

Women of Internet Marketing Introduction

[Search Marketing Gurus](http://www.searchmarketinggurus.com)' owner, editor and chief writer (as well as bottle washer!), Liana “Li” Evans, interviews two women weekly for this interesting series. Designed to shine the spotlight on the great accomplishment of women within all areas of the online marketing industry, the series has become a popular “must read” among all search industry professionals.

The column is published weekly on Wednesdays. If you would like to suggest a woman to be interviewed, please send an email to smg@searchmarketinggurus.com.

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[Women of Internet Marketing Wednesday Part 11](#)

So after a week off, we're back with our next edition of Women of Internet Marketing! Are you ready to learn about our next two featured women? I certainly am, they are definitely a couple of fun people to meet and hang out with, but also, have a rich history in our industry.

One of our women this week is a linking guru, the other cracks a whip from time to time to help keep the infamous Danny Sullivan in line on the Daily Search Cast. One of our women learned her craft by driving traffic to online psychic networks and a Russian Bride website, the other still has her first reply back from one our industry's leading experts. Have I intrigued you enough? Great! Now its time to learn more about Alex Bennert and Debra Mastaler.

[Debra Mastaler](#)



I first met Deb online in the [High-Rankings](#) forum, and even before meeting her in person, I knew she was a great person to get to know. Perhaps I'm a bit biased, but, I think she's likely the top expert on the subject of linking and how it affects your search marketing efforts. I know that's a bit of a big statement, but she not only speaks and trains at [SES conferences](#), but she volunteers at High Rankings as a moderator. There's never been a time where Deb's information and advice has steered me wrong.

Deb's the president of her own company, [Alliance Link](#), and also has her own blog called the [Link Spiel](#). Along with training and speaking at SES, Deb also speaks at Jill Whalen's High Rankings conferences and fills in once a month on the Linking column with Eric Ward at [Search Engine Land](#). So now, lets get to the questions!

Q: How did you get into the Search Marketing Industry?

A: By way of a directory link. Between late 1997 to early 1999 I had a directory of organic co-ops, farms, and food stores after searching online for a central resource and not finding one. Email aside, I had no experience online much less with search engines or SEO so I used the standard marketing and public relations techniques I knew and was comfortable with. I bartered links for email lists, ad space, created cross promotions and would issue a press release each time I had a new customer or created a new section of the site. I started to rank really well for just about any 'organic' phrase so I was happy but still clueless as to what was making that happen. It wasn't until the business owners in my directory started asking me to help them rank that I realized I was doing something right. That's when I started researching online marketing and found a newsletter called Rank Write which was written by Jill Whalen and Heather Lloyd Martin.

Alliance  Link

I still have the original email I sent to Jill and her answer to me. Every once in a while I pull them out and remember fondly the simple days when it was all about keyword density, meta tags and any inbound link. Jill patiently explained what I was doing and the effects it had on my site and from those conversations Alliance-Link was born. I eventually let the directory go and ventured into SEOLand and link building. It's been a fun ride so far and I have no regrets save one – I wish I had never let the directory go for all the 'link' reasons you can imagine!

Q: *Most successful industry accomplishment?*

A: I've been very fortunate to have a number of wonderful opportunities come my way and I appreciate each one beyond words. I'm especially grateful to Danny Sullivan and Chris Sherman for making me part of the [SES](#) conference series and part of their [Search Engine Land](#) blog team. It was an honor to have been asked to be the initial Link Building Moderator at the [HighRankings Forum](#) and to be part of the [Incisive Media SES Training Program](#). I will always be grateful to [Peter DaVanzo](#) for being the first person to ask me for an interview and to [Jennifer Laycock](#) for being the first to reprint one of my blog posts.

Q: *Why do you like/love this industry?*

A: For several reasons. I like being part of an industry that has front row seats to the changes taking place in our society via the Internet. I've watched as MySpace burst onto the scene and became part of our daily vernacular, how Google morphed from a search engine to a verb and how local search has just about made the yellow pages obsolete. And it goes without saying that I love a great number of the people I've met along the way and consider myself lucky to call them friend.

Q: *What aggravates you most about this industry?*

A: LOL – guess I should have seen that question coming.... Well, two things aggravate me - people who plagiarize content and people who preach SEO/link building but don't practice it. Just because someone has a website and "optimizes" it doesn't make him an authority on the subject of SEO and/or linking. And yet we tolerate a number of people in our industry as *experts* who have this type of background. I work on a variety of sites and never experience the same outcome for any of them, so why do we embrace people who make blanket statements about cause and effect when all they have is one site to base their observations on?

Q: *What's the next big thing you see happening in this industry?*

A: More and more integration of Web 2.0 type concepts and technology into corporate America's online sales and communication activities. We're starting to see it but once the blue-chip companies integrate the technology and show consumers it's fast, easy and fun to use, it will morph forward. /p> The other thing I see happening is the refinement of mobile search. You can search from your phone now but it's not pretty and it's not efficient. Wouldn't it be cool to speak a search command into your phone and produce a listing of businesses? I'd have a field day with shoe stores wherever I traveled! Or how about rating a restaurant right after leaving it instead of waiting to get home and power up the laptop? Point and click will be replaced by speak and click and we'll all own more shoes. Do you feel Search Marketing and Search Marketers get have a bad rep, from outsiders of the industry?

I'm sure we do but then there are people who don't like the Pope, Gandhi and Elvis as well so it's best to keep all that in perspective when we talk about what people think.

Q: *Why do you blog?*

A: I blog to practice my writing skills which suck. And not because I use eloquent words like *suck* but because I don't have the ability to put down on paper what I hear in my head. I try to blog on a regular basis but life and work get in the way. And yes, I am planning to take [The Link Spiel](#) off

Blogger and give it a big girl blog right after I redesign my pitiful website which at the rate I'm going will be in 2010.

Q: *What's a typical day like for you at your company?*

A: Depends on if I'm at home working or on the road. I have a number of clients in Richmond/Wash DC area that keep me on retainer so I'll visit with them several times a month and I do a lot of off-site training. I'm a chatty Cathy by nature so the visiting and the feedback is a lot of fun for me. On the other hand, I love my jammies too so I'm glad I can have both types of work days.

Q: *Who's your favorite blogger to read?*

A: Hands down [Rohit Bhargava](#). Closely followed by [SEO By The Sea](#), BoingBoing, [Micropersuasion](#), [Constantin Basturea](#), [Eric](#) and [Justilien](#). Oh and Gawker, [Gray Hat News](#) and [Mike Grehan](#) for fun and good photos.

Q: *Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?*

A: Let's see, eight on a regular basis. [Yours](#), [Christine's](#), [Dazzlin' Donna's](#), [Amanda](#), [Kim](#), and [Jennifer](#). I also like to read [Lisa Barone](#) at BC's and [Esther Dyson](#).

And now of course for the juicy stuff!

Q: *Favorite Memory for an SES Conference?* A: Google Dance 2004. I got to spend time with Paul Gardi.

Q: *You have been in the industry for quite a while, surely you can tell the audience if you've ever seen Bruce Clay in tights and a cape?* A: Nope, but I have seen him in purple silk _____ !!

Q: *Sexy SEO's, which would top your list? Oilman, Web Guerilla or Dave "Fookin'" Naylor? Ooooo be still my beating heart!*

A: Todd can talk over Greg which makes him my hero and I hear he drives a big truck so **big** sex appeal points to Todd. However, I'd need to know if he has chest hair before he takes home the prize. So...

Even thought I don't know Mr. Naylor the fact he's earned a middle name like "'Fookin'" is promising. I already know he doesn't have chest hair since I've seen his streaking video so I need to find out he drives a big truck or SUV. That leaves....

My panel-mate MonkeyBoy. Anyone who says it would be an honor to be bitch slapped by me and openly compliments his wife is definitely OK in my book. However.....

Truth be told I'd run them all over for Paul Gardi.

LOL - Deb has a wonderful way with words! Thanks Deb for letting us get to know you! And now onto Alex!

Alex Bennert



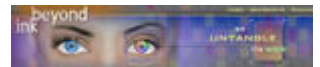
I finally got to meet Alex in London this past SES conference, after hearing about her, and actually hearing co-host the [Daily Search Cast](#) with Danny Sullivan on [WebmasterRadio.fm](#). I'd hope to get to meet her so I could ask in person if she'd like to be featured here. With a feather boa to accent her style (yes she was a victim of the bead and boa fun), she happily agreed.

Alex works at [Beyond Ink](#), with the ever fabulous Anne Kennedy. Her road to working with Anne and being a co-host to Danny is definitely an interesting tale that started back in 1999 and involves photography, psychics and Russian Brides. Of course I had to hook you in, so now you are ever so curious as to how I came up with that trio of facts and you must read on to our questions and answers with Alex!

Q: How did you land in the Search Marketing Industry?

A: I started out trying to carve a career in professional photography. Digital scanning

and imaging was logical next step followed by putting these images on the web which led to learning web design. After freelancing for a couple years, I had to find employment that provided insurance. I answered a job posting at a local dot com for a web designer. Except it was really an SEO position. I worked with a team of 4 people to drive search traffic to a network of sites that included Russian brides and psychic consultations. The job was very unusual and quite instructive. When the company went bust (along with all the other dot com deaths around 2001), I hung out my own shingle and began freelancing search optimization services.



[Beyond Ink](#) was a search marketing agency in my area. Their in-house guru was none other than Elisabeth Osmeloski. While technically my competition, the owner Anne Kennedy was always incredibly helpful and generous to me. They brought me to my first SES conference. In 2004, Beyond Ink made me an offer I couldn't refuse and 3 years later, here I am!

Q: Most successful industry accomplishment?

A: I'm very proud of working with [Zillow](#) before they even started building their site to design a completely bot-friendly architecture.

Q: Why do you like/love this industry?

A: Oh boy! Where do I begin?

- It's both an art and a science.
- Degrees and background experience do not define the potential for success.
- Sometimes I get to be a hero.
- The genuine camaraderie of our community is uncommon (in my experience).

Q: What aggravates you most about this industry?

A:

- Web developers that retain clients by holding using hostage tactics such as proprietary CMS systems or domain name ownership.
- Territorial, short-sighted IT staffers. Jeez, can I just get 5 minutes to state my case? I swear I'm not stoopid.

- Corporate clients where marketing, IT, and accounting or completely silo-ized so that your great ideas just get swallowed into a black hole of oblivion.

Q: *What's the next big thing you see happening in this industry?*

A: Marketing budget allocations continuing to increase for web while decreasing for other types of media.

Q: *What's it like co-hosting the Daily Search Cast with Danny?*

A: Easy! For the most part, I just have to stay out of his way. I throw in the occasionally yep, mmmm, uh-huh, or an attempt at a sophisticated hahaha to make myself sound wise and clever. The real trick is to watch out for Danny Rants that have show-extension potential. Specifically orange-level rants destined to draw our segment well beyond 45 minutes. Now, let me be clear! I'm sure there is a statistically significant percentage of our audience who ardently appreciate the finer nuances of Danny's spontaneous compositions; but I see myself as an advocate of our Power Users. I'm referring to our listeners that still have another 7 podcasts to hear, 54 blogs to scan, 16 Google alerts to review and 4 forum threads to monitor before they even open their email! That's when I have to crack my virtual whip and step up to take control. NOTE that this is not the official WebmasterRadio description of the hosting job, merely my own interpretation of it. ;-)

Q: *Do you feel that doing SEO as easy as baking a cake?*

A: You'll have to be more specific about your definition of "SEO" as well as the type of cake!

Q: *Who's your favorite blogger to read?*

A: Why do you ask for only one? I'll have to throw my top 10 into a hat and make a random pick..... and the winner is.... [StuntDubl](#).

Q: *Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?*

A: [Rebecca Kelley](#), [Lisa Barone](#), [Vanessa Fox](#), [Dazzlin' Donna](#)

And now for a little fun with Alex....

Q: *[Andy Hagans](#) or [Aaron Wall](#)?*

A: This one is easy since I haven't yet met Andy. During the last couple years, Aaron has certainly earned my respect and admiration. He is the ideal example of how far determination, persistence, and inquiry can take you.

Q: *Which do you prefer, the Danny Rants, or the Danny Songs on the Daily Search Cast?*

A: It really depends on the day. Danny's rants are always amusing and occasionally thought-provoking. The songs provide a surreal diversion.

Q: *Craziest thing you've ever had happen to you while you have been in this industry?*

A: Hmmm....several incidents spring to mind but they all involve a certain [Ms. Osmeloski who already dodged that question!](#)



Ooooooh these gals and dodging the fun questions ... maybe I can do a live on the spot interview in NYC? What do you all think? :) Thanks Alex for being such a great sport and letting us learn more about you.

[Women of Internet Marketing Wednesday Part 12](#)

Week 12 is here and I know you are wondering, "who else is to come?" Well we have two women this week, and I've got about 3 more weeks worth of women lined up to interview as well. That means we'll have interviews up until week 15, at least. I'm hoping I'll have enough interviews to last us up until SES NYC, where maybe I'll even get some live interviews with the women who've been featured in past weeks.

So, that brings us back to week 12, and two women who've been contributing to our industry for quite a while. One of these incredibly talented women, most of you are going to know because she's a true luminary to a lot of us. The other is a relative new comer to the conference, blogging and news scene, but has still had the industry experience of around 3 years under her belt. So let me introduce you tonight to Sara Holoubek and Rhea Drysdale.

Sara Holoubek



To me, [Sara Holoubek](#) has always been that great writer whose articles I always look forward to reading, and always hoped to get to meet "one of these days". When I was in Kitty O'Shea's at Chicago SES, I turned around and there she was talking with Frank Watson (who at the time, I had no clue who he was). I had to introduce myself, being a fan of her writing and also snagged her for a hatbait picture, which also led me to being able to interview for SMG! See [hatbait](#) was good for somethings! ;)

Sara's been in the online and interactive industry for 8 years now. She specializes in Corporate Growth Strategy. As she explained it to me "In layman's terms, I help businesses grow and frequently building, buying or restructuring a search competency is part of this equation. Occasionally I will advise search agencies or other small businesses on their overarching growth plans." Of course, most of you also know her as the contributing editor of the [DMNews](#) SearchBuzz newsletter.

Q: So Sara, can you tell the SMG audience how you came to land in the Search Marketing Industry?

A: While I had early exposure to Overture and then Google when working at an interactive agency in 2002, it wasn't until I joined iCrossing in 2003 that I really got my feet wet. At that time, the firm had 35 people in Scottsdale, AZ, and I was hired to help build the New York office.



Coming from the interactive agency background, I saw many opportunities to elevate search engine marketing.

Q: What do you consider your most successful industry accomplishment to date?

A: Being successful as an independent consultant. There is nothing like being compensated for what you think, and not for what a firm wants you to say!

Q: *Why do you like/love this industry?*

A: I am a very reluctant marketer. I am more interested in consumer behavior patterns and what this tells us about society. For me, search not only represents the most efficient means of providing a consumer with what he or she wants, but provides a meaningful layer of linguistic data.

Q: *What aggravates you most about this industry?*

A: While we have many brilliant tacticians, there are very few who have their eyes on the future of the industry. Forget algorithms and bid strategies for a second, and think about the effect of industry consolidation, Google potentially disintermediating agencies or some of the potential game changers out there.

Q: *Being a consultant, what's a typical day like for you?*

A: Meeting over coffee with a client, analyst, or banker, followed by endless email, phone calls and analysis. While working for myself does allow for a certain level of flexibility, I admit that I am a total workaholic.

Q: *Social Media – like it, love it, still figuring it out?*

A: Love it with a capital L.

Q: *If you weren't in Search Marketing, what would you love to be doing?*

A: I would dedicate more time to working with socially responsible enterprises.

Q: *What's your favorite thing about being involved with SEMPO?*

A: As a board member, it provides me the rare opportunity to sit back, forget that we are all competitors, and think about the industry's macro issues. For example, there has been a dearth of talent for the past few year, so we asked ourselves: what can we do about that? Thus the SEMPO Institute was born.

Q: *Who's your favorite blogger to read?*

A: I tend to scan all the search blogs, since I need to stay current for my role with SearchBuzz. If you really want to know, I'm obsessed with NYC real estate, so I read curbed.com

Q: *Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?*

A: I guess I don't think too much about gender when I read blogs!
Alright, semantics out of the way, lets get down to the fun stuff!

Q: *Chris Boggs or Kevin Lee?*

A: If only there were a Chrevin Blee.

Q: *Who do you think throws the best parties at search conferences?*

A: My philosophy has always been that Yahoo! usually spends more dollars per person, but Google's parties tend to be more fun.

Q: *Alex and Elisabeth both dodged this question – will you be brave enough to answer "What's the craziest thing you've ever had happen to you while you have been in this*

industry?"

A: That's a toss up, though I'd have to say being cyberstalked is just plain weird. Sometimes I ask myself, "Is there some picture of me out on the web that I don't know about?" ;)

Q: Top 3 Sexiest SEO Men?

A: If only my significant other used computers....sigh.

Oh, how these women so beautifully dodge answering some of these "tough" questions. :) Thanks Sara, this was fun!

Now let's learn a bit about Rhea.

Rhea Drysdale



I met [Rhea](#) this past December at SES in Chicago. The first night there, [Cameron Olthius](#) grabbed up a group of us to go to Dick's Steakhouse (I'll spare y'all the joke) and Rhea was in that group. The next day Rhea was on the bus in the seat in front of me for the Yahoo party, and then she was at the luncheon that SEO Fan Girl threw. I'd never met her prior to that, turns out, this was her first conference, and it thankfully we didn't scare her off!

Rhea's been in the industry for about 3 years now and works as an e-commerce analyst at [Venus Swimwear](#). She's also the newest contributor that Loren Baker's added to [Search Engine Journal](#), and also helps out with their SEO Clinic. Rhea's got a really interesting background, and her "prior life" job before landing in this industry is really a complete change from online marketing, so read on and find out just what she use to do.

Q: So Rhea, tell me, how did you land in the Search Marketing Industry?

A: After taking a basic HTML course as an elective while finishing my B.S. in Advertising, I stumbled upon a job posting on a local surf message board. No, I don't surf, but everyone else in my life does and I'm an active member of the Surfrider Foundation. The job description appeared to be for an entry-level web developer and at the time I was interested in web design. With years of Photoshop experience and an elementary understanding of meta tags I was one of two hires and easily out-lived the second. Little did I know it was really a full-time SEO and copywriting position or that I'd love it!



After six months I was promoted to account management and had a crash course in PPC, email campaigns and client management. It was a challenging, but intense experience and the lessons I took away from it proved to be invaluable. By the ripe old age of 23 I'd already managed more than 100 clients ranging from a Fortune 500 hospitality group to small businesses.

Q: What do you consider your most successful industry accomplishment?

A: During my first six months at the entry-level job, I had multiple clients ranking #1 for some of the hospitality industry's most competitive terms. I wouldn't call that an accomplishment though, I was just doing my job. To date I'd have to say becoming a contributor on Loren Baker's Search Engine

Journal. I’ve only had one article published, but it was well-received and put a smile on my face for days.

Q: *Why do you love this industry?*

A: It holds my attention. I lose interest quickly if I do the same thing every day, so I thrive on learning and challenging myself. I also love that I found a career where all of my favorite skills or subjects are used: creativity, analytics and behavioral science. I’ve always been obsessed with what motivates people’s decisions to act or think a certain way. In college I wrote a thesis on marketing and brain nodes, this fundamental understanding of brain activity comes in handy daily. Even further back, in high school I studied primate behavior at our local zoo. Everyone called me monkey girl, but I loved learning about innate versus learned behavioral responses. Yes, I’m a dork.

The point is - I love SEO because I get to analyze human behavior and make adjustments to a site to help fill a need or solve a problem for someone. It’s terribly exciting.

Q: *So lets turn that around, tell me what aggravates you most about this industry?*

A: General misconceptions - I think SEOs are a lot like car mechanics. If something is wrong with my car I have to trust the mechanic’s advice, because I have absolutely no knowledge of the subject. It makes me feel helpless. I could learn to fix things myself, but I’d probably blow myself up or cost thousands of dollars in damages later on down the road. SEO is exactly the same, no one understands what we do or how we do it, so it’s easy for some “experts” to take advantage of that incompetence. That gives everyone a bad name and forces clients to try and fix things themselves which wastes time, resources and money.

Q: *What’s a typical day like for you at the company you work for?*

A: After attending SES Chicago I have a terrific True Local rocket launcher, which I like to shoot my coworkers with throughout the day. I also play with my Bruce Clay puzzle quite a lot. Sometimes I do a little work, go to meetings, make phone calls, etc. Anything to look busy. :)

Seriously though, I work hard and I can’t separate work from home. I would say my work day varies depending on what’s going on. Some days I’ll spend hours catching up on research articles and blogs. Other days I spend hours pouring over PPC reports or constructively brainstorming new media/code tweaks with other departments. We switched domains in November, so that was fun... in other words, I had the shakes for three months.

Q: *So what is your opinion of Social Media – over hyped or a real tool for Search Marketers?*

A: I think it’s a real tool, but the bottom line is if your company doesn’t belong in a certain area you shouldn’t force the matter. For example, I’d love it if Venus made the first page of Digg, but I doubt a 17-year-old boy from Colorado is interested in buying a bikini from us. It’s essential that I don’t lose site of our target market and brand or I risk wasting time and money. So, I absolutely love social media, but I proceed with caution when it comes to a multi-million dollar business.

However, I should note that it’s ridiculous for a company not to consider their place in social media. Every opportunity should be considered regardless of whether a stuffy suit thinks MySpace is nothing

but a Dateline special waiting to happen. When timing, an ingenious concept, branding and location come together in the right mix, greatness is achieved.

Q: *If you weren't in Search Marketing, what would you love to be doing?*

A: Seriously? I'd be in the Congo studying gorillas or at one of the regional primate research centers studying cognition. I've been to every zoo on the eastern seaboard, received a grant from Budweiser to attend an International Environmental Enrichment Conference and spent a summer studying whiptail lizard foraging ecology in the Arizona desert. I had a career before I ever graduated from college and I burnt out fast. I was like a pageant kid for animal behavior!!

Q: *Your working with Loren Baker on Search Engine Journal on the SEO Site Clinic, how did you become involved with that?*

A: I don't know! Somehow I ended up at dinner with Neil Patel, Cameron Olthuis, Lee Odden, Loren Baker, Justilien Gaspard, David Wallace, David Temple and yourself my first night at SES Chicago (also my first ever conference). When I got home I put my 11 Networking Tips into place (without knowing it at the time) and Loren asked me to contribute soon after. My suspicion is he felt pressure to include a young female contributor after it worked well for Bruce Clay and SEOmoz. I'll be ecstatic if I can amount to half of what Lisa and Rebecca have already done for the industry.

Q: *Who are some of your favorite bloggers to read?*

A: I like each of the following for different reasons...

All of [SEOmoz](#) and [Search Engine Journal](#), [Graywolf](#), [Oilman](#), [Threadwatch](#) and [Andy Beal](#) just to name a few. Yes, I like Andy Beal because I won the iPod, but he also pushes articles out like a machine.

Q: *So how man many women bloggers do you read?*

A:

- [Lisa Barone](#) at [Bruce Clay](#)
- [Rebecca Kelley](#) at [SEOmoz](#)
- [Tamar Weinberg](#) from [10e20](#)
- [Kim Krause Berg](#) at [Cre8asite](#)
- [Sara Holoubek](#) for [DM News](#)
- [Jessica Bowman](#) from [SEM In-House](#)
- Jennifer Slegg from [SEO Days](#)
- [Jill Whalen](#) at [High Rankings](#)

And more when I can... [Rae Hoffman](#), [Debra Mastaler](#), [Christine Churchill](#) and [Amanda Watlington](#) Alright, now that we put you through the ringer on the "all about you" part, we'll have a little fun!

Q: *Loren Baker or Barry Schwartz?*

A: [Cartoon Barry](#) is awesome and I think he's original in a sea of noise. BUT... I'm obviously partial to Loren, he's my Florida buddy and we have the same dry sense of humor.

Q: *Best dressed Male SEO – [Rand Fishkin \(with his yellow shoes\)](#), [Joe Morin \(with his fairy godmother appeal\)](#) or [Mikkel DeMibb Svendson \(with his great suits\)](#)?*

A: This depends on your definition of “best dressed”. If we’re going purely on aesthetics Rand wins, but if we’re dressing to get noticed Mikkel slaughters the competition. My first impression of him was simply... Wow (sorry Vista, it was an exclamation before a slogan).

Q: *Craziest thing you’ve ever had to do?*

A: I’ve done a lot of crazy things... Measure the anal shoot of a 200 pound tortoise, help capture Mojave and Western Diamondback rattlesnakes and ten minutes before my fiancé proposed I was free climbing the side of a cliff much to his dismay. I don’t think I “had” to do any of those though. :) Thanks Rhea for letting the SMG audience get to know you a bit more, now we can all look forward to seeing you at more conferences!

[Women of Internet Marketing Wednesday Part 13](#)

This week we have our two featured women, but, I've got a surprise for you all. A special treat, just because I've heard that this weekly column has a few fans. So to reward the audience for being patient on Wednesdays (**looks over at Ms. Lisa**), I've gone back to our first two women to ask them a few more questions.

When I first started this column, I didn't ask the "fun" questions to the first couple of women. So I gave [Kim and Rebecca](#) a call and asked if they'd be up for "Round 2" of Q&A. I'm glad they said yes! So along with our two women this week, after this edition you'll soon see an additional set of interview questions in a totally separate post to make this an extra special day of Women of Internet Marketing Wednesdays!

First up though let me introduce you to our two wonderful women featured this week. Both of these women have been in the industry for quite a long time. One is a founding member of SEMPO, the other helped a client get on HGTV. One I've met in person and has been going to SES for what seems like forever, the other I'm hoping to meet at a SES conference very soon. Let me introduce you to Jessie Stricchiola and Zinda Schaefer.

Zinda Schaefer



I met Zinda this August as I was leaving San Jose. For as shy as she claims she is, she came up to me and said "Excuse me, are you Li who spoke with Ward on a panel this week?" And from there, we had a wonderful chat (*yes Ward, she told me all of your secrets!*). We were suppose to meet up again at Pubcon, but do to unforeseen circumstances, I ended up not going.

Since I knew Zinda worked with Ward, I knew she had to really know her stuff about this industry. Little did I know just how much and how knowledgeable she really is! Zinda works for [Evantage Consulting](#) where they specialize in online marketing, strategic online marketing planning, search marketing (SEO/SEM), affiliate marketing, A/B testing, usability / accessibility, web analytics, business analysis, and project management.

Q: Alright Zinda, I'd like to know how in the world you landed here in the Search Marketing Industry?

A: In 1999 when I was working at Deluxe Corporation, my boss came to me and said they were paying a big agency big money to submit their Web sites to search engines in order to get listed. He asked me if I was interested in learning about this 'search engine stuff' and I said yes. Neither him nor I really knew what this all meant, but it sounded fun and I was ready for a change. I spent ½ day with the ad agency and then I was truly on my own.



1999 and 2000 were actually a very stressful time for me because I really felt alone in this new endeavor. Back in 1999 there were only a couple forums such as MarketPosition where you could ask 'Black Knight' and other knowledgeable people about such things as robots.txt file, Meta tags,

and site submissions. I attended the second Search Engine Strategies conference held in California with an attendance of a couple hundred people! Being so new to SEO – and shy – I just couldn't make myself go up and start a conversation with any of the people presenting at the conference. That's one of my biggest mistakes!

I read every article and every forum discussion that I could get my hands on – no matter the topic, and attended as many SES conferences as I could. When one of the first online search engine optimization classes came available in 1999 or early 2000, I signed up and passed with flying colors. The rest is history.....

Q: *What's your most successful industry accomplishment?*

A: Of course I have to say optimizing all of the Deluxe Web sites for very competitive keywords (checks, personal checks, etc), obtaining top rankings for the majority of their key phrases in the top engines (yes including Google), and that these rankings remain today is a great accomplishment.

Q: *Why do you love about our industry ?*

A: I love the passion that people have for SEO/SEM. People always say “you're really passionate about your job” and I am. I'm lucky to work at an organization where the passion is contagious!

Q: *What aggravates you most about this industry?*

A: As with any industry, I hate the unethical SEO/SEM companies that sell a bill of goods to a client. Or worse, when they get the client into a situation where their Web pages are banned from the engines and the client doesn't understand how or why it happened.

Q: *Linkbaiting – love it, hate it – think it needs a better name?*

A: Linkbaiting can be an effective way of getting quality inbound links, but it can also be difficult to demonstrate ROI unless you already have something that you can offer as linkbait. If you have to develop something, it's important that you consider whether the time/resources required are best spent on linkbaiting or on another search marketing tactic.

Q: *What's it like working with Ward Tongen ?*

The best! Ward is a client who has been in the SEO/SEM industry for many years. We do a lot of strategizing, brainstorming and knowledge exchange.

A: *Do you feel that doing SEO is easier than Rocket Science?*

I actually had a former boss that REALLY was a rocket scientist! He explained what a rocket scientist did and at the time I thought SEO was just as hard. Well, maybe not. But I think it can be just as frustrating. I think a key difference is that the science of rockets is built on some physical principles that you can trust to work exactly the same way every time. In SEO, our world is continuously changing, and we need to adapt strategies and tactics as appropriate. And so, some days I feel like I have 'failure to launch'.

Q: *What's a typical day like for you at your company?*

A: Certainly, our client activities are our priorities at Evantage, and my work products run from analysis and reporting, strategy and brainstorm sessions, development of comprehensive

recommendations, etc. We also work hard to maintain leading-edge knowledge in this industry, which means constant research on articles, blogs and a lot of communication. Of course, I have the luxury of working with a great online marketing team, so we are constantly supporting each other, including talking/evaluating/running ideas past each other.

Q: Who's your favorite blogger to read ?

A: I don't think I have a 'favorite'. There are so many it would be hard to list just one. Here are a few favorites: [Threadwatch](#), [SE Roundtable](#), [Search Engine Land](#).

Q: Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?

A: [Cre8pc usability blog](#) and of course [Search Marketing Gurus!](#)

Alright now maybe we can get the nitty gritty fun stuff from Zinda.... she does know both [Ward Tongen](#) and [David Temple!](#)

Q: OK, I know this is a tough one, but you have to choose ... [Ward Tongen](#) or [David Temple](#)?

A: Kirk or Picard? Princess Leia or Queen Amidala ? How can a person really choose?

Are you asking who's more passionate or who's balder? It's a toss up either way.

What can I say? They're both special snowflakes. But I know Ward loves food, especially chocolate! He wins!

Q: Which conference has better parties – SES or Pubcon?

A: I like the parties at SES the best. With regards to Pubcon, I'm going to sound like my Mom – the music at the big bash is too loud!

Q: Craziest thing you've ever had happen to you while you have been in this industry?

A couple years ago I was working with a client who makes sofas, chairs, and ottomans. The unique sell is that all three components open for storage, there are lots of fabric choices, and the furniture is shipped via UPS. Awesome products but they had no inbound links and didn't rank in the top 50 listings on any of the engines. I decided to go to the Minneapolis home show with screen shots of this client's products. Walked up to one of the popular HGTV personalities and started telling her about these products. She loved them! I got her in contact with the client, she featured the products in some of her articles and then on some of the TV shows! How cool.

Goes to show – think out of the box!

That it does Zinda! Thank you for letting me fire these questions your way! Now lets get to know a little more about Jessie.

Jessie Stricchiola



Jessie is well known throughout our industry. She's a founding member of [SEMPO](#) and a well known authority on click fraud. I haven't yet met Jessie, but one of our audience members requested to see if I could interview her. I was very happy to see that I could oblige the request! I learned a lot about Jessie just by going out to her site, [Alchemist Media](#).

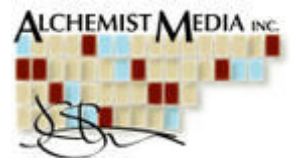
Q: So Jessie, tell us, how did you get into the Search Marketing Industry?

A: While I was still in college in Massachusetts I worked at a used bookstore in town, where I met a gentleman named Rob who was, while getting his PhD, beginning to do something called "search engine optimization". He and I struck up a conversation around the internet and search one day, and I told him I had become somewhat addicted to my college's new 24 hour computer lab with 56k internet access!! I was always an information addict, and had become a searchaholic every time I went to the lab to write papers. I had become fascinated by the process of how the search engines "decided" to rank certain web site pages for things I searched for, and so Rob and I had quite a lot to talk about.

He asked me if I was interested in coming to work for him, as he was starting a small web consultancy – and so he handed me a stack of books on hand coding HTML, web design, usability, etc, and told me to keep track of my time and he'd pay me \$10/hour to read them. If I liked what I read and thought I could work with the medium, he wanted us to work together. I did, we did, and from there the rest is history!

Q: What do you consider to be your most successful industry accomplishment?

A: I've been blessed to befriend so many brilliant and talented people in this industry, and any and all accomplishments along the way could not have been made possible without the support of my industry peers. I feel I've been able to raise a significant amount of awareness around the click fraud issue at a time (2001-ish) when no one really wanted to pay attention to it, and from there the ball has been taken into the hands of many – which pleases me to no end. I also truly enjoyed helping to kickstart SEMPO, it truly was a group effort with some of the industry's brightest – all of whom remain close friends and colleagues to this day.



Q: Why do you like/love this wonderful industry of ours?

A: Two reasons – it's dynamic nature, and the people. The industry itself, as an area of focus in one's life, is just so incredibly vast and open to possibility – and ever-changing at a pace faster than any other industry I can think of. The amount of change and progress that happens in search (or in the web in general) in one week feels like a year in the medical field. I'm never bored. And, I'm never caught up. It makes for fun times.

And to be good at search, it takes a combination of creative and analytical prowess – one must have a true balance between right and left brain giftedness - to think and strategize in ways one must to understand this industry and excel within it. Because of this, nearly everyone I know in the industry is an eclectic, fascinating, dynamic, funky, wildly huge and passionate personality – what's not to love about that?

Q: And now the reverse, what aggravates you most about this industry?

A: How easily and quickly inaccurate information can spread like wildfire, with non-industry folks not knowing necessarily where to turn for reliable information – this happens in general, but we also saw a lot of this around the click fraud issue at one point. But alas, it's the nature of the industry, its speed!

Q: What's a typical day like for you at your company?

A: Wow – no day feels typical anymore. The challenges are always changing, the landscape is always changing. But typically, our time is split between managing accounts that have been up and running for some time, doing the heavy lifting on new accounts, and bringing in the new business. Mixed into that of course is traveling for speaking engagements and client meetings. Typical SEO work.

Q: Click Fraud – over hyped or real problem?

A: Real problem – under-hyped by some, over-hyped by others.

Q: If you weren't in Search Marketing, what would you love to be doing?

A: I'm already doing everything I love to do ... I have a great horse I ride every week, have a steady yoga and meditation practice, and travel to some interesting places and meet truly fascinating people for my work. I think I will always have an involvement in search.

Q: You were one of the founding members of SEMPO, why do you feel it was important to help start this organization?

A: The industry needed an increased awareness around its incredible offerings, a voice and a resource point for non-industry entities, and we created that.

Q: Who's your favorite blogger to read? A: Actually, I don't read blogs too much.

Q: Right now, how many women bloggers do you read? A: See above!

Alright, now for the fun part!

Q: If you were stranded on a desert island name 3 Search Marketers you'd want to be stranded with, and could you give a little explanation as to why?

Dana Todd – she's one of my dearest pals and we can weather any storm together.

Danny Sullivan – he makes me smile, constantly.

Noel McMichael – he'll know where to find the wood to burn.

Greg Boser – he'll have one of his casino friends fly a helicopter to save us eventually.

Q: Funniest thing that's happened to you at a search conference?

A: When I thought I was being inconspicuous on the last conference day when all my speaking sessions were over – I went out to the pool mid-afternoon, in my bikini, with a hat and sunglasses thinking no one would recognize me – I had been inside a hotel for four days straight in mid-August and I just needed some sun! The pool was empty and I thought I could just soak in an hour of sun, unnoticed. Only later, one of my friends was kind enough to come up to me and let me know that



word had been going around the guys at the conference “Go to the pool window, Jessie's in a bikini!”. It was actually my first speaking engagement. I was 24 I think, and I was truly embarrassed. So in retrospect, it was funny, we still laugh about it now.

Thanks Jessie! It was great to learn all this great and interesting things about you. :)

[Women of Internet Marketing - Special Edition](#)

For all of our faithful Women of Internet Marketing fans, Search Marketing Gurus presents a special edition of our weekly column. When [this column first started](#), I really didn't have a clue how popular this would end up being, or even how it would change and how long it would go on for.

My first two women were so great to step up and let me feature them first, for that I'm ever so grateful. At the time, I didn't send out "fun" questions like you now see featured at the end of each woman's interview. So with that in mind, I decided to give Rebecca and Kim a call and ask them if they'd be up for being "re-interviewed" but I promised to make it fun. No hats though, I promised!

Kim Krause Berg



You all know her from [Cre8asite Forums](#), as well as a guest blogger on Barry Schwartz's [Search Engine Roundtable](#). She's first up for our "Re-Interview."

Q: Joe Dolson or Justilien?

A: It has to be Joe, even though he voted for Jill Whalen as his favorite female SEO "godmother", shortly after I offered him a moderating position at Cre8asiteforums.

Joe is a unique man. He's classy. Very smart. Naughty sense of humor, which I like. He and my husband, Eric, discreetly held me upright when I accidentally had a glass of wine while taking pain medication for my torn knee meniscus at SES Chicago 2006, but they didn't stop me from flirting with Review Me Roy. I guess the sight of a tipsy woman squeezing the thumb of a guy in costume is a turn on.

Q: Do you think that Bill Slawski ever sleeps?

A: I've known Bill since 1998 and I know for a fact that he slept once.

Q: You're trapped on a desert island, and you can only have two other Search/Usability folks with you, who'd you choose? (by default, we'll let you have Eric there ... cuz he's just cool!)

A: Sawyer and Hurley. Oh. From the industry? Matt Bailey, because he understands me and won't think it odd when I decide to have an imaginary friend named "Wilson". And Jeremy Shoemaker. Because if he goes missing, everybody will come looking for him, and we'll be found. I'm no dummy.

Q: Do you think Barry Schwartz types faster than the speed of light?

A: A few years back I sat near Barry at an SES conference in New York. I wrote notes by hand and he typed into his laptop. A man, who was sitting nearby, remarked to me that he was amazed at how fast I was writing. That was nothing. When I later went online to see Barry's coverage at SERoundtable, he had 90% more information on the session than I did. I never hand-wrote notes after that again. I later tried to be like him at the Chicago SES, when I reported on sessions for his website. It was something I needed to do, to prove myself worthy...to see if I could be as good as him. There's something pitifully sad about that.

Q: Craziest thing that's ever happened to you in this industry?

A: Two things come to mind. Being known in search engines as a "sex goddess" is one. And, the success of Cre8asiteforums. I started out in SEO, officially doing it for a company in 1996, and

freelancing for years in SEO until switching over to full-time usability in 2002. My old Cre8pc Website Promotion club in Yahoo!, launched in 1998, was a tiny group of folks. We were practically invisible until that club morphed into what is now Cre8asiteforums. I'm not an A-lister. I met Danny Sullivan for 20 seconds once. SEO/M can create the illusion that you or your site is something it may not really be. Usability makes you face reality because, now let's be honest here. SEOMoz's, Rebecca, is the new sex goddess in town.

Rebecca Kelley



Next to Rand, Rebecca's the most famous "mozzier" (SEOMoz) out there. Look out Rand, I think she's gonna out pace you really soon! Rebecca recently spoke at the SearchFest in Oregon and helps to put together the great comic strip after the past two SES's (Chicago and London).

Q: David Naylor or Greg Boser?

A: Although I fookin' love Dave Naylor, Greg took me to Paris, for cryin' out loud. In this case, bribery wins out.

Q: Does Rand have an alternate personality that likes bats and caves, wears a utility belt full of seo tools and drives a really funky car that can morph into a submarine or a flying plane at any given time?

A: Rand's alternate personality likes bait and rankings, and he wears a trendy belt from Barney's, and drives traffic. Wait, that's not really an alternate personality...

Q: Question 3 is a two parter, because we have two teams on SEO Survivor:

Part 1: Team Manly Men: Danny Sullivan, Mike Grehan, Shoemoney, Matt Cutts, AussieWebmaster, Oilman – **Who's the tribal leader and why?**

A: AussieWebmaster would be too busy buying everyone shots to lead a tribe, Oilman would be sauced off gin and tonics, Mike Grehan would be too mean a leader because he'd probably whip people with his stick, and Shoemoney is too busy competing with his wife in order to name their second-born. That leaves me with Matt and Danny...I'll go with Danny as the tribal leader, because he bought me a pasty in Salisbury (sorry Matt, but once again, bribery wins).

Part 2: Team Wonderful Women: Kim Berg, Jill Whalen, Debra Mastaler, Christine Churchill, Elisabeth Osmeloski, Donna Fontenot – **Who's this tribal leader and why?**

A: Hmmmm, for this group I'd have to go with Elisabeth as tribal leader.

Q: From the two teams above – which tribe wins SEO Survivor?

A: The ladies would win. Great SEO skills combined with boobs and pretty smiles wins out over just great SEO skills alone.

Q: Bonus Question: What's the craziest thing you've ever seen Rand do?

A: I like that this question is what's the craziest thing I've ever seen /Rand /do, and not what's the craziest thing /I've /done. I guess Rand's just more popular than I am. *sniffle*

Anyway, let's see...well, I saw him propose to his girlfriend on television, I've seen him eat pig ear (which he made everyone else try, too--I'm still recovering from that), I saw him sing some half-ass



karaoke in London, I saw him dive and catch Mystery Guest from falling down an embankment while we were hiking (what a hero!)...so, I guess is what I'm trying to say is that I don't think I've seen Rand do anything crazy ;)

[Women of Internet Marketing Wednesday Part 14](#)

Guess what? Its Wednesday, you know what that means? Well yes, that it's Wing Night at the local pub, but before going there, I've got some interesting women for you to read about. So if you must, crack open that beer, pour your glass of wine and read this before going out for those wings!

Tonight I've taken a bit deeper interview of one woman, and have come back around to re-interview another because when I first interviewed her, you all knew her as another persona. One of these women, I've actually looked to as a true leader, someone I aspire to in work ethic, and drive for understanding technology. The other woman, she's become a really great friend to me over the past couple of months, in fact, if I could I'd have her working on my team at Commerce360, but, alas those French pastries keep calling her! So tonight let me introduce you to Amanda G. Watlington, Ph. D. and Ylayn Meredith Ousley.

[Amanda Watlington](#)



Amanda Watlington has always been an inspiration to me. She's a woman who I look up to in this industry, as she always is right on the edge of technology figuring out how to effectively use it for marketing purposes. There's very few people who know the ins and outs of podcasting, blogging and multimedia for online marketing, like Amanda does, and even fewer so willing to share their knowledge, like Amanda.

I've been going to SES for quite a while, and Amanda's been one of the speakers I always learn something from. I always try to make at least one of her sessions she speaks at, because she is so willing to share her knowledge with the audience. If you are a first timer to SES, make sure you go to at least one of Amanda's session, trust me you will walk away with ideas already formulating in your head before you are out the door. Amanda's also the co-author of [Business Blogs: A Practical Guide](#), this book is a must read for any business considering starting a blog. Amanda's got a wealth of knowledge she shares in the book.

Amanda blogs a lot too, between writing for [Search Engine Watch's blog](#), and her own blog "[Blogs & Feeds](#)", she also participates in a [weekly podcast on Partner Maker](#) - wow, she really keeps busy! So now lets learn a little more about Amanda

Q: Thanks for letting me interview you Amanda! Can you explain to the audience what is your area of specialty in this industry?

A: [Searching for Profit](#) is a search marketing firm. Our focus is strategic and the tag line "Remember, it only counts if they find you" gives a window on our approach. We make content able to be found. It doesn't matter if it is a product page on a commerce site, a blog post or the audio in a podcast or a video. As clients have turned to adding new media to their marketing mix, we have turned with them. When all is said and done, we work with them as they use search to make a profit. Most of my clients are the new type of search marketing client – very knowledgeable, yet looking for strategic and tactical advice.



Searching for Profit

Q: How long have you been in the industry?

A: I [blogged back in December](#) that I had been billing for SEO work since 1995. So, if my math is right, that means I've been in the industry for 12 years.

My first technology job was in 1978 when I was managing data contracts in the hospital industry. The company that I worked for gathered data from member hospitals, and my job was to facilitate reporting on Medicare and Medicaid hospital discharges. I managed contracts, developed tape layouts and made sure that the big fat data tapes were sent out on time. It was deep water for me, but I paddled hard and found that I like swimming in the deep end of technology. After a stint in publishing, I stayed in technology marketing. I loved the speed and the constant change. That is what I like the best about search. It is constantly moving, yet the goal is still a marketing goal. The tactics and the opportunities are in motion. I will continue to chase new technologies in search. They are like shiny objects to me.

Q: There's been a lot of different stories about how people have gotten into Search Marketing, can you tell me what brought you into the industry?

A: Like most people in the Web, I came to the Web and search by accident. I was teaching marketing full-time at a college and working during my vacations and free time at a public relations agency. One day we were discussing doing a fax newsletter for a client, and I suggested that we build a web site instead. I wound up creating the site – two generations of it – and doing the online promotions which were tactically search marketing. It was a perfect match. I'd found my place.

Q: What do you consider your most successful industry accomplishment?

A: It probably hasn't happened yet, but looking over the stern I am proudest of being able to continue to work on the cutting-edge of a cutting-edge industry for more than a decade. Being able to stay on the crest of any wave is a challenge, but to stay in it for so long is an achievement.

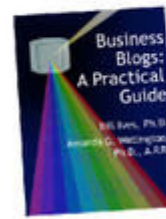
Q: What aggravates you most about this industry?

A: I can't say any one thing aggravates me, but I have grown weary of some things. For example, I've grown tired of the "black hat" vs. "white hat" discourse. I know for some it is just poking fun, but our industry had a smarmy edge to it in the early days. I still meet people who don't believe that there are ethical search marketers and consider us all spammers. I don't like being painted with a coat of paint that does not suit me. As an industry we now sit at the big folks table so why are we still indulging in name calling like we belong at the kid's table. Shouldn't we be crowing more about how much we are responsible for the growth in online sales and marketing? So the sooner we dispense with the "black hat" vs. "white hat" discussion will not be soon enough for me.

Q: You've been in this market for quite a while now, what are some of the major changes you've seen take place?

A: I've been on the bus for the full tour so I've watched lots of changes happen. The scenery outside the bus is very different today than it was twelve years ago. Way back when we all also chased, and there was no paid search. There were very few tools and the methodologies were evolving. Given how much change there has been already, I can hardly wait to see what the next 12 years will bring.

Business Blogs: A Practical Guide
by Bill Ives and Amanda G. Watlington
ISBN# 0-9766180-0-1



Q: You're really involved with using podcasting, blogging and video optimization, do you feel that companies are really missing out on a great opportunity to market their companies with these mediums?

A: I was at a conference, [BarCamp Boston 2](#), over the weekend and said during my session that any digital asset – web page, blog, podcast, video – takes time to create. Time is our most valuable personal resource. If we take the time and resources to develop any digital asset, we are wasting our resources if we do not optimize their exposure. In short, I see two opportunities missed. The first is a missed marketing opportunity for those not using these media. The second is a squandering of the resources spent creating them. Optimizing any digital asset should be ingrained in the creation process. I know this is a hard edge approach, but given the results that search optimization can bring, it is not flawed thinking.

Q: You've been involved with SES for quite a while as a speaker, how have you seen this conference change over the years?

I really look forward to each SES with great enthusiasm. I have watched the conference grow and grow in many ways. The sessions have changed and grown with the industry. The content has really changed and grown more sophisticated and more marketing focused. Older shows used to have sessions on directory submissions and doorway pages, and some of the sessions were literally roundtables, much like the birds of a feather lunch tables. Even though I have been attending the shows regularly for years, I still find myself coming away from every conference with some new insights. I really cherish the opportunity the conferences give to interact with other searchers.

Q: What advice would you give for other women starting out in this industry, based on your own experience?

A: Learn everything that you can. Don't be scared of the technical side of this business. Search requires left and right brain integrated thinking, and women are really good at that type of thinking. We also need to highlight our achievements – not hide our light under a basket.

Q: What's a typical day like for you at Searching for Profit?

A: There is no typical day at Searching for Profit. I never have slept a lot, so days and nights are of the same cloth. My days begin early (normal business hours) and end late. We joke that we keep East and West coast hours. I often work all night when I am interested in something. When I lived in the country I used to have a rule of thumb that if I could hear the birds outside chirping, it was time to get horizontal for a few hours. My husband and business partner is also a consultant – not in search – so he is in tune with the time demands. When he is in town, we will sometimes go out to lunch and actually leave the office, a stunning thought. We try not to work weekends, trying to use the time for

real recreation – fishing and boating (for both of us), and golf (for me) in the good weather. We are also both crew referees so our weekends are largely spoken for by non-work activities,

My actual tasks depend on what I am working on – talking to a client, meeting a prospect, writing a client report, plunging through data looking at results, solving a problem, developing a strategy, producing a presentation, writing. I am for the most part a heads-down worker. I don't use IM, but the phone is often an easy distraction. I have several people who work with me, but we are virtual for the most part so we live on email and phone.

Q: Greg Jarboe or Andy Beal?

A: Can't choose! both are nice guys.

Q: Who's the got the greatest SES conference "identifier"? Rand with his yellow shoes, Mikkel with his crazy suits, or is it Danny Sullivan with his Lederhosen? (ok, Danny only had to wear those once since he lost the bet to Thomas, but still!)

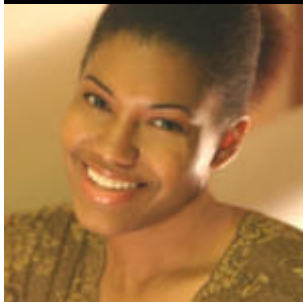
A: I was told as a child to look for outstanding people, not just those who stand out, so to the greatest conference identifiers are the sparkling intellects of the outstanding people that I've learned from – that is not to say that they too may stand out in some other way too.

Q: Who throws the best conference parties?

A: I've had a lot of fun at the big parties, but some of my best memories are from some of the smaller parties with friends like the dinner I had in London in June of 2006 with Mike Grehan and a twenty other folks.
I couldn't agree more Amanda, I've found the best part of the conferences are the small dinners and the great convos at the bar!

Now, lets talk again with Ylayn. Ylayn? Yes, you've met her before!

Ylayn Meredith Ousley



Ylayn's become a great friend over the past months. Even before I met her, and just knew her as SEO Fan Girl, I had a feeling she'd be a great person, and I was right. She burst onto the scene with naming Rand her August SEO Sexy Man of the Month, and from there, it caught on. With great anticipation the community waited on baited breath to see who'd be next, or even better - who'd be the next comparison!

Ylayn's an American living in Paris, who's constantly in search of fat French people, which she always says is not as easy as it seems. She's working with clients in France and the U.S., through her own [internet marketing company](#), and even gets to go to London to assist her clients with their search marketing projects. When I first interviewed Ylayn, I didn't know exactly who she was, I only knew her as SEO Fan Girl when I first sent out the questions. So the interview was conducted from that perspective. Tonight I've come back around and wanted you to get to know the woman behind this legend.

Q: So Ylayn, you go by Y.M. Ousley in the business world, why is that?

A: Y.M. (Ylayn Meredith) Ousley - it's not being pretentious, in the US no one gets my first name right, in France no one can get the th sound in my middle name. I figure I can't go wrong with initials. And one day I do hope to make enough from search and internet marketing to be pretentious.

Q: Tell us a little about you, and what you do – beyond the whole SEO Fan Girl persona.

I eat crepes every day and await the upload of America's Next Top Model on bit torrent with baited breath (and then I take a long breath, and bait it again to wait for the recap on [FourFour](#)). To pay for this lifestyle, I'm currently working with a few clients in Paris and one in the US. I tend to focus on several aspects of internet marketing and business development because while France has a lot of smart developers, there's still very few of them focusing on marketing, usability, tracking and other things that are just as important as the script running the site. I'm also currently at work on a PowerPoint for a website I hope to get funding for. The first slide offers my first born, so I think I'm off to a good start.



I was recently talked into skiing by SS (Special Someone, since the name Mystery Guest is reserved) and have reaffirmed my commitment to being non-athletic. I also spend time trying to find French people who do get fat (I'm up to 4 since the New Year) and a healthy amount of time with a great group of expat girls on the same mission. To put this in perspective, one of my friends is a US size 6. She goes rock climbing on weekends, works out regularly, etc. She went into a clothing store and a saleswoman excitedly told her they had plus sizes. Maybe the sales pitch was lost in translation.

Q: Were you really snickering to yourself when you saw people asking Lisa Barone or Rebecca Kelley if they were SEO Fan Girl, in Chicago?

A: Well, I was slightly offended that no one wanted to be Fangirl. After I got past that I thought it was pretty funny that people had it narrowed down to Lisa and Rebecca. I met both of them and they had a good sense of humor about it. Which means that they'd obviously already accepted bribes to place guys in the position of Sexy SEO of the month.

Q: Tell us, who wears the cheese the best – Ken Jurina, Ward Tongen, David Temple, Aussie Webmaster, Rob Kerry, David Wallace or Rand Fishkin?

A: Decisions, decisions! Well, Rand had some coordination going on. The yellow cheese highlighted his yellow shoes. Come to think of it, who was the first person to notice the cheese?



Q: If Greg Jarboe, Joe Morin, Andy Beal, & Jarrod Hunt all had to rank for "I'm the sexiest SEO on the planet", who'd win?

A: Jason Calacanis (haha, gotcha!) Well, Greg would obviously get the best PR and dominate the news onebox, Joe would start turning up in YouTube videos and take video search, Andy would win with the big brands and graband Jarrod would probably rule the college campuses (or at least their

links). So in various markets, I think they'd all win. Greg in the news onebox, Joe in video search, Andy probably turning up in a financial or company link, and Jarrod in the general results. And then Jason Calacanis would blog about how being sexy isn't rocket science and dominate the nofollowed links.

Q: Who's got the best "gimmick" – Rand with his shoes, Mikkel with his suits or is there someone else you think has the best "identifier" in the industry?

A: I love Rand's shoes (everyone knows that's the way to a girl's heart), and Mikkel suits are eye catching, but my money's on Dave Naylor. Will he give you a hickey? Lick you? He's fookin' unpredictable and frankly I find that type of behavior in an SEO pretty hard to resist. Though I have to say, Ken Jurina's been pretty darn snazzy lately. If he keeps it up there'll be an SQ cover in his future I'm sure.

Thanks Ylayn, for taking the time for yet another interview, this time it was nice to introduce "you" to the audience!

[Women of Internet Marketing Wednesday Part 15](#)

Welcome back to our 15th installment of the [Women of Internet Marketing series](#)! I'd like to point out the link just below the banner to you all. Our [Women Of Internet Marketing link](#), will take you to special page that now has the list of each of the women featured linked to their interview. You will also find on that page PDF versions of the interviews. There's a full version that has all the interviews (which will be updated after each interview is conducted), as well as segmented pdf versions of the interviews for easier downloads.

I'm quite excited to bring you our two women this week because both of them were so much fun to learn about! Both have been in the industry for quite a while and both have had extraordinary successes. Learning about what brought them into our industry was a treat in itself, as well as learning what they like, who they think is the best dresser and that even our "vets" tend to duck those questions our past interviewees have. Let me introduce you to Anne Kennedy and Janet Driscoll Miller

[Anne Kennedy](#)



Anne Kennedy is one of this industry's most respected speakers and leaders, and has been working as a Search Marketer for over 10 years now. She's the managing partner at [Beyond Ink](#) and also runs [SEONews.net](#). Anne's got a diverse background from being involved with the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) to serving on the Board of Directors of Mesda, Maine's IT trade association, she's quite involved in all areas that are connected with our industry as well.

Anne has seen this industry grow from its infancy and has consistently guided her clients with successful results. Her company, Beyond Ink, has consistently created and built visibility for scores of businesses, achieving average traffic increases of 300-400 percent, improving conversion rates, and increasing e-commerce sales. Anne, as the managing partner of Beyond Ink runs the business and, guides her staff which includes past interviewee Alex Bennert to great success with their clients with amazing consistency.

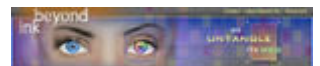
So, now, lets get to know a lot more about Anne!

Q: So Anne, what do you consider to be your area of specialty or practice?

A: Search marketing. Well, actually attracting and managing talent for search marketing. As the staff here keep reminding me, I run the business; I don't do the business. Providing the occasional visionary comment, too. Oh, and then there's the leadership thing.

Q: What's a typical day like for you at Beyond Ink?

A: I travel a lot, but when I'm in Maine it goes like this: We open and close late, because of all the west coast business, but I generally start my day at home early checking emails, and pinging Europe. When I get to our office and check in with our team to see who needs what from me. My job as leader is to enable them to get the best job done. We use YM as a virtual sign-in board; we provide laptops, broadband and VPN so they can work from anywhere, and do. Here the middle part of the day is



almost always meetings on the phone and in person. My new mantra is to not schedule anything closer together than 30 mins. When I'm traveling, things are much the same, though switched around. For example when I'm in the UK I'll have the meetings first and then get on the IM to see what's up as the US Inkers are starting their days.

Q: Can you tell us what brought you into the Search Marketing Industry?

A: After 30-odd years in marketing I was looking for a way to do public relations online and it quickly became clear that organic search was the prime way to get that critical third party endorsement. If your business can't be found in search engines, your credibility takes a nose dive. As I was coming to this epiphany in 1998, I was sharing start-up office space with web developers who were really good at getting "hits" when it was easy. The owner said, "search engines are getting too complex for us to program ways to get traffic. You do it for us." And handed me our first three clients, one of whom is still with us.

Q: What do you consider your most successful industry accomplishment?

A: Contributing to our clients' success. Repeatedly. That's what has kept us in business for 10 years.

Q: What makes you love this industry so much?

A: First, I love the people. We have a real global family. In what other industry do competitors share trade secrets, leads and business? The friends I've made around the world mean a lot to me. Then there's the travel; I love a business that requires me to visit places like Stockholm and Reykjavik. Most of all I love what we do. Search marketing is so much more satisfying than traditional push marketing; customers are actually looking for what we're showing them and when we recognize that they are in charge, not we, the whole thing goes much better. I come from the Vance Packard Hidden Persuader days, when you could get a man to buy a car if it was red. (were guys really that easy?). The best of us respect our clients' customers and respect the medium we work in.

Q: So, lets turn that question around and tell us what aggravates you most about this industry?

A: Speaking of respect, what really bugs me are the fast buck companies that prey on limited knowledge to sell businesses services that are at best ineffectual and at worst can actually damage their competitive positions. This has been a problem for as long as I have been doing this, and it just won't go away. The lyrics may change but the song remains the same.

Q: You've been in this market for quite a while now, what are some of the major changes you've seen take place?

A: Consolidation, monetization, and proliferation. When I started there were engines like Infoseek and Excite. Does anyone remember Northern Light? [Li: *nods* oh yeah!] In marketing, competitors winnow down into Coke and Pepsi, and maybe the "Uncola" if things get interesting. With three major players and Ask increasing market share at a good clip, the consolidation ain't over yet. Meanwhile, monetization is a natural evolution, too. After all, "being in charge of all the world's information" (Sergey Brin 2003) takes a lot of brain and processing power, and those don't come cheap. By proliferation, I mean the increasing ways to search: shopping, news, image, local, mobile, and so forth. To me as a marketer, each is a new way for my clients to be found by their customers, which multiplies their odds of doing so.

Q: You're involved in the PRSA, and are on the Board of Directors of Mesda, does being involved with these associations give you the opportunity to promote/dispel rumors about Online Marketing Industry?

A: I try. Mesda is a great Maine trade association for IT, and through it I made my first friends when moved the business here in 1998. PRSA, on the other hand, suffers from a head-in-the-sand approach to search. There are a handful of great PR firms who 'get' search, but for the most part PRSA appears to subscribe to the magical thinking that if they ignore search it will go away. Perhaps traditional PR practitioners fear no one will need them to talk to the media for them, when in fact there will always be a place for good strategic media relations. That said, the way journalists get information for stories has changed radically in ten years, and the PR firms that will suffer are the press-release-by-the-pound mills. If you understand search and how much editors and writers use the engines, then you realize they are a very important target audience for search and need to be respected as such.

Q: You've been involved with SES for quite a while as a speaker/moderator, how have you seen this conference change over the years?

A: Other than doubling in attendance every time? Danny and Chris have done a great job keeping the content changing with the times. And we've had a lot of fun along the way. Attendees are more from marketing than the early days when they seemed to be a lot of techies. I remember my first SES, where the cloaking session was SRO, and Writing for Search Engines was sparsely attended. Well, guess which session is still on the grid? Though cloaking must have paid well, because the panelists wore really nice suits.

Q: What advice would you give for other women starting out in this industry, based on your own experience?

A: Network. Make friends. Listen. Everything we know we have learned from each other. In the early days it was Marshall Simmonds' i-search discussion list, where we traded tips and observations. Now there are great blogs and forums, with the engines themselves chiming in.

Q: Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?

A: Ouch. I keep thinking I should read more. I'll start with yours, OK? Still I went to some of BlogHer last week in NYC and got really turned on by the caliber of talent there. So many blogs . . . so little time (sigh)

Alright, let's have a little fun! Yes, Fun! :)

Q: [Mike Grehan](#) or [Lee Odden](#)?

A: Oh Mike, definitely (kiss, kiss Mike! T won't mind, it's only me)

Q: Rand Fishkin, Greg Boser, Danny Sullivan and Andy Beal are all in a contest to rank for the phrase "I'm a hot & sexy SEO" – who wins?

A: Tough call, but that's something I can actually imagine Greg saying, and Barbara would surely agree.

Q: What's the craziest thing you've ever seen happen at an SES conference?

A: Oh my, "crazy" can have so many meanings. Gonna duck that one; who knows which craziness I was in on?

Q: Any other comments you'd like to add?

A: I could go on for days, but better get this off to you. Next time definitely!

Thanks Anne!

Anne: Thanks for asking!

Can I just say.... I just loved doing this interview with Anne! :)

Now lets learn about our next fun and talented woman featured tonight, Janet Driscoll Miller.

A few weeks back I got a really great email from a man who suggested a great woman for me to interview. I took that suggestion and did a little digging, then realized I'd met this woman, but never got her name. Thanks to Tad Miller, both I and now you the audience will get to learn a lot more about his wonderful wife, Janet Driscoll Miller.

Janet Driscoll Miller



Janet has had a long career in internet marketing and public relations, and has become a leader in our industry through her great work throughout her eight years in the industry. Janet is President, CEO and Lead Search Strategist for her company [Search Mojo](#) and has her own blog, [Search Marketing Sage](#). Prior to starting Search Mojo, Janet was the Director of Internet Marketing at WebSurveyor Corporation, where she helped to increase Web Surveyor's Google Page Rank from 5 to 9. She also increased their #1 rankings on Google by 900%, and decreased pay per click advertising spend while doubling conversion rate. Wow!

Alright so with that introduction, lets get to Janet's questions.

Q: So Janet, can you tell me just how you landed in the Search Marketing Industry?

A: Eons ago, I was in public relations. When the web was gaining in popularity, I moved to web design and web marketing because it combined the marketing and PR side that I loved with my other love -- technology. In 1999, I began to really delve into search marketing as it began to gain popularity. In 2004, I decided to focus on only search marketing vs. marketing communications or other forms of online marketing because I realized how quickly SEM changes. I knew if I focused in that one area, I could see greater success.

Q: What's a typical day like for you at your company, Search Mojo (if there is anything that's typical!)?

A: LOL. That's a good question. Let's see... emails, problem solving, accounting stuff, more emails, conference calls.... it's a long day. As a growing company, I'm not only training the new staff and helping the experienced folks too, but I'm currently the accountant, office



manager, IT manager, and everything else too. As we grow, that will change, but it is challenging to balance it all.

Q: *What would you consider to be your most successful industry accomplishment?*

A: I'd have to say starting my own business and keeping it running successfully. It's a crowded space -- lots of companies want to offer SEM services. I think we're able to differentiate ourselves, so we're able to not only compete, but grow like wildfire!

Q: *Why do you find that you love this industry?*

A: The thing I love most about SEM as an industry is that most SEM professionals view their colleagues as friends and advisors. There's an openness with SEM professionals that I've never seen in any other industry. Perhaps it derives from the nature of the web -- open access to information. But whatever the reason, I really appreciate the advice and guidance of my colleagues.

Q: *What aggravates you most about this industry?*

A: Part of what drove me into starting my own SEM firm was that I get very aggravated at the amount of misinformation floating around about SEM, and I get frustrated that so many companies fall prey to poor-performing SEM firms.

Q: *Linkbaiting – love it, hate it – over-hyped, under-utilized - think it needs a better name?*

A: I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE link baiting. I think when used correctly, it's a great win-win for everyone -- a great tool and a great viral link builder. A good example is a link bait application I worked on with one client -- an online polling tool. The client is an online survey company, so the polling tool combined their technology and a link bait opportunity into one. It's a win for those who use the free application and for the software company.

Q: *What's the most exciting project you've ever worked on?*

A: That's a tough question. I think they're all very exciting! Each client brings new challenges, and so our jobs never get boring! I think the most exciting projects we've been working on lately have been with helping clients enhance their ROI tracking. It's important to us to help clients accurately track ROI so they understand the impact of SEM. Clients love to see the data, and we love to see the success. It's been really exciting.

Q: *Janet, you're a speaker at SES, which panels do you speak on and how did you become a speaker?*

A: I'm speaking on the SEM firm track on partnering with ad agencies. I really enjoy sharing data with others about how we've been successful as an SEM business, and hopefully my experience can help all of those folks thinking of starting or growing an SEM firm. I approached Danny Sullivan about my experience and the data I had to share, and he selected me for the panel. I feel very honored to be able to speak to my peers!

Q: *Now here's a bit of a touchy question, I hope we don't spark any debates here! Do you feel that doing SEO is as easy as baking a cake?*

A: Most things in life and work can be simplified if you have a process. Baking a cake is a process --

you have a recipe. If you don't follow the recipe, baking a cake is difficult. BUT, if you have a good recipe, anything can be made simple. I think that's true of SEO as well.

Q: Who's your favorite blogger to read?

A: I really enjoy [Andy Beal's blog](#) posts and I've been reading [Lee Odden's posts](#) for years.

Q: Right now, how many women bloggers do you read?

A: Wow. Unfortunately, not many. I've found that the SEO/SEM industry is pretty male-dominated -- maybe it's just me thinking that? I was at a Web 2.0 conference recently as a speaker, and I was the only female panelist on the entire program for the day. I don't normally think about it being male vs. female -- I really just look for the most knowledgeable info.

And no for the fun part of the interview!

Q: [Lee Odden](#) or [Loren Baker](#)?

A: Lee Odden!

Q: Best Dressed Male SEO?

A: Hmm... how about Rand Fishkin and his cool yellow Pumas?

Q: Have you googled yourself on Google and been surprised with the results?

A: Doesn't every SEO do this? :) Definitely surprised, but pleasantly surprised.

Q: Craziest thing that's ever happened to you?

A: Motherhood. By far. It's crazy, it's fun, and it allows me to stop being a workaholic. I have already given my 19-month old daughter a toy palm pilot and cell phone so she can be high tech, just like Mommy.

That's too cute Janet! :)

I'd like to thank both of these women for taking the time to answer my interview questions. Stop back next week where we'll have our 16th week of our series. Keep up to date on our list of interviewees by checking our [Women of Internet Marketing](#) area on SMG!