

# How Steve Brown Built a 40+ Client Dental SEO Agency

Daryl Rosser: Hey guys, Daryl here. Welcome back to another episode of the Lion Zeal Show. In this episode, I'm sitting down with Steve Brown and we're breaking down his agency, DDS Rank. So, DDS Rank is an SEO agency for dentists. They specialize just in working with dentists, and in doing that, over the last I think three, four years, Steve has built it up to around 40, 50 clients today. So he's doing very well for himself, and it's very fascinating, basically, to break down his agency, see exactly how he built it, and why he built it the way he did. And what's super fascinating to me is that he has very different beliefs in how to grow his agency and get clients to meet.

He believes that he should go out there and bring clients to him, and he basically sells over email, rarely ever over the phone. Whereas I'm more like, "Let's go on the phone, let's close the deal, let's follow up," and stuff like that. He doesn't really do that, he just sends them the proposal, follows up a couple times with emails, and they close, they buy, over email, which is insane compared to what I teach. So, it's very interesting to see the opposite side of how exactly to do this. So hope you enjoy the interview, let's get straight into it. It's gonna be great. Enjoy.

Thank you for joining me on the show today. It's very cool to have you here. We've been friends for a while now, so I've been meaning to bring you on for ages now. So, thanks for joining me.

Steve Brown: Well, Daryl, thanks for having me. I've been looking forward to an opportunity to do this.

Daryl Rosser: Awesome. So for, I guess, most people, you're not that well ... You don't really build up a brand, and when you do, it's all under a username, so most people don't know who you are. So, do you wanna give a little introduction as to who you are and what it is you do?

Steve Brown: Sure. My name is Steve Brown, and I run a company called DDS Rank. It's a dental SEO company. Company started in 2013, is when I started doing that with the dental niche, and have been doing it ever since.

Daryl Rosser: That's awesome. We were both talking before this about how we both went through learning DDS training, like we both started exactly the same time, 2013. I think it's really cool stuff.

Steve Brown: Yeah, their backlinks XXX program that Glenn and [Diggy 00:02:05] did-

Daryl Rosser: Old-school.

Steve Brown: Which, you know, for me was revolutionary. I mean, I had started with a few friends, we had started some local ... I'm up in Maine in a fairly rural area, and we each started, we lived in different towns, and we had started a local directory type site, where we wanted to do local news, and information, and then sell advertising to businesses. That was our plan. Part of the plan was, well, how do we get the sites to rank so that we're number 14, you know, plumbers in my city, all of these different categories so that then we could sell ads to people, or get them to pay for premium listings in our directory.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: So, that led me to SEO, "Okay, how do we do this? I got to learn how to rank." Went through a bunch of different things, and finally stumbled across that backlinks XXX course. As I said, there was one module in there, you know, we talked about it a little earlier, the rank and rent model, where Diggy had done it with a Vancouver personal injury lawyer, and I thought, you know, "Hey, I can do this." I mean, it was a plan. You know, a lot of people give a lot of general knowledge, but they actually had a plan laid out, "Do this, do this, do this-

Daryl Rosser: And real examples as well, which is really cool.

Steve Brown: Yeah. So, when I saw that I was like, "Hey, I can do this. Why can I do this? I'll give it a try." So, that was the start, and you know, obviously been through a lot of courses and training sins, and that's what-

Daryl Rosser: Did you immediately like go for the course, and like, you know, "I'm going to start a dental SEO agency?" How did that come about?

Steve Brown: Well, you know, I've been through a lot of courses. I'm a person who believes in training, and learning. You know, once you start getting clients that are paying you a decent amount of money, you realize, "I only have to pick up one or two nuggets out of a particular training. Even if it cost me 1000 bucks, if it helps me land one client that's paying me 1000 bucks a month, it's a plus."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: And I know you have to have the money to start that. A lot of people want to start SEO, and they got 20 bucks in their pocket, and they don't know what to do, but once you've got a little money coming in, you can leverage that. So, you know, I've been through Neil Patel's stuff, I'm actually going through Gotch Academy right now, from Nathan Gotch. I know you did Gotch SEO Academy, I know you had him on.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, great guy.

Steve Brown: I like to read and study stuff, I've been through the backlinks XXX, I went through the marketing Inc. that Glenn and Diggy have put together. It's good stuff. So, part of that, almost every course you go to, they'll tell you about niches you should concentrate on. You want to pick somebody that has aa high value client.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, it's very tough to make a living doing SEO for a pizza joint, because they're making 10 bucks a pie, you know, and that's what they're selling it for. They're going to have to sell an awful lot of pizzas in order to afford you. So, you want to pick a high dollar one. Everyone's like, "Oh, dentists. That's the one." So, everyone in the world wants to hit dentists, but you know, when I looked at it, there was a couple things about it. I can look at a dentist, and I say, "Okay, first of all, they're smart, and I like dealing with smart people because they see the value." You know, you don't have to spend a whole lot of time convincing them that they need more clients, or they can get more clients. They know that.

Daryl Rosser: That's fascinating, because I've heard people say the opposite in that niche. They say that they're at what they do, and not so smart at business.

Steve Brown: Well, it's true that ... Well, I wouldn't say they're not so smart at business, but they go through dental school, and land up spending, you know, a lot of years learning how to fix teeth, and they get some general marketing courses and whatnot, but you know, most of them know what they're really good at. They're really good at fixing teeth, and so they want to find somebody who's really good at the marketing, or who's really good at SEO, that can just take care of that for them, which I like. Now, I mean, you and I, we've known each other and talked back and forth online. I mean, you're in what, Thailand, or wherever you are, I'm in Maine.

Daryl Rosser: Vietnam now, yeah.

Steve Brown: Vietnam, wherever you're at. It's a long ways away.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: But you know, my personal situation is I have a few kids, and my youngest daughter has some pretty significant medical issues, so I have to care for her all the time, so I needed to be able to do something where I could be home. I didn't have to be in an office, I didn't have to [schmooze 00:06:21] clients, and all of that. So, by picking dentists, dentists want to find somebody who knows what they're doing, and they can just trust to do the work for them. Most of them. There are some that aren't.

I mean, in doing this, I have never met a one of my clients, never, and you know, many of them I have never even talked to on the phone. We do everything via

email, which is perfect for me, because when you have a child around that's making a lot of noise, it doesn't sound all that professional to have a screaming baby in the background, you know. But, that was part of it.

With dentists, it's real easy to justify the cost. You know, I mean some of the studies I've seen say, for a general dentist, the average client is worth, you know, around \$1000 of profit a year to the dentist, and maybe will stay there as much as 10 years. So, if you can win them a client, it's worth probably anywhere upwards of \$1000 to \$10,000 over time.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: Well, if I'm getting you \$1000 per client that you didn't have, how many do I have to make for you to get for you to justify paying me. You know, if I get you \$2000 worth of patients a month, will you pay me \$1000 a month? I would think so. Most dentists are smart enough to know to pay 1000 to get two, you take that deal all day long.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely, yeah.

Steve Brown: If you start talking specialties, you get to braces, it's a higher number. Some of the very special dental implant things, some of those procedures are 20,000 bucks. You know, how many of those do you have to sell to justify doing the SEO work?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: So on that hand, you know, you have to be smart to be a dentist. You may not have all of the marketing and business skills, or advertising, or computer or technology skills, but you understand how money works, and you understand numbers, and you can make the case. They know what they would have to pay in advertising. I mean, I've picked up clients, and they came, "Well, we always used to just buy ads in the Yellow Pages." "Okay, well how much were you spending?" "Oh, we were spending \$10,000 a month on Yellow Pages ads."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: That's just sad. But I mean, back in the day, what else did you do? You put an ad in a magazine, and maybe you spend a few thousand bucks to run in a local magazine, or an ad. With SEO, it's different. Like, most of the other advertising, you hit a local newspaper, or ... At least with the Yellow Pages, Yellow Pages was a little closer to Google, because you're hitting somebody at the point of search. They're actively looking, so they go to the Yellow Pages section on dentists, and hey, you want to have a full-page ad in there, because when they're looking for a dentist, you want to be in front of them as a dentist.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: If they're in the magazine, if they're in the newspaper, most people don't get up in the morning looking through the newspaper for a dentist. They just see your ad, so it's less effective.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: Google is at the point of search and so, you know, you're targeting specific search terms. It's almost equivalent to looking at like social media marketing, Facebook. Facebook, at least for dentists, is less about people looking for a specific thing as it is for just general brand awareness.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: Facebook, social media marketing, it's great for targeting a demographic, targeting an area, using social proof, "Hey, three of my friends have liked this dentist," but Google, and lesser Yahoo, and Bing, is really where you want to go if you want to target people who are actively searching. So you know, you can make the pitch to them there, you can pitch them on the value of advertising. Planner, although it's gotten worse over the years, still gives you add value, so you can say, "Hey, people in your market are paying 10, 20 bucks a click for these things. If I get you the equivalent traffic of 50 visits a month, at 20 bucks a click, that's 1000 bucks a month worth of add value that I've given you, and I might've brought you a client or two that's worth 1000 or 2000." So, it's real easy to justify what you're doing.

Daryl Rosser: For sure. Let me ask you, did you go straight to like a dental industry, or did you kind of play around with some others first?

Steve Brown: You know, I looked at a few, dental was one. I looked at lawyers, because again, they'll say, "Hey, go for the high value ones."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: Lawyers have always made me extremely nervous, because they sue people for a living, you know, so if you messed something up with a lawyer, they got nothing better to do than to sue you. They know how to do it very well, whereas ... So, I was always a little nervous about going after that niche. I mean, I've done some things, and I worked for clients in other areas. I've done some affiliate SEO, we talked about that.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: But really, dental was the one I decided. You know, Google has a thing out there, I'm sure you've probably seen it at some point, but it's their famous 10 things I know to be true. It's like their little manifesto. If you go search Google, "10 things I know to be true," everywhere there's this list, and number two on this list is, it's best to do one thing really, really well. I really felt like, you know

what, yeah. Of course, they do everything now. They do, you know, online tools in every area, but the search is their main thing.

For me, you know, when it comes to doing client SEO, one of the problems with doing, say you want to be the local SEO for your town, well, keyword research takes a lot of time to do it well, so if you're doing plumbers one day, and if you're doing, you know, whatever manufacturing company the next day, or dentist the next day, you've got to do a lot of work. But, if you only deal with one particular industry, yeah, from one city to the next, the keywords change a little bit, but once you kind of know what people search for, and the best terms, and how one industry works, you can leverage your time so that you're not reinventing the wheel with every time you pick up a different kind of client.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely. I mean, being straight up, like if me versus you went in to get a dental client, you'd win every single time, because you know the language they speak, you know all the ideal keywords, you know everything all up front, right?

Steve Brown: Yeah. It's funny, you know, my company is DDS Rank, DDS, Doctor Of Dental Surgery, that the three letter acronym that comes after a gentle name. So, I'm going through keyword research early on, and I'm searching for different terms. "Okay, dentist city, city dentist, dentist in city ..."

Daryl Rosser: Don't know if you can hear that ...

Steve Brown: You get broken into there?

Daryl Rosser: Some weird kids screaming or something in the background.

Steve Brown: I thought my weird kid would be screaming. I'm glad it's yours, and not mine. But, I remember looking at terms, and then around me, DDS, nobody searches for DDS in my town. Nobody does. Nobody does in most cities, but then I happened to be doing some research down around Georgia I think, around Atlanta, and one of the highest ranking terms with the most volume was, you know, Atlanta DDS, and I'm like, "Wow, why do they use that term down there?"

Well, where I come from, and I know you're from a different country, in the US, when you need to go get your license, you go to the DMV, the Department of Motor Vehicles. In Georgia, it's the Department of Drivers Services, so they call it the DDS. So, even though it's a huge volume keyword, it's of no value to a dentist, you know. So, somebody who doesn't know dental might not know that, but you spend time in any niche, and you start to learn the ins and outs.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, absolutely. Is there any other advantages of being focused like that?

Steve Brown: You can develop a brand. You know, you can be ... You really should focus on something, because it's very tough ... You're never, almost never, unless ...

Okay, guys like Nathan Gotch, or maybe Matt Diggity do it, but most people are just not going to rank for SEO.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, you got guys like Kotton Grammer or whatever, that poor tons of researchers into being Chicago SEO, and an Orlando SEO, but even that, they go to a city, and their pitch is, "Hey, I'm an SEO, and look, I can rank in your city," but I think more valuable to most people would be, "I know this city, and I show up for a zillion different things in this city, and I understand the market, and I understand what people are looking for, or within a particular niche." I think that was one of the values, you can brand yourself. We only do dental, and that's part of how, you know, we promote ourselves.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: We're not focused on, you know, pizzas today, and dentists tomorrow, this is what we do. This is where we read, this is the industry. We look at trade magazines, we stay in forums, we do all of those things around this one thing.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, absolutely. I agree. I think it's perfect. Let's talk a little bit about client acquisition. I know you have some very interesting strategies. What would you say today your most effective way of bringing clients is?

Steve Brown: Well, I am not like a schmoozy marketing guy. I know a lot of people do ... When I get into this whole SEO, you know, it's very appealing to market it, because everybody once to make a buck, and it's usually marketed as, "Oh, this is easy, and you know, clients will just fall over themselves, throwing money at you. You just send out 500 emails, or 5000 emails, or 50,000 emails, and you'll get a certain percent back, and you can just talk them into it."

I didn't want to be that guy, first of all, because I've always kind of felt like if I really am striving, striving, striving to attain clients this way, to talk them into how great I am, I'm going to have to strive to keep them happy and maintain them, and I didn't want something that required me to be on the phone all the time, to hold hands. You know, I'm not running, even though there are several of us working together, and it's not in an office, and I'm not on the phone all the time, and we're not in conferences, and we're not going to trade shows or any of that for the most part. The client acquisition, you know, we were talking a little earlier, before we got on the call, about three, four years ago it was really easy to rank.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, you could just nail some PBNs, do some high-power links, and boom, you can rank for almost anything easy. So, what I did to start out was, okay, I started some rank and rent sites. I did a dental site in Tulsa Oklahoma, in, you

know, Miami, and a bunch of different big cities, and with the idea that I would rank and rent them to somebody. What I found was, it was easier to rank than it was to rent.

Daryl Rosser: That's very true.

Steve Brown: It's one thing to get a site to rank. For resources at it, but then you got to talk somebody into actually letting you put their stuff on there, and to pay you monthly. But, I was able to say, "Well look, this dental site over here," and truthfully, it was a crap site. You could put up a one, two, three page site, and have one page of text that used different headings and stuff on it. It didn't even have to make sense. Truthfully, you could build a page specifically that made no sense, but use the right words in the right place, and you could rank it.

Daryl Rosser: Very easily.

Steve Brown: So, you could have this site that was a cheap looking, easy site, and you could go to someone, "Look, I put this at number one in one of the biggest cities in America. What do you think I could do for you in a small town?" So, it was at least proof of concept before I had a lot of clients. You know, and I think for anybody who wants to get into SEO, I mean, you know, and a lot of your guests. I've listened to some of your podcasts, I think they're great. My nephew's a big fan by the way.

Daryl Rosser: That's very cool.

Steve Brown: He's getting into SEO, and he's like, "Oh, there's this guy. I get his emails, and I watch his podcasts. I really like ..." I'm like, "Oh, I know him." So, you're really famous, Daryl, just so you know.

Daryl Rosser: Just a little bit in the SEO space. Outside, I'm a nobody.

Steve Brown: Yeah, but I'm nobody. I'm in the middle of nowhere in Maine, you know. I completely lost my train of thought, that's too bad. But, being able to show proof was one of the things, certainly, with rank and rent sites, but I guess what I really wanted to do was I wanted to rank, and have people come find me. I didn't want to try to talk someone into necessarily hiring me, I wanted somebody who already was looking for what I provided to find me, and asked me for those services.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: One way to do that, and if you have good rankings, which you know, I had, and still have for various target keywords for the sites we use, is I have a lead gen software. I use the MySiteAuditor, have it sitting on my page as a, you know, free dental SEO audit. You come in, you click a link, and within 30 seconds it



gives you a semi-detailed printout of the things that are wrong with your site. And, it's a lead gen tool, and people use that.

So, if someone comes to your site for dental SEO, and they use your lead gen tool, you know they're looking for dental SEO, they're concerned that their site is in ranking well, whether it was because someone else messed it up, or because they'd never done anything, and so, you know, you've got a hot lead, and you send them an email. The other way, and we've talked about this before, there are a number of forums, and online spaces that are specifically just for dentists, or dentists, or contractors, or consultants who work with dentists.

I decided I was going to go to a couple of those. One specifically that has a lot of traffic, and they have literally hundreds of forums, most of them deal with, you know, fixing dental problems, which I could care less about, but there were two or three that were specifically about marketing, promoting your practice, SEO, and just add value. Go in there, because of course there's tons of people that want to get in there and just market themselves.

Daryl Rosser: Spam the crap out of it.

Steve Brown: Yeah, spam the crap, you know, and I have the best thing ever, and most of the dentists are smart enough to realize you're just, no you're not, and they'll boot them out of there. But I just go in, I have a simple, you know, little thing in my tagline with a link to my site, and I answer questions from time to time. Whenever, you know, it's like, "Oh, I got to bring in some new clients," I can go into that forum and answer some questions, provide some value, without marketing myself, and the dentists who want what I have will contact me and say, "Hey, could you look at my site?" One of the things we do that a lot of people don't do is we do in-depth audits for free. If a dentist comes to my site, they do the automated one ...

Daryl Rosser: What does in-depth mean by the way?

Steve Brown: In-depth? What would you do on an audit that someone was paying you for?

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: I mean, literally, someone will come to me and say, "Would you do an audit on my site?" And we will do a backlink profile audit, we'll do keyword research, we'll look at their competitors, I will go over their site with tools, and also somewhat manually, and write them up a 20 or 30 page report. We'll spend hours on a potential client.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, wow.

Steve Brown: Because, the mind set, and I know I've read this and heard this in a lot of different courses, at least some of the Neil Patel stuff and whatever, is that, "This guy gives this much stuff for free, imagine what he'll do if ..."

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely.

Steve Brown: So yeah, we may spend, you know, three, four hours putting this proposal really in-depth, but these guys, if they're coming to me, are probably going to four or five other guys, and four or five other guys are going to maybe give them an automated report, maybe give them some generic marketing material, because they're all about volume. I'm not all about volume. I one, you know, I'm going for maybe little higher value client, but I'm not offering a \$100 a month package either. You know, we're charging a reasonable amount. So, I spent three or four hours doing a proposal for somebody.

I converted a pretty good percentage. You know, it ebbs and flows, and a lot of times I'll have people, you know, we just brought on a new client the other day, I did a proposal for him a year ago, and heard nothing for a year, and then get an email, "Yeah, we're ready to start with you now." It's like, you know ... But, because they had that piece of information, it was the most thorough thing they got, and it explained to them why they were in ranking. You know, all of these dentists, they want to be the best dentist in town.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: A lot of them, they craft their office to be a certain way, they tried to hire the best people, and it drives them insane when the guy down the street that has horrible practice, and is lousy with clients beats them in Google, because they ought to be number one, right? They're the best dentist in town, and they don't necessarily know why. If you can tell them why, "It's, well look, you've got no links to your site, your website was developed by somebody using stock content, and it's crap. You need better content, you need content, it needs to be optimized so that it can be scanned and to read, and then you need links from authoritative relevant places in order to rank."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: "Oh, okay." "So, this is what I'm going to do for you." You lay it out for them, and then they're happy.

Daryl Rosser: I love it. I actually teach a similar sort of approach to that. If you want to get a client, you have to tell them you're amazing, to show them what they need to do, then offer to do it for them.

Steve Brown: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I think, you know, most of these guys, one thing that I see in the dental industry is, everybody targets them. I mean, I get probably three or four emails a day from people telling me that my site, "Oh, we

see there some problems with your site in Google, and we can make you number one," and you know, "Just contract our Indian form that has five people working for it." You know, "For \$10 a month, we'll make you number one in Google." It's like, well they get this all the time, and they get people calling them trying to rip them off, and so to have somebody who actually knows what they're talking about, and gives them information for free, and doesn't put the hard-sell on them, I found it to be pretty successful.

I mean, that's a big way that we do it. We don't really advertise. We may in the future, I'm in the process right now. We're expanding things a bit, we're nailing down our communication strategy, our reporting strategies, our on boarding. You know, trying to ...

Daryl Rosser: Scale.

Steve Brown: Sometimes you start something, and it just starts getting away from you. And you get too big, and you can't service people, so you realize, yeah, you need to get things ready to scale. One of the books that I'm starting to read right now is called Scale.

Daryl Rosser: Oh, straight to the point.

Steve Brown: Yeah, and it's about, you know, building a business. I don't want to build a job necessarily. You know, I don't want to just build something that requires me to do every step. You know, you do a lot, I like a lot of your stuff you've had on dealing with VAs, and farming out things. I hate managing people. I've done that in previous jobs.

Daryl Rosser: Fair enough.

Steve Brown: I like people who just you give them something to do, and they do it, people I trust.

Daryl Rosser: I'm with you these days.

Steve Brown: But, you have to have systems in place, because if you don't, you know ... I spent a lot of time learning SEO, learning how to do different things, and you know, well, I mean I went to school for computer science, went to college in the late 80s, so I've been in this industry as a programmer, consultant doing a bunch of different things for a lot of years, so I have some technical expertise, but you need to be able to boil that down, and pass it off for people, so that they can replicate your success.

So, that's kind of what we're working on now so that we can scale things up. When we do that, we may do some advertising. My theory, the only reason I've never really advertised is because I was afraid if I put an ad in front of 50,000 dentists, what if they all call me at once and want me to do an in-depth audit of

their site, what am I going to do? So, we've been doing it slow, but that's the plan right now.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, let's break down a little bit then. So, you jump on, say, forums and stuff, and you start adding value. Not pitching or anything, just people ask questions, and you just answer them, right?

Steve Brown: Yeah, well the first thing, if somebody wanted to replicate that strategy, I would suggest the first thing you do is you get on there and you listen, and you read. You read a bunch of the threads there, you get the feel of what people are looking for, you look for the ones who are obviously marketing themselves, and you avoid that. You look for the type of answers that people appreciate, and thank. You look for the people maybe who have more followers on that forum, and see how they do it, and then you just offer to answer questions, you know, without being super in-depth, or pitching your services. Yeah, so get in there, read, and then you make some comments, and you try to add value. If you know an answer to a question, give it. If you don't, don't.

Daryl Rosser: And then, what happens just as a byproduct of doing that? Is it people actually reach out to you, like private message and ask you-

Steve Brown: Private message, or hit the link off of your things, off of your signature, and come to you. You get an email, you get a message, you get a whatever, "Hey, could you take a look at my site?" You say, "Sure." You know, I mean we only deal with dentists. There are sometimes you have clients that approach you, and you realize, "Look, this is just not going to be a fit either," based on the market that they're in. I mean, one of the other things we do is we only work with one dentist in a particular city.

Daryl Rosser: Make sense.

Steve Brown: In our agreement, we give them a radius around that we're not going work with your competitors. If you have two clients in the same space, and they're not your sites ... I mean, yeah, if you're doing affiliate marketing, sure, you want to have 10 pages, and you want to own the first page, but if you have two clients in the same space, who gets to be number one?

Daryl Rosser: Very true.

Steve Brown: You know, I mean, so I don't want to be fighting against myself, and I also want to tell them, "Look, if we're working with you, we want to pour ourselves into your business, to be a resource for you." So, we do that, and yeah, you go over their site, I give them a professional looking, well worded, and well explained thing, "This is the things that we see wrong with your site. If you were to hire us, this is the steps that we would take," and you know, and we would execute it for you. You make them a proposal, and you hand it off, and I'm not high pressure. You know, I will follow up.

Sometimes you do proposals for people, you send it out, and you never hear from them again. I'll send a couple follow-ups, "Hey, did you get my proposal? Did you go through it?" You know, I use ... Hub Spot has a little widget thing you can pay for, and so you can tell when your emails get opened, through Google. It's very handy. You can see how often it's been opened, you can see, you know, all of that. But yeah, we follow up with them, and see if they want our services, and you know, if they do, great. If not, you wait for the next one.

Daryl Rosser: So, like they probably message you, they ask you for some help, do you answer some questions first, or do you just like, "Hey, let me put together this audit for you," and then ... The audit is the proposal, right?

Steve Brown: The audit is the proposal.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: I mean, the first few pages of the audit, it kind of explained who we are, why we do it, and really mixed through the whole thing. See, that was part of my thought, was if I make this proposal well worded, well explained, and I put my marketing pitch throughout the whole thing, you know, "You're actually on page one for a few of these keywords, but you're down around 9th or 10th," and if you can tell them, "Look, based on numbers, the number one result gets 32.4% of the clicks, the number 10 gets 2.4%, which means if I move you from 10 to 1, you're going to get 13 times as much traffic."

I mean, you can make that pitch, you tell them, "Hey, you know, 75% of the people that are looking to buy local goods and services go online to check first, who are they seeing? Are they seeing you?" You're making your pitch while you're explaining the problem to them.

Daryl Rosser: Got it.

Steve Brown: So really, the proposal is the pitch. Sometimes, yeah, you have to have phone calls, sometimes you have to have more email exchanges. You solve particular problems, or you tell people, "Yeah, your sites penalized, I'm sorry. Look at it, you're in the 70s and it's because of this. Somebody built 6000 links to you." But yeah, that's part of it. You answer questions. I mean, I'm not going to sit there and fix somebody's problems for nothing forever, but typically it doesn't work that way. They recognize the value, they see the logic in the proposal.

You know, and we're still working to tweak that. I think, you know, one of my things that I have to work on, my proposal's a little too wordy in some places, and I want to make it a little more visually appealing, put some infographics in there to help spruce things up, we've had pretty good luck with it.

Daryl Rosser: It's fascinating to me actually, that your sales approach is literally just email them a proposal, and then you get people to actually sign up on that. It's great.

Steve Brown: Yeah, I mean, all of them sign up off of that. I mean, there are a few that you have to talk to on the phone, but again, these guys are hard a lot of times to get on the phone.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: The other thing is, you know, when you're looking at your site, and you've got a lead gen thing, and people come in and do a scan of their site, a lot of times, like today, here ... Can I say what the date is here? I don't want to mess up your podcast, in case you're saving this for way down the road.

Daryl Rosser: No, it's cool.

Steve Brown: But, it's a holiday here. It's the Fourth of July here. So, you know, I haven't looked at it today, but I would really expect that today I will get some dentists hitting my site audit tool, because it is a day they're not working, and they're sitting around. A lot of times late at night, or on a weekend, and you know they're surfing, and they see their competitor's ahead of them, and it's driving them nuts, and so they'll go hit the tool, and ...

They're not easy to reach a lot of the times, and so, you know, they're not looking for somebody. They want to just hand it, and have someone handle it. There are some dentists who want to micromanage, and those ones typically don't do well either, but the ones who are successful say, "Hey, what I know how to do is I know how to do dentistry. I make money when I'm working on people in the chair. I don't want to micromanage the landscaper, I don't want to micromanage the builder who's doing my office, and I don't want to micromanage my SEO. I just wanted to work. He can do the work, he can report to me on what he's done, I can see the benefits, and you know, boom, that's it."

Daryl Rosser: For sure. Okay, so let's go about the other client acquisition method. So, you said your ranking for SEO terms, like dental SEO terms, they go to your website, and you have the MySiteAuditor on there. What happens? So, they enter the year URL, they enter a name, I think the website address, and maybe their email as well, how does that turn into a client?

Steve Brown: How is that turning to a client? Well, sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. What happens is they put that in, they put in a keyword, they can put in a competitor, and it will do an audit, it will hand them right online. They don't even, you know, they can put in a fake email. If they put in a fake email, it never turns into a buy, unless they do another contact, which sometimes they do. I also have a, we have an in depth SEO audit submission form on the site as well, and that's how people contact us.

So, in the branded MySiteAuditor thing that it does for them, that gives them an audit of their thing, it says, you know, "This goes over some common factors of SEO. If you're interested in finding more detailed information, you know, here's

a link, contact us here." But often, I'll send them an email once I get notified, "Hey, you've got a new lead," and I'll send them an email saying, "I saw you used our automated tool, but it, again, just goes over common SEO factors, but if you want someone to look over your site, and give you detailed information for free, just let me know, and I'll start the work for you."

Sometimes they respond to that, sometimes they go fill out the form themselves for the detailed audit, and then we do the work. We go through, generate the audit, you know, build this document to them that includes a proposal and all of that, and send it via email. They look it over, and then you say, "Hey, do you have any more questions? I know there was a lot of info in there, if you have any more questions, give me a call, or send me an email, and we'll go from there."

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: Most of the time, if the proposal's good enough ... It's the same pitch that you would make. I mean, you understand like I do, at some point, even if you're making an ungodly hourly rate, you only have so many hours in the day, and you want to leverage ... You know, people who sell courses, you have a course, and part of the reason you do that is, how many people can you train individually? There's only so many, but if you build a course, you can-

Daryl Rosser: Very few, yeah.

Steve Brown: Right, and I try to leverage by saying, "I can only do so many site audits, but if I niche down so I'm focusing on a common set of keywords and terms, I've saved myself some time, and I can leverage that well." If I craft a proposal that has a lot of my pitch built into it, I don't have to say that time and time again on the phone. I can send it to them as part of the free information of giving them. And truthfully, the audit that we do is good. I mean, it's not like it's ... We spend time on it, and-

Daryl Rosser: I think you showed me up before actually.

Steve Brown: Yeah, we probably changed it a little bit since then, but yeah, don't share it please. You know, you got to have some trade secrets.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: But yeah, so it is good information, it's good free information, and they pay, you know, a lot of competitors and people in other spaces charge hundreds and hundreds, because it takes hours, you know.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: But yeah, if you give them that free information with your pitch, they see the value, and they sign up.

Daryl Rosser: Can I ask you to go through some basic numbers with me then, of how this stuff sort of performs?

Steve Brown: Sure.

Daryl Rosser: So, first off I guess I would be curious, as a rough percentage, how many people do you think that go through like MySiteAuditor will end up going ahead and requesting the in-depth audit?

Steve Brown: I don't know. You know, guessing, I'd say maybe a third or so. It's tough to say.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: But then again, I have a lot of people who never use the MySiteAuditor. They just come in, because they don't even care to know ... It's not like they're going to fix it themselves, you know.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, yeah.

Steve Brown: I mean, it's kind of, I'm in the dental space, so you know the advertisers can only get yourself a free dental site auditor, a free dental check up, a site check up, that kind of thing.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Steve Brown: But truthfully, most of them don't care. Some of them don't care, they just want someone to fix their problem. They're not looking to learn how to do it, they're looking to have someone do it, and so they just go right to, "Hey, could you look at my site and tell me what's wrong?"

Daryl Rosser: Okay okay, and one about the numbers of that then, the people that like request the in-depth order, like the proposal, what sort of percentage will go ahead with that?

Steve Brown: You know, it varies, and again, it's tough to get solid numbers, because like I said, I just sign somebody up that I sent a proposal out a year ago, and I haven't heard anything in 12 months, and that they signed on. So, you know, how do you know exactly? You know, I don't know, maybe 10%, maybe 20%, maybe less than that, maybe more. We're not trying to do hundreds of proposals a month, I couldn't handle that. I don't want that kind of volume.

As I mentioned earlier, before we got on this call, I was watching one of your guests the other day who's, you know, ramped up to 200 clients or something, and the thought of managing 200 clients right now kind of scares me.



Daryl Rosser: I bet, yeah. I'm with you.

Steve Brown: We have, you know, beyond that, we still have a pretty decent number of clients that we handle for a small firm. You know, there's probably 40, 50 range maybe that we handle.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, that was my next question.

Steve Brown: You know, somewhere in that range. We are ramping up. We certainly want to do more, but I want to do it in such a way that we can continue to provide good service for people, because if you ... You know, there is one danger of not having enough clients to survive, and the next danger is having too many clients and not servicing them well enough, and you lose them all. You know, so there's a happy sweet spot in there, and we're trying to do it right, and grow smart.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. What about the team running that? Is it just you, or have you got a few people?

Steve Brown: I have a few people that are working with me. There is, well, five of us in total.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: Right now, we're doing different things, but some of that is, you know, when I first started out, I was trying to be very specific. The first line of my website used to say, when I first started, "We don't build dental websites. We only do dental SEO. We're not a website design company," and yet, invariably, I'd have people, "Could you build me a website and then rank it? Could you build me a website?"

Daryl Rosser: Even when it was there?

Steve Brown: Yeah, you know, and I got to do it. Then, it was like, "We're only an SEO company. We just build websites and do SEO." "Well, could you manage a pay per click campaign for me?" You know, you get enough people asking for that, okay, yeah, we'll add that in, and there's value to that. So, you know, we don't do ... There's a lot of people in the dental marketing space that do print advertising, they'll do mailers, they'll help train your front desk.

I mean, one of the problems with SEO, at least in my space is I can't guarantee people will get new patients, because you know, I can talk about rankings, and I can talk about traffic, but we don't in a lot of cases build their website. So, we can make suggestions, but sometimes people have websites that are just plain lousy.

Daryl Rosser: Terrible, yeah.

Steve Brown: And it will never convert. I could bring the whole world to your website, and they're going to bounce, and go to your next competitor as soon as I do.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, so you can't control that. I mean, you can make suggestions, but then, most people will go, they'll get the phone number, they'll pick up the phone, and if the person at the other end, at the front desk is a hag, it doesn't matter how many people I bring, you know, they're never ...

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: And there are some agencies that are big, that do call tracking, and they'll actually record the calls, and they'll work with the dentist, "Hey, this is how you can improve your office, and train your staff to do this." I'm not that guy. I don't want to be that guy. I want to focus on ranking websites, on bringing traffic, and yeah, conversion optimization certainly will help with that. You can't necessarily promise dollars, or you can't promise land in patients, but I can get you traffic, and I can get you rankings, and that's kind of where our focus is.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. So, I'm curious, because I think you kind of mentioned this before, that now that you've grown quite a lot, like considerably over the last couple years or so, has there been kind of growing pains with getting up to like 40, 50 clients, compared to like 20, 30?

Steve Brown: Sure. Oh, absolutely. You know, communication is an issue. I mean, you got to leverage tools. You have to leverage tools. Part of it is, you know, when you get into this space, okay, you've got to work on your proposal thing, you've got to work on your whole, "Okay, I've got you as a client, now how do I get the information I need? How to actually do the work to rank your site, and get your results? How do I report to you what I'm doing? What tools do you use to track rankings, to track analytics?" All of those things become part of it. The whole billing side of things, you know, how do you manage billing for 40 or 50 clients, and staying on top of that, what tools do you use?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, your research tools, and I mean, there's a lot of different tools. Then, now that I've got, you know, a team of people working, how do you manage communication? We're spread all over the place. It's not like we meet in a particular building. You know, one guy that I've worked with for a long time in various capacities, he's about an hour away from me, and then, you know, everybody else is multiple states away from me.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: So, we got to have tools. We've been doing some stuff with Basecamp recently, and using that to manage communication, keep track of client work, and to do lists, and all of that stuff. It's a good tool, but we're still nailing all of that down.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Is there any other tools that like your agency couldn't survive without?

Steve Brown: Yeah, I mean, we use FreshBooks to do the billing.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: And it's been good. It's an accounting software, but it's not ... It's really we use it for billing, and really for billing, that's what it is.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: Most everybody pays me online. I mean, you have a credit card processor, and you also have PayPal, and they can pay either way. The bills go out, you can schedule them automatically so they go out on a recurring basis, that's been pretty handy. And again, you can see when bills have been viewed, or when they haven't, and it will send overdue notices and all that stuff. So, that's been a pretty handy tool, the Base Camp has been handy so far. You know, use the standard SEO tools, we use, you know, I have Majestic, and Ahrefs, and Raven Tools, and SEMRush.

Daryl Rosser: The whole lot, yeah.

Steve Brown: You know, all of those things for different things. Are you writing those down?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, you know, like links for resources afterwards, clearly take a note.

Steve Brown: Well, you know, a lot of those have a cost, too.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: I mean, for certain things in doing audit research, I like Majestic for looking at links, and backlinks, and that, but I have also been warming up to Ahrefs more for certain research things.

Daryl Rosser: Actually, I missed that.

Steve Brown: I like the SEMRush. SEMRush has some good audit tools in there, and there's some stuff we get out of that that I like a lot. Raven Tools, we just went through, for doing analytics reporting, automated analytics reporting, and we evaluated several that were out there, and you know, you want to pick the tool that you can report what you want to report, and not report what you don't want to report, and so I think we're pretty settled on using Raven Tools for doing that now.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: There are other ones out there that we looked at. I'm trying to think. One of the platforms we look out for a while was, is it UpCity? Is that what they are? They're like a, you manage clients in that. It actually scripts out your whole process for, and they have a process for ranking clients that it scripts out, and it gives ranking reports, and analytics reports, and you can check off, you know, you've done this, you've done that, you've done that.

One thing that I never wanted to do is I don't want to report, "I built X links for you, or I did whatever, because truthfully, if I get to a place where maybe I don't have to do a whole lot for you for a month, you know, I don't want you to be dissatisfied. I've got you ranking well, why should I tell you that I didn't have to build any links for you this month, because everything I built is doing its job."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: So, certain things you report, certain things you don't.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Hey, you touched on something earlier, you said, like scaling issues, you said like sometimes you need to track like when you need to send them invoices, we need to track everything, and we need to report to them, we need to message them and stuff like that. How do you stay on top of that with like 40, 50 clients?

Steve Brown: You don't sleep is really the way that I figured it.

Daryl Rosser: Fair enough.

Steve Brown: No, I mean, it's like anything else. If you get a system in place to handle it, there are a ton of automated tools. When I set up a new client in fresh books, I can set up their invoicing, and I can automate it so that it happens on the same day every month for the certain amount. When we set someone up in our ranking tools, you know, we typically, one of the things I like about the rank tracker that we've used, and I've used a few, Pro Rank Tracker, what else, but the one that I kind of like right now is SerpBook.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: The reason why I like it, I mean, it tracks how a client is doing in Google, Yahoo, Bing, Google Maps. If you want, you can track desktop or mobile, across that, but it also allows you to do a white label page, I guess, basically. You can embed it on a page on a site.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: So, we could set up what we call, you know, a rank tracking portal for a client, give them a web address they could go to that's, you know, not indexed, it's just their web address, and it shows all the keywords that we're doing for them, and

it's updated daily, and it shows history over time. So, we could just send them there, "You want to know how you're ranking, you don't have to call me and ask, you don't have to do the searches yourself, you can actually look at this and see what we're doing."

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: You know, and it also has automated mailing capabilities too, so you could say, "On the first of the month, I want to send out a PDF of, you know, a branded PDF with the rankings in there." So, anything like that that can do stuff automagically for me, I like.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, fair enough. Must be massively helpful as well when you have a lot of clients.

Steve Brown: Yeah. Well, you know, I thought I had a lot at 40, until I see the guy with 200, you know, and then I think, "Well, I need to do things a little better if I'm going to manage that process."

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Steve Brown: And the other thing is, you got to have people that you trust.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: I mean, and I recognize the value of having VAs to do certain type of work, and I've used a VA one time with some success in the past, but I'm never going to have a VA communicate to my clients.

Daryl Rosser: Of course, yeah.

Steve Brown: So, I decided I want to work with people that I trust to be able to talk to clients, and to be able to, you know ... That way, we can kind of divide and conquer. If you have somebody who really focuses on the map side of things, or doing AdWords campaigns, you can say, "Hey, talk to the AdWords guys." You're going to do a website design project, "This is the website design guy, and he'll walk you through the project all the way through," and it doesn't have to be me managing the project necessarily.

Daryl Rosser: It's the only way to scale, right?

Steve Brown: Yeah.

Daryl Rosser: Like, as were speaking, CJ is messaging me, like giving me updates on how his calls are going.

Steve Brown: Well, you know, and that's fine. I mean, I've had some clients I've had to let go in the past.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: The absolute worst that I've had, in a couple cases, it's funny it's happened this way a couple cases, where you've had a woman who's been a dentist, and her husband is a project manager, like software developing project manager.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: He's the one who hires you, and he's starting to tell you, "Well, you're going to do this today, and I want you to report to me," and you have to say, "No, that's not what we're not going to do. You're not managing this project. If you want that, then you need to hire somebody else."

Daryl Rosser: Sure

Steve Brown: "You're hiring me to do the work, and you're not going to direct me on what to do. If you knew what to do, you would've done it yourself. You're hiring me because you don't know what to do, so just let me do it, and if that doesn't work for you, that's fine. There are other people who need the work bad enough, but I don't."

Daryl Rosser: Sure. Hey, final few questions and, because we're getting like 47 minutes. Firstly, is there anything, like really good nuggets that you have to share that I just haven't asked you a question so you can answer it?

Steve Brown: Be really good at on-site SEO.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Steve Brown: I mean, because truthfully, the people that I have for clients, and a lot of cases, a majority of their competitors aren't even trying. So, they just have a site, and they don't know anything. They had it built, or they used some tool. Knowing on-site SEO is going to be valuable, and understand what's wrong with a website, because as we were talking, it was easy in the past. You could build a crap site, and if you pound enough links at it, it's going to rank.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: It's harder to polish a turn these days. You need to have ...

Daryl Rosser: I agree, our page is super important today.

Steve Brown: So, that's definitely a benefit. Other nuggets, I can't think of anything off the top of my head, but keep talking, it'll come to me.

Daryl Rosser: How about this then, this is the question that beginners would love to hear. If you lost all your clients, I don't know, everything else, all your money and everything like that, you have like \$500 left, and you wanted to start another SEO agency, how would you go about doing it?

Steve Brown: Well, I would probably, again, I would do a little bit of research to identify a market where I could easily justify value. I feel like any dentist I talked to, I can make a pitch to them based off the value of the services that I could provide. If I lost everything, assuming I didn't lose my mind, I'd still know how to rank a site, and I still have access to the tools, so the 500 bucks would be used to get myself in front of the right clients, and maybe do some advertising to bring them into me.

But, I'd want to understand the, pick a niche where I could, you know, I could actually justify paying for my services. I think most, and I mean, I've done work for some other industries, and I still have a client or two in different places that's come to me through friends and stuff, that are outside of the dental realm, and I know there's a lot of other clients. I think it's a great market. If someone once to make a living online, if you learn SEO, even though it's not as easy as it used to be, there's always people who are going to want to rank a website, always.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Steve Brown: I hope I don't have to start over again, but I think I could.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, I agree. I think you could do it.

Steve Brown: Oh wait, I mean, the answer is I would buy the Lion Zeal course on how to rank. Isn't that the right answer you are looking for?

Daryl Rosser: That's the one I was looking for.

Steve Brown: Sorry. By Daryl's course. Read your emails though. I read your emails all the time. I love your emails, the conversational ones, they suck me in. Like I said, I've watched a bunch of your videos, and I think they're really good, and they all provide value. It's excellent stuff.

Daryl Rosser: Thanks, man, I appreciate it. Cool, so what else? Okay, so if someone wants to reach out to you, is it okay for them to ask you some questions or anything?

Steve Brown: Yeah, sure. If someone wants to send me an email, I mean, I'd be glad to try to answer as much as I can. I'm not going to give away the farm, but the truth is, okay, if I had 50 or, say I have 200 clients. You know, in the US there's, what, 1100,000 dentists or something? I'm not going to take over the market and be the one guy. I'm not trying to be. So yeah, if somebody wants to ... I mean, I

hope everybody listening doesn't decide to do dental SEO, because it is a crowded market, and everyone's shooting for them, but yeah.

Daryl Rosser: Yes, terrible. You guys shouldn't do it, absolutely.

Steve Brown: Yeah, I mean, if someone wants to hit the contact form on my website, it's DDS Rank, or you know, I'm Steve at DDS Rank, that works. If you want to send me an email, sure.

Daryl Rosser: Awesome, man. Well, I appreciate you joining me today. It's been really fun.

Steve Brown: Well, I appreciate you having me on. My nephews going to be thrilled to see him famous now, I've talked to Daryl online.

Daryl Rosser: That's super cool. All right, man, that pretty much wraps it up, so thanks for joining me. I hope you guys enjoyed the episode, and I'll see you guys next week.