

# How A Control Freak Like Me Manages A Large Portfolio Of Sites Alone

I often get asked how I manage such a large portfolio of sites without an equally as large team. While being a bit of a control freak helps with that, I think the secret is just that I keep things simple.

And a lot of keeping things simple means focusing on the 80/20 principle.

As one person, I can't do all of the things – and I certainly can't do a lot of them well by myself. So, I focus on the things that matter and I do them the simplest and easiest way possible.

I outsource things as needed, instead of keeping a full-time team around. And I don't hesitate to pay for things that make my job easier.

But also, coffee. I drink a lot of coffee.



# Posting New Articles

When I have new content that I want to get up, my goal is to get it up as fast as possible without making any errors. For me, that means using the Classic Editor plugin for all of my sites.

I don't want to take the time to mess around with Gutenberg blocks.

I don't want any plugins to help me style my posts.

And I certainly don't want a glitchy-ass page builder to slow me down. (I say this as someone who has used page builders off and on throughout the years.)

These days, I only use page builders for [hub pages](#).

For images, I always buy those Deposit Photo credits when AppSumo runs that deal, so I get my images there. Granted, their on-site search engine is garbage, so when I can't find what I need I either look for a Creative Commons image or buy a one-month plan at Shutterstock.

Have you seen those sites where the featured image for each post has the text overlay? I certainly don't take the time to do that.

[via GIPHY](#)

For most of my sites, I have it setup where new posts are auto-posted to the social channels. You can do this with Jetpack and other free plugins.

## **Link Building**

Doing your own outreach for links is really fucking time consuming. And if you're doing guest post outreach, then you've got to either write or order the article for the guest post.

With almost 20 sites, I don't have that kind of time.

That's why I've been using [NO-BS a lot lately \(my referral](#)

[link nets us both a cool \\$100 credit when you sign up](#)). I've had a few people ask me privately if I've stopped using other services like NO-BS...the answer is YES.

In my opinion, they're cheaper overall and more transparent. And I was a customer for more than a year before they set me up with that referral link.

All that being said, here's the thing about paying for links – it means you have less money to spend on content and other things. So, what does that leave you with that is simple and easy to do without taking up much time?

[HARO](#).

You already know that I love HARO for links, though admittedly it doesn't work for all niches. But when it works, it really works.

[via GIPHY](#)

## Keyword Research

I tend to do my keyword research in batches so that I can really fall into the rabbit hole. In my experience, when I'm doing keyword research I tend to stumble upon things that I wasn't looking for, which leads me down a whole new path.

So, I plan on doing my research in batches so that I can explore those new paths over an hour or two...or several. Hell, I've spent entire afternoons doing nothing but keyword research.

But with the way that I do keyword research, I end up with several months of keywords and article ideas, so I don't have to do it again for quite some time.

How I do my keyword research varies depending on the site that I'm doing the research for. I don't know that I've ever seen

anyone mention doing things differently depending on the scenario, but you definitely should be mixing things up a bit cause not all sites are the same.

[via GIPHY](#)

So, here's a brief breakdown of how I do things in various scenarios.

Is it for an existing site? If yes, then this is my process:

- Do I already know the overall topic I want? If yes, then look for other sites on this topic and mine their keywords with Ahrefs for ideas.
- Do I want to create a new silo? If yes, start on Google using autosuggest and identify interesting keywords and competitors. Then, move to Ahrefs for competition analysis.
- Do I need to boost current ranking content with internal links? If yes, use autosuggest in Google to find related topics I can create content on.

Is it for a new site? If yes, then this is my very time consuming, but worth it, process:

- Use a tool like Ahrefs, [KWFinder](#), or [SEMRush](#) to do top level keyword research (i.e. best gaming chair, best gaming desk, etc.)
- Make a list of all the affiliate sites (or content sites running display ads) that I find for each top level keyword
- Use Ahrefs or SEMRush to find the competing domains for each of the sites on your list (focus on affiliate sites/content sites) – this will take a while to do
- Put all those sites in the same spreadsheet and remove duplicates. You're left with your competition for the niche.
- Use the Ahrefs batch analysis feature to run all those

sites to get traffic and DR stats.

- Sort that list by DR and start building out the target keyword list for the new site by pulling ideas from lowest DR sites first, and so on.
- When done, that massive list of keywords and competition is the only blueprint needed to dominate the niche

Am I looking for a new niche to go into or a new opportunity?  
If yes, then this is my process:

- Look at all the broker marketplaces to see what niches people are selling sites in
- Look for sites running display ads (AdThrive, Mediavine) to get ideas for high traffic niches
- Run any potential sites/niches that interest me in Ahrefs to check DR and competition
- If I find something I like, then use the new site process above

If I find an actual ranking site that catches my attention, then I often use Fiverr and pay someone to run a Screaming Frog report so that I can see all the posts on the site (if there is no sitemap that I can access).

[via GIPHY](#)

## My Everyday Tools

Every single day that I am working on my sites, there are three tools that I am using without fail.

- Photoshop
- Ahrefs
- Google Sheets/Excel

That's really all I need to run my business. Sure, whenever I have a new post for a site that does well on Pinterest, I end up using Canva and [Tailwind](#), but that's not an everyday thing

for me since not all of my sites do well on Pinterest.

And yes, from time to time I use other tools like KWFinder, SEMRush, etc. but not every single day.

## Other Menial Tasks

Of course, there are other things that must be done to maintain a portfolio of sites. Mostly, menial things that aren't exactly difficult, but definitely seem tedious.

A good example of one of these tasks is posting to the social profiles of my [fake personas](#) to make them seem real.

I tend to do stuff like this in those little pockets of time when I can't really do anything else productive. So, when I'm waiting for the kettle to boil or when I'm waiting for food during the grocery delivery window and I don't really wanna get too involved in anything (since I can be disrupted at any moment).

In pre-COVID times, I also did stuff like this while sitting at the airport, taking a train, etc.

Hell, stop scrolling through Instagram while you're pooping and you've got a few minutes where you can do one of these tasks on your phone.

[via GIPHY](#)

## Making The Most Of Your Time

I guess it's also about really making the most of the productive hours that are available to you – in addition to not getting distracted and just keeping things simple.

For me, that means using a paper weekly planner where I

physically write down what I'm going to work on for the week. And I note what I accomplished and can cross off my master list of tasks.

I also keep an Excel sheet where I track my daily word count of all the words that I've written for my sites. This lets me see at a glance how productive I've been and how I'm doing with my yearly goal.

(No surprise, I'm behind for the year)

This also means that you need goals. Getting 300,000 written words up on my sites is only one of those goals, and seeing that spreadsheet every day helps to push me towards productivity.

Knowing what you're working towards helps you structure your day better so that you have a greater chance of meeting those goals.

[via GIPHY](#)

## Final Thoughts

Honestly, I get asked a LOT why I don't have a team and why I don't have "systems" where I can build my own team. And when these conversations are face to face, the person asking is usually looking at me with this look that makes it clear that they think I'm the dumbest person on the planet.

Like people just cannot believe that I don't have all these people that I manage, so that I can sit by and do nothing while this team does all my work for me.

And I guess that works for some people, but not me.

I don't want to manage a team. I like doing SEO. I like working on sites.



What I don't like is managing people.

I don't even want to manage one person, who is then in charge of managing everyone else.

Am I the bottleneck in the process? Yup. But I'm okay with that for now.

I hire freelancers as I need them, and that works just fine for me. Most of the time I'm just riding solo though.

If you're feeling the push to scale up to having your own team, then know that you can keep things simple and still be pretty successful at all this...and all the profits are all yours.

Getting back to where we started, let's break all of this down into something simple – what I think you need for success at managing a large portfolio of sites by yourself:

- Spend time only on what works – those are the essentials
- Stay motivated and goal-oriented
- Be a self-starter who makes the most of your productive hours
- Coffee, coffee, coffee

[via GIPHY](#)