



Expand2Web

by Don Campbell

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Expand2Web Podcast #6 PDF Edition

Don Campbell Interviews Will Scott - President of Search Influence

Don Campbell: Hi, everybody. [Don Campbell](#) here, and with me today is a friend of mine, Will Scott. And Will is an interesting guy. He's been coaching businesses on getting on the Internet since like 1994, before most of us even really knew what was going on. And I remember meeting Will for the first time at a conference a few years ago, when I was first getting into this space, and Will took me aside and really gave me some real practical advice for getting started. Just not even knowing me, he really helped me out a lot. Ever since then, we've been friends and have gone back and forth on a lot of things. So it's a real pleasure to have you here today, Will, to share some of those tips with everybody else.

Will Scott: Thanks for having me on, Don. I look forward to the opportunity to share what I can with your viewers. I love sharing the knowledge. I'm always gratified when people find the information that we have useful, so I'm happy to be here.

Don: Great. Yeah. I've noticed you've been doing a lot on the blog, too. I forgot to mention earlier, so [Search Influence](#) is your company, right, based in New Orleans?

Will: Yes, sir.

Don: You've got, what, over 20 people there now, right?

Will: We've got 20 full time folks and around 30 contract writers, because we do a lot of content development. And you mentioned our blog. [The Search Influence blog](#) is a very, very active blog, and the thing that makes me feel like a success is I have almost nothing to do with it.

Don: [laughs]

Will: My teammates have taken over the blog, and I don't even feel the need to have editorial control because they're all so involved with our customers that I know they're going to do the right thing.

Don: Yeah, I noticed a lot of different names on that blog. So that's a good thing, when you can get the machine rolling like that and you don't have to be involved with everything that's awesome. That's what I'm striving for. [laughs]

Will: My thing is that they're the ones who are actively touching the work that we do, and who better to talk about it?

Don: Yeah, exactly.

Will: I'm glad that's getting noticed. I hope they keep it up.

Don: Yeah. Well, hey, let's start off with, like I usually do, three questions. I'd love to just hear. Let's say you're talking to a small business owner that's kind of doing things for themselves, or maybe a consultant that's helping small business owners. I know that one of the things about you is you do a lot of experiments I've seen, the things you've blogged about and things you've told me about, where you're finding out about local search topics and some social media things. So if you were talking to a small business owners or a consultant right now, they're trying to get their business listed, what are some local SEO, social media flavored tips you might share with them?

Will: It's funny, but some of the things that I think we think of as very basic blocking and tackling of local SEO, a lot of small business owners don't know. I sat down with a company that's signing up with us. They're an alarm system company. And they have, I offhandedly said, "It's unbelievable to me that there are small businesses who've created a Facebook page but haven't claimed their Google listing."

Don: [laughs]

Will: And these guys were like, "Oh. That's us". Right?

Don: [laughs]

Will: So some of the stuff that I think you and I, and other folks that we know in the local search space, take for granted, a lot of people just aren't doing. So, I think the first thing that small business owners need to know is, go to Google, Yahoo, Bing. Claim your listing, because claiming your listing is the first step in local search. So that's step one: claim your listing.

Don: I'm sorry to interrupt you. There was a stat that I heard that, out of the 20 million or so small businesses in the US, only like two million have claimed their listing. That's kind of amazing, right?

Will: Look, based on our experience, I totally believe that.

Don: Yeah.

Will: But it was interesting, because I think it was [Andrew Shotland](#) who had written about this, this idea of companies claiming their Facebook fan page, not their Google listing.

Don: [laughs]

Will: Their [Google listing](#) is so much more important.

Don: Sure.

Will: So, tip one: claim that thing.

Don: Get it claimed, yeah.

Will: And tip two would be, when you claim it, Google's going to recommend some categories, and you have to pick one which is consistent with their categorization scheme, which is going to be a lot like yellow pages, right?

Don: Right.

Will: Abstractors or abdominal supports or something.

Don: [laughs] Right.

Will: But there are four more categories that you can choose from, and only one of them has to match what Google thinks it should. Now, you've got to be careful, right? You shouldn't stuff in there your whole city plus service category...

Don: Yeah, and I've seen that before. [laughs] We all have.

Will: Oh, totally. One of their categories will be like "New YorkNew Jersey, chiropractor, back and health specialist". Right?

Don: [laughs] Right.

Will: That's a little overboard. But there's nothing wrong with, if your primary category is, say, "physicians, chiropractic". I don't know what it really is. There's nothing wrong with the next one being "back pain" or "chiropractor", or even the plural, "chiropractors".

Don: Right.

Will: Because, as those match better the way people are searching, you have a higher likelihood of showing up on the map. And sometimes it works to your benefit, where you'll put in a category that not many other people are using, and so Google will think that you're the only right answer. We have a client right now who has the only listing on the map for facelift, major city on the eastern seaboard.

Don: [laughs] OK.

Will: That I'm not naming, because I've done that before and lost those listings...

Don: Yeah, right.

Will: But it's a mistake in their favor, based on the fact that we used facelift as a category.

Don: OK.

Will: That would be my number two tip. And then my number three one would be, take advantage of services like GetListed to find different places where you can list your website. So,

I'm sure you've talked about this with some of your viewers before, but GetListed.org allows people to go check and see where they're actually showing up on the local search landscape.

Don: Sure. it's a great tool.

Will: And get some easy avenues to go ahead and get more of those valuable citations. Because, in local, it's not necessarily about links. It's really about citations, which are places where you're listed. And this starts to look more like a phonebook exercise than anything else.

Don: Right. So those citations are your backlinks for local, in a lot of ways.

Will: Yes. Right, absolutely. Absolutely. In many cases, they're just as easy to come by. People want the most accurate information in their directory, and so they're happy for you to come and list yourself.

Don: Right, because it saves them. They usually got a lot of that data from a data feed. And for you to come update that and touch it up is a good thing, as long as they know it's legitimate, right?

Will: Right, absolutely.

Don: Yeah. So that's a great tool, GetListed.org. Gives you a nice little dashboard and a scorecard, almost, of where you're at with everything. I think it gives you some jumping off points to claim more of those citations as well, right?

Will: Right. It's funny. I mean, there's some things, and again, things that we take for granted that I think a lot of people don't really recognize is that there are three primary data providers for every online yellow pages. So, as you cruise around the Internet, it's interesting to scroll to the bottom of the page on a directory and see "Powered by" whoever it's powered by.

Don: Right.

Will: And it's going to be powered by one of three companies.

Don: Yeah.

Will: Info USA, Axciom, or Localeze.

Don: Right.

Will: And that's it.

Don: Right.

Will: And in fact, the new Facebook Places product is powered exclusively by Localeze.

Don: Right, I know. That's awesome for them, huh?

Will: Yeah. So, I mean, when you've got Facebook. And the thing that's really interesting about Facebook is that demographically, it's ridiculous. You know? It's like 30 percent of the population of the United States is on Facebook.

Don: I know. It's crazy.

Will: And as I always tell people, Facebook is basically everybody that you want to be talking to. Because it's 125 million people, which is already 33, 34 percent of the US population. And they've got to be over 13 and connected to the Internet. [laughter]

Will: So, to me, that sort of defines everybody.

Don: Yeah.

Will: You know, as a marketer, everybody that I want to talk to is on Facebook.

Don: Sure.

Will: And so it makes it that much more important to get listed in Localeze and make sure that you've got the right information there, since that is what people are going to be using when they check in on Facebook and as Facebook starts building out this whole Places concept they're working on.

Don: Sure. And, you know, I found, too, that one of the other things with Localeze and these different providers is it's just good... It's not like a silver bullet for getting, right, and I'm sure you would agree. But it's great to help fill in the cracks, right, especially if you've got some data that's inconsistent. And we all know the name, address, and phone number is so important. Right? The more that data matches up, the stronger the signal, right, to Google.

Will: And it's kind of instant critical mass, which is what I like about it. It's that while you can surely go out and claim those listings in two, three dozen places and have a great wealth of citations for your business. The ability to drop it into Localeze or Universal Business Listing and have it blast out into the ecosystem is a great shortcut for businesses, I think.

Don: Right, right. So, number one, you mentioned claim the listing. Right? Make sure you claim them in Google, Bing, Yahoo, and the major... There's about six majors I always go and make sure are totally claimed and optimized and they're all very consistent. Right? Then you mentioned categories using a little bit of gray area there, in terms of how you use the categories. Just gives you some opportunities to rank for different keywords. Right? And then you mentioned GetListed as a tool to manage those listings. Right? And then... Go ahead.

Will: And from GetListed, jumping off into some of those data providers, where you can start to really bulk up those citations.

Don: Right. Right. Yeah, I think Localeze submits to something like 90 different sources from... We use Localeze as well, and it's a good service. So, yeah. And then you mentioned Facebook. I mean, that's something that comes up a lot. We help our businesses sort of get setup on Facebook pages. And it's interesting, because obviously they're going more local. They're going to start to

do a lot of check ins now. And they've got the Places pages. And it's like a great opportunity for businesses, but from an SEO perspective, it's a little bit hard to know, you know, to monetize that. I mean, some people are seeing... I've seen stats at something like 30 percent of the traffic on the Internet is going through Facebook. I don't know if that's true, but it's starting to become like, you need a website and you need a Facebook page. And then I was wondering if you had a perspective on that as well?

Will: Well, it's funny, I was talking to somebody today who were concerned about the expense of building a website. And I said, "Well, you know, you might consider just building on your Facebook page until you're ready to spend the money to build a website".

Don: OK.

Will: Because with the ability to create multiple pages and to use notes and other mechanisms. A friend of ours, who you know well.

Don: Yup.

Will: Does some really kind of fun stuff with Facebook fan pages, where you can show one image to people who are your fans and one image to people who aren't your fans. So, there's a great example of where it says, you know, "In order to get all of the latest news, click that like button up there".

Don: Right.

Will: Right?

Don: Yeah.

Will: And it's a neat way to get people to take action. We did a project recently with a group, they're a political action group that's focused on liberty. It's not a catch phrase. And so instead of asking people to come and be the fan of this political action group, we asked people to like certain quotes from like Abraham Lincoln.

Don: Oh, wow.

Will: On the subject of liberty. You know? So, we went back to the framers of the constitution, looking for quotes from them on liberty.

Don: Wow. That's clever.

Will: And so of course people are going to like them. And we built from around, I want to say around 400 fans to over 10,000 fans in two weeks.

Don: Wow. And so was that coupled with the Facebook advertising campaign, then, to drive people to the site? Or...

Will: Yes, absolutely. So, that's what it was all centered in was this Facebook ad campaign that was asking people to like these quotes.

Don: Right.

Will: And so those 10,000 people become really active members of the community. Because it just so happened that through Facebook's demographic targeting, we were able to be speaking to people who had a high likelihood of real affinity with our client.

Don: Right.

Will: So, if there's one thing about... And I think a lot of people, just because of the newsworthiness of it, a lot of people are very interested in Facebook and Twitter and many of these other sort of high profile social media outlets.

Don: Right.

Will: But in terms of real business impact, the place where we've seen the greatest business impact is using Facebook ads. And so people are like, "Ads? Facebook? You mean there's more than just Mafia Wars?". [laughter]

Will: Or the one that I always get, which I think is completely inappropriate, which is the dating over 40. I'm like, "OK, my wife was kind enough to tag me as married to her. You don't need to show me the dating over 40". [laughter]

Don: I saw that on your page. You mentioned that once. That was funny.

Will: I'm just like, you know, "Here's a targeting opportunity gone wrong".

Don: Yeah. And Facebook makes it easy to target that stuff, too, right? So, there's kind of no excuse for being sloppy around it. I mean, it's pretty straightforward to say, "Only show to these people".

Will: Right. And you can say, I mean, you can get really granular with it.

Don: Yeah.

Will: Like, we did a campaign recently that our targeted group was women between the ages of 25 and 60, within 50 miles of Atlanta, who were fans of Victoria Secret. [laughter]

Don: Wow.

Will: OK?

Don: That's pretty targeted. [laughter]

Will: How powerful is that? I mean, especially when you figure out that there's over 16,000 of them.

Don: Wow. And it tells you that, right? It tells you right there.

Will: Right, totally. As you're building the ad. So, to me, I think the piece that a lot of people aren't getting about social is... I mean, because let's face it. Social media is tough. Right?

Don: Yeah.

Will: I mean. You've got to get out there.

Don: You've got to work it.

Will: You've got to be a real person.

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...day after day.

Don: Yeah.

Will: You have to truly be social.

Don: Yeah.

Will: But...

Don: Yeah.

Will: But, when you realize how many eyeballs there are on Facebook...

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...that you can access those eyeballs, by this little ad up there in the corner.

Don: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Will: It's a no brainer.

Don: Yeah.

Will: Totally. We've been finding this is the part that makes it really compelling for me is that when you look at relative return on investment...

Don: Right.

Will: When comparing dollar for dollar Google ads to Facebook ads, in a local context...

Don: Right.

Will: We're not even really talking about casting a really wide net.

Don: Right.

Will: We're staying within 20 miles of this location, within 50 miles of this location.

Don: Yeah.

Will: When you think about it, in that context, we're seeing a cost per lead as much as a third on Facebook as on Google.

Don: Yeah.

Will: So, if we're spending \$40 a lead on Google, we might be spending \$10 a lead on Facebook.

Don: Yeah.

Will: That's a big, big deal, as long as the inventory of leads is there.

Don: You know what else is interesting is: it's a little...You don't have to do as much keyword research to do that advertising either. Right? Because instead of trying to bet on all of these different keywords and doing all that work, you're just targeting on a demographic or where somebody works or what they like, which is a little different.

Will: Yes.

Don: Right? Kind of.

Will: Yeah.

Don: Yeah.

Will: If they like your competitor, then chances are they may like you too.

Don: Right.

Will: So, you can start to get really subversive, with your target...

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...which I get a kick up.

Don: Well, usually...Go ahead.

Will: I was going to say the most critical thing to think about though is that: with good target return on investment really quickly proves itself out on Facebook.

Don: Yeah.

Will: I feel, two years from now, after everyone's figured this out...

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...maybe it won't be as easy, but...

Don: There's a little arbitrage there. Right? Because it's not as say competitive as a Google AdWords campaign right now, going into Facebook.

Will: Right.

Don: ...I've seen. So, you set up the ad. You target the demographics. You send them to another page on Facebook, which I also heard our friend told us was better converting the ad points to a Facebook page, instead of a website. Right?

Will: Yeah.

Don: There you go. So, you can set up something pretty quickly. Right? And, inexpensively.

Will: Well, we've actually been testing that theory, with forms, as a call to action, actually, imbedded in Facebook pages.

Don: OK.

Will: So, I mean you can actually build your form. For instance, we've got a form system we host. Specifically, so, we can track things like referral information, where they came from, and what they searched for.

Don: OK.

Will: You can embed those forms in the Facebook markup language.

Don: Oh. Yeah.

Will: So...

Don: Yeah. Yeah.

Will: The user fills in the information, and it submits directly to you. And, they never even have to come to your website.

Don: Right. Right. Yeah.

Will: They're whole transaction is on Facebook.

Don: Yeah. The whole experience is right there. [cross talk]

Will: I mean it's there.

Don: Yeah.

Will: Yeah.

Don: Yeah. That's awesome.

Will: You bet.

Don: Well, you know it's funny. I usually wrap up by asking you for a secret or a tip that you think that a lot of other people don't know. But, I think you kind of gave it to us. That whole Facebook ad is a big opportunity. Right? That a lot of people don't know about. I think.

Will: It is a wide open opportunity. I mean. The Facebook guys want everybody to know. But, as far as I'm concerned, let's just keep that between you and me and all of your podcast listeners.

Don: Yeah.

Will: It is an unbelievable power tool that a many people are not having right now.

Don: Yeah. Great. That's awesome. So, is there anything else that you want to share? I mean. SearchInfluence.com. You've got the blog there. What else you working on? Anything else you'd like to...last minute tips or something linked to your website? I'll put your website and your blog in a link to getlist.org, in the blog post. So, everybody has that.

Will: Good.

Don: But, I noticed that you guys are blogging a lot, with really good content on the blog at SearchInfluence. So, I'd recommend everybody to [follow your blog](#).

Will: Thanks. The one thing that I've been kind of pushing my team for is to be a little bit more customer focused maybe not so much search marketing industry focused.

Don: OK.

Will: Because my vision for our blog has always been that it can be a good place for the kind a people that we'd like to have as customers to learn.

Don: Yeah.

Will: I've always been of the opinion that we can tell somebody exactly how to do what we do.

Don: Yeah.

Will: We can walk them through it step by step, but the fact is the kind of customers that we like to work with are the ones that recognize that their time is much better spent building their business.

Don: I couldn't agree that. Totally. Yeah. I'm so with you...

Will: That has much..

Don: ...on this point.

Will: Thankfully, I think that there's a lot of people who realize that they would much rather be working on the business...

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...that they know...

Don: Yeah.

Will: ...than trying to learn a new whole set of skills.

Don: Yeah.

Will: We really do, as a company, strive to be a great holistic experience for our customers, where they don't have to feel like...If they have a question about print advertising, we might have an opinion.

Don: Yeah.

Will: I mean. We might not. But, we're at least going to give them some ideas about how we can track its effectiveness, if their committed to the medium.

Don: Sure.

Will: So, I think that I definitely recommend our blog to anybody. I learn things, reading my blog, but I'm not the one writing it all the time.

Don: Yeah. Yeah.

Will: There's a wealth of great resources out there. Many of whom you've already linked to on a regular basis to them. If I've been helpful, they're really happy.

Don: Yeah. Well, I totally agree with your philosophy, as a company. I think you embody that. When you first met me, you didn't know me from anybody else. You gave me some real practical advice. You've continued to do that. So, I thank you for that. I think that philosophy kind of shows through with everything you do. It's one that I agree with. I think that too that it helps everybody. Right? Because you share...

I found that on my blog too. Just share everything that I know, and people still come back to you. They need more. [music] It's just a good thing. So, I should have turned my phone off, before starting.

Will: Actually, I too.

Will: Put readable button on my desk phone too.

Don: Yeah. Yeah. So...

Will: In any case, that's the big thing, Don. It's one of the reasons why I count you among my friends as well as some of the other folks we know mutually is that there is not a one of them who holds back from sharing knowledge.

Don: Right. Exactly.

Will: There's what, according to the SBA, 18 million small businesses in the country...

Don: Right.

Will: ...or something.

Don: Some crazy number.

Will: 18 million non-franchise small businesses.

Don: Yeah.

Will: So, somewhere in there is enough to keep my team and me happy for a long time. [music]

Don: Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. Well, hey. This has been great, Will. Like I said, I appreciate everything that you've done for me and for being here and taking some time to do this. I think this has been an awesome interview full of good stuff. Thanks again for joining me. I appreciate it.

Will: Don, thank you for having me. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to your folks.

Don: Good deal. Well, will talk soon, Will. Thanks.

Will Scott is President of [SearchInfluence](#). At Search Influence, Will leads a team of 20+ dedicated professionals who put customer enthusiasm first. We believe that the Internet, Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimization and Social Media need to become accessible to small business for their success. You can follow Will on Twitter [here](#).

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