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Subject: Fwd: From agency founder to SaaS owner💰
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من: **High Signal** <pete@highsignal.io>
Date: الأربعاء، ٢٠ نوفمبر، ٢٠٢٤ م ٦:٠٦
Subject: From agency founder to SaaS owner💰
To: <younesleeyoungae@gmail.com>

Hey!

Thanks for signing up to my newsletter for founders 🙌

If you came from my Indie Acquisitions resource, welcome!

This week I have an interview with Jules about growing his Embarque SEO agency and acquiring an SEO SaaS as a non-technical founder. I found out about how Jules built his agency from scratch and how he's planning on operating a SaaS as someone who is not a developer.

Read his interview to find out more.

You can read it below the news headlines.

Newsletters are awesome

You can get started for free and they scale beautifully.

The time it takes to send a newsletter to 100 people or 10,000 people is exactly the same.

If you want to learn how to grow and monetize a newsletter, check out my course

It's usually \$70 but you can get it for \$50:

<https://petecodes.gumroad.com/l/newsletterbundle?layout=profile>

News

Here is the latest founder news:

StackBlitz makes \$4m ARR in 4 weeks

It's a little unusual for an AI company to be so "build in public" about their revenue but StackBlitz has announced it hit \$4m ARR with it's Bolt product. It's a way to make websites with just prompts and the demos look great! They are crediting an integration with Claude Sonnet for the fast revenue growth:



Eric Simons

@ericSIMONS40



Case study on <http://bolt.new> from [@AnthropicAI](#):

- Zero to \$4m ARR in 4 wks
- 100k+ of y'all using Bolt every wk
- One of fastest growing AI tools globally

Wild & surreal! Ty for all the support & patience as we scale y'all 🙌 Let's go!

<http://bolt.fyi/anthropic-4m-arr>



bolt.new

bolt.new

Prompt, run, edit & deploy web apps

8:19 PM • Nov 12, 2024

96 Retweets 909 Likes

[Read 83 replies](#)

Add a "make an offer" button to your website

Greg Isenberg has made a button which you can easily add to your website to attract buyers.

Lots of people are running websites that they are secretly interested in selling so it makes sense to add a button to display this fact:

The best companies are bought, not sold - Warren Buffett (probably)

GET ACQUISITION OFFERS WITH ONE LINE OF CODE.

Drop our free button on your site and turn random visitors into potential buyers. When a visitor is interested in acquiring your business, they'll send you an offer directly - no middlemen, no commission fees.

Get offers on your site

<https://offerbutton.com/>

Beehiiv launches Media Collective

Email software company Beehiiv is making a substack-style move here by offering legal support, health insurance and a range of other benefits to independent journalists:

These guys ship fast! You can apply to join here: <https://www.beehiiv.com/media-collective>

From agency to SaaS founder

Can you tell us what you've achieved with Embarque.io?

We've been in business for four years now. Today, we work with 10 to 15 clients at any given time. I'm incredibly proud of the reputation we've built. Our clients trust us, not just because we deliver results, but because we become partners in their growth.

It hasn't always been easy. SEO is constantly changing, whether it's algorithm updates or new competitors. We've had to be quick on our feet. But that's part of what makes me proud: we've faced challenges head-on and emerged stronger.

I think that longevity speaks volumes about the quality of work we do and the relationships we build.



Jules

What's been your proudest achievement with Embarque?

Honestly, just surviving—and thriving.

We've burned through six figures, dodged algorithm grenades, and somehow. We're still here!

Running an SEO agency in such a competitive space is tough. Many of our direct competitors have folded over, but we've managed to still grow over time.

We've helped companies like MentorCruise and VEED climb the SEO ladder while dodging algorithm curveballs. That's wild even to me!

We've also evolved significantly over the past four years.

What started as a productized SEO service has now grown into a strategy-driven, revenue-focused agency. This shift required us to rethink how we operate and deliver value, and it wasn't easy.

We've burned through six figures along the way, reinvesting in the business, taking calculated risks, and learning from every challenge.

Keeping a company going through all the ups and downs is tough, especially in an industry as volatile as SEO. But each challenge has pushed us to adapt and grow.

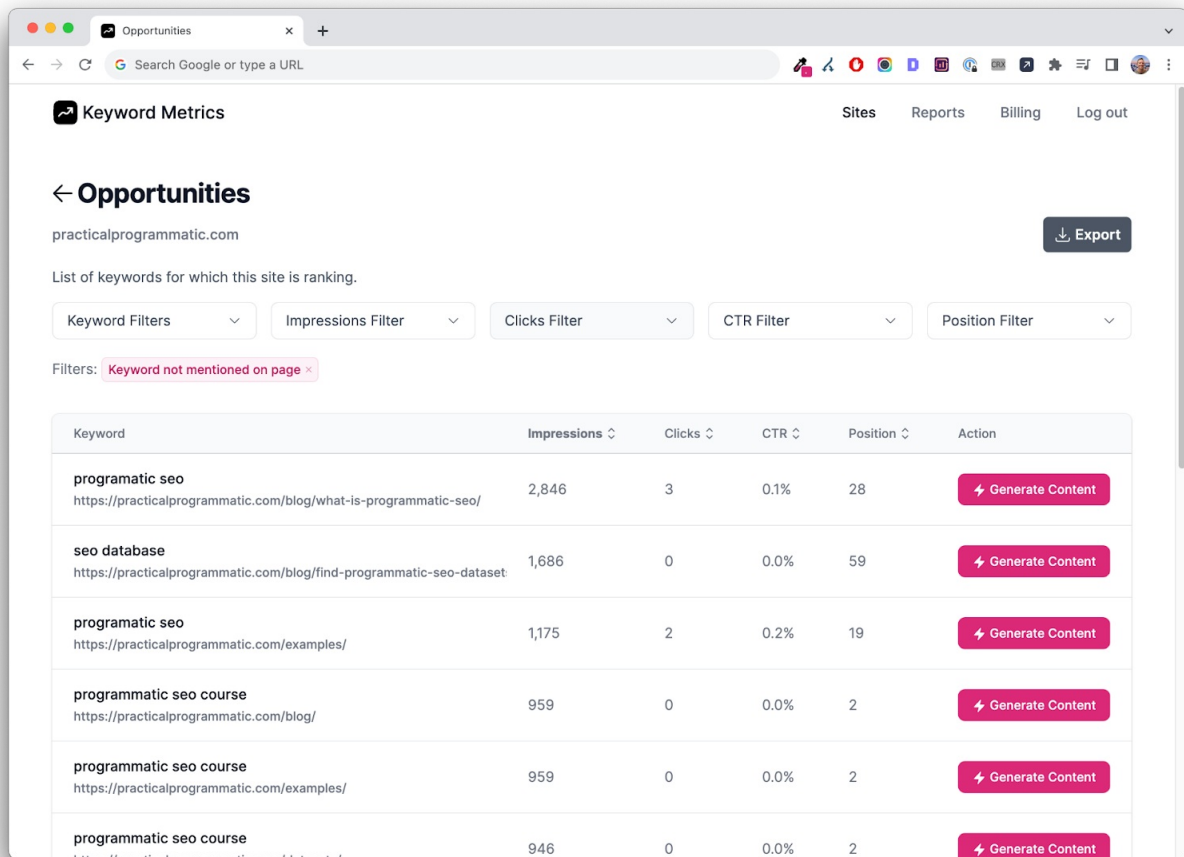
Can you tell us what Keyword Metrics is?

Keyword Metrics is like Google Search Console (GSC) but on rocket fuel.

It's a GSC rank-tracking tool that turns hours of lucrative SEO work into minutes.

It more effectively shows the keywords you need to target to increase revenue and traffic.

Whether you're an SEO specialist or a business owner, the goal of Keyword Metrics is to help you focus on strategy and results, not just data wrangling through endless rows of exported query data.



The screenshot shows the Keyword Metrics interface for the domain `practicalprogrammatic.com`. It features a navigation bar with links to Sites, Reports, Billing, and Log out. The main section is titled "← Opportunities" and includes an "Export" button. Below the title, there are filter buttons for Keyword Filters, Impressions Filter, Clicks Filter, CTR Filter, and Position Filter. A filter is currently applied: "Keyword not mentioned on page". The main content is a table with the following columns: Keyword, Impressions, Clicks, CTR, Position, and Action. The table lists six keyword opportunities, each with a "Generate Content" button.

Keyword	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Position	Action
programmatic seo https://practicalprogrammatic.com/blog/what-is-programmatic-seo/	2,846	3	0.1%	28	Generate Content
seo database https://practicalprogrammatic.com/blog/find-programmatic-seo-dataset/	1,686	0	0.0%	59	Generate Content
programmatic seo https://practicalprogrammatic.com/examples/	1,175	2	0.2%	19	Generate Content
programmatic seo course https://practicalprogrammatic.com/blog/	959	0	0.0%	2	Generate Content
programmatic seo course https://practicalprogrammatic.com/examples/	959	0	0.0%	2	Generate Content
programmatic seo course https://practicalprogrammatic.com/dataset/	946	0	0.0%	2	Generate Content

Why did you acquire Keyword Metrics?

Buying [Keyword Metrics](#) was impulsive but strategic. I skimmed through the numbers, thought it was directionally correct, and decided to purchase it.

The platform was working *just* fine, and any fixes required I could make them myself.

Plus, the name was very easy to brand.

I'm the non-tech founder of [Embarque.io](#), an SEO agency that's been going strong for four years, but I wanted to do something bigger.

When I saw Keyword Metrics for sale on Twitter, I jumped on it.

As someone who runs an SEO agency, I knew firsthand how tedious it can be to work with Google Search Console. This tool fits like a glove. It automates processes and reporting that would usually take hours, making life easier for me and offering more value to my clients.

There's a big difference between running an agency and running a SaaS, though.

SaaS gives you scalability, but it also comes with its own challenges—technical challenges, for one, since I've never led a development team.

But for me, that's the appeal. I'm spending 14-hour work days, and I wake up excited. I'm literally dreaming of keywords.

As a non-dev, how are you going to develop your SaaS?

The best way to sum it up is:

"If you don't know, you learn."

But let me tell you how that's played out in real life.

After acquiring [Keyword Metrics](#), I knew there was no turning back.

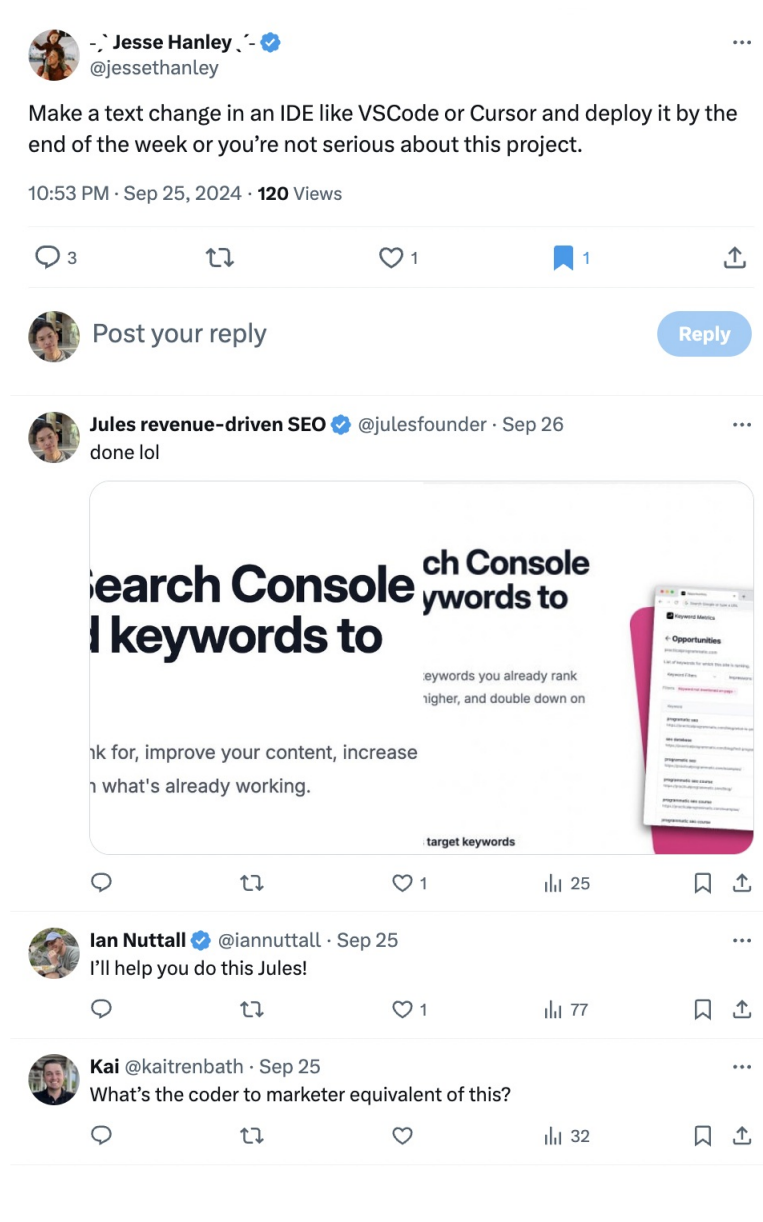
I had to figure out how to make this thing better, even without a technical background.

One day, someone on Twitter threw me a curveball. Jesse Hanley, an experienced founder, tweeted about shipping features as a non-technical founder.

It was the elephant in the room, and I couldn't ignore it.

At first, I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?"

But that tweet made me realize something crucial: there are founders out there, just like me, learning the ropes as they go.



So, I decided to dive in headfirst. I used ChatGPT to help me understand and change the text within the app.

Ian, the previous founder, helped me with the setup, as well.

Then I managed, hit commit, and deployed via Forge.

That was much easier than I thought.

Things didn't end there.

Pretty soon, I was changing some of the keyword filters and the AI features. I even included a new content generator! It creates optimized featured snippets based on my insights as an SEO agency founder and expert.

It wasn't perfect or flashy, but it was a significant milestone for me.

I realized that coding, much like anything else, is about persistence, creation, and problem-

solving. Sure, I'm not going to be building complex systems overnight.

But knowing I can contribute—even if it's with a bit of AI and mentorship—was a huge win for me. It's like driving without a licence. And I was partly-raised in the Philippines, where that often happens!

Now, I know where the steering wheel is.

I'll have a YouTube video coming out on this soon, so stay tuned.

How did the deal come about?

One minute I'm scrolling Twitter, the next minute I'm DM-ing someone to buy their business like I'm ordering pizza. It was fast, impulsive, hopefully satisfying, but not totally certain it was the right choice.

Obviously, unlike pizza, there was a lot more at stake.

And I stumbled across a tweet from Ian Nuttall. It was simple but impactful: "SEO SaaS for sale. \$30k."



Ian Nuttall
@iannuttall



I have an SEO SaaS for sale for \$30k.

Keyword Metrics has been making \$850-1k MRR since I launched it in October (and I haven't really updated it since launch)

I think it has potential but I'm just not that interested in working on it any more.

It's built in Laravel on the TALL stack.

I'm looking for:

- Experienced buyer who can move quickly and easily
- Async comms (no calls)
- Ideally somebody I know or know of already

DMs open for verified users.



2:59 PM · May 7, 2024 · 20K Views



13



5



51



55



Ian's tweet laid out the basics—Keyword Metrics had already been making close to \$1k in MRR (monthly recurring revenue) since its launch. And to top it off, it was built on a Laravel stack—something that's stable and reliable, even if I wasn't familiar with it.

He was looking for a buyer who could move fast, be asynchronous (no calls), and ideally, someone he already knew or had a connection with.

What appealed to me most wasn't just the MRR or the fact that it was an established tool. It was the alignment.

As an SEO agency owner, I'd spent countless hours manually working through Google Search Console's data, extracting what I needed for clients. The potential to streamline all of that into a few minutes using Keyword Metrics made so much sense.

Was it impulsive? Absolutely. Was it risky? No question.

But sometimes, those gut feelings lead to the best decisions. And so, with very little vetting

or hesitation, I bought a SaaS company.

The journey since then has been a mix of excitement, learning, and some occasional "what have I done?" moments, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

How are you planning to grow Keyword Metrics?

Step one: Make it so good that Google gets jealous.

Step two: Watch it spread faster than a meme in a group chat.

The goal is to replace the need for complicated Google Search Console and rank tracking reporting setups with something simple, automated, and actionable.

I want Keyword Metrics to be the go-to tool for anyone who's tired of wrestling with spreadsheets and wants to get straight to insights.

The plan is to focus on product-led growth, referrals, and solid SEO strategies to reach more users. The product will speak for itself, and the more value we provide, the easier it'll be to grow.

Yes, product-led. It's the best type of growth, done right. It's how Embarque.io has thrived over the years. We're better than our direct competitors and 2-3x cheaper.

When I think about growth, it's not just about increasing the number of users—it's about making Keyword Metrics indispensable to the people who use it.

But let's get into the details.

Product-led growth

The product has to do the talking. I want users to have that "aha" moment as soon as they try it.

The beauty of SaaS is that if the product is good, it creates its own momentum. We're going to focus on refining every part of Keyword Metrics so that from onboarding to the core functionality, users experience real, tangible value.

Whether it's cutting down their reporting time or helping them uncover high-potential keywords, we want every interaction with the tool to be rewarding.

Product-led growth means iterating quickly based on user feedback and constantly delivering improvements that users didn't even know they needed.

Referral marketing

Nothing beats word of mouth. When people find a tool that changes their workflow or saves

them time, they talk about it. That's what I'm banking on. We're going to create a referral system that rewards users for spreading the word.

But even without formal incentives, I'm counting on the product to be good enough that people naturally want to recommend it to others in their network—whether it's in SEO communities, on Twitter, or among agency owners.

Solid SEO

It would be ironic if an SEO tool didn't use SEO to grow.

This isn't just about casting a wide net—it's about creating targeted content that speaks directly to our ideal users. I want to create case studies, guides, and tutorials that show the real-world value of Keyword Metrics, helping us to establish authority while drawing in potential customers.

Nurturing a community

One thing I've learned running an agency is that relationships drive business.

That's why I plan to build a community around Keyword Metrics, where users can share tips, ask questions, and get early access to new features.

This community will also serve as a feedback loop, helping us understand user pain points and address them quickly. Over time, I see this community becoming a hub for SEO professionals to not only learn from each other but also feel invested in the growth of Keyword Metrics itself.

At the end of the day, the product will speak for itself. The more value we provide, the easier it'll be to grow. My goal is to turn Keyword Metrics into the go-to tool for SEO professionals and agencies that are tired of wrestling with data and want to get straight to insights.

What are some basic SEO mistakes that lots of founders make?

One of the biggest mistakes is waiting too long to start SEO.

Founders often think SEO is something they can delay, but it takes time to build momentum.

If you start late, you'll find yourself playing catch-up while competitors are already ahead.

Another common mistake is neglecting **backlinks and PR**.

These are essential for building authority, yet many founders overlook them. They're so focused on the day-to-day that they miss out on critical opportunities to strengthen their website's credibility.

A lot of founders also fail to center their growth strategy around their **website**, which should be the main conversion hub. Without a strong, SEO website, you're missing out on turning visitors into leads or customers.

Then there's the issue of not being **data-driven**.

If you're not tracking the right metrics or telling your brand's story through SEO content, you're leaving potential growth on the table. SEO isn't just about throwing keywords into content; it's about using data to craft a narrative that speaks to both users and search engines.

And finally—this one's a big opportunity missed—**long-form content** can be repurposed into smaller, bite-sized pieces. Your SEO content doesn't have to live in one format. It can be your main hub, repurposed across different channels, giving it much more mileage than founders typically realize.

This means that even if your page doesn't rank, you can still repurpose that into smaller content pieces.

How do you feel about people using AI for writing content?

AI is only as powerful as the person using it. I've seen people lean too heavily on AI to churn out generic, low-quality content. That's a big issue. After all, in SEO, **expertise, authority, and trust (E-E-A-T)** are vital for success.

Plus, if your content doesn't meet a certain quality benchmark, search engines and users will notice.

That said, AI has **limitless potential**.

With the right creativity and framework, you can do just about anything. It's not about cutting corners. It's about using AI to **enhance** what you're already doing, not replace it.

AI can help improve processes, generate ideas, and push the boundaries of possibilities. It should never come at the expense of quality.

Where can people find out more about you?

You can follow my journey on [YouTube](#), where I'm documenting my experiences as a non-tech founder diving into the SaaS world, and running the agency.

I'm also active on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), where I share updates and insights about SEO and growing Keyword Metrics. Oh, and definitely check out [Keyword Metrics](#) itself—you'll see exactly what I've been working on!

Thanks for the chat!

I hope you enjoyed this newsletter! Let me know if you have any feedback 😊

You can just reply to this email.

Cheers,

Pete

p.s. Reach out if you want to promote your startup in front of 1650 founders with an advert!

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