

Great Minds Think Data Wraps ‘Google and Growth’ Series with Joy Hawkins — The SEO Playbook for Getting Seen

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Great Minds Think Data, the podcast hosted by technology executive [Maury Blackman](#), has released the final episode in its acclaimed three-part Google and Growth series: “[Google, Growth, and Getting Seen — The SEO Playbook with Joy Hawkins](#).”

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Joy Hawkins

In this episode, Joy Hawkins, founder of [Sterling Sky](#), LocalU, and the Local Search Forum, joins Blackman to break down what small businesses must know about SEO in 2025. A Search Engine Land columnist and Google Business Profile Product Expert, Hawkins has worked on thousands of local listings across the U.S. and Canada, helping businesses navigate Google’s evolving local search algorithms.

The conversation zeroes in on one of the most misunderstood aspects of SEO: customer reviews. Hawkins

makes it clear that reviews are no longer optional — they’re a baseline requirement for visibility.

“[Reviews are] huge. They’re like table stakes,” Hawkins says. “We actually have this conversation with businesses all the time. I’ve had some argue with me — they’ll say, ‘Joy, there’s no way reviews matter that much.’ And I tell them, ‘If you don’t have them, you won’t succeed.’ We see it over and over again — a business might break into Google’s local three-pack, but they won’t stay visible there unless they’re consistently asking customers for reviews, especially when their competitors are doing it.”

Hawkins shares examples from her work showing that businesses with strong, ongoing review strategies maintain higher placement in Google’s results — while those that neglect reviews often lose ground, even if other SEO factors are strong.

Beyond reviews, Hawkins discusses the importance of website content, keyword-rich business names, accurate categories, and consistent business hours. She also explores how AI-driven search is beginning to reshape discovery and what small business owners can do now to adapt.

Blackman calls the conversation one of the most practical in the series: “Joy cuts through the noise. She takes something that feels highly technical and translates it into clear, actionable steps that every business owner can follow.”

As The SEO Playbook concludes, Blackman reflects on the series’ purpose:

“This wraps up our Google and Growth series,” he says. “Over the past three episodes, we’ve looked at Google Business Profiles, growth strategies in digital marketing, and now SEO. I hope you’ve walked away with a toolkit that helps your business get discovered, build trust, and grow.”

With Hawkins’s expertise anchoring the finale, The SEO Playbook delivers a clear, real-world roadmap for how small businesses can strengthen their online presence and sustain visibility in the competitive world of search.

“Google, Growth, and Getting Seen — The SEO Playbook with Joy Hawkins” is now streaming on Great Minds Think Data via Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and all major podcast platforms.

About Joy Hawkins

Joy Hawkins is the founder of Sterling Sky, LocalU, and the Local Search Forum. She is a Search Engine Land columnist, a Google Business Profile Product Expert, and a frequent speaker at global SEO conferences including MozCon, Pubcon, and LocalU Advanced. Since 2006, Joy has helped thousands of small businesses across North America improve their rankings and visibility in Google Search and Maps.

About Great Minds Think Data

Hosted by Maury Blackman, Great Minds Think Data explores how technology, data, and innovation drive business growth. The Google and Growth trilogy equips small business owners with practical insights to thrive online — from mastering Google Business Profiles to digital marketing and SEO.

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Maury Blackman
The Transparency Company
+1 925-997-7974
[email us here](#)

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