

# How Brian Hong Built a 14 Person Remote SEO Team for His Agency

- Daryl Rosser: Hey guys, Daryl Rosser here, welcome back to another episode of the Lion Zeal Show. In this episode, I'm sitting down with Brian Hong and we're discussing his SEO agency, how he's getting clients, how he runs it, how he set it up, how he has a team that he manages of 13 people that basically do all the SEO, the web design, and Facebook ads and different services that he offers for him, and really just how he built up his business, so you guys we have some nuggets out of it and value to help you scale your SEO agencies and your teams and things like that. There's a lot of great value in here for really scaling up, building an agency, getting clients, and different topics like that. It's really, really interesting, hope you guys get a lot of value out of it, with that said let's get into the interview, hope you enjoy. Brian, hey man. Thank you for joining me on the show today.
- Brian Hong: Thanks for having me.
- Daryl Rosser: For anyone that doesn't know you already, do you want to give an introduction as to like who you are and what it is that you do?
- Brian Hong: Sure. My name is Brian Hong, I live in New Orleans Louisiana, I've been doing SEO since 2002, since about 2008 been doing agency SEO, and kind of have my hand in a few other revenue streams, a little bit of PPL, I'm trying to get back into a little a bit of affiliate marketing, but the primary revenue stream, what pays the bills is the agency client SEO.
- Daryl Rosser: It's cool man. We were chatting briefly before we went live and you were saying that you got started in this back in 2002?
- Brian Hong: Mm-hmm
- Daryl Rosser: That's a long time ago.
- Brian Hong: It was a long time ago, yep. I was a broke college student trying to figure out how to make ends meet, working 60 hours a week, doing insurance, waiting tables on the weekends, and figured there's got to be a better way to make money, and I had a buddy that made \$400 on the internet, and I didn't even know what that meant, he just told me, "I made \$400 on the internet." I'm like, "What does that mean? What do you mean you made \$400?" Then he told me he did affiliate marketing, and I started googling stuff, and started searching around, and I discovered the world of affiliate marketing, took out a credit card loan on my Discover card, I went to search engine strategies, back then I think it

was done by Jupiter events in New York, and that's all she wrote. That kind of opened up the door and paved my career I guess in this industry.

Daryl Rosser: It's really cool, and you kind of mentioned what you started big promotional stuff like that, can you share like what sort of stuff you were doing back then?

Brian Hong: I did a lot of adult products, Cialis, Viagra, adult products pretty much, X-rated products, no porn but there was like penis enlargement pills, just very adult related products pretty much is how I ... and the reason I got into that was because of one of the speakers that I went to that conference. One of the speakers, I'll never forget him his name's Todd Friesen, he I think back then had a company called Oil Man Production, or Oil Man something, I think it's oilman.ca is his website I believe, anyhow he was on the panel and he just talked about how he did extremely well selling adult related products at the end of the panel, I waited to speak with him and he convinced me that I need to get in that too, and that's why I got into it, just because he was doing it and killing it.

Daryl Rosser: Was that super profitable for you back then?

Brian Hong: That was extremely profitable for me back then. I was a young kid that felt like I won the lottery, on top of that this guy Todd, he gave me ... well I don't want to put my blast, I don't know ... well it doesn't matter, it's such a long time ago. He gave me a guest post spammer, back then it was a way to acquire links, and it was a guest book spammer, and so I'd be able to scrape the web, and then once I scraped I could pretty much post a backlink with any anchor text I wanted using this, I mean it was like my golden ticket. He gave me the niche to get into, and he gave me the tools, all I needed to do is press go, but I felt like I was at the right place the right time.

Daryl Rosser: It's super cool, the just old-school spam techniques.

Brian Hong: Yeah. All the way page generator, lots of spamming, guestbook spamming, all that stuff.

Daryl Rosser: Nice. Presumably, that didn't work forever because you shifted?

Brian Hong: I did. I shifted, I did affiliate SEO, and I figured wow I'm making really good money, I'm pretty happy with the amount of money I'm making, but then I had that light bulb, if I'm making a lot of money, the program I'm promoting must be making way more money than me, so I wanted to figure out how to move up the food chain. I wanted to figure out how to get affiliates, and then in 2005 December, let's see I lived it's Katrina, so December 26, 2005, I created my own diet pill, and I figured out how to recruit but I didn't ... nothing innovative, I've never really done anything.

I'm not one of the SEO innovators out there, I listen to the smart people like you and other SEO people, and let y'all figure out how to do the hard stuff and I'll

just try to go execute y'all's concepts, but I had my own affiliate force, launched it, I still have it, it's a pretty crappy website, I keep it alive now. I don't think even it works, I just kind of have it for just nostalgic memories, optimumhoodia.com but it's pretty much a site that doesn't do anything, but just there for me to look at every now and then.

Daryl Rosser: Nice man, and when did you get into Client SEO? Why did you decide to get into it?

Brian Hong: I got into it because a friend of mine he said, "Hey there's some negative press about my father online, do you have any ... " Then he then stated, "I know you do some stuff online, can you figure out how to get rid of it?" And I said, "I don't know how to get rid of it, but I feel like I could figure out how to push it down." My first client was a reputation management client, he was a priest. No sexual negative PR, but bad press on him, and I figured out how to move all his info on the second page, and I created my own assets I ranked them and eventually went to the third page, and most of the negative press floated on the third page and on, and then I think word traveled, he was happy with what I did, he told a buddy who was a businessman, then the light bulb went off I'm like, "Well wait a second. I think I can charge for this." That was kind of my start, Client SEO.

Daryl Rosser: That's really cool. It's just interesting to me because I see a lot of people in our industry they want to start with maybe Client SEO, but then are like, "I want to get rid of these clients as soon as I possibly can and get to affiliate so I have to deal with anyone, I can just sit in my room and do whatever I want." But you are just kind of the opposite.

Brian Hong: Yeah. I miss the affiliate SEO stuff, because it's like you bust your ass for three months or six months and then you can kind of sit back travel and the hardest part of your day is something ... if you do it well is just counting your money, how well did I do.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: I definitely miss that life. I think the hardest part for me personally, is kind of transitioning back into that because I can't ignore all the clients I have, but I want to get back in affiliate SEO, but I'm kind of just stuck in this groove, which is not really a necessary complaint because ultimately I love what I do. I have my complaints of things I don't like about it, but my list of why I like it is much bigger than the list of why I dislike it.

Daryl Rosser: Fair enough.

Brian Hong: But it's hard for me to transition back to the affiliate SEO because of time, all my time is spent managing my clients, and it's kind of my wheelhouse now.

Daryl Rosser: That makes sense. So what is the difference? How is your lifestyle like managing all those clients, are you doing it all yourself? Do you have a team? How does it differ?

Brian Hong: I have a team of 13, they are all Vas, I have ... let's see, London, Philippine, India, Texas, California, that's pretty much where they all spread across, but I'm a pretty lean operation for what I do I feel like, I'm a team of 13, I don't have a secretary, there's no really sales person, I pretty much wear all the hats of the project management. I guess it's a pretty busy life. I'm always on my phone checking emails, I've been fortunate enough actually out of the clients I do manage, I've set up all the automated reporting just using software.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: There's not a lot of phone calls. I do have a handful of clients where I do have that, for the most part it's not like I have to go out and meet these people or talk to them every single month.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: It's more often I don't ever talk to any of them.

Daryl Rosser: What is the phone calls is after bringing in new people mostly?

Brian Hong: What's that?

Daryl Rosser: The phone calls that you're doing is mostly just bringing in new clients?

Brian Hong: I'd say my biggest bottleneck is plugging into my system, just onboarding you at discovery session, figuring out what you want to do. Once you're plugged into my system, a lot of it is systemized.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: I use Asana for all my project management. I was kind of inspired actually by ... what's his name? He created SEO cheat guide, Stuart?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: Stuart, that is?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. Can't remember the first name but yeah.

Brian Hong: I just signed up for ... Stuart Trier, I think Trier or something, really smart guy.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah that's it.

Brian Hong: Really smart guy. I signed up for one of his mastermind programs and he sold kind of a systemized step one, step two, step three of SEO. I didn't necessarily use what he provided because he used Google sheets, but I took it and I integrated it into Asana, and it was a pretty ... for me it helped a lot my business, because it systemized the process, and I didn't really have to look for super high and talented SEO people because everything was outlined. I just needed to hire staff, and I could get really cheap wages overseas, and everything was laid out on how to do it.

Daryl Rosser: Sure yeah. It's cool. What do your team do then? You've got 13 people, that's a pretty decent size for a lot of SEOs.

Brian Hong: Yeah. I do the client SEO stuff, and I have kind of ... I'd say over 50% of my business is people white-label my product and we sell it, so I work at a lot of other agencies and so I don't make as much money but I don't have to deal with people, that's kind of the nice part right?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, definitely.

Brian Hong: So on top of that I have a custom guest post outreach service, so link building, that's kind of why it's slowly grown. Most of the staff members are probably recently a part of that team, the guest post outreach.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Are you doing PBNs as well or just like white hat like average links now?

Brian Hong: I used to do PBNs. I've moved almost 100% away from that, and I'd say ...

Daryl Rosser: Interesting.

Brian Hong: ... 90% of my activity is the outreach.

Daryl Rosser: I'm just curious, why? What's the meaning of that? Why did you decide to shift?

Brian Hong: It got frustrating for me. It's like I would invest all this money, all this time in a PBN, we get the index, or maybe I just wasn't doing it right. There's probably a better way to do it and I wasn't doing it, but the way I was doing it, it got very frustrating of investing time and the upkeep, and I feel like it took more resources on a monthly basis to maintain and prevent that asset from depreciating in power, and so that led to the outreach, because at first you just build a PBN you won't have to worry about the SEO hosting, it was pretty simple, and then you have to worry about the hosting, then you have to worry about signals, then you have to worry about the quality of it, then you ran into ... for me hosting issues, website to BD index, and it was like, "Oh my God, it's one thing after another."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: So that just kind of led to the outreach service.

Daryl Rosser: No, it would be completely managing PBNs is a nightmare. I love PBNs but it's a nightmare and managing like hundreds or thousands, it's an absolute mess.

Brian Hong: Yeah, but I mean I still use it every now and then, I'll use it as a bridge. I use Matt Diggity, Diggity Marketing, I use his PBNs every now and then, so depending on the client, I'll kind of use that as my bridge because the outreach takes a little bit of time for me. I'll just set up and trickle some PBNs using his service, and some various other people on all the Facebook groups out there, and then eventually I'll just move into the outreach. So I still use PBNs, I just don't do it myself. I focus my time on outreach now.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Actually it could be in this the best approach, even if you want to use PBN just go to rent them from Matt or someone else rather than managing, it's like a separate business right? Just managing all the sites.

Brian Hong: Absolutely. Just more headache than I wanted to deal with.

Daryl Rosser: Exactly. Where do your clients come from then?

Brian Hong: I'd say most of my clients are in Louisiana, where I'm at now.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: Texas, California, Florida, and I'd say the concentration is there. I'm pretty I think lucky, where I don't really have to look for a business because I've aligned myself with a lot of other agencies, and I just wait for them to send me their business and they repackage it and resell it.

Daryl Rosser: Perfect. If someone wants to go out there and replicate that then what would they have to do?

Brian Hong: Let's see, how did I get my ... I go to conferences. I'd say some of the people that I've aligned myself with kind of these joint ventures, I've met at conferences.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: There were just deals made from going to conferences, going to the bar, eating, getting drunk with them, talking shop, and then next thing you know, "Hey let's try to do something together." And then it kind of snowballs.

Daryl Rosser: Sure. So what you're saying is I can't sit in my bedroom all day and just somehow miraculously come up with all these clients?

Brian Hong: Maybe, I don't know, you figure that out let me know. Share that secret with me when you figure that out.

Daryl Rosser: Cool, but I agree. Just going out there and actually networking and meeting people and it kind of happens.

Brian Hong: Yep, absolutely.

Daryl Rosser: Did you start with the white-label service or did you start with just going to like standard businesses and working directly with them?

Brian Hong: I started going to businesses. When I first got started I think my rate was like \$300 a month for SEO.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: And it sold like hotcakes. I had 120 accounts but they were paying \$320 a month, it was a lot of work for-

Daryl Rosser: You managed 120 yourself?

Brian Hong: I did. It was for another agency partnership, that agency grew on top of me so it was kind of both, is this agency gave me on any given month probably anywhere between about 50 and 75 SEO accounts, on top of that I had fluctuated from about 30 to 50 on my own, just kind of do an SEO for myself, so that's how I would acquire all my clients, except it was a lot, a lot, a lot of work. I felt like I was working too hard.

Daryl Rosser: Understandably.

Brian Hong: It was 300 bucks a month, the margins were getting smaller and I was doing most of the work myself so I could keep most of the margins, and then it just came to a point I really ... what changed it is I got that one client that was willing to pay me \$5,000 a month and I said, "Whoa, why do I have all these clients when I can just have one client paying me five grand a month?" And then I just started firing my clients because I said I need to have more clients, like not necessarily 5,000 but I needed to get rid of my \$300 a month clients, because I needed to open up bandwidth for some of those larger dollar clients. That was kind of the shift, so I started trimming the fat, getting rid of some of my SEO clients, you know without burning any bridges very amicably, and I'd say that's probably one of the shifts that's kind of taken place past two or three years I've kind of gone on that journey trying to flush out some of the super low dollar SEO clients I have.

Daryl Rosser: That makes sense I guess, like my maths isn't that good but that's at least 10 of the \$300 clients, quite a few more, I can't do the maths in my head it's 11:30 a.m. I'm not used to this morning stuff.

Brian Hong: Yep.

Daryl Rosser: For the beginners then, they'll hit \$300 a month they're like, "That's reasonable." They hit \$5,000 a month they think, "That's insane." How do you justify those the fees or investments for the client?

Brian Hong: Well it kind of depends on the niche too and the average, and so really it's not like I charged more because you had more money, it's more often the people that have more money were in more competitive niches, like personal injury lawyers, or a national campaign for someone that has a product that targeted more than a hyperlocal area or even a regional area, so there's just more work to be done. I kind of expanded, so I didn't do just SEO, I expanded my services and that led to creating more revenue streams, so it wasn't just SEO. Then I had a press release marketing, SEO, custom guest post outreach, social media management, Facebook Ads, custom motion graphic videos, YouTube video promotions, video SEO, mass page generators, I also have a web design team, so it's just I offered more, so I was able to increase my outreach ticket.

Daryl Rosser: It's interesting. I think that's like two different approaches, and like in our space in the agency type of space, where one approach is like, "I'm going to go see for a specific, I'm going to work with just this one niche, I'm going to do just this one service, and it's like hyper focus." And then there's the other approach where you just added more and more services, and you preferred to kind of just stack more services?

Brian Hong: Yeah. So far I've stacked at ... I think I'm pretty comfortable with whatever, I think I've ran out of stuff to sell. If there's something to sell I try to figure out how to sell it, but I don't think there's any more services that I can figure out that I'm comfortable stacking on top of what I already have.

Daryl Rosser: I guess the rationalization is that they're not just paying you for like SEO, but you're adding everything, so it's more and more money from the exact same customers.

Brian Hong: I want to be that one-stop-shop. If you want to do anything digitally online I want to be that solution.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, nice.

Brian Hong: Which I've heard a lot of other people argue against, like focus on what you're good at and start narrow, like focus on ... like you said earlier, just focus on a niche or focus on SEO, but I guess for what I've done it's worked for me.

Daryl Rosser: Clearly yeah. I mean there's different ways to do everything right? It's not like black and white.

Brian Hong: Yeah true.

Daryl Rosser: All right so for your first 10 clients, this is the big sticking point for a lot of the beginners, how did you get them?

Brian Hong: The first 10 I SEO'd my website. If you google anything related to SEO plus my city geo modifier, I had to make sure it was on the first page, ideally number one, but if you're on the first page that's enough leverage to convince someone else like, "Hey I did it for me I can do it for you too."

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: I didn't do much cold calling, I'm not a cold caller, I'm not a pushy salesman, I just got it but ... So initially, I started with SEO agency, but I couldn't really get any clients. I might have gotten one client every 60 or 90 days, and I'd have clients and I'd go on consultations, but they'd say, "Hey great, we like all the stuff you have to offer, sounds good, by the way can you build us a website or can you revise our existing website?" And I was like, "No I can't, I'm an SEO company."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: Then I would tell them, "Hey but when you get that done give me a call back." No one ever called me back. Then I went to Barnes and Nobles, a bookstore here, and I bought a book on How to Build Websites for Dummies, and I learned how to build websites myself, and that way the next time someone asked me can you build me a website or can you revise my existing website I didn't say no I said yes, and they would be then in my bubble, and then I can easily have that conversation of, "Hey now that your website is done let's do some marketing." So I'd say that when I added web design services, that was when my growth occurred.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: That got my foot in the door, that established that relationship.

Daryl Rosser: So it wasn't just leverage having the first page rankings, it was actually like inbound marketing, like you actually leads for and they come to you?

Brian Hong: Yep. That's why I tried taking everything, a logo project we turned into a web project, we turned into SEO project, we turned into a paid search project, then eventually they'd want to add video, then YouTube marketing, it would just stack on top of each other.

Daryl Rosser: Got it.

Brian Hong: It was a much easier conversation to have.

Daryl Rosser: I'm curious actually, did most of them start with SEO or did they start with something else then?

Brian Hong: I'd say when I first got started, the majority of my business I'd say were 90% started with web design. They were just standard dentists, lawyers, doctors, whatever it maybe, I want a website, or I don't like my existing website let's redesign it, and so I would say, "Yes I can do that." If they liked what I delivered, then they were very receptive and very open for me to say, "Hey, uh, let's make your website a lead generation machine now, let me show you how."

Daryl Rosser: Good. Was this back in the free your dollar a month SEO days?

Brian Hong: It was.

Daryl Rosser: What did you charge for web design then?

Brian Hong: Back then my starting price was \$1,500 for a website.

Daryl Rosser: It's pretty low also.

Brian Hong: Pretty low. I was just trying to build my portfolio and get that experience.

Daryl Rosser: For sure.

Brian Hong: I mean there were some projects I wouldn't even charge anything for the web site, but then I would use that as leverage down the road of saying, "Hey look at all these companies I worked for." They didn't know how much they paid me, but they would recognize all these local companies and say, "All right, you worked with him? Okay, if they worked with you then and you're good enough for them then I'm going to hire you because you probably are good enough for me."

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Brian Hong: I just needed to start to build my portfolio really.

Daryl Rosser: So you think it helped then when you started going after the \$5,000 the multiple thousand dollar clients and stuff that you had this experience and portfolio to show off?

Brian Hong: I think so. I think it prepped and prime me for a lot of things. It was a pretty big grind for me, it was a lot of work, there's a lot of customer service, I learned a lot about just patience and how to deal with people, and so that ... yes I think it definitely gave me leverage in getting those higher dollar clients, because I feel like I made a lot of mistakes, I did a lot of things right, I did a lot of things wrong having those lower dollar clients, and I'd rather make those mistakes with those

three \$400 clients than those \$5,000 clients so that's all, it is a valuable road map for me.

Daryl Rosser: So working with clients then that started at like \$400 a month, now it's obviously much bigger, you must have learnt a lot about managing them, communicating with them and stuff like that, do you have any tips for people? Because I see a lot of people will get like two or three clients and they basically get stuck working with just those two or three clients, there's too much maintenance and they can't scale.

Brian Hong: Yeah. I guess I set the expectations early. Now I don't know if I'm lucky, because I talk to a lot of other agency owners, and I just don't have to talk to a lot of my clients, they just leave me alone. I don't know if I'm lucky, I can't put my finger on how I'm able to do that, but for my tracking I use agency analytics, it used to be my SEO tool, and then they rebranded it to the agency analytics so I set up all my automated reporting, descends, that connects a search console, it has a ranking dashboard, I love their development roadmap it connects to call rail, it's pretty much become a centralized dashboard to connect all the various thoughts. It even connects to SEMRush, has an audit, it connects the AdRoll now, you're remarketing Facebook Ads, it's kind of a one-stop dashboard for everything, and you can set up automated reporting to go weekly, monthly, whatever that may be.

As long as they see that, they feel like I'm doing work, on top of that, really the majority of my clients I'd say about 90% of them are local businesses, so at the end of the day you can talk all this fancy SEO jargon, they kind of don't give a shit, they just make my phone ring. Whatever it takes to make my phone ring, that's what they're looking for, they're not looking for, "Oh, you- you built me a new link." Well they care more about what that link's going to do to for them not the actual acquisition of the link. I got rid of all my reporting and I said, "I'm going to give you what you're looking for and that's conversions." So that's my reporting, as long as they see conversions coming in, they leave me alone I leave them alone, and I can focus most of my time just on working and kind of refining their campaign.

Daryl Rosser: I'm with you man. I have the same sort of relationship with clients, that idea whatever is just like you want your phone to ring, like I can make that happen just leave me to it, and they'd leave me to it, they don't bother me.

Brian Hong: Yeah.

Daryl Rosser: I think you were right when you said at the beginning that you set the expectations at the beginning, I think that's the huge difference that a lot of people maybe screw up on. I don't know but I know it's the same thing that a lot of people are basically complaining that their clients suck and that they never leaves them alone, they want calls every other day and stuff like that.

Brian Hong: Yeah.

Daryl Rosser: I don't really run into it either.

Brian Hong: I mean I've had a handful, but I think I can pretty much still count on one hand how many I guess quote-unquote pain-in-the-ass clients I've had, but even the pain-in-the-ass clients, they weren't even that bad.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: It wasn't so bad.

Daryl Rosser: Do you think it's like a vibe as well? Do you qualify people before you take them on as a client?

Brian Hong: I do. I'm at a point where I'm ... back then I took anything and everything.

Daryl Rosser: \$300 a month? Just give it to me I'll take it.

Brian Hong: Yeah. Anything just I wanted the business, I was super hungry, and I'm still hungry, but I'm in a position where I can tell a client no. If I get a bad vibe from you, I feel like it's just not a good fit, maybe we just run heads or don't get along, then I can ... I'm not in the same position where I have to take every single client that comes along my way. I can say no I don't, I choose to not work with you, I'm in that position ...

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: ... which is a great feeling. It's much different, because I know the other feeling of, "God I really don't want to do this but I'm going to do it anyway because it's 300 bucks a month."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah I get it. I remember I started out as well, is like I saw the website for ... I'm from the UK, so it was like a £300 website, and I was like I really needed the money, like £300 but it's not worth the weeks that I'd take to the setup a site for like \$450, like stupidity, but I was broke and I needed some money at the time.

Brian Hong: Yep, absolutely.

Daryl Rosser: You mentioned the niche is really important earlier for ... you don't have to charge higher prices, you're obviously working with agencies and stuff like that, what other types of niches do you focus on even though it's not hyper focused?

Brian Hong: I don't really focus on I guess niches, I focus on I guess more so organizations that have certain levels of revenue, because the formula isn't too much different, whether you're a dentist, doctor, lawyer, a fitness equipment provider, SEO is SEO right?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: Google is going to say, "Oh well, you need to- you might need to build a different type of link, but it's still links and content." The formula is pretty much the same regardless the niche, so I don't really look at, "I need to go after this niche or that niche."

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: It's if you have money I want to work with you. That's my requirement.

Daryl Rosser: What sort of qualifications almost do you look at? Like making a million plus a year, like what's the sort of ideals for a client?

Brian Hong: I've tried staying up and kind of brainstorming on what that ideal client is, because I'll run Facebook ads for my own company I'm like, "Okay, I need to go after the company." You can set all those parameters on Facebook, the million dollar or half a million, but a lot of times their startup's not making that much money that still have ... If you can easily spend 1,000 bucks a month, I think that's a good starting point.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: Depending on what you're expecting. If you're a local business with at least 1,000 bucks a month, then I'm comfortable to help grow your company, and if I can grow your company, then I know we can change that 1,000 to 2,000 to 3,000 because I want to grow with you, that's why I don't mind taking those lower dollar clients.

Daryl Rosser: Sure.

Brian Hong: A lot of my clients now, some of them even are the clients we started off at \$350 and we've ... like one client went on a dental practice, I think we started at \$600 a month, and now we're at \$6,000 per month.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: It's because I've run with them, and so I don't mind going along for that journey with you.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Is that adding additional services or is that increasing the price of SEO?

Brian Hong: That's all the above for this particular client.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: So that led to website, so I guess my revenue stream is website, that's a one-time cost, I convince them do redesigns, and then we have hosting that's a really, really easy moneymaker, and then I have webmaster fees, and then I have just web revisions on a monthly basis, and then I have website insurance, so I'll charge for that, and then we have paid search, Google AdWords, social media management, Facebook Ads, custom guest post outreach, press releases, content marketing, I'll manage their blog, and the list goes on and on, I'll just keep on stacking it.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. I guess that's what the 13 staff are for? Like running all that stuff?

Brian Hong: Running all that stuff, yep absolutely.

Daryl Rosser: Are you just involved in sales, client management, and just keeping the team together?

Brian Hong: Yeah. I guess for the most part yeah. I'm still kind of in the trenches with them, I burn the candle on both ends many, many of these nights. If I'm trying to figure out ... because I look at all of this as a process and not a destination, I don't ever feel like I'm going to wake up and think I did it. It can always be better, I feel like there's always someone else out there trying to get more market share than me and I just have to keep up with it right?

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely.

Brian Hong: So I spend a lot of time buying tools, buying services, even if it's a service I have to offer I'll still go out there and buy it, because maybe I'll discover a better way that it can be done, a lot of these SEO communities, I'm on Facebook a lot reading a lot on all the various Facebook groups, so I'd say a lot of my time is trying to spend researching. I'd say one of the biggest valuable groups I've joined recently is this ... have you heard of the SEO intelligence agency?

Daryl Rosser: I know of them, I'm not in it but yeah.

Brian Hong: I'd say that's probably one of the more valuable groups I've joined in recent years, and I get the majority of my SEO knowledge from that group. It's been a super valuable and a time-saver for me, because it used to be get a golden nugget here, get a golden nugget there, and you're a member of like 20 different groups, and every now and then something really valuable tactic comes out, where I've been able to consolidate that and get a lot of my golden nuggets just from one group, which saves a lot of time. It's just made my life a lot easier.

Daryl Rosser: Sure. That makes sense, cool man. What is your business kind of split between these days, so you have a few different things, how would you say like it splits in terms of like the Senators?

Brian Hong: In terms of the agency or in terms of like web design verse SEO, or in terms of-

Daryl Rosser: In terms of the agency versus the average links service versus the white-label like ...

Brian Hong: I'd say these days the outreach ... it's still pretty new, the outreach I started about a year and a half ago, and it's kind of recently picked up traction I'd say in the past four to six months.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: The biggest revenue stream is SEO, client SEO, I'd say through the white-label.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: These days the majority of my business are through some white-label partnerships I have, or not even all are white-label so I have a lot of some agencies where it's not even white-label, they just say this is our preferred SEO vendor.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: It's kind of ...

Daryl Rosser: Is it more of like an affiliate deal or is it purely just recommending you?

Brian Hong: Purely recommending me.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: They don't even up charge it or anything, I do some I guess quote-unquote a few free things for them, but it's not I can't figure ... I'm always trying to figure out what is their endgame, why aren't they trying to make money off of this, but I don't know I guess I'm lucky, right place the right time, I don't know. I don't want to ask because I don't want to ruin or piss off.

Daryl Rosser: For sure. No, I get the same thing, not from agencies but a person is just like, "Oh we don't target that area." Or, "It's not our regular niche or something." They just pass it on and I'm like, "Okay, thank you very much." I'm not going to.

Brian Hong: I guess they did mention though when we first started the relationship, they just feel like it's a value added they have to their clients, so they can be that one-stop-shop, so they can stay working with them because they're like they don't need to look anywhere else if they can get everything they need out of this other agency who just brought me on board with their agency.

Daryl Rosser: It makes sense. I mean you said you added Web Design to stop them going somewhere else, and staying somewhere else, but if you wanted to partner with an agency that just does Web Design, so they send them back to you again afterwards.

Brian Hong: Yep. That's actually what I do. I kind of go after those traditional marketing agencies, the web design agencies, the graphic design agencies, or radio, media buyers, those are good people to rub shoulders with, because it's usually the clientele they have, they don't have this \$300 a month budgets that I used to have, they have a couple thousand dollars a month budgets. So it's easy to have that conversation and say, "Hey let's- let's take some of that and spend it on digital."

Daryl Rosser: Okay, and you think a year on after, and you said most of them come from conferences, is that deliberately going to specific conferences where you can meet those sort of people?

Brian Hong: These days I just go to just a handful, probably two conferences a year, probably two or three conferences. I used to go to webmaster world, I used to go to SMX, and search engine strategies, I'd say these days I just go to about two or three conferences, the same two or three conferences I've gone to every year that just for me it provided the most value. I'm not a big hard seller, I don't walk around saying, "Hey I do web designing, hey let's do business, hey let's do business." It's just really having a drink, eating, small talk, having natural conversation about what you do, what you're trying to do, and I guess business is just born out of that for me.

Daryl Rosser: Definitely.

Brian Hong: Just having natural organic conversation, not being a super pushy salesman.

Daryl Rosser: It's cool man, I like it. So what are your goals from here, how are you trying to scale things and grow things now?

Brian Hong: I'd like to get into more PPL, so I'm trying to get into that. I'd like to expand this guest post outreach service, and I'd say recently the past few SEO clients, instead of your charging them a fee I'm saying, "Hey give me a percentage of your company." Actually having a piece of their company without charging them any SEO, so that's kind of any deal that comes along I'll always try to pitch that, instead of saying, "Hey instead of you paying me 1,500 2,000 \$3,000 for SEO, whatever that number is, how about you just give me ... " Is if you make money I make money, because I want skin in the game too.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: So it has to be a good fit. Right now I'm working on a Charter Fishing Company where I'm doing that, where originally we quoted them three grand a month. I

said instead of paying me three grand, I'll absorb that cost, I'll spend all the AdWords money, I'll put up all the money but I get a percentage of your revenue, I'd rather go that route.

Daryl Rosser:

Nice.

Brian Hong:

That way I have no income ceiling, I have a higher upside, I eliminate the risk for them, they have nothing to lose because I'll put up all the money, it's a win-win situation to me.

Daryl Rosser:

It's cool man, how does it work then?

Brian Hong:

Right now it's different for every company. I've had a few ... so I was like a home remodelling company, I did that for out in Texas, instead of them paying me an agency rate, we've ... that was a fortunate situation where it's three different people, we each get 33% of the profits.

Daryl Rosser:

Nice.

Brian Hong:

In that case it was just a lot of trust. I trust the person taking the calls, I monitor everything on top of all that, so in that situation I just have to trust the person. When a deal goes through we use a CRM called pipe drive, so I kind of see where each potential client is along the process. I guess it's different for everyone, for the Charter Fishing Company, I'm going to use a third-party booking system, I'm going to probably take the deposit, and then when the individual goes to actually go on the fishing trip, they're going to pay the remaining balance to them. So I get the deposit, they get the remaining values.

Daryl Rosser:

That's simple then.

Brian Hong:

Yep, that one was a simple one.

Daryl Rosser:

Okay.

Brian Hong:

I guess it depends on each potential joint venture like that, but that's what ... I'm trying to grow that more instead of ... because I'm pretty happy with the clients I have now, is how do I grow faster, is try to align myself with businesses where I'm part of that business, actual partnerships where I have no income ceiling.

Daryl Rosser:

That makes sense, it's also less likely they're going to disappear after three months or six months because they're like, "Oh, these other SEO agencies that does save me \$200 a month."

Brian Hong:

Yep, and it's zero reporting again, I don't need to report to them.

Daryl Rosser:

Yeah.

Brian Hong: I'm part of their company, is if you don't make money I don't make money.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: So we're both in it to win it.

Daryl Rosser: So if someone's wants to go out there and do that, is there like legal contracts and stuff like that? Do you need to get like a legal adviser? How do you do it?

Brian Hong: I feel like one day I might learn things the hard way and I hope I don't. I can count on one hand how many contracts I've actually signed, every single invoice, no client ever signs it. It's been an issue a handful of times, but not bad enough where I need to totally rethink, and get a legal team, and get this filled out, get that filled out, it just hasn't been an issue.

Daryl Rosser: You just accept it as like a potential risk, like if a client doesn't pay or something like that, just suck it up and be gone?

Brian Hong: Well I take a credit card and put it on file too, and I auto bill every single one of my clients, so I don't want to be a bill collector. I use an automated invoicing software called FreshBooks so that handles ...

Daryl Rosser: Okay, FreshBooks is cool.

Brian Hong: It's all recurring, you just don't have to worry about it really. It sends them the snail mail. I like it too because it connects to PayPal business payments, which only charges 50 cents a transaction, you don't get charged backs if it's ACH draft, that's another reason I like it as well.

Daryl Rosser: Cool man. What other tools, you mentioned agency analytics, corel, pipedrive, FreshBooks, and you have a tool that your business like would fall apart without.

Brian Hong: Oh man, I'm a tool whore you should see my JVZoo. I guess what other tool, I use them all, it just kind of depends. I've SEMRush, Ahrefs, I've recently cancelled my Majestic membership because I use a plug-in called SerpWorx, which I recommend every SEO person who uses this, it's like one of those life-changing super simple software's.

Daryl Rosser: What is that?

Brian Hong: Have you ever heard of SerpWorx, S-E-R-P-W-O-R-X?

Daryl Rosser: No I don't know it.

Brian Hong: If you went to a search result, it pulls in the APIs from Majestic, Ahrefs, Moz, and SEMrush.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: So it uses all three of those, and then it's a Chrome extension, and so if you did a search and I typed in any search query, it'll expand the actual result and give you all the referring domains, h1 tags, it gives you a snapshot analysis of everything, then if you click on the asset there's something in the left-hand corner, where it'll show you the h1 tags, word count, domain, it just gives you every ... you don't have to go to every single, you don't have to do so much, it tells you everything in one spot while viewing the website.

Daryl Rosser: Nice. Cool man. Any of us just give you a nice list of resources?

Brian Hong: That was really good. I guess it kind of depends, like for video ... what do I? I use video marketer ... I forgot the name of the actual tool, but it's AB ... I don't remember its name, so AB, ABO ... there's some product creator who created a video marketing tool, I can't remember his name, but that ... I've used that for kind of I guess mass really spamming YouTube is it helps manage channel creation, channel management, taking the same video, and syndicating across the web.

Daryl Rosser: What do you use Youtube spam for?

Brian Hong: For just using the same video over and over for service plus geo modifier, and so web design company New Orleans, web design company in another city, but not having to create another video to do it over and over.

Daryl Rosser: Got it. Is that bringing clients?

Brian Hong: It's kind of a trophy piece, I use it all the time just to say, "Hey look at what I can do." I kind of lay out all the potentials, and it doesn't necessarily get the client to do that service, but it makes me look like an expert. It builds kind of like my character like wow this guy knows how to do everything, he's the guy I need to go with, although I'm not going to use that they just feel like having access to me, maybe down the road there maybe something they want to do, it just positions me as being a bigger deal than I am pretty much.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah that's cool. Is there any books that over the years have massively helped you grow your business or give you ideas that changed things?

Brian Hong: I don't really read. I read emails. I mean I know how to read, but I'm not much of a reader, really all the reading I do is emails and all these I guess SEO kind of communities I'm in, all these webinars, and white papers. So the SEO intelligence agency is pretty cool because they have a little packet, they send you a full-color packet, so really what they do is they do testing for you. I don't have to do any testing. I can do the testing, but they'll perform all the testing and they have it super, super organized, and easy to digest and easy to reference. So if you have a question about keyword density, if you have a

question about the power of a web 2.0 link, whatever it may be, they have dozens and dozens of tests they do every single month that I have access to, that's what I read.

Daryl Rosser:

Nice.

Brian Hong:

That's what I spend most of my time on.

Daryl Rosser:

Cool man. The typical beginner question to everyone laps, if you lost all your clients, lost all your money, or blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and you have to start over you have say I don't know \$500, what would you do?

Brian Hong:

\$500, that's hard, what would I do to make money with it? I would probably get into paper lead, PPL.

Daryl Rosser:

Okay.

Brian Hong:

I feel like that's what I'm trying to get more into right now. I like the idea of getting into paper lead, so I would say that, or are you asking what tool I would buy or where would I invest it?

Daryl Rosser:

Yeah, so paper lead is a good start, then how would you leverage your 500 to make an ROI?

Brian Hong:

Maybe try doing a paper call on Adwords to try to get immediate leads, and just do arbitrage.

Daryl Rosser:

I was thinking the same thing.

Brian Hong:

Just make a few bucks. Really I would sign up with Google partners, because when you open up a new AdWords account they give you \$150 credit, and so as soon as you create then they do account, I would take that 500, deposit it, use a coupon that every Google partner gets, so now I have \$650, and now would use it probably to do a little arbitrage, try to get some capital to do something bigger.

Daryl Rosser:

Cool, and cool on the ads for anyone who doesn't know, is just ads that is only on your phone right? And it's just the phone number to click is in that website.

Brian Hong:

Yep. It closes the gap in the sales funnel, it's an immediate lead.

Daryl Rosser:

Yeah. Are you using that now?

Brian Hong:

Yep, absolutely, 100%.

Daryl Rosser:

Cool man. I presume that's just a PPL stuff already, like you're already doing exactly what you just said.

Brian Hong: Yep, doing that. I have a landscape, I'm still getting relatively new for the PPL stuff.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: So far it's worked pretty well. I'm not knocking it out the park, but it's profitable.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: It's enough to keep the client happy, and keep them on board, and keep them renewing, sometimes it's that bridge you need for a campaign to mature, and for a SEO campaign to launch, you need time, so that buys me time. If anything, that's a good way to buy me time, on top of that you can make some money doing it as well.

Daryl Rosser: That was actually going to be my next question, are you doing that in conjunction with SEO and other things?

Brian Hong: Doing it all, yep. I would say the main activity is that average client I bring on, what I preach and try to convince them to do is SEO of course, then Google AdWords, and the remarketing, and Facebook ads, and then if they said, "What else can we do?" I would say Instagram or YouTube, maybe YouTube or Instagram but usually those are the next things I would advise beyond that.

Daryl Rosser: It's a lot of services. It makes sense that they're all very effective.

Brian Hong: Yep.

Daryl Rosser: Cool man.

Brian Hong: I just feel like it's easy to convince someone to do that when you're already saying, "Hey, I'm doing SEO and it's working."

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Brian Hong: Then you introduce other things you can do, because they just have that trust with you, as long as it works. It doesn't always work, but they're more receptive, their wallets are a little bit loose to it when you have that conversation with them, if you're doing something that already works.

Daryl Rosser: Definitely. All right, you're in a lot of groups and stuff as well, so is there any like kind of ... not to be rude to people, but like dumb mistakes you see people making that you've kind of overcome yourself, that you'd recommend people to do or to fix that?

Brian Hong: Yeah.

Daryl Rosser: Cool people out.

Brian Hong: Exact match anchors, stop doing it.

Daryl Rosser: Completely?

Brian Hong: I still see people doing it ... I personally I don't do it. I do nothing but kind of conversational anchors, modified exact match, modified branded, naked URLs, contextual links, I just kind of focus on that, on real natural anchors, long tail anchors as well, I'd say that versus indiversity. If you look at the anchor text profile, I feel like it's just the same set being recycled over and over. Either that plus using exact match anchors. I feel like I still see that a lot.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, cool. I guess we can pretty much wrap it up, any final ... if anyone's going to watch this and they have some like, "Wow like Brian gave me some awesome nugget or some awesome words of wisdom." What's a good end of all to wrap it up? Putting you on the spot. Say something smart.

Brian Hong: Go follow your group. Go follow your Facebook group, I'm kind of reading through that, I think that's a good community, I'm a member of the community, and I don't know all the information you're looking for is out there if you look for it. I've learned a lot through Facebook.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely.

Brian Hong: I see so many paid programs, and I'm not saying they're not worth it, because I pay for them as well, but for someone just starting out that may not have the capital to join all these 500, 1,000, \$2,000 programs like OMG and so on, they got some awesome groups out there that give information for free, and you don't always have to come out of pocket to learn some of those golden nuggets, and monetize, and build a business out of it.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely. So go slack off on Facebook?

Brian Hong: Yeah.

Daryl Rosser: Cool man. Where can people find you if they want to reach out or anything?

Brian Hong: InfintechDesigns.com is my website.

Daryl Rosser: Nice.

Brian Hong: I guess that, and then email, [brian@infintechdesigns.com](mailto:brian@infintechdesigns.com).

Daryl Rosser: And your outreach service I guess is along there?

Brian Hong: It's a wordpress, it's nothing right now, it's bigeasyoutreach ... no bigeasylinks.com.

Daryl Rosser: Okay.

Brian Hong: It's kind of work in production. It just kind of picked up more traction without even advertising it, and I've kind of focused on fulfilling all the orders, so building up the website, and making that alive has kind of been in the back burner while I kind of just take care of the orders that are coming in without it.

Daryl Rosser: All right man. Awesome, I appreciate you joining me today, it's been fun chatting.

Brian Hong: Awesome, thanks for having me man.

Daryl Rosser: All right, I hope you guys enjoyed the episode, and I'll see you guys next week.