

Halftime Mike Podcast with Ray Hiltz

Podcast Raw Transcript:

Hello there! This is Mike Gingerich with the Halftime Mike Podcast. Today I am excited to have Ray Hiltz with me. Ray is in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and we are going to talk about Google+. Ray is an expert on the subject and he has been doing this for a while with businesses, equipping them and using all the tools that Google+ has to offer. Welcome Ray!

Ray: Well, thanks very much Mike, I'm really thrilled to be here. Any opportunity to talk about Google+ is a good day for me.

Mike: Excellent, excellent. Well Ray, I've talked a little bit beforehand that my audience is owners, marketers, small and medium sized businesses that are using social media, digital marketing to help grow their business and my podcast is always about doing things to help them learn and take a look at new tips, new tools, things that they can leverage. I'm usually help them grow leads, grow leverage online and in the half time podcast is the chance for them to step back, and reflect, learn about something, figure out what might be doable for them so that they can implement that in what I call the second half as a basketball fan.

Ray: Sounds great, we share some of your same demographics.

Mike: Very good now. Let's see, I'm sure being where you are in Montreal that there is a lot French going on, but we're going to stick in English. Well, I can say "parlez vous français" but not much beyond that in this point in time.

Ray: That's okay, that's fine.

Mike: Alright! ☺ So let's dig in to Google Plus. It's been around for a little while. I think it's gaining some traction. Maybe you can speak a little bit about the beginnings of Google Plus and where it is exactly today.

Ray: Well, there is a lot of theories rolling around. Google isn't exactly really open book, but what motivated them or what their big global plan was, but there is a lot of conspiracy theories on that. Well, basically I think the initial reason, that they've launched Google+, was at the same time they want to make web search more relevant and more precise, because that is their business model. They have to come up with the best and most relevant search results that they can. To do that they need access to personal data, and because we basically have a lot of Twitter and Facebook data they had to come up with their own platforms. But not really successful, Google Buzz was just prior to that, but with Google+ it was a huge change of the whole business culture for Google, because not only was it a way, a platform to be social, and of course when it came out the hype was all about Google+ versus Facebook because they were the only comparison that we had the for size. But it's nothing like Facebook.

They created Google+ to be an entity engine, basically some way to verify who is on the platform, who the authors of the content is, and is that content valid and what level of authority these people have. All that to, again, give the best search results possible. That's why you have to open an account with your personal profile, and that's why you can't use a pseudo name. That's why they are so strict on those things. That is why there are also no ads basically on Google+, and that's why they've created authorship to tie you with content that you create.

So at the beginning it was perceived to be Facebook versus Google+, we still get that because when people thought about what social media is, they were talking about Facebook. That is the way people think when they think about social media.

I tend to think about Google+ as basically a digital marketing area. When you are on Google+ you are on the internet and you are in Google, that's it. And as more and more of their properties add Google +, and the most recent being YouTube, what happens is they sign in with their Google+ account to give a comment that is very much apparent. And what they said all along with that Google+ isn't the platform but a social layer covering all of their products and that exactly what it is.

Mike: I like that term, so it's a social layer covering all their platforms, and their platforms being, I mean YouTube or even Gmail and more... .

Ray: Yeah. Gmail, YouTube, Android I mean it's pretty vast.

Mike: Yeah, okay a layer covering that. I like that. So you really tied it in directly. You know authorship is one of the key components. Why don't you speak a little bit more about authorship as it pertains to small business owner and their blog for instance?

Ray: Well hopefully most small businesses understand the value of the blog, I mean as much as I'm a fan and this is the platform that I work on most with, I still highly recommend that people have blogs, they have their own site. Because Google is not your site, it belongs to Google and all there are number of people who are writing to Google+ only which I don't think is a great idea.

But having said that, it's important that your content follows you, that's associated with who you are. First of all is scraping a site. They go around steal content then put it on their sites. This helps avoid that. So when people search for something, whether it is an Italian restaurant, say Italian restaurants in Montreal, well actually Sam is visiting California for the first time, I've never been here before. They know who I am, because it is in my phone. I say okay, Italian restaurant. Well, they are going to be able to locate where I am and tie me to the nearest Italian restaurant and through exchanges I've had with friends, like you, Mike. You've talked on Google+ with me and I'm in your circles. They're going to probably have you show up in my search, because maybe you have your favorite restaurant that you have mentioned or something, and that is basically how this whole semantic search and the whole personalized web works.

That's how it all fits and should, because it all should be working together.

Search has become more personal. So everybody's search is different depending on who is doing the search.

Most times people don't flick the little switch on global search and personalize search, people just default than personalize. So if you are a small business you want to be in front of your customers as many of those touch points as possible. So whenever they come round the idea or the thought like, "Hmmmm I need a new sink". – well, if you know in those streams may be blog posts of yours came by saying "How to avoid frozen pipes if you're in Montreal". Certainly non and you're just in California doing the matching, but they can cross stream and you can comment them on there's a connection, you've made a connection and the more of those small connections that happen the more relevant to Google, you and I are. When you do a search you want your customers to find you. And the best way of finding you is to have a relationship with them, and the best way to have a relationship with them is to be in Google+ and to be in their circle.

Mike: Okay, very good, now let's take a moment to look at another component, the business page in Google+. So If I am a business owner, business marketer and I have my own Google+ profile and then through that I can create a business page, correct? Do you want to expand on that?

Ray: Yeah, you need a personal profile to create a personal business page of course. Business pages can vary if you are a local business, a restaurant, a salon or a shop – it's imperative to have a Google+ page. First of all they've merge features, remember the old Google Places? That is now called Google local. So now a Google local page is merged with a Google+ page. So when someone does a search you'll appear on the knowledge graph, which is the block right next to the left hand column of your search result, with a nice big area with a map, and with the review option that will link directly to your Google+ page. Google tends to like business pages. So it's definitely an advantage, but having said that, your strategy for creating a Google+ page is to usually align your Google+ pages with your digital online office, or your work space or your shop. That's where people go to find out what you have to offer whether it is a product or a service.

However, you should lead in terms of making connections and relationships and content marketing with your personal profile. I see that a number of people are putting up business pages and they're kind of treating that as yellow pages. But it doesn't work that way because everything, specially with authorship, is connected to your personal profile and that relates back to your business page, to your content and to your blog. So there's definitely a strategy on a strategic sense that you should definitely do most of your work as your profile. Basically humanize your brand, put your face up there for your company.

Mike: Okay, now you answered a question that I didn't even ask and that was brilliant because I wanted to get to that one. So leading with your personal brand and profile is key but also having that company page as kind of your information source to go to, the source about you on Google+ is important?

Ray: Definitely Mike! You know, it's totally reflective of how we act in real life, right? I mean, if we were in a town and we go to meeting or networking meeting or chamber of commerce meeting, we go there, "as Ray Hiltz".

I'll come up to group of people talking, maybe I'll find something in common that they are saying, for instance, if they are talking about fishing and I say "Yeah, we were doing a lot of trout fishing last summer and I found a great spot," and we have this trout fishing in common and then they'll say "Oh well, good to meet you Ray, good to meet you Ray. So what do you do?" and then I'll say, "Well I'm a social media strategist, I'm a Google+ coach and oh, this is my business card and if you're interested you can come over to my office". It's the same with my Google+ page, or my blog and that how it's work in real life you don't open up basically shoving a business card on someone's face. You let them know who you are first so that they can relate to you and you can reach them on more personally emotional level.

And that is how it works online, people aren't interested in making relationships with brands, they are interested in making relationships with people. Once that happens, once that relationship happens then you start to build trust and trust is essential in the whole final process, the whole buying process.

Mike: Yes, Absolutely. Yeah, I think that is a great point about the personalization and how you lead with your personal profile. So from a business stand point, if it is going to be individual, it's going to be sharing things on Google+ as your profile. Let's talk about growing your community and interaction. Obviously if Google+ gives you an opportunity to follow people and their circles and their community. So why don't we kind of dive into that. Let's say I am a newbie and I have a Google+ profile and I am looking to begin, to explore, to maximize, to help my business connect better on this platform. What are some things that I need to be aware of?

Ray: Well, a circle is kind of the foundation of Google+. It is kind of what sets it apart from the very beginning. I mean circles and then hangouts were the most popular things in the community. If you are just starting out, I think you should start out like if most social platforms are missing, set up some basic circle for instance. Set a circle for your friends, invite them over but then start doing a search and Google+ has a hashtag search and it is extremely accurate and they are very helpful.

So you can do a hashtag search or you can just search for whatever industry that you are in, search for your competitors. But search for your interests. So if I am in a restaurant business, I'm going to look for chefs, I'm going to look for restaurants, I'm going to look for people who have food communities, that kind of thing.

And if I want a local business I'm going to just click on the geography into the search. Then what you do is you create a circle, say I have a restaurant circle, I've got a Google+ consultants circle, people who were in Google+ can talk about Google+ and how they use Google+ search. There's a whole bunch of details that I want to arrange on those if you're using it for a lead generation, there's a whole process that I use for instance. So for instance I'm looking for my target market agencies and consultancies and entrepreneurs, so I'll look for those and I'll look for people who are working on those kind of issues that I am interested in. And if I don't know them very well, I put them into a very general circle, and I use to call that my "pergatory" circle, because I don't know if they go vertical up in the finals or down in the final because they are in the middle.

And then as I write post or as I come across their post commenting or wanting me or there are some interactions I move them up because on the top of our screen we have four buttons basically. We have

explored them; we have the four top circles up here on top of your screen. So those are the ones that you going to access most often, that is what you want most interesting and the relevant people in. So I moved them up that way, I think a big advantage, in terms of businesses, is communities. Circles is good because you can choose what circle you want to interact in. When you open up your Google+, your default is the “all” something like Twitter right? You have the “all” default which I rarely ever go into. You have your list so I go into my engages, I go into my social media master mind group all these list is what I look into and you do the same thing in Google+. I tend to go to into circles.

Communities on the other hand are much more focused, that is where networking really happens because first of all there are not so many people in it but it is very focused on one particular topic. So you can check whatever your interest is, find a community for that and then start engaging in that community and comment in that community and that establishes your expertise, that establishes who you are whether you are an engager or not and that I think probably is the quickest way to gain a following and a network on Google+.

Start with circles because you want some things happening, you want to use them primarily at the beginning for listening to see what people are posting and how they are posting it.

Follow the big guys on Google+; Martin Shervington, Daniel LaBelle, there are a number of people that I can make, give you some names that may end into your blog post if you want. Those people have put out all kinds of help posts, so that is where it all started. But if you really want to get into building a community and networking for business and lead generation I definitely recommend that you search those communities and become active in them.

Mike: Okay, Yeah. So, and just for the audience, I mean circles are basically, I mean you can communicate through circles. So if I put ten people in that circle and people who are interested before they were in twitter, now they are in Google+ with me, I can send them a message through that circle and it's that circle that is going to see that message.

Ray: Yeah, circles are very malleable that way. You can put one person in that circle and then if you put a post it is like sending an email. You know it is one on one. Or you can have a circle that has 500 people on it and send a post to that circle. Those posts are private unless your circle is public. Whenever you post in Google+, on the send bar you have the option of doing it private or circles or to communities or to individuals. If you send it to an individual or a circle it is considered a private message. And that is not findable by anybody else for instance. So if brand is important to you, your profile is important to you I encourage you to do as many public posts as possible. But again, if you have a targeted message for someone, circles is very convenient for that. And that is what I like about Google+ because I don't have to worry about who I am sending it to because you always have to make a decision every time you make a post. Because, it's embarrassing you know, I make mistakes on Facebook, because those icons are really tiny and I forget who I am sending it to!

Mike: Okay, now very good.

Yeah I mean, I think as you mentioned, Google+ has been integrated so quickly with some of the other tools, I mean like YouTube. If I comment on a video on YouTube, that is part of Google+ commenting and the same thing with our messages. If you message me and I can get that in my Gmail I can just reply within my Gmail and that is basically part of the layering and connection pieces that Google+ offers as it shares it back to Google+.

Ray: Totally, I don't know if we have, but we can initiate this hangout from my Gmail account or YouTube account or obviously on Google+. In fact I just posted a YouTube earlier this afternoon and about a couple minutes later I saw my email, a notification that said there is a comment on it and I opened that up it sent me to my YouTube channel and underneath that was the latest comment and whole string of comments about the whole group that shared that YouTube or commented on Google+, and that was not even in my YouTube channel but was brought together on that comment string.... I mean that's incredible!

Mike: Yeah absolutely! Okay, now one of the other big components for businesses and business individuals to be aware of with Google+ are the Hangouts and the Hangouts on Air. Do you want to dive into that a little bit?

Ray: Yeah, these are some of my favorite things. I have a weekly hangout on air show it's a Lunch Bunch show. It's every Tuesday at 12:15 eastern time and it kind of started with my Community. Speaking of my communities, because I have an email list like most of the people and my subscribers and I kind of wanted to do something special with them. I didn't want to be just in an email list. So I decided to create a Google+ Community, a private community for the subscribers and it is called the Google+ Tips And Topics Community and in that you know we share some tips and topics as the name suggests.

So I created a weekly hangout so we could all just chat about Google+ issues and all that. And that evolved into a national broadcast because with Hangouts on Air it goes from being a private video chat like a Skype chat to a national broadcast because the default is public. So whenever you do a Hangout on Air the public can access it if they can find it and it is automatically uploaded to YouTube so it's recorded and so you can always have that into your archive. It's incredible content marketing machine.

So Hangouts on Air is powerful stuff. So if you want to use it as content marketing for instance, you can take that hangout on air, you can edit it into small pieces put it into your blog, you can actually embed it on air simultaneously as you do it onto your blog post you can also do that on Facebook using an app called 22 Social.

So that's great and the networking aspect of this is the fact that when you do hangouts with people is you tend to up the level of intimacy. When you someone face to face it's quite a different experience than sharing posts or commenting on a post. You are talking to someone. You can see their body language and it forms a really interesting bond. Because I remember, it was a couple of years ago now, my very first hangout and it was with Martin Shervington and I was kind of shy, shy to go on a Hangout but he saw me post something to that effect and then he said "Come on over. I am doing a hangout now" and that was before hangouts on air and this is not public. This is just a hangout. So I did, I jumped into this hangout and there were like 8 other people from all over the world on this hangout and I am

like "This is so amazing!" I may have never met these people otherwise, so we chatted about things. Some of them were in India, some were in Italy and all those people I still have them in my circles and I still engage with them regularly because when you are in that space and you see people and you exchange ideas with these people that relationship is like on steroids. It just takes you to make a "jump" and I think that is the most valuable thing with the hangout. So that is why when I do my lunch show I like to have a panel on, because not only, not so much that they are going to participate that much but in the actual show in the conversation there is a chance for them to network and meet other people and for other people in the viewing audience see them, so the great branding and the networking for sure. That is why I am really hyped on hangout and then there's a whole slew of business applications right? I mean you can do private hangouts now from YouTube station so instead of being automatically on public you can specify who sees the video. And if you are a company and you want to do a seminar or an employee meeting kind of thing. You can do that, it's uploaded, it's archived, it is recorded and you could control who sees it. And that's incredible. We use it a lot in class rooms, in education. I did a hangout on air with David Emerald the guy who wrote a book on some magic search with a friend of ours Cheriz who lives in San Diego. Now I'm in Montreal, then he was in Greece at the time and we were addressing a class in San Diego. Now how cool was that?

Mike: Absolutely, absolutely yeah.

Ray: And we have an interaction from the students who could ask questions.

Mike: Yeah, I did my first live presentation in a class in the States and we were in different States and I could look at the class room audience there of course they could see me and we're doing this by a hangout so that was a wonderful opportunity and this actually I should mention this, I mean I can't wait back and forth I'm not typically recording my podcast with Google+ Hangout but today we are so we are actually doing a live little hangout right now. This could be my podcast episode and this could also be archived on my YouTube channel as well.

Ray: Ah see, super. That's again the whole point of multipurposing this is why Hangout is such a great content marketing app. There is a guy on Google+ called Ryan Henley who does an amazing job with that. He had a podcast for a long time and he is now doing what you have just described. He is doing a live broadcast basically a TV show where he is interviewing someone and then he takes that and then he strips it as a podcast, an audio podcast so people have a choice of watching it video or just listen to it and a number of people who don't watch the live podcast will tell me that "Oh, yeah I can't it live because you are at noon and I'm doing something and so I always listen to it in the car." And I say "Isn't it kind of distracting, isn't it a bit dangerous?" they say "No-no-no, we listen to it in the car you know, we just put it on the iPhone and just listen to it". So there are a lot of uses for it.

Mike: Yeah, absolutely. Lot of times when I first talk to somebody about Google+ they always kind of come out from a SEO standpoint, you've kind of went down and talk about authorship and then all this other tools. The ability to have communities, the hangouts, the circles and those types of pieces. So it opens the eyes up away from just it as a pure SEO tool but let's take a moment and just talk about some SEO value again kind of maybe back to the Google authorship that seems one thing I've noticed is that if

I have a blog post and I share that on Google+ it seems to be indexed very quickly. Is that a fact or just something that I am assuming.

Ray: No, you're right Mike it is. I mean it's astonishing. I've run some tests and I've listened to certain other people you know who are in the SEO business like Eric Enge. You know it can be indexed as quickly as 6 minutes. Cause I've seen that happened. It's amazing how fast, well it is not surprising it's Google's properties right, so they have a total access to it. Well they know who you are, and that is the reason why they created Google+ was to do that was to verify that you are who you are.

Mike: So yeah it does, so your content does get indexed very quickly.

Ray: They have limited access to facebook and twitter that is again another motivation for them doing Google+ because to create the best searches possible they have to be I guess the most secure and more sure that is the most relevant to whoever is doing the search query. So being on Google+ kind of makes out easier for them because they can see all of your history of your stuff you've done, how many shares it was. And remember the most important indicators in these; believe me I'm no SEO specialist but you kind of have to do this just like you had to read a blog yet you become a Wordpress specialist. It's kind of the basics that you have to do. So it's not about what people go on Google+ thinking "Oh, I have to go because it's going to help my SEO" and it does in so much as may be your post would be indexed faster, but it's not going to really help you unless you become active and you write good content because it's all about content. It's all about authority content and the social signals that you send up and those social signals are result of people sharing your content and you're not going to share a content if it's a crap, right? So ultimately, whether it's on Google+ or not, the thing that is going to get most impact in your SEO result is the quality of your content. And also adding to that, your network is definitely important, you have to have people who are of influence to help Google understand your level of authority. Cause again it is about building your authority, and by having people who are seen by Google who are influencers, that helps them establish your authenticity and your authority

Mike: Okay, so they are measuring that..

Ray: Oh very much.

Mike: Sense of, kind of that the attempt of cloud has done that you know but it is directly related to your content to the interactions around you or content of others in Google+.

Ray: Yeah, and again it's not just Google+, that's the big difference here. It's not the wall that kind of guarding what Facebook is. Google looks at your whole web. All the stuff that you do in the internet and it places more importance on your website. In fact they say probably placing more importance there than it does on Google+. Because if you have authorship your link or your website is linked back to your Google+ profile anyways so that's taking care, they know that, they know who you are, they know you're in Google+ but your website is really the most important thing for them to establish the quality of content that you do. So it's very important that you pay attention to the website that you optimize it for SEO so that people can find what they are looking for and you do helpful stuff. And then Google+ finds those influencers, starts engaging with them so that they can see your stuff and gauge with it and if they

think it's helpful then they share it, because that is what is going to result in higher search page placement.

Mike: Okay, so just when you're talking here I think one of the things that comes back to me is the importance that if I have some content that has a value, being able to make sure that I have the Google+ social sharing button on my blogs so that I can make it easy for others to share is going to be important as well, just because I want the easiest option as possible for my content to be shared and if there is value and Google is kind of measuring in a weighing my authority based on the shares, I need to take a look again to my website to make sure that I have that Google+ sharing option in there.

Ray: Oh definitely, that's very important. I mean your content doesn't do anybody any good if it just sits there, right? It has to be shared. And definitely I recommend putting that Google+ badge on your sites so people so that people can actually can follow you there. And it's an easier way of linking your page with your google+ profile.

Mike: Okay, alright. Well Ray these have been some great tips here and it kind of brings down to a close here. Do you want to leave a final tip or something that we missed that you believe is very important to you, what you would say to our audience as they are thinking about their presence on Google+

Ray: Okay, I'm trying to keep it down to one, if I have to give one tip. I would say if I have to give one tip that would be dive in and interact as much as possible. Leave comments, make links with people that are in your area of expertise and interest. Engage as much as possible because people say that you know Google+ is a ghost town because your friends aren't here, your friends are on Facebook -that's great go to your Facebook and hangout with your friends. But when you are in Google+ it is about making new friends. And we make new friends because that person has something in common with us. And if you approach Google+ that way that doesn't seem so daunting. If there are a lot of steps in Google+, it can be overwhelming. The second point is don't jump in without a strategy; know what you wanna do because each product that is on Google+ can be used in a specific strategy –lead generations, circles and communities, content marketing with posts because your Google+ posts are basically websites, are indexed linked websites with Google right? And then in terms of networking, you know again communities they can add hangouts to that, cause then you know when you make a show you get higher visibility and you get to know people on a very personal level.

Mike: Excellent stuff. Ray thank you so much for being here with me today with our audience in The Halftime Mike Podcast.

Ray: Oh, certainly my pleasure. I hope I gave you enough takeaways because I'm just thinking about all the stuff that we were saying, taking all extensive stuff. You know we could do a half an hour show just on a hangout.

Mike: Absolutely, I'd like you to come back to do that. Yeah, absolutely. Now you gave me some information and obviously people can find you on the web at newraycom.com and obviously they can look you up on Google+ Ray Hiltz and you're going to give me few links that I would have the show notes for Google+ strategy, and how do I schedule hangouts on air using Google+ so some tips that way.

Ray: Cool.

Mike: Excellent stuff. Ray, I really appreciate it just an introductory overview I do feel like, yes kind of went a high level on multiple components but I think that's where it starts. So maybe you know, on some future episodes we will be able to dig into these specific components. Appreciate your time.

Ray: Oh, It's my pleasure Mike. And any time at all you want to dig into more little things, anytime you like.

Mike: Alright, sounds good Ray. So again this was Mike with The Halftime Mike Podcast. Have a good day and thank you to our audience. Take care.