Uncensored truth about black hat SEO & AEO | Lars Lofgren, Fractional VP of Marketing

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Show notes

Welcome to what might be our most unusual episode yet. My guest today is Lars Lofgren, a Fractional VP of Marketing who's worked with companies like Perplexity and Automattic and has generated over $20 million in affiliate revenue across his career.

Lars has seen every era of SEO from the inside: the link building gold rush, the Helpful Content Update bloodbath, and now what he calls a new Wild West where Google seems to have turned off its spam filters.

Today we're doing something different: a true crime-style deep dive into the dark side of search: Black hat SEO, parasite schemes, Reddit manipulation, and how Google's algorithm is being exploited right now in ways that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Lars isn't here to teach you how to break the rules, but as he puts it: it takes a thief to catch a thief.

My 6 biggest takeaways

1. Google changed its algorithm at the end of 2022, and most old playbooks no longer work. Lars calls it the biggest shift he has seen in his career. The helpful content update is now a permanent part of the algorithm, ready to hurt your site if you cross the line.
2. Link building is no longer the shortcut. He built huge numbers of high quality links in 2023 to save sites that were dropping, and it did nothing. You can no longer go from zero to number one with links alone.
3. The new way to win, is building your entity across platforms. Build your presence on YouTube, Reddit, or LinkedIn first. Then come back to Google, and in his experience you can break many SEO rules and still rank. Note the word he uses: entity, not brand.
4. He calls Reddit the most powerful tool for manipulation he has ever seen. Five upvotes in a decent subreddit can put you on page one of Google for terms worth six or seven figures. Win on Reddit, and you win on Google, every LLM, and Reddit itself at the same time.
5. There is a hidden way to use Reddit that he says is wide open and widely used. Old anonymous accounts. An agency watching product threads. Soft comments with no links and no clear traces. A few fake upvotes to start the momentum. Sometimes they even post the question and answer it with a second account. His advice: if a product ranks on Google through Reddit, assume someone put it there.
6. Every black hat trick from 2008 is back. Expired domains pointed at money pages. The new version: find domains with few links but a strong Google Business Profile full of reviews. That

authority is hidden from normal link tools and feeds your entity.

Let's connect

Niklas on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/niklas-buschner/ Radyant on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/radyant/ Lars on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/larslofgren/

Full conversation

[00:00:00] If you're using playbooks from like pre-Twenty or before, twenty two. The majority of them are just not relevant anymore. in my eyes it is a different world with the Google algo itself and stuff that worked five years ago does now work today at all. How do people work with Reddit? Maybe not in most precious ways that they want to do LinkedIn post about. The issue with Reddit is that, To get Reddit to work for a company you kind of have go the absolute extremes because You can't just going as marketer in a row like you cannot play middle at all. mods users downvote. you would do fucking oblivion right? Can't Play the Middle. the ultra white hat road is extremely difficult if not impossible for majority companies But there is a third door.

[00:00:49] Before we dive in, you're listening to the Masters of Search podcast with me your host Niklas Buschner. each week I sit down with some of these smartest people around the world and SEO and AI search To bring you their strategies mental models And top pieces of actionable advice. if You enjoy this podcast don't forget to like and subscribe. then follow it In your favorite podcasting app or YouTube. It helps us get top-notch guests and create the best possible content for you. Let's dive into todays episode! Lars has seen every era of SEO from the inside. The link-building gold rush, the helpful content update bloodbath and now what he calls a new Wild West where Google seems to have turned off its spam filters.

[00:01:48] Today we're doing something different A true crime style deep dive into the dark side of search Blackhead SEO Parasite schemes reddit manipulation And how google's algorithm is being exploited right Now in ways that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Lars isn't here to teach you how to break the rules, but as he puts it It takes a thief to catch a thief. So welcome to the podcast lars makes. Nicholas. I'm really really excited. be her. How did she like the intro? That's good. Yeah, that was good. yeah i hope we will have good retention on this episode with a great until i put A lot of effort into it there. so To get going how do You know so much about The dark side Of search? uh what i think my I think it comes to, I like dark shit.

[00:02:33] Okay? Maybe we're getting a little too personal. you know how great. maybe things are different for you but when i came up in grade school uh was very common to have these fifth and sixth graders do these big reports on a subject that they want to...you'd be doing the research report. people pick like..I'm gonna go study submarines where im going to study And the Backstreet Boys, they were really popular. So I think some people did like...I'm gonna study in sync and do a big report on in-sync for that kind of kid stuff right? What'd i choose to do a report on? Ah, so I've always been drawn to like really dark stuff in any venue. So yeah... In marketing what am i drawn too? What do I dig into when it comes through my universe of stuff?

[00:03:32] Why do I latch on to you and be like oh! I want learn more about that. who is this person?! What did they just say?? What does this blog post was a YouTube video? What's the podcast??? And its generally people doing absolutely insane shit on the internet. Uh, and some of it's entertaining. Some of its funny. so this is awful. in their horrible people doing horrible things that happens sometimes. um but yeah if you're drawn to the thing then It finds you one way or other right? And do have any particular

sources are like platforms. I know they might get up. there would be If i start If you want, if you wanna starting point go look at my Twitter profile. Look who I follow and then just start looking through people.

[00:04:15] there's an internet marketer doing some crazy stuff in their. that'll probably get your point the right direction. Okay got it. And what was your favorite period of SEO? If not now because i mentioned in the intro That You've been through all Of It. so yeah What Was It? I would say My Favorite Period was probably between maybe twenty ten and like, twenty eighteen-ish? Like right in there. It's actually a good long while! And now this era wasn't perfect by any means. There were tons of content mills...there always is..There are companies exploiting everything Affiliate marketers just going full bore. They're just exploiting the hell out. but all that said That was also an era where if you wanted to do it the right way, in other words high quality content from someone that really knew what they were talking about.

[00:05:16] If you're willing just grinded out and focused on okay... What are users looking for? I'm going make them happy! I'll work harder than any company is willing. I'm going to care more than anybody else is willing to do because everybody else in this category They're just w two employees, right? There's you know some of them care but honestly a job-to-job like i'm gonna come at it from Like that founder. That hobbyist that enthusiast that Just Is just Gonna go. I'm gonna Do everything I possibly can To make the content In This Category Better Than Anybody Else. if You Took yeah You Could Take That Approach And the, not to say it was easy. Not easy at all and the ROI would not be immediately apparent. you'd be grinding for years.

[00:06:04] but if you wanted to take that approach You could go build something really special That users recognized? That you were proud of and Google also recognize and reward you. Eventually traffic will come The money comes lots ways to monetize when things are working like this And you could build something from scratch that was like really special, right? There were a bunch of websites. they got built during that era. That we still know today. someone went on to be quite big companies like Nerd Wallet Right and that was possible During that era. these days as I'm not sure if it's possible anymore If You Really Want To Go I mean, I get asked occasionally on whether or not you should go build like a website that's SEO focused.

[00:06:53] A hundred percent from scratch and regardless of what they're now willing to do it white hat black hat gray hat regardless the combo unlike your plan with fire. It is very volatile. I'm not even sure Google knows what it's doing half the time. It is basically just like a spooked elephant, right? And how do you deal with this boot...I mean i don't actually know How to deal with spooked elephants but i assume step one Is get away from the spooked Elephant. Right You Don't Spend Time Around An Elephant That Scared Out Of Its Mind and that's google. right tons of people are getting hit by accidents. The algorithm is all over the place. There is A pattern in the madness But if you go in with like, hey I'm just going to do the right thing and Google's gonna recognize that.

[00:07:36] And then i'll get rewarded down-the line. That is a very naive perspective. now. The era today was different from my previous era Not saying it didn't have any problems but there were plenty of people doing it the way they could win. Now those examples are far fewer. And part of this is Google's fault, it's also just the ecosystem too with LLMs gobble everything up. do we need websites? I don't know. maybe still think that we due to some degree but It's not the same like oh i'm gonna help people With informational how-to content and google a healthy Ecosystem than I can plug into That. Those days Are dwindling in getting Um, they continue to recede into the background. Right? So um that would be my favorite era.

[00:08:30] and why? And what would you say this favorite era of yours? when did it end and Why? I'll stay started. i mean It really. if we're gonna put like an actual like gravestone uh date on it how i'd Say i ended twenty-twenty two. That's when Google really started to shift. Now people might hear that day

and be like, ah! It was when ChatGBT came out. so yes there is basically in twenty-twenty two things happened not just one but two. the first was yeah chat gbg announces or model three whatever it was I don't remember But they went hyper viral went big. then boom the whole LLMAI craze begins right? Thats part of it. But for anybody in search, there was actually something and still is to many ways. Something even more intense happening which is Google fundamentally changed the algorithm like it just does not behave the same that used do?

[00:09:29] Like I'm not even saying I had a front row seat right now as running an affiliate business. we started twenty nineteen-ish And We were kind of hitting our apex at in twenty twenty two. So all system good, we were like holy shit. We're on. it is amazing. and then things just started fucking collapsing. after that. some of that decline has deserved if I'm being honest but we had a front row seat to the shift in the Google logo. uh...we are hyper-hyper optimized for the previous era which also means not optimized for current error. So that twenty-twenty two, uh demarcation date is when that algo shifted hard. And if you're working with someone whether or not it's a consultant maybe let say your VP has the background in search.

[00:10:19] um anybody on G if you are founder yourself and you spend a lot of time in search If You're using playbooks from like pre twenty twenty Or be number four twenty twenty two there majority of them are just not relevant anymore in my eyes. I've had to throw so many of them out, sometimes some tactics. they're still somewhat useful like yeah get your keyword on the headline sure but that's...that is just beginning. it looks like its such a small detail. now i have so many other things to worry about. im not even gonna like Worry About The Headline right now. It's it is a different world with the Google algo itself and stuff that worked five years ago does not work today at all. So, That was really big shift probably single biggest platform shifts I've seen in my career like just absolutely wild And took about maybe eighteen months total for google to roll out.

[00:11:20] We saw the beginning of it at the end of twenty-twenty two before anybody else started to pick up on it and everybody has is on top of their Google Algo update timeline. The real hits When people started talking about it and things really started like breaking out into the ecosystem. And everybody recognizes something big was going on that actually happened at the end of twenty, twenty three when helpful content updates started rolling out in force this September. maybe I think um That hit a ton of sites Really directly including us again front row seat. We were we're going through. And then the hits till it kept coming. I think that following spring in twenty-twenty four, like maybe April or something there was another big hit That just took all sorts of hobbyist websites to zero right?

[00:12:16] and now The helpful content update is just baked into the algo. It's always lurking ready to destroy you if you tripwire Get about eighteen months for the whole thing to roll out, but uh that that transition period was just pretty nuts. What what do you think why your sites went to zero because I can imagine a couple of people listening to this and saying hey? You probably didn't do everything. The right way if Google put. i mean at least there are some people That trust google a lot. And now they say Hey, you know google published Some guidelines on this and then yeah read it. Occasionally one of ten people says, hey you know Google's also just acting in their own commercial interest. So what would you say to those why your sites went to zero if you supposedly did everything the right way?

[00:13:07] Yeah this is a one I well wanted not do anything the wrong way. let's be honest. okay. so some these sites absolutely deserve to get taken down a notch. Okay when i say um ok on any platform Right uh If You're Winning If you are, whether it's SEO rankings or you're just dominating YouTube where you're dominating Instagram or whatever. Generally like if you really want that number one spot You were probably gonna have to get into the gray area a little bit right? Like you can generally get to spots three-to five big giant player Um, in your given vertical. Uh everybody knows you but if you really

want to dial it up to number one You're gonna have to get into the sketchy shit usually right? Now we were absolutely dominating Number One.

[00:13:59] Okay so We weren't just like In The Mix! WE WERE DOMINATING. uh ONE OF THE MOST. So here at B-to-B... B-To-B Affiliates. That's where our whole company focused and we were managing multiple websites. And for one of our biggest B to D terms, this thing's a monster right? Just absolute monster. We're making you know single blog post ranking number one with the right affiliate deals can do over six figures in affiliate revenue per month. it's not per year that's per month. okay things are monster. uh...we didn't just have the number-one slot three different websites on page one. We were starting to lock up that whole category, we're basically starting the corner of the whole market okay? To get to a point where if any other company you know wanted to promote its product through affiliates in search at all...we are quickly becoming the only company they could talk which is quite the position of leverage.

[00:15:06] We were fully aware what we're doing, okay? Now...we definitely did not do everything by book. Okay The strategy for that era like I said even though it was my favorite and one big in a while It wasn't without its issues Right? Yes, there were people doing it the right way and still going big. We we're definitely in the gray area. um And we-we were also winning! Right?! We found holes to exploit... ...and we took advantage of that. Um but I think the big difference between then and now is like when Google went through that transition yes Did they nick us? They absolutely took us down a notch and they probably should have To be fair But he's very much..I don't know if you have this saying On the other side of the pond, but you know throw the baby out with bad bathwater right like mm-hmm.

[00:15:59] Google took us down. They took a lot of other affiliate Aggressive affiliate folks down deservedly so write all this makes sense. But they also destroyed Every magical part of google at the same time Right? So they threw the good with the bad. Instead of dialing in their algorithm, instead saying oh hey there's these folks like Lars that are making too much money and maybe we need to dial this back a little bit or at least force Lars go do his real work which I don't mind doing it. Maybe let us give him more incentive just going for that shit rather than exploiting things. they threw everything out Right. And tried to start over with a brand new algorithm, which in my opinion has like more holes. now it's like they sort of in a weird way Like In the past.

[00:16:55] you could win. well You can kind of win everyway and The past. you Could Win White Hat? You Could Win Grey Hat and You Can Win Black Hat. You Just Had To Like Pick How You Were Coming At It. Make Sure You were Playing in the right Areas Now! You Can't Really Win White hat. You can't really win grey hat, but black hat is like open season. now it's kind of fucked up. Or you can sort a win white hat But only if you have massive brand and you've got really mechanical content And you're like okay. well what the fun in that? I don't know. So anyway, it's just a really weird environment now. Yes they took us down and should have changed that but I think the change in a fucked up way. things are different. or what took this down?

[00:17:43] specifically if i was going to let say Lars you know hey Lars You absolutely need another affiliate company. how would u do? Um, well I would not do it the same way. That's for fucking sure i would Do it? I would have to attack The problem in a completely different direction. I Would NOT start with google at all. I wouldn't even Start With a website. really hello that i'm not Even gonna worry about google At least For now Even though there is still plenty of affiliate money To go around. you Have to Attack the Problem kind Of From the side or from A Completely Different Angle. i would Go start a youtube channel Start a YouTube Channel and build up that audience, build a plenty of engagement. You can do that the healthy way to that content first-way.

[00:18:30] get really excited. take your audience along on the journey with you. Do all that great creator

stuff? Build up an audience build up plenty attraction And then when you're really starting become a player in your category whatever you know category after. Then come back to Google. And that is what I've noticed across clients. It's what i've noticed on my own sites, it's What? I've notice on who's winning. Generally. basically Google dialed back their The weight that link building has on any given site. right. They dialed That way Back not to say the link Building doesn't matter anymore But they dialed it. Wayback Is no one of the cheat code that he used To be Because that's the model we used previously. And in that golden era of kind-of affiliate SEO, basically all you needed to win was like could build better high quality links without getting caught by Google?

[00:19:24] If you can do higher volume and higher quality without being caught then you won it! Very simple playbook. It is an execution playbook. That is no longer the case in my eyes. You cannot go from zero to number one just off a link building, In fact when we started get hit We did...we really ramped up Link Building and an attempt To save some of these sites that were starting to sink didn't do shit right? I built so many links in twenty-twenty three like crazy high quality amazing lengths And it did not slow anything down at all. OK, so link building was the previous loophole. Well now the new loophole is like cross platform here and whether or not you've built your entity up across multiple platforms for at least one solid platform that has not Google.

[00:20:16] So basically Google's taken their authority measurement which used to be there link indexed in. they have now shifted it into our outsourced it to other platforms like YouTube or Reddit, or LinkedIn. Or Instagram whatever it is. so if you build up your entity on those other platforms then come back to Google. You can just commit SEO sins left and right in Google doesn't care? Your site could be trashed, your paychecks could also be your content Doesn't even match search intent half the time. But Google's like. ah this entities trustworthy. Right, and I use the term entity very deliberately. It's entity not brand. right because brand is everybody can get like. uh people can get a little sloppy with that term.

[00:21:01] they think oh i just need to go build the brand in your my company. i'm like no yes or no? That brand needs to map to an online presence. Your online footprint around your entity needs to be cohesive And um you know it needs to have plenty of engagement and popularity. If you do that, You come back to Google and use rank for stuff left right in center. It's like kind of nuts. how easy it is. In many cases its easier But you need to go build the other platforms first. then you Come Back To google. I used to be able to start with SEO on day one. now SEO Is Like The Giant Payoff. At The End There He Is. It Can't Help You Along The Journey From Day One In most cases, if you're trying to go especially like a creator or affiliate route.

[00:21:52] If you're in a niche, if your SaaS business and you're an niche that's less competitive or e-com again. There are some basic things You can do. in the beginning That's like bottom of funnel stuff But once use hit that if you want to keep expanding your marketing funnel You need to go elsewhere right? You can just build up this content engine Like he used to. you've here doing it The way. even if you're investing insane amounts into the editorial quality sort doesn't matter anymore facts Less money invested in editorial content can be a good thing. these days like I have to reign writers back in half the time. No, no less engagement content. Let's make this little less valuable otherwise Google is not gonna like it right?

[00:22:33] It's weird space. So yeah, it's just lots of change enormous amounts of change. But yes been kind of crazy to watch. Okay, let's dig into some of these things. So I can imagine people thinking okay i have to get my entity on other platforms. but if it's another platform then there are also either editors that uh want To feature me in their articles or they don't and the. there are platforms like reddit where you Have moderators etc. so yeah Let's take one example. um because You said It's very easy too. Get yourself uh on these platforms. so let's talk about reddit because obviously reddit has gained a lot of

popularity. yes it is like if i get my brand people mostly talk about brand on reddit then it will be recommended more often by chachi bt etc.

[00:23:28] and then people started spamming reddit. And some of them noticed moderators delete the comments that are. so what do you see? Yeah, sometimes. What do you see? How? how do people work with Reddit? maybe not in the most um Most precious ways that they want to want to do a LinkedIn post about? yeah So I've been a long time reddit user. okay i still use old reddit which kind of dates me and makes me don't know. Maybe whatever people can judge me for that if i want. but anyway i've been around reddit For A while And The issue With Reddit Is That To get Reddit to work for a company, you kind of have to go the absolute extremes. You cannot play in middle at all from marketing perspective. Now what I mean by that is like reddit has it baked into cultural ethos of Reddit and platform as whole And just culture and mods.

[00:24:26] users are very anti-marketing Which i think thats key pillar. why Reddit now where its at? From the get-go, people were like we don't want marketing of any kind here. Sounds great and for a while it was great but now its created because Reddit's become so dominant. It has become one of these go to platforms period And then on top. that is at the top Google everywhere right? Just everywhere There almost there. You talk about like loopholes that get to the top of Google and how links no longer work. Well Reddit's one of those main loophols. they got atop, right? Even halfway respected subreddit in your category. you even a moderate number uh, subreddit and you will find yourself on the top of page one for very important commercial terms transactional terms in Google.

[00:25:27] Very quickly right? The amount work that it takes is so low And that's because Reddit is just getting a boost constantly. It just goes straight to the top Googles Desperately looking for fresh content that looks even halfway legit and pumping it straight to the top of Google. So, The monetary incentives here are massive! There's so much money in so much influence on Reddit because its at the Top Of Google constantly. not only is there a top-of-google but It's THE resource For every LLM. You start asking research questions on anything, and every LLM is desperately going through Reddit trying to find anything related. So if you want to skew results in perception of anything... Reddit is a fulcrum like I've never seen it before!

[00:26:15] You're not just optimizing for Reddit? You get Reddit, Google or all the LLMs?! All-in-one go!! It's kind of nuts!!! Like you don't have one platform but YOU GET THREE!!!! And you could argue that they are Like it's. they're. all three are contenders for most valuable, influential platforms out there. Right? It's like that plus Instagram and TikTok. right boom you kind of have all of its um. so this is massive platform but it's extremely anti marketing. So what do you do? well You can go ultra-ultra white hat Ultra transparent ultra soft to the point where you're just, your founder. You're helping out a given community and slowly building up your own name. Oftentimes because of Reddit culture it's not even like Your Name It's Your Handle.

[00:27:09] So if you really build-up a random anonymous username over time People do this! It does happen...it takes forever....It can be done. But how many fenders or even companies were just full-time marketers are going to go build up, you know a single user profile over like a decade. I'm probably not that many right? Like it's these are absolutely exceptions. So that's one option. Right alter ultra white hat. maybe if you have a lot of excitement around your company Maybe get a branded subreddit going. That's really tough. building communities is so hard so brutally hard Even if it doesn't matter what the platform is. you're just trying to build like an actual fan base around your company. It's crushingly difficult, especially If you're not hot or there's nonex a lot of excitement around your space.

[00:27:58] most companies I would argue are not gonna be able to do that Like even if they do all the right things. Just like people don't want to be fans. you know, Water Spriggett company. I don't know

like whatever. it just... Like. not to say there aren't interesting things about boring industries that actually are-I love BDB! I don' t care how complicated and boring is. There's always something interesting once you get into but a lot of this stuff is functional. We're not looking for entertainment from the stuff or community They were belonging. For all these companies. It was like no i have job. Please help me, right? Since it's much more straightforward. So those options are going to be very limited and It's gonna be really, really tough because you can't just go in as a marketer into Reddit like You cannot play the middle at all!

[00:28:43] You can even Be Like A little marketing where we're like. ah helpful tips. And then...you know, occasionally mention your company mods. users that downvote you would do in fucking oblivion. Right mods will scrape Your stuff and Just instantly pull it. um..You're just doomed right so You can't play the middle. The ultra-white hat road is extremely difficult, if not impossible for majority of companies and folks out there... But there IS a third door! Let's open that door! That is wide fucking open!! And everyone's doing it!!! You really played that storyline now? It was like cliffhanger. Now we have to have commercial Good good. Yeah, sometimes I start meandering and it I barely don't even manage to pull back together But i think this one landed.

[00:29:33] so third door wide open. yeah was the third door? well you just fake at all. okay like You go in with anonymous accounts? You go when they've been. they'd be farmed up over time. They have long engagement histories on the categories you care about And you have to going soft. You can't be blatant about it. If you try to throw an affiliate link or something like that, That doesn't fucking work. everybody can spot that! You have do. in a way there's no fingerprints but if go and say I'm starting the new payroll platform none of my clients are on payroll i am not doing anything right now. so this is not real example. BUT I absolutely someones doin' this somewhere. So let's say I'll start a new payroll platform.

[00:30:25] And I was like, okay uh...I need ROI within somewhat reasonable timeframe something shorter than five years and um..and you can do this yourself if your extremely motivated. the go-to move is to find an agency that will do it for you. there are a bunch of them out because theres big money in here And if you work with an agency, also get plausible deniability. You're like oh I didn't know what they were doing and had no idea. we've cupped ties to that part! You can wash your hands very easily should something come to light. but you find an agency and ideally have done all the work it takes. build up these accounts triggers, right? So these accounts are clean. They're well maintained and they're healthy .They have not been abused ,they look legit.

[00:31:20] And you work with this agency. and this agency starts finding all the different Reddit threads that haven't been locked by moderators yet in a ranking. Uh... they start monitoring All of the main. You know your payroll. Who's involved in payroll decisions? HR. Are there HR subreddits? Yes, there are! There's so fucking many of them. There is an entire subreddit dedicated to payroll. It literally r slash payroll right. it not hard to find these things and its active. theres a buncha people in here And you start slowly slipping into these different subreddits and leaving a comment here, or even a comment there. Some of it's like fairly just helpful genuine content to build up your presence in the receipts on your account.

[00:32:10] so if anybody goes digging into your account history everything looks real. And then when someone, there's multiple ways to do this. But let's say they're actually is a genuine thread that pops up in our payroll and somebody was like hey I'm looking for...I have business roughly the size we've tried using products X&Y. They suck! Am at loss. Is anything new hot? That i should give it try. Oh well your agency Managing an account is watching this subreddit. They see the thread go live and they just slip in it say hey You should check out so-and-so there's no link. There's no URL. it looks perfectly natural. It's

a very informal voice, its not hard to sell at all. the account looks real and they've been engaged and there is just an innocuous comment right?

[00:33:05] Looks like everything else on Reddit. but now you get that brand impression for someone looking a product in your space, the community anybody else in the community. that's also like kind of wondering. maybe they should switch. They'll now see their thread if you're following it closely and then in a few weeks time, Google sees this active thread and says oh hey we should consider this other product when for search rankings it starts to build up the entity right because its on another platform. people are talking about it. Google loves that! Google is going start to trust your domain and you're entity more than they did previously. all of the LLMs will start picking it up right? And All You Had To Do was come with the right account Watch the threads coming in and when the right one comes up just slide In.

[00:33:55] now if you really want to push this there's a lot of ways To do it. One, If You're Really On Top Of It Or Your Agency Knows What They're Doing they Don't Just Have One Account. They have A Bunch. So They Slide In With One Account And Then They Slide In with A Couple of Upvotes. Get That Comment to The top Fairly Quickly Not Too Many Right? Ya Gotta Play Careful! You Gotta Play Under The Rate. Discipline Is The Name Of The Game Already? Um, you can't have anything. look fishy. Right? It's gotta. everything has got to look normal but won't read it all of. Reddit is also a momentum game right like if you get out early. that's how You Get All Of Your Karma. That's How You Get Ranked your comments at the top The Threads.

[00:34:34] That's So You Get Post To Get A Ton Of Upvotes. You Come In Early And Then Whatever The Momentum Is On Reddit Reddit Tends Just Like Keep Pushing It Right, so if you come in. You don't have to seed all the upvotes. You just had to see a couple. now you're at The top. and for as long is that post has gained engagement? In the community over the next twenty four forty eight hours? well it's gonna get a lot more up votes and Generally, you know once a post is out And that kind of initial comment structure Develops while the rest of the engagement tends to just lean into That same structure unless something goes crazy Controversial. Uh, things tend to build on the structure that the post starts with. Right?

[00:35:20] So you just need a seed of it a little bit and then they community will take care of the rest. if you want up this even further You have your agency Seed! The initial thread. They come in with another account And they pretend To be the HR team struggling With payroll. I'm accompanying roughly this size or whatever. We tried all these other products, they suck! What do we use instead? And then you know maybe don't come in as the first comment because You don't want to look too suspicious. But maybe it's comment number three Or four. boom your coming with an alt and answering your own question effectively. okay This shit happens constantly. It is everywhere. I'm now at the point where if i see product threads on reddit, this is probably bullshit.

[00:36:07] You should assume it's not all of its bullshit but you should assume more bullshit than not and you'll be right to majority The. what Reddit agencies are doing around this stuff is pretty intense. People say, oh the mods will catch this you can sniff it a mile away. No You Can Catch The Shitty Ones From A Mile Away Okay? The ones that Are Good That Care That Put Real Effort Into This. They Look Like Everything Else on Reddit. They just they merge into the background. They don't leave any fingerprints. if you go digging, You don't find anything. I love digging up scams and bullshit on the internet And this is the type of stuff. or if If you care and you're doing it right there's nothing to find no one will find Any fingerprints at all?

[00:36:53] uh, agencies or they have like multiple people working on humanizing content so that it matches the exact voice. It looks...it's not some marketease from some marketer and some corporate

tagline but no its- it looks just users! Its got spelling mistakes? And it looks like someone's just writing on their phone, or in the checkout line and they're just ripping off comments. Just like the rest of Reddit... ...and you'll never catch up! So this stuff is rampant- that kind of mild stuff? That's more common stuff. I mean no people have queued up. They've deliberately poked of communities intentionally and stirred up like controversial, civil wars within communities. And getting infighting in conflict In order to get certain things to pop.

[00:37:49] You can be really malicious with this stuff if you want to pull on manipulation But just the product threads will keep everybody busy for a long time. That's where money is anyway. Like I said i'm in B-to-B A lot random niches And Reddit, like you don't need that much. This is the crazy part. You can get to top of Google with five upvotes on extremely important terms That move six or seven figure deals. It's fucking nuts! And no one's checking. It's insane! So yes, Reddit Wild Wests lots of sketchy stuff. if something is ranking on Google via reddit you should assume that it was planted there because most often I wasn't okay. for the record Lars does not recommend to do it That way. he just describes so everybody.

[00:38:43] Well yeah let me give my risk speech Yeah. Okay, um if you were to do this let's say you worked with an agency or You did it yourself? You did some of this reddit manipulation and decided To Do It With Your Brand Or Your Company. Today I Don't Know Anybody That's Gotten Burned By This. To Be Fair As Of This Moment The risk is exceptionally low, especially if you're not sloppy about it. Like you might piss off a given moderator or community and maybe that does a little bit of damage. but we all have ADD on the internet right now and probably will forever so I don't think anybody will remember anything. to impact your brand would be pretty minimal. also platform risk. So if even if you went too hard and you were exposed, is that going to ding your entity or whatever?

[00:39:35] You're doing in Reddit permanently? I don't think so. Is that gonna lead any Google manual actions Or google algo hits? no Google's not currently looking for any of that stuff now. That is as of this moment right Google. actually, there is a google search update going on right now. I think so. maybe that update has something baked in and i'll change my mind in a week? I don't know. but um regardless of what happens in the short term at any moment in the future reddit google Any other platform could wake up and say oh hey Maybe we should like actually care about what's happening on Reddit. Maybe someone needs to be paying more attention of all the manipulation going on, maybe we need to bake into some negative consequences in how people are working on this platform.

[00:40:27] that is now a fact-of-truth for everything I guess? That...I mean i don't think it was an unreasonable conclusion. Maybe they do. At any point in the future, Google could get its shit together and start looking for these negative manipulation signals – a great parallel! In the early days of SEO nothing was wrong with pain-for-links…nothing. And I'm sure people during that era made tons of arguments like how would Google ever find? You know, How Would They Ever Know I Paid For This Link? Right We Can Make The Exact Same Argument Today. How Would Google Ever Know Uh...I Paid An Agency To Build Up This Fake Account And Then Post This Fake Comments! HOW WOULD THEY EVER KNOW?! But Like There If They Gave A Shit and they Really Cared They Could Probably Come up with Plenty Of Signals That Correlated right Now.

[00:41:25] With That Stop the Game. No It'll Just make the game Harder Um, but my point is like paid links weren't a problem until they were. Now it's not to say people stopped paying for links entirely or stop building links, But you had be way more careful about. he just couldn't go on some paid link platform pay a bunch of links and rank right? You have to like very carefully remember earlier on how I was talking about our strategy for ranking in dominating the affiliate area SEO. who can build more quality lengths at volume without getting caught Right? Google shifted so that there was risk and you

had to play ahead of that risk And be careful with how much he brought on. right now There's essentially no risk with anything.

[00:42:08] You're doing on Reddit, but that could change and Now everything. if you are doing manipulation You can wake up tomorrow and Everything you've been doing can now become a serious fucking problem. That can happen. that might happen. Uh, I think the odds are low because i'm not impressed with google's execution these days or reddits to be honest. So you know what is likely that this happening again? Low um but if you are someone who is extremely conservative when it comes to risk. If you have a brand that you really don't want to mess with uh You just don't wanna touch anything. That's even like the slightest of sketch. Don't do that stuff right now! I know plenty of entrepreneurs and founders that are very risk tolerant.

[00:42:56] It's kind why they're founders, And they don't blink an eye at this stuff like yeah cool game on right? Like They'll go for it and we'll do it. Um i would not do that personally with my business. For my stuff i like operating in the light Even though i've gone through periods where i didn't. i prefer transparency I know, so like being transparent and doing things the right way but also to win. So i go back and forth between them two Right now with all of my stuff that i control an own. i am ultra white hat. it's very buttoned up across the board. im not doing any sketchy stuff But i have clients. they were like well give us some sketchy stuffs. And i'm like ok its your business talk to someone so don't get you squared away.

[00:43:44] Uh, that's my be care. You're playing with fire on Reddit speech. and do you think if a signal like reddit and differentiating between If something was manipulated or it's legit? It is so hard? even if you say that Google might have signals there might be Like the way to actually differentiate between genuine conversations and those that got seeded. Do you think the signal as a whole, like basically influence of Reddit on either Google or chat GPT citations etc. will just decrease over time because they... The argument these honest and super valuable conversation is not valid anymore due to exploits from us marketers? Yeah, if Google is doing the real work then more Reddit threads will not rank. Reddit's visibility in Google will go down If Google actually cared about validating the accounts The subreddits and mods the post themselves and doing some work to make sure that they have not been manipulated.

[00:45:00] And if there is a sense of manipulation, that stuff doesn't rank what? That means it's at the Reddit. content inventory will decrease and rankings invisibility will decrease with. I also think that's pretty tough Pilled to swallow for Google leadership and definitely Reddit. Leadership, right? They have like massive fucking deals between the two. red and Google are like customers of each other partners. this is um so it's. you know I was a google BP or something rather And i walked into a conference call. They're bad at their jobs and cannot police their platform, And I'm gonna have to start doing it for them. That is going be a very uncomfortable conversation! And my boss My CXO or who has seen your VP of global strategy whatever the fuck you Google might tell me Lars Back the fuck off.

[00:45:56] there's a deal that's bigger than this. I mean, i don't know if that's actually happening right this but um a lot of stuff like That can happen and does happen in big tech. Right these big deals get made And you kind of have to just let the slop ship Because there's too much money on two big of A single contract somewhere Again. I Don't think their google attorney is listening This. please don't send me a cease and desist. I have no idea what's happening at Google But Things like that happen in big corporate tech companies, right? And who knows maybe it's happening here. Maybe not I don't know. but uh yeah i There are so many dynamics going on right now which leads me to be pessimistic That um google or reddit Or anyone will actually put In the work and time that policing these platforms truly require.

[00:46:51] They're putting in a fraction of what it needs. And everybody, if they do put that effort and time... Everybody including Google and Reddit themselves even Google users will feel the pain right? If we are doing all these fake comments or pulling them down or getting rid Reddit threads aren't there. Reddit, Reddit threads and posts in comments that look real are no longer in search results which means people looking for solutions Are now hitting dead ends faster? And they're more conscious of those dead ends right. so what's better for the Google user A Google user, a lot of users might be happy with the fact or maybe not consciously but subconsciously happy with effect that even if it looks real is still better than no response.

[00:47:49] Right? So Google user satisfaction goes down! Even though we're actually making things better for them and preventing them like slap from getting in front of them at first place. right. so there's always weird feedback loops in play to kind prevent this moving forward my eyes. But yeah, I think Reddit should rank less. The quality of Reddit and the number high-quality Reddit threads does not correlate with current visibility on Reddit. in my opinion Right. And I'm a deep Reddit user, this is not just like an SEO that's salty at Reddit. Like no, I know what's happening in Reddit and there is good stuff already! It's not total trash but it's shrinking by the day... ...and you gotta be careful with what you pay attention to on Reddit.".

[00:48:36] We duck into Reddit a lot now. What else are you seeing? That is working when it shouldn't. Oh man so much. Let's pick out one example. Yeah, maybe you're the your favorite? The most concerning or most surprising absurd. yeah Okay here. well within Google A good a good way to think about it is every black hat tactic that was popular in. like two thousand eight Has come back And you're like Lars all of them and I guess all of him. So drop domains expired domains man those are back-and-full force holy cow Basically, just actually here's a trick that I saw somewhere and i fucking believe it man. I'm not going to go do it myself but understand why everybody else is doing it. So you know? Everybody. It's been known for a long time although there was a period where the expired domains were not as popular.

[00:49:32] And For anybody That doesn't Know what The expired domain Trick What it Is You Just Go Look at. There's all these tools out there that I'll show you which domains came up for, they were not renewed. So the domain has been dropped. They're now free to register again from scratch. You don't have to buy it first. The current owner are just available. Well when these domains kind of get dropped? We still live link authority right? There's always links All these old links pointing those domains. so you go a lot of SEOs and doing this four years Hyenas in the mix. Okay, it's not just some secret and you know It's not gonna be a feast for just to you. there are other players. so keep that. There's a whole market around this.

[00:50:12] But uh The whole point is defining domain with high quality links preferably somewhat relevant what? You're already doing Re-registered at domain from scratch. you now own hit for whatever the fee Is of fifteen bucks or Whatever. And Now you get all That Domain Authority And you can start redirecting those domains to whatever pages. You need two on your site, your homepage particular moneypages supporting pages. do all that stuff and bad stuff is working. it has been working for a while. I mean It came back in like full force. the new twist on this which i think Is interesting? have old links that are valuable and relevant to what you're doing. You look for link or do, you look for domains that potentially have no or very few links but have a very established Google business profile preferably with reviews.

[00:51:09] Right now it's like some cafe that got shut down and there is a ton of these, right? Small businesses. Retail business. they are always churning. They're going out to business A lot don't build any links. So if you just look at simple link building tool It comes up as nothing. so alot people overlook

That stuff with other domain. Black hats they dont see. but If your checking Google Business Profiles There's a lot of authority baked into that entity. Again, right? It's not domains anymore it is the Entity Google Business Profiles. they really build up that entity those reviews oh yeah. so you take that domain and do the redirects. in all other cases from what I'm hearing get some pretty nice bumps uh... So thats popular at the moment.

[00:51:56] another one That is really popular as like just press release, like parasite SEO. So there's all these news organizations. you can do this like press riot wires through them, press-release wires right? And they'll charge your fees. sometimes it was a couple thousand dollars. I think Rooters does this and I know bunch of SEOs that are just why try to rank... Do the work again in our own domain to rank when we're gonna go to Rooter's pay a couple thousands dollars, do his press release. All their affiliate links are baked into that press release And it just goes to the top of Google, right? That's insane. So there is a lot of stuff around those. like all the press release stuff Is very rampant at the moment.

[00:52:37] they expired domains. I know bunch people are buying links left and center. Okay i gave whole speech about how dangerous Links are. well They were. It almost feels Like google stock paying attention To link building. now they did dial down the influence that link building. So maybe their rationale was like, oh, links don't carry as much weight we don't have to check them all anymore or we can save ourselves a bunch of compute time right? Well for the instances where they can still move the needle now you can. I'm seeing sloppiness in link-building Like i haven't seen and over a decade Right. And if you look at top ranking stuff You could look through The Link profiles and the link Building is so blatant Like people are doing stuff I never would have done even in the height of the affiliate SEO era, right?

[00:53:24] It's just so blatant. So obvious and Google is not doesn't seem like they're checking it. Doesn't seem to care. Oddly enough if i was summarize what will kill your domain these days as usually content when you look at sites that are suffering When I looked at sites where we were well then tanked or struggling Always a content problem. There used to be links, right? That's why there was whole generation of SEOs that got so paranoid around link building even if they were willing To still get into sketchy waters like the gap paranoid and really kind Of religious about. let's make sure we don't get caught in this stuff now. you can be sloppy as hell But if your content is not super dialed in, If you just stretch it a little too far.

[00:54:12] You will nuke your whole domain and It takes months of not years to come back from that. so almost like the whole risk model on SEO flip-flopped right for up The bulk of my career was Like...you know..You can always fix Content but you Can't Fix Your Link Profile. So do Not Fuck Up Your Links Now Its Flipped. Google doesn't seem to look at the only soul. But Google's definitely paying attention your content, so when you're considering like a content expansion plan? Oh my God! You need to be paranoid about where you are pushing into how you doing it and...you better not stretch too far. otherwise um..You gonna go through very rough patch with your rankings. And if your ranking is tank Yeah, all the LLM mentions go down with it.

[00:54:57] Right? They correlate right. so It's all. foundation of system is a lot overlapped there. So you're not just fucking yourself on one platform You're fucking yourself and chat GP and Claude and perplexity in everybody else. So yeah be really careful this stuff And content Is where the bulk or the risk is. and building up like an entity your domain With any these likes search systems at the moment if you would Want to do it right and not wait like five years, for example with a genuine reddit engagement then being the helpful founder that has no timeline. No deadline at all. but you want to have results in reasonable amount of time And maybe your risk appetite is okay But you don't want to engage in something.

[00:55:42] That's obvious manipulation. You would be tasked With that a B to be software product, somehow AI native fresh company. I don't know. you can make something up. what they're doing. how would you approach it? Yeah so this is the question that everybody's asking right and i do think there's a path. The path Is more narrower than It used To Be all Right. So I've worked with A lot of SaaS Businesses. I've done a ton Of Consulting for Different SaaS Founders And Tech Founders Over The Last Fifteen Years Had A Lot Of Clients And what I used to tell people was like, look every channel works. Just go pick one that you're going to stick with especially on the organic side. organics my background right? Okay i kind of know how paid works.

[00:56:30] um but Like i'm not a paid practitioner like. well on the Organic side like they all use To work just pick one. pick The medium be podcasting. if You love video Go do YouTube. If You Love Social Go Get On Twitter. You Know Whatever It Is. um SEO That's The Space That I went Really Hard on. They all work and they can take you from zero to something. Those days because of AI, how our media ecosystem has changed so much... I'm talking a lot about Google on the Algo but it's not just one level. there is also the media landscape in the A.I., how LLMs are impacting everything like search behavior as users try research through AIs But also the content mix. that's not coming out from everybody. shipping AI slop left, right and center media habits in the media media ecosystem has changed a lot.

[00:57:23] So going forward it's actually way. you can't just like pick a channel and stick with It right? Like I used to be able to tell people hey, well If you can get like a halfway decent writer whether it's a founder or like a writer You find as a contractor And you just like start blogging consistently and stay on it. It will pay off at some point. Right that might take like six twelve months To start to see the some sort of return and it won't get really interesting for five years. but like It will be there, right? That's that is changed. That's not no longer the case or it's not nearly as reliable of a path. But there is still one path. With all this change There was one path that still absolutely fucking works.

[00:58:04] if you show up You have some degree of talent Not even like amazing just some just little bit. use care And and you don't quit. What is the model for that kind of like white hat, authentic very transparent doing things. The right way founder. That wants an organic approach to marketing and it still has a lot of leverage in ROI potential over both Like the medium term and long-term. what does that model look? It's not a new model but That's it. One of the like remaining models that still works, which is that founder led marketing right? So Google was going through all its shit Reddit as its own weird beasts. and so what works Right now? It's across everything What is not slowing down in the slightest. essentially his influencer marketing And founder lead marketing just this funny little label.

[00:59:05] The startups have called that same shit Like be the influencer the founder. If you can come in and have some options on what platforms to choose, though there's a limited list but it is an option... You do get some options! You can occasionally mention your company, you could occasionally put in like an actual pitch. You can do all that old-school standard content marketing permission based marketing at Seth Godin popularized like twenty years ago. All of that stuff still works! All it cuts through the AI slop. It is absolutely viable as long As you come in and are very consistent. Put on that influencer hat and you don't fucking quit, right? If you keep going it will pay off. And I'm seeing this myself on.

[01:00:04] there's just... I'm not some thought leader pontificating like a random fuckin' podcast Like no! I am doing my self and i've seen it. The funnel has shifted. A big part of that is because everyone was so sick with all this AI slop. It's easy to produce at least content that looks polished in mass, right? Because AI is there. You can do all the content you want and get your prompts a little dialed-in or foundational data a little bit dialed into. just ship! Ship! Ship!! Ship!!! Just BLAST content through every medium. then you want in mass like it's. no having a content engine has no longer differentiation anymore everybody doing so easy to ramp up content volume. audiences are retreating from my

opinion. They're getting sick of it.

[01:00:55] I can't tell you how many people like are in my LinkedIn DMs and they're just like Lars, your content is a breath of fresh air on LinkedIn. all this fucking...I don't want to put words but there's so sick about the banal generic trash content on LinkedIn. And then anybody that comes with any degree or voice god someone willing to be like a little authentic and not just playing all these ridiculous content memes, trends or recycled content that we're bored to tears with. If you can come in as yourself authentically transparent again don't quit keep at it You will get there. So I think like going forward, whether it's for an individual founder or even Like I'd say the same thing to a marketing team if i'm talking to an organic Marketing team and they're like Lars.

[01:01:59] What is the cutting edge of? Organic marketing and like well you take your entire organic marketing team And You all Put on the influencer hat The whole fucking team the VP All the full-time employees. you basically said okay we like II don't work on the blog anymore. I am now an influencer at this company. All the follow up questions to that statement are a question you need to go answer, right? So like okay if i'm an influencer what am I doing with my day-to-day? What's my specialty My influencers specialty At This Company compared To all The other full time influencers on this team? Right You Go Answer Those Questions. You Now Have Your Organic Strategy Right? Some people are going to go focus on speaking slots.

[01:02:44] Some people were gonna do podcasts, some people are gonna do LinkedIn really hard. Some People are gonna Twitter! Some people who're gonna a mix of two or three those things. You'll occasionally do some blog posts when they make sense. you might do so occasional workshop for your customers. all To build up your own brand presence Your own personal brands...your own channels..your own personal channels not Brand Channels. No one listens the brand channels. They haven't forever. And even if you have a branded YouTube channel, it's like okay. who are the main characters on that channels? Are they gonna be your founders or is there going to someone in marketing team. Who are those identities? You go answer these questions and find a path forward but its now really dialing-in of that person right?

[01:03:26] The personal identity from their company? and who were the Personal Identities that represent our company? Go figure this out! There will be tons of lead flow. You will be able to build an entire brand from scratch if you want too. A couple teams that are doing this really well right now have always had a lot of respect for the Ahrefs team, they've been doing this forever even before it was cool. so many of them were linked in with a lot great content on LinkedIn...A newer team is up and coming. that's like crushing it! Is The Beehive Team? They're all over LinkedIn. a bunch of them are and like that's kind of the new organic Like influencer based Team sport model of organic content marketing. It's very B to be right.

[01:04:17] there is plenty of incumbents in the newsletter space. they're going head-to-head with sub stack and kit Mailchimp, everyone else And their from what it seems like doing really well. So you could follow a very similar model? You don't need. you can start with one person. You do a part time as the founder, it has tons of leverage on your time but when you start. Of course if you don't have an active audience It's going to be shit right. that traction is gonna Be essentially zero. so you got get the ball rolling? Yeah Get a little momentum. But if you'd get into it and you could go in like I my personal accounts were Essentially dead two years ago because I was built an affiliate company iIwas working out something else I wasn't doing My personal brand And then AI comes out, I'm like oh shit all company content is fucked.

[01:05:04] The only content that's going to survive from an individual person you trust. so even in B-to-B content marketing how do you operate through individuals? That'll get somewhere interesting

and thats where... I would be exploring that model but if i was building a SaaS startup today or the first marketing hire at a SaaS start up with some B-To-B tech company of any kind. That's the model I would be going down. All right, last we covered a lot of ground. What didn't we talk about that? We should have talked about in some. so there is so much Dumerism and hype Because AI at marketing like oh are we gonna have jobs? Do our startups even go to exist in a year? once Claude rolls out some new feature set that blows us all up.

[01:05:56] Maybe some categories will go through that. But so, you know when the AI like viral viral hype moment hit? You now I was deep into affiliate SEO and content right. So of course a content marketing was one of the first to go through very existential crisis because Like the first time you're in Claude, and then you put it up prompt. And look at like a pretty good blog post here. Oh shit! Are any of us going to have jobs? So I had a legit career crisis about two years ago. I lost my company AIs ruining everything that i liked on the internet. Am I gonna be valuable or are all my skills going? So I went through this crisis really early and now it's like spreading to every other department, in every other function.

[01:06:51] And everybody is going through the business model. are we gonna have jobs? when like crazy big because of this AI moment, some will get absolutely crushed. Now what was that? That's the textbook company check or whatever for college students. Like they got absolutely obliterated and you're like yeah once You can just get any summary about Any homework assignment from chat GBT like why are you going to rent a textbook like it makes sense? Some so some spaces are gonna Get absolutely crushed And then is unfortunate I think the bulk of companies, jobs everything else. It's going to be okay. we're all gonna have jobs like AI is just a. it's not our tool right? i think um We are going to spend The next decade Like shifting different workflows around rebalancing the weights across everything.

[01:08:04] In some areas, especially engineering and output has gone up like a hundred X in last six months or whatever. it is so great but that doesn't necessarily mean your company's one hundred X effective right? Engineers can write code all day long. they could have AI write code a hundred times faster. But if thats not what customers actually want Is that going to move their company forward? Fuck no! There are all sorts of really critical elements in a given workflow, and an operating model across the company that are absolutely mission critical. And if anything some of them have become even more important. like I'll give you an example on marketing. um i pissed some people off when i say this...I'm like..you know I started my career and did a bunch of stuff but one things I started doing early on was writing a lot of SaaS copy for marketing websites right?

[01:08:52] All the homepage copy, all of feature pages. All landing pages...all that stuff! I was writing all that copy by hand. and uh i love writing copy!! I have a ton of respect for The Direct Response Copy World so im not saying this flippantly..I am deep in that space. I've worked with alot of best reject response marketers on the planet like absolute monoliths. and um you know Im gone deep enough to copy to understand these people are so fucking good. ill never be half as good as them right? But also understand how good they truly are Right. Like, so I have deep respect for this field. but i think the days are gone when you need an individual marketer on your team writing The majority of a copy free website like he.

[01:09:32] just don't anymore. But what do you really? On the marketing team, where's that work shifted? Where is the bottleneck now? I'm working with like a B to be fintech company at the moment and Their product velocity is insane. At the moment my holy fuck. i'm so impressed By how fast they're shipping what their shipping quality seems Like it's there. They have really good read on the market And oh man you are all moving flight. It's just insane this speed that your movin. It's moving so fast that the

product is constantly out of step from like sales, marketing. All the agencies working on behalf Of The company right? There was a huge group of people who need to stay in sync but products just ship ship ship shipship.

[01:10:17] Right. well That Someone has got plugged dead hole. So what does that role traditionally? Product Marketing In the past building this startup not to degrade product marketing, but like you could kind of neglect it for a while. Right? Like if your brilliant startup I mean what's really important lead gen that's where all the money goes is just generate leads for sales right and product marketing once you get big enough It becomes like real bottleneck But for awhile You can kinda get your way through it. Product would only ship so fast. basically with a few well-placed emails and occasionally internal webinar or like demo, you could kind of keep everybody in sync for the most part. But now with the product velocity it doesn't matter how many updates you do... It's just moving too fast right?

[01:11:06] Especially if your not having an in house copywriter write all of your copy. You can have AI to do that! What does AI need?! AI needs really strong foundational docs. They need accurate product documentation, they need accurate positioning docs so it knows where to take things. if you tee AI up with high quality Documentation. It can write all the copy for you especially just like standard marketees Like okay here's our feature. Here is how works? Here's a Problem. solution parent right like this is not like even get decent copy and its NOT. It's not that fucking hard. As long as the positioning and product brief, how this feature works... All of those sufficiently documented AI can spin it into whatever you need on American site.

[01:11:57] all your landing pages a bunch of campaigns, a bunch promo material or email campaigns....all that stuff! All your one pagers for sales everything. but you NEED that foundational doc right? You cant just depend upon kind of standard company osmosis to handle the product marketing function even early-on. well So these days, I would hire a product marketer. A hardcore product market way earlier than i would have at previous rounds. because like if the products moving so fast...I need everything else to stay in sync. and If we don't have someone that's literally in every single fucking weekly update call with product and has seen what's happening, seeing whats coming down the pipe. And can make sure all of documentation is dialed in checking every detail not just depending on AI.

[01:12:46] but you gotta be really paranoid about foundational docs otherwise mistakes get in then they replicate it and spins out of control. nothings consistent right? If someone was in that role now boom! Now you have all the foundational docs. marketing All channel specialists go to town Right on any promotion and you can do major product launches that with a footprint That had never be able to do in the past With a very lean team. as long As someone's working on those foundational docs which my opinion goes to product marketing now, right? So yeah It's. these jobs are still exist. We've just gone from oh we need Someone writing all their copy And worrying about positioning on the marketing site doing it by hand too.

[01:13:26] Take that same person, get them embedded with product and say like okay you're not writing the copy on a marketing site anymore. You are working all these foundational docs for... All of our other marketers and agencies will spin AI on top of it to get their work done right? So we've just shifted around. I think this is going be true business models. It's gonna be true in lots of internal processes, job roles. so while some things might get hammered This other area, just one step to your side has actually become a major problem now. And now we need to spend all that or take that time and effort from here and place it over there. So I think that's going to be like the bulk of this AI transition right?

[01:14:13] It is not gonna kill everything. its not gonna shut down our businesses ,not gonna kill out jobs. Its just gonna shift where you need to spent our time. That's how i'm looking at When my startup in

the company I'm building. that's what i'm looking at for. My clients and um, That's like I don't buy into hype but also don't buying the doomerism. i'm way more level headed at this point on ai Um. But i am sick of bullshit. i think other people are too. What a great take to landon? Um last this has been great. thanks so much for uh all The time all the insights. if people liked what they heard and they want see more, hear more or read more. What's the best place to follow and who should reach out if they feel like someone with your approach would be great to help them with their company?

[01:15:03] Yeah a couple things... If you want my unhinged takes I am most active on LinkedIn at the moment. LinkedIn is fire! You can get as many ladies as you wanna in LinkedIn And if you want to, do like my shtick then go follow me on LinkedIn or just connect with these. I accept any request as long as you say hey listen to your on this whatever podcast and they're okay cool yeah I'll set the connection and DM me. always happy here from folks If you wanna Follow along more closely. i do have a website and newsletter larsloffgren.com. The email list is right On the homepage. that gets into My system and Then Any big updates Always Go out Through There. If you want to reach out, who should reach out? I generally help.

[01:15:52] Most of my clients are kind of like enterprise SEO content level so they perplex. the automatic fairly bigger companies that run go hard. But if you're wondering, hey what channel should we get into? Hey do you have any agencies in this space that you'd recommend. Hey does our marketing budget make sense? um feel free to reach out like a DM on LinkedIn is great. I am on Twitter and Blue Sky as well so reach out. sometimes i'll get on a call. maybe i can just help you with a quick couple quick questions through dms and hope gets you sorted. but yeah happy to reach Out. If You're Struggling With Marketing And Don't Know Where To Spend Your Marketing Dollars Awesome. We'll put the links in description. last thanks so much for doing this has been great.

[01:16:38] I think we learned a lot and i hope we delivered on the promise. uh, we made in the intro but i'm pretty sure we did For everybody. please leave a comment And let us know how you liked. episode and last Thanks. speak soon yeah thank you.