn't have the time or resources to find it. They don't even really care that much. It's all about nailing the big fish. And you're basically pretty safe. So, the chance of you really getting nailed like



Blog Blueprint or Build My Rank is virtually zero. It's just – and until you start making a huge ruckus and basically spitting on Google's face, you don't have much to worry about. So keeping the network to yourself, keeps it pretty safe.

Pat Flynn: Got you. OK. Now, one more question in regards to that particular strategy. If you're buying these sites and I'll ask you in a second, where you're saying that the domain and the content on that site that you're buying if it's PR2 site doesn't have to be relevant to your site. You can buy that because it has a PR2 or 3 or whatever and then change things around? And then putting the proper anchor text and make that site relevant even if the domain name is something like fly fishing and your stuff is about dog training. Like that works?

Alex Becker: Yeah. But it's a little bit different because a lot of times the sites we're going to be buying, they're not going to be pretty populated with contents. It's not that we're going to be buying a big site that really has all these articles on it and then going to sneak in our links in there. What we're going to be doing is basically going out there and finding domains right before they expire that have good PR. And then what we're going to be doing is just basically putting WordPress on the side, very simple and then filling the site with relevant content. And that's really all it takes at that point. You're basically working with a clean slate that has a really high PR.

Pat Flynn: OK. I see. So, any sort of – where would you find these sites online? On Flipper or ...?

Alex Becker: Well, most of the time where we're going to be finding this sites, we're going to be finding them on Go Daddy. And there are a few tools actually out there that help you find sites right before they expire on places like Go Daddy and a few other domain auctions. And that's really useful because the Go Daddy auctions and other site auctions aren't designed to help you find PR sites. It helps you find domain names and so forth.

But there are a few sites like FreshDrop.com or a tool called PR Powershot. They basically let you go out there and you can see the domains of PR sites before they're expiring on Go Daddy. You can basically jump in there in like the auction house right before they expire and jut basically hop on these domains right before they're bought so you can now be getting a lot of PR4 domains, PR3 domains, PR2 domains for way cheaper than they would usually go for.

For example, sometimes PR3 domains go for like 90 bucks but if you go out there and you use FreshDrop or PR Powershot, you're going to be able to go in there and find kind of those cheaper PR2 or PR3 domains that I talked about earlier.

Now, if you're looking for kind of the higher PR domains, you're usually going to have to go through a domain vendor. And these are usually guys you can find on Digital Point and a few other websites out there on the Internet. Most of the time, you're just going



to have to dig for them. They're on Digital Point or from a lot of places. And what they do is they'll basically go out there and they've done really good at buying those really high PR domains and you can basically negotiate and buy the domains through them.

If you're selling out though, PR Powershot, FreshDrop.com, great resources for finding kind of lower PR domains for really good deals.

Pat Flynn: How many of these sites you want to shoot for in your sort of network or whatever?

Alex Becker: If I was just starting out, maybe three to four. Of course, you just want to go out there and you're going to get that initial testing done. And maybe later down the road, just start building up on it. But you'll get really good results from a few domains just like that right off the bat if you do your keyword research the right way.

Pat Flynn: And you just need one link coming from the sites to point to your main page?

Alex Becker: Well, the way we want to build the links on the site is kind of by the kind of anchor text profile that I talked about earlier. All we have to basically do is we'll go out there and we'll make maybe one main keyword link to say our site is about dog training. Let's just imagine that.

Pat Flynn: OK.

Alex Becker: Our main keyword link on the site will be like dog training. Our next keyword link will be like puppy cage training or something like that, something relevant to the niche. And then our final link on the site will be like a URL link or an image link and that kind of gives us that really natural-looking backlink profile coming to site and also gives us three backlinks coming from the high PR sites instead of just one.

Pat Flynn: Right. OK. I don't know if those of you who are listening or watching this right now are probably – if you're not an expert on SEO really, your mind is probably blown or you probably don't know what to do, that's why I wanted to sort of put this stuff to the test just to see what happens just like I did with the Niche Site Duel. See if I can bring another site up in today's SEO world. And so, we'll see what happens and I'm going to work with Alex and see what we can do and just put this to the test. It will be fun.

Now, we talked about purchasing tools and websites, what about for people who don't have a budget? Can they still rank?

Alex Becker: Oh yeah, you can definitely go out there and still get really good results with this. You're just going to be doing your keyword research really well at this point.



And of course, you're not going to be going out there. You're not going to be competing in really competitive niches. But that's not how you should start out anyways.

So if you go out there and you kind of build sites kind of like how Pat used to in the Niche Site Duel the way he saw me like a lot of Web 2.0 and someone link to those websites. That still works very well. And you can get it basically going and you can go to a social web marketing site and link to your site like that. And you can still get results doing that as long as you're doing your keyword research the right way.

And also with that being said, we really get to tap on anchor text. If you're creating your site and you go out there and you build tons of links and all your links are the same kind of anchor text, that's still going to get you slapped. So go out there, kind of use the kind of free methods you've seen Pat used before in the Niche Site Duel. They're great examples. But just keep the anchor text in line and you're going to be seeing pretty good results as long as you do your keyword research the right way. You've got to pick your keywords.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. I think the big theme here is anchor text. And I know a lot of people got hit because they were over optimizing their anchor text. And I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong really quick, if your site got slapped in that update, you can work on your anchor text and try to get back some of those links or change some of the anchor text to get that profile link back to where it should be. Is that right?

Alex Becker: Oh yeah. You definitely can. But the cool thing about Google right now is you can still rank for competitive keywords extremely quickly. Last we talked, I showed you myself ranking for like a 22k search month keyword or like a 30k per month search per keyword and a few days, there's actually almost like 24 hours. So sometimes a better solution is not to try and fix your site, not try and do the Google rain dance of healing, as I like to call it but you can actually go out there and you can just make a new site and rank it just as fast actually like three days later. So, that's kind of my input on that.

Pat Flynn: All right. Now, thank you, Alex, for coming on the Smart Passive Income YouTube Channel. You said you had something to offer us just to kind of give us a little bit of more information on this before we get together in another video when we start to do another Niche Site Duel or case study. What is it that you had to offer?

Pat Flynn: Yeah. What I want to do is I'm pretty sure this interview probably created more questions for people than it kind of made answers and show them some really cool opportunities but they're like, "All right. How do I really get started doing this?" Because really in SEO, you need the nitty gritty to get started. So what I want to do is put the two strategies we talked about earlier in two separate PDFs for your subscribers.



One, the kind of just easier, less competitive strategy that is kind of for people that want to just get started and the other one, the kind of more hardcore, very competitive strategy you can use, say you have SEO clients who you've been doing SEO for a while. In that way, anybody who really needs the nitty gritty can just hop into it and kind of pick up and kind of get the small details that everybody really wants.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. And we'll try to do that the next time we meet. So thank you, Alex, for coming on the show. You know Alex, again, Source-Wave.com. Go check him out. He has got some great case studies. He's very transparent there. And he's got a great community built there too. And yeah, thanks again, man. Appreciate it.

Alex Becker: Yeah. Awesome, Pat. Very happy to be here.

Pat Flynn: All right. Take care.

Alex Becker: All right. Cool.

Pat Flynn: All right. I hope you enjoy that interview with Alex Becker from Source-Wave.com. Lots of great information and I'm sure you'll get a lot more questions. But like he mentioned in the video, there are a couple downloadable PDF files that you can get. The links to those will be in the description below or if you're watching this on the blog, there will be links to those PDF files here on the blog.

And please stay tuned. I got a lot more stuff in regards to niche sites coming up with Niche Site Duel 2.0 coming up. I'm going to put these strategies to the test. I'm going to interview some more experts to try and get the best information out there on how you can build a high-ranking, quality, valuable niche site that's going to help people and also help pay us back in return. So look out for that. I look forward to seeing you in the next video. Take care.