

Climbing Out Of \$100K in Debt with Launch Jacking and SEO

Daryl Rosser: Hey guys, Daryl Rosser here. Welcome back to another an episode of the "Lion Zeal Show." And in this episode, I'm sitting down with Derek Pierce, and we're discussing how he went from \$100,000 in credit card debt to rebuilding his entire life, basically getting out of debt. And he did that using SEO and using launch jacking. So if you don't know what launch jacking is, it's basically the idea of going out there and hijacking the traffic, the promotion and the discussion about a product launch that's going on. It's like an info product launch, something like that. And then get in front of that and diverting traffic through affiliate links, basically, and making money as an affiliate and some people have gone on to make tens of thousands of dollars, even a hundred thousand dollars, in a day from doing this successfully.

It's a pretty cool strategy. So in the episode, we're going to break down how exactly he did that, we're going to break down why he was in \$100,000 in debt, and we're going to break down how Derek basically built up his life after that, and built up his own audience, and talk about building a list, and the value of that and how you can leverage building a list and an audience to make money. And of course, launch jacking and how you can do the exact same thing.

All right? So, let's get into the episode. I hope you guys get a ton of value of it. Enjoy!

Derek, hey man! Thank you for joining me on the show today. It's cool to have you here.

Derek Pierce: Thanks for having me, I really appreciate it. You've done a great job with the blog and the podcast. Glad to be here.

Daryl Rosser: Thanks, man. So for anyone that doesn't know who you are, do you want to introduce yourself?

Derek Pierce: Yeah, my name's Derek Pierce. I'm from Alabama, I've been doing SEO probably for about ten years now. I got started doing launch jacking and I built some tools and things like that. So I've done just about every type of SEO that you can possibly do, from Web 2.0 type stuff, ranking videos, ranking websites, doing a little bit of client work, doing a little of this, little of that, so.

Daryl Rosser: Nice. You mentioned launch jacking. Actually, I think we had one person on the show ever that's actually mentioned launch jacking. Can you explain what it is and what sort of stuff you're doing?

Derek Pierce: Basically it's whenever you get a product name that somebody is going to be launching, and you are basically grabbing the traffic. You're ranking for the product name. Maybe the product name plus your view, maybe your product name plus "bonus" or something like that. The advantage to that is that the keywords are super targeted and it's a very much buyer-intent keyword. So somebody that already has some exposure to the product -- maybe they weren't sold on the product from getting blasted with a bunch of swipe emails or something, and they take to the Web to look for a better deal, so that's what I did. I'll tell you a story too, if you want to get into it later on, but that's really how I got my start, doing launch jacking. I think it was Jeff Lenney you had on here that talked about doing launch jacking.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, Jeff. Yeah.

Derek Pierce: Yeah, I saw that, and I reached out to him. That was a great interview you did.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, he shed a lot of light on it. He's a really cool guy. Is your approach different to his, if you saw the interview?

Derek Pierce: We had been in the same circles and I saw him at some different events and things like that. I think I saw him at the Zoo event, but we never had like talked. So I reached out so him and I was like, "Hey, we're in some circles and we've never formally met so you did a great job on the interview." But yeah, the way he does it, the way he talked about it was very similar to what I did in the past. I don't currently, I'm not as active in doing that as what I used to be but that's really where I got my start, so.

Daryl Rosser: All right. So before you go into launch jacking, you were telling me before we started recording about kind of your background and how you were \$100,000 in debt and had an IRS audit right before you got into all this stuff. And this kind of saved your ass basically. Can you kind of share like what your background is?

Derek Pierce: Well, okay so I started doing real estate deals. So I was a real estate investor buying and selling houses and I had some success with it. I quit my job. As soon as I quit my job, the markets just sort of went upside down and I couldn't borrow any money. So it was like, I quit my job, then I think like two years later my wife quit her job. And then it's like the market just went haywire. So it was one of those things where like, I think I had 15 houses and 10 of them were vacant. So basically, what I was doing was I was renovating some of these properties and I was using credit cards to fund the renovations. So what would happen is, whenever I would flip them, then I would go back and pay the credit cards off.

Well, when you've got 15 and then you've got like 10 that are vacant and you can't sell them and like, I was trying to give them away. I remember I was marking them with cars, I was giving away TVs, I was doing everything that you

could possibly imagine to get these houses done and get them off the books and I couldn't move them.

And so one day this lady comes back from a conference and I thought she was completely off her rocker. And she's like, "Hey, why don't you stick them on eBay." I was like, "Selling a house on eBay? That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard of." And so it ended up, I stuck one on eBay and I got more views on that one property than I did anything else. There was no comparison. So what we were doing was we did something kind of unique on listing the properties. Instead of just listing them, what I did was I set the prices and then I set to where they were bidding on the down payment. So let's say the price was \$50,000. So that was set in stone, and so then the bid amount was like, starting at a dollar.

And so I would get people like 5-to-8,000 views on one property and there would get a bidding war going on. And there was people in California, there was people in Jersey, there was people all over the place bidding on my property here in little small town in Alabama there's like 65, 70,000 people.

Daryl Rosser: That's really cool.

Derek Pierce: That's how I got out of the houses. But that left me with this debt.

Daryl Rosser: What sort of year was this, by the way?

Derek Pierce: Probably like '05, '06, somewhere around there. Yeah. So '05, '06, '07, somewhere in the ballpark of that. What ended up happening was like, I still had this credit card. Even though I'd got rid of the houses and got them off the books or whatever, like I had to borrow money to just live off of and to be able to pay the creditors and things like that. So I had this \$100,000 and I thought, "Well, if I can sell a house on eBay online, then I need to be online." I just knew like, I've got to be online. I grew up in a small town, like I didn't have any kind of computer training or anything like that, so I started researching on how to sell e-books and things like that. And so I did that, built a very small list, and basically all the e-book was how to buy houses no money down and it was also how I sold these houses on eBay. That's basically what it was.

I built this blog up while I was doing it. Just like little articles. Had some videos about different properties and, you know, just different things that was going on in the real estate space and one day this guy reaches out to me, a guy named Mitch, and he was trying to get me to promote a guy that he was working with that was selling real estate info products. And so we talk on the phone for about 30 minutes, he's like, "Hey, man. You need to get with these guys that are doing these launches."

Back then, it wasn't like a launch every day. You know what I mean? It wasn't like that. So I was like, "These guys are assholes." I automatically thought that

they had this big list. I automatically thought like I wasn't good enough to talk to them or whatever. What am I going to bring to the table? So what ended up happening was I said, "Okay, I'm going to talk to them and we'll see what happens."

So they do this launch and I write a blog post that's a review about every piece of content that they put out as the pre-launch, number one. So every pre-launch piece they had a name for it, so I write a blog post out. Every video they did, write a blog post out. I think they gave away a little software too as like a little, I don't remember, like a calculator or something. They give that away, wrote a blog post about it. Everything had a blog post. And then launch day comes, I start getting these cha-ching messages and I was like, "Holy cow, what's going on?" I didn't know what was going on. So I thought it was my list. My list is better than what I thought it was.

On that launch, I ended up being on the leaderboard and it was like in the top 15 or 20 or something like that, people or whatever. But nobody knew who I was, like I was a nobody. And my name was like right next to Ron Legrand, which is like the godfather of real estate, right? So I was like, "Great, Ron Legrand?"

So next launch comes up and I just mail my list. I don't do any of the blog posts, nothing. No response, nothing. And I was like, "Wait a minute. Why did it work this previous time and then this time..." Well, I got to looking back at some of the traffic that I was getting and then I started looking, I was like, "Holy cow, I was ranking for all these terms," and the that's when a light bulb went off. Then that's when I started approaching these launches, and most of them was in the real estate space and then I eventually got into some in the internet marketing space. But what I would do, is I would buy probably five domains for each launch. Any name I could get, just "product name review", "product name bonus", and I would just hit the living hell out of them with links. Every single one of them. That's kind of how I got started doing it.

Daryl Rosser: That's really cool man. So you accidentally, basically, stumbled into the idea. It wasn't like you went online like, "Oh there's a cool guide on how to do launch jacking." It was just...

Derek Pierce: No, no. There was nothing there. That wasn't a thing. It wasn't a thing, like nobody was really talking about it. Everybody was doing launches and that was the big thing and it was like a \$1,000, \$2,000 product launches at that point but nobody was really backing them for a while. There got to be some competition because people started seeing what I was doing and I'm sure there was some other people doing the same thing too and then I think this kind of word just kind of took off. It was becoming a little bit more competitive, but what I ended up doing was I participated in so many of these launches and I got on leader boards, and I started getting some really big chunks.

Like one launch jack that I did I made I think \$79,000 in sales. That all wasn't mine, just so you know. Half of it was mine and then they had to back out refunds and stuff like that, so I didn't see all of that. But still, when you go and you're like \$100,000 in debt and then you see your name on the top-five leaderboard and it's like almost \$80,000 in sales, it does something to you, a kind of thing. It's a good thing.

Daryl Rosser: How long did it take you to pay off the debt?

Derek Pierce: It wasn't long. I don't know. I didn't calculate it in terms of how long, but it wasn't long after that because we started getting some pretty big chunks and what I did was like, one day after we started doing these I started looking at this and I went like, "Wait a minute, I've got all of these domains." I was kind of pissed, because I was like, "I'm buying five domains for each of these launches and then I'm just hitting them with links."

Back then, like what we talked about before you started recording, you could just hit them with any kind of stuff like comments, forum, profile, whatever. You could just hit them. I was like, "I'm doing this. All this work for just a one-time payoff and then I'm not getting anything out of it."

So then one day I was like, "Wait a minute. Why don't I just go back to these same sites and just start linking to my new stuff?" And that was really the first PBN that I built, was just off of the ones that I had done the launch jacking with before.

Daryl Rosser: That makes sense. Also the links were ... it was just like pure spam, tools, automation?

Derek Pierce: Yup. That was like the wild, wild west. What was funny was this was like 2006 to 2008, 2009 somewhere around in there, and people then were saying, "Hey, this is going to burn your site out." It was like all the warnings that we see now where everybody's talking about like all this bad stuff's going to happen. But then it was like you can't build links, you can't do this, you can't do that. We would hire somebody to run and do 30-to-50,000 links inside of a week.

Daryl Rosser: It worked.

Derek Pierce: It worked. Everybody was saying it wouldn't work, but it was. It was the craziest thing.

Daryl Rosser: That's super cool. So when you were doing this initially on the launch jacking sites, it just linked through to their site as like an affiliate? You weren't building any sort of email list or anything at this time?

Derek Pierce: No, I didn't do anything with an email list, I just build them up to the site. And then on the site I would take like a screen grab of a video or something like that

and then I would make it look just like the site that we were promoting, so they couldn't tell the difference in it. So I would just make it look as identical as I possibly could, then I would put like a screen grab of a video or something like, "Hey, click here to play." And so when they land on it, like I may have all the content below this but on the top they would just see this video. So they would click to play it, and then it would carry them over to the affiliate link.

Daryl Rosser: Cool man. It wasn't back then, the whole bonus stuff. I know these days, every time you see a launch it's like you get this, this, this. Like \$100,000 of bonuses when you're doing this program. Obviously, it's all made up.

Derek Pierce: It wasn't as bad as what it is now, but it was still there. Because a lot of these people were looking at it from the standpoint of like, "Can I get a better deal?" Or something like that. They wanted to get more information, they hadn't been sold on it. So if you slid a bonus in that was good, then it would definitely help you make the sale but it's just gotten ... I think it's kind of gotten out of hand. It's kind of gotten crazy. Like what we were talking about, I'm going to give you a free night at my house and drive my car for a year or whatever. It's ridiculous.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. I mean, clearly, it's working for people so as long as they can actually add some value then good for them.

Derek Pierce: Some of them are good, you know. Some of them are really good. Again, I'm not knocking anybody or anything like that. Some of them are really good.

Daryl Rosser: So what did you get into after, like you started making some serious money with launch jacking. You ended up linking the sites to your new sites which is like, basically a PBN and actually probably a good PBN if you already had a ton of links and maybe some traffic still.

Derek Pierce: Right. That's what I did, so then we started linking to other stuff and I started trying to rank for more higher-end key words. I ended up ranking for like mobile marketing, real estate investing, creative real estate, some pretty big terms. That was all before Panda and Penguin come in. Those terms really didn't make me money, it was more just from an information base. It was more bragging rights at the time, I didn't even have proper sales funnels and things like that to put them into place. But I did rank for those terms, so I guess that accounts for something, you know, for bragging rights purposes.

So then what happened was I started getting my name on leaderboards and like, nobody knew who I was so then people wanted to start masterminding and connecting and talking to me and things like that. Led me to doing SEO for a best-selling author. I thought that was going to be the route to go, and man, it just didn't work out. After I guess about six months of doing that I was like, "I don't think I want to go that route, I'd rather stick with doing affiliate marketing."

Daryl Rosser: Like you own the sites and stuff.

Derek Pierce: I'm sorry?

Daryl Rosser: You prefer like, owning the sites and having full control of everything?

Derek Pierce: Yeah. Well what happened was this guy, he had a pretty ... He was a legit guy. He had a pretty big staff and whatnot. He had an operations manager that come in and she read a "SEO for Dummies" book over the weekend, and then she saw all the stuff that I was doing and I was moving these sites up. So like, what I ended up doing, he had some complaints on Rip-off Report and stuff like that, so I was trying to move up his Twitter profile, I was trying to move up some Web 2.0 stuff, his Facebook fan page. Just basic stuff, you know, because you're trying to move up eight different properties and move the one out on the second page and it's a lot of work.

So I was doing this and I was making some pretty good progress and she's like, "Hey, this isn't working. This is not ... You're going to get him into trouble. Is this even legal." And I'm like, "Legal?".

So they guy's calling me up. He's like a best-selling author guy and he's got this reputation he's worried about. He's like, "Hey man, what you're doing, is this even legal?" And I'm like, "Yes. It's okay." But it was just a pain in the neck because I didn't want to have to like, justify what I was doing. You know what I mean? I didn't want to have to answer to anybody.

I did that. I didn't like that. I still did the affiliate marketing but I started building a list, started selling my own stuff and putting together promotions and stuff for my own products and that's kind of where I migrated to.

Daryl Rosser: That's cool, man. Yeah I'm actually working with a client. If I got on the phone with a client and they say, "Do you even know what black hat, gray hat, white hat means?" I'm like, "This isn't for you, bye bye. Done." I will not take on a client if they even ask me, "Is this white hat?" We're not working together. Go away. I need someone that's extremely dumb and has nothing on this topic, because they're exponentially easier to deal with. Because of that, basically.

Derek Pierce: Right. And if they take an interest in it at some point, and a lot of them will if you're doing this for them. They're going to kind of pique their interest in it and it's going to be a thing of like, they've got to be cool to work with, you know what I mean? They've just got to be kind of laid back and just cool. I kind of felt like, we got on this group call, and it felt like I was having to defend what I was doing, you know? And I'm like, "Wait a minute, I've moved up like three properties inside of a month." I mean, it wasn't a thing of the results, it was just a thing of how I was going about it.

Daryl Rosser: Okay. Most of my clients, as long as they're making money they're happy. That's easy to deal with then. They just want to make some money.

Derek Pierce: Yeah, that's a lot easier to deal with. Stick with those people.

Daryl Rosser: Definitely. So I liked the progression you made from affiliate to kind of creating your own products and stuff. I'm trying to encourage friends and stuff to do the same thing these days. It's kind of the next level. Rather than just being a little affiliate, you're actually building up your own legit brand and having your own stuff.

Derek Pierce: Yeah. I think for me what really changed it was I was still doing some of the affiliate and I was still doing some of the launch jacking and I had some launches that didn't go well. I was really, at that point I was like, needing the money. I was like, "Oh this big name's going to launch XYZ Blaster 3000 whatever and I'm going to rank for it." So you put all this energy and effort into it and then the launch just bombs for whatever reason. Maybe they didn't get the affiliate support or whatever, but I just realized there was a lot of things that were out of my control.

I remember one guy in particular, his server went down on the day of the launch and I had multiple spots on the first page. This was a big game, somebody that you would not expect anything like this to happen. The server was down for like 36 hours before it ever came back up. And so he made a joke, he's like, "Yeah, I think we're just going to take the orders in by fax the next launch."

So that was all he could say. But at that point I was like, I've got to do something that's more for me that I can count on a little bit more and I can have a little bit more control. The whole reason we do PBNs and SEO to begin with is what? We want to stay in control and control the whole process, and I just looked at it the same way whenever I started building my own stuff. It was the same exact process.

The thing is, it's like, I believe in doing things ... Whatever you do, you've got to figure out a way of making money. SEO is the one thing that you can really guarantee profitability from, it's because ... I've been running Facebook ads, and I know I've saw some of your ads too. Sometimes I'll throw an ad out and like, I won't get anything. I'll get no return whatsoever. You go in with PBNs and you're getting that asset. You're getting something that you can, you know, if you need to sell links off of or if you sell blog posts off of, it's something that you have, that's there. You know what I mean?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, definitely. We do quite a lot on Facebook ads these days, like a few hundred a day, and it's testing basically with our stuff. You've got to tweak it all the time. It's very unlikely, to be honest, that you're going to start off and make money. It's very unlikely. It takes a lot of time to tweak it and play around with

the funnels and play around with the offer and everything like that to get it profitable.

You're right, with rankings, it's so, so, so cheap, isn't it? Like, throwing up a few PBNs and ranking is a few thousand dollars you start ranking for this keyword that can bring in a \$1,000 plus a month just from a few keywords. The ROI is insane.

Derek Pierce: The thing is, though, it's like, let's say you're not ranking though. You've got a real asset. Think of how many other ways you can make money from that. You can sell links off of that, you could sell blog posts off of that, there's so many other ways that you can monetize that project other than just relying on the rankings. And so, I think that's the thing too, is figuring out ways that you can make money from. So like, everything that I do, I try to turn it into a profit center.

So if I rank for something, it's going to be a case study. If I rank video, it's a case study. If I do anything, it's a cheat sheet, it's a case study, it could be a full-blown course. If it's something I can build a software around, I'm going to get a developer on it. If it's something being automated, that's kind of what I look at. I just try to figure out ways that I can take what I'm doing and build and make money from all different types of angles no matter what. That's kind of the approach that I take. It's worked well for me.

Daryl Rosser: Actually, I like that. Someone asked me before like, how you kind of diversify your business. So once you're doing, maybe ranking for the affiliate sites, how do you diversify it? And for me I think the easiest way to diversify it is not to completely do something separate but to add extra things to your business that all add value to the main thing. Kind of like what you're saying. So for me, for example, I run Lion Zeal stuff and then I have like, my agency stuff. The agency just makes sense to run while we're doing it because it's case studies and everything for Lion Zeal so additional training, and it all kind of ties back with constantly doing SEO for ranking a client.

Basically, everything I do, I'm going to add something exactly the same as you. It all has to add value to every part of the business. Or as much value as it possibly can.

Derek Pierce: And see, you've got it figured out. It took me a while to figure that out, so kudos to you. You're already figuring it out, and that's the way to do it right there. You're exactly, 100% right.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. We'll see. But I think so.

Derek Pierce: I'm telling you, man. You're doing it the right way. That's the way you do it. The thing is, it's like, let's say you rank an affiliate site or whatever. Well, that can be like a mini case study, you could sell it. You could sell that or you could give it

away as a lead magnet, whatever. You don't have to just ... Everybody's worried about stealing niches and things like that, and I worry about that too, but you don't have to give away the niche or the market or whatever. You can just tell what you did and how you got the results and just document it and you've got an asset at that point that you can do whatever you want to with.

Daryl Rosser:

Definitely. So that's an interesting topic, then, because you've been in this sort of thing, like information products and stuff, a lot longer than me and software and everything like that. Let's say that it's outside the make money niche. I have a friend, he's ranking very well for weight loss type keywords, stuff like that. He's just recently started selling e-books actually. So originally, he just promoted other people's products. He created a couple of his own e-books. He did, I think, a good few thousand dollars last month from selling his own e-books to a list and it's working really well.

What are a few sort of pitfalls, mistakes that people make when they first start selling their own products and building up their own list for that sort of thing?

Derek Pierce:

I think, for me, what I really had a mistake with and what I really regret was not having confidence to ask for more money up front. I felt like I didn't have a confidence level of being able to ask, say, a grand or \$100 a month or whatever. It was I think like, I felt like I needed to be And this applies to making money online and this applies to fitness or whatever. I felt like \$7-\$10, \$20 or whatever low ticket thing, it was in my comfort zone. I think that's a very common mistake a lot of people make.

I've got a guy that's my neighbor and he's wanting me to help him do training. I think he's 65 and he's in credible shape. If you saw him out you would say, "Man there's no way this guy is 65." He looks amazing and he's been like, in all these body building competitions and stuff. He looks great. Most of his clients look good too and he's really strict about the diet. He's a very humble guy, and I'm like, "Okay, dude. You could do this, you could do this." I'm trying to give him all these ideas and I'm like, "You could charge this," and he's like, "Wait a minute, wait a minute." He doesn't feel comfortable doing that.

The thing is, when you're starting to compete in some of these markets, especially when you've got competition, it doesn't make sense to go after it when you've got competitors that are charging hundreds or thousands of dollars. It doesn't make sense to come in to the market with a \$7 product. They're going to eat you alive, I think.

I learned that in the real estate space when I was trying to sell this e-book. There was guys that has \$20,000-\$50,000 coaching programs at the time and here I was, I had my little \$49 e-book and you start trying to run ads. There's no way you can match what they're spending, you know?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. There's a lot of guys saying it now. Basically, whoever can afford to spend the most money on ads is going to make the most money.

Derek Pierce: Exactly.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. So if you're selling a \$7 e-book, even like PBNs and stuff is going to be super pricey. How many sales do you have to get to cover that cost, right?

Derek Pierce: I see guys doing that now with some of the PBN services, too. They're selling stuff really, really cheap and I'm like, "Don't do that." Some of the domains and stuff I can't believe, because I know they're doing a lot of research on some of them, you know? But I really believe that's ... People, a lot of times, they have a hard time asking for the money and if I had it to do over and I could go back, I would try to slap myself around and be like, "Look, dude, you've got to get over this." It's all a confidence thing, you know?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. That's very true. How did you build your list?

Derek Pierce: Most of my list is buyers.

Daryl Rosser: Okay, cool.

Derek Pierce: Rolling stuff out, rolling stuff out at a lower ticket. But when we roll it out now with a lower ticket we've got stuff that's higher end ready to go in the back end. We've got a upsell, then we've got the webinar, and we've got continuity programs. We've got other things that we're doing with that. And that's the other thing that's really helped me, too, is the continuity. I know you've got the monthly, yeah, that's a good move too because it took me a while to get that. But the re-bills, man, that's the name of the game right there.

It's not just for selling stuff, either. That goes for the affiliate side too because ... I like stuff, it doesn't matter if I'm selling it or if it's affiliate, I like stuff that I'm either going to get a lifetime commission or I'm going to get re-bills, recurring commissions, anything like that. It's just that's the way to go right there.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely. It's actually funny, because that's the same advice that I gave my friend. I was looking at his site and he sold these two e-books, he made a few thousand dollars off it in a month just on the initial, like, opening up and sign up for it wrapping it up with those products. The first thing I said was like, go up there and add a one-click upsell. Add something like a video trainer that goes with the e-book to help them implement it better. And then, after that, add another product and make it like a supplement or something like that and charge them \$30, \$50 a month to get a subscription to get the supplement every month. And just by adding that you'll like, probably triple your revenue or something like that with zero extra work. Nothing.

Derek Pierce: Did he take your advice?

Daryl Rosser: I think he's working on it all now, so I'll have to update everyone later. That would be a good case study for later.

Derek Pierce: That's another thing too. I see a lot of people trying to make stuff perfect, you know. They say, "Oh I'm working on it," or whatever. It doesn't take me long to launch a product. If I wanted to launch a product, right now it's 11:20 p.m. tonight. If I wanted to launch a product, I could launch one in the morning and I would have something out ready to go. It doesn't take long, you know? If I was going to do that, I haven't launched a product probably where I had everything done, probably in two years outside of software. Everything's been where I sell it and then I fulfil it after that, because you just don't know. Sometimes people are just not interested in whatever it is that you're looking to sell, you know? By doing that, it forces me, literally it forces me to create the product.

"Okay, I'm going to do a three-week class, four-week class," or whatever. Then I get paid up front, and then I've got this asset that I can turn around and sell over and over again.

Daryl Rosser: Fair enough. And as long as you're transparent, that's totally cool right? Especially when you drag it out like it's going to be a five-week class. Easy.

Derek Pierce: Totally. The thing is, you can use it as a sell point, too, because you can say look, you can participate in this. Especially if you're doing webinars. A lot of times I'll do these and I'll just do them as a webinar. And so you can participate in these, you can ask questions live. And so, that kind of helps you dictate how the course is going to go as well. If you position it right, you can really use that as a selling point instead of something that would hurt sales, you know?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah, absolutely. How do you ... You mentioned one of the big issues you made was kind of under-charging. So, take my friend's example for example, selling \$37 e-books or something like that on how to lose weight or how to get in better shape or something like that. How do you kind of increase the price by tweaking their perceptions or anything like that? How do you achieve being able to charge \$1,000? Because obviously you can't charge \$1,000 for an e-book.

Derek Pierce: Well, I think you have to like, for an e-book, maybe it's not an e-book. Maybe it's a six week class. Maybe it's like what you were saying. You've still got this front-end product, but then you've got ... Maybe the six-week class is just more in-depth, maybe a little bit more hand holding, maybe it's email access. Just something to add a little bit more value to, maybe a personal touch or something like that. Stuff that we sell that's higher ticket, then people get access to me, they ask me questions and things like that or maybe it's something that's software related. That's kind of what's worked for me, anyway.

Daryl Rosser: Definitely. So both of us are SEO guys. I'm curious if you were starting over again, would you build this off of SEO and, today, do you only rely on SEO or do you go to other traffic sources as well?

Derek Pierce: I do other traffic sources. If I had it to do over again, I would look at paid traffic sooner and I would build my list sooner. I still think SEO is the best way to go in terms of just getting super targeted traffic. There's nothing else like it in my opinion. I eat, breathe, and live the stuff. I love it. I love talking about it, we could be here all night talking about it. But I would get better and I would be open more to the idea of doing paid traffic.

Facebook ads, I was turned off by it from day one and it really hindered my business by not doing that. I missed a boatload of opportunity just from the early day and just trying not to adopt. Part of that was, I was still trying to do a lot of SEO on my own and running a one-man shop and things like that. Since then I've kind of outsourced a lot more and doing more of that stuff. That's what I would do. Like I said, I'm still sold on it, but I would start looking at some paid stuff as well.

Daryl Rosser: All right. Fair enough.

Derek Pierce: What about you?

Daryl Rosser: I'd start with SEO, 100%. I love it and its much easier to get started with and it's a great way of growing your revenue and getting some cashflow. If I was going the client route then I'd just stick to SEO. I'd probably just start working with people to outsource it to or building a team, probably just outsourcing it from the start.

If I was going the affiliate route or something like that, I would probably take the building more of an authority approach. Ranking originally, starting off with just rankings, then later on like you said, once you're making some money as an affiliate then start creating your own products and stuff like that. Setting up all the upsells and all the different upsells, the different things like that, building an email list.

And then, it's like, if you can add paid traffic as an extra and it really builds up the site and stuff and big, then I'd be looking at if I can run Facebook ads, if I can make that profitable. Especially once you've got your own products, everything like that. Build up like legit brand in a niche.

Derek Pierce: Right.

Daryl Rosser: That's interesting stuff to me.

Derek Pierce: Yeah. I agree with that. And I think for me, the reason why I keep going back to SEO, like I never could get rid of it. I don't know if I just had this love for it whenever we got started kind of thing and it kind of dug me out of the hole or whatever, but I've just never been able to put it down, you know? It's always been the thing that I always go to. Whenever we do trainings, I do a training that's not SEO. Guess what? Somehow there's always an SEO angle to it that

ends up being talked about or whatever. Even if I don't intend for it to be. So I would not neglect the other traffic sources, though, would be the thing that I would do.

There's something to be said, though, for focusing in on what it is that you're doing too.

Daryl Rosser: That's very true, actually. Yeah.

Derek Pierce: I think a lot of people are spreading themselves too thin with shiny object number one, shiny object number two. But I think if you go at it like you're talking about, where you go at it from a progression of getting good at SEO and then building the list, you're going at it and you're adding to what you're doing instead of, like, just running all over the place.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. Ranking a bunch of sites basically, finding a niche that makes good money and then scaling that one niche versus ranking a few sites then you're running Facebook ads too, you have offers and you're running ad words to some other stuff and just kind of trying everything out. But it's just test through with SEO, find something that works and just scaling it in that one direction.

Derek Pierce: And the thing is, even though like ... Let's say the niche you go after, even if it don't make you money, big deal. You've built something, you can use that to throw links to something else and you can use it as a case study. It's really hard to lose when you put yourself in a no-lose situation, kind of thing.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely, man. You said you have a few SEO tools and softwares?

Derek Pierce: I do.

Daryl Rosser: Do you want to...

Derek Pierce: Go ahead.

Daryl Rosser: Do you want to share what they are and what you built and why you built them?

Derek Pierce: Yeah. Well back in the day, like posting was a pain in the neck. So we were keeping up with everything in spreadsheets and it was just a disaster. So I built, originally I built a plugin that would go in and we did it all from within WordPress, and it would post to other WordPress sites. That ultimately got graduated into a web-based software and it's called Rank Gold. It's in a web-based software and it's where you can manage multiple PBNs and it handles all the posting and everything for you.

It does multiple platforms and things like that. It mixes stuff up you can do spun content if you wanted to. If you wanted to do like original content and just

syndicate one article per blog then you could do that. So, I did that and then I did another, probably that product and then another one I did called Rebuild Aged Domains.

You're familiar with Link Juice Keeper?

Daryl Rosser: Yeah.

Derek Pierce: I figure everybody that's watching this is probably familiar with it. But basically it takes that concept to like a whole other level. You install the plugin on this one and it redirects, does a 301 redirect to your existing post and pages instead of linking it all to the homepage.

Daryl Rosser: That's better.

Derek Pierce: So you can mix it up however you want. If you want it to go to certain ones, if you want it to go to just a variety. That way you can have all of your stuff set up and then install it and it will do the 301 loop. Those two things probably would be like ... Those are probably I would consider the staples of what I've built as far as SEO goes.

Daryl Rosser: That's cool. And how did you get into building software from creating info products and webinars and stuff? Creating software is a completely different game I'd imagine.

Derek Pierce: I don't even know [laughter].

Daryl Rosser: It happened.

Derek Pierce: Well, yeah. So what happened was, I thought, "You know what I'm going to..." Because there's another product I have, it's called Page One Plugin, but it's a silo builder and it will automatically load like several plugins and it will tweak them and instead of having to go into WordPress and install each individual plugin one by one, this grabs them. It grabs like 10, and then it will optimize them and change the permalinks and delete the sample page and post and all the mundane stuff.

So I was just like, "Okay, what if I could build tools that I could not have to do all this mundane stuff that we're doing on every single site." So that's really probably how it got started. So I got started with that one. So I built that one, and then there was the posting tool. That was a lot of work. I put an ad up on Upwork, at the time it was oDesk. I got a guy, and he built the Page One Plugin for me quick. He's been with me ever since. He builds out everything. We've built a ton of tools out, a ton of software. He does really good work.

Daryl Rosser: That surprisingly sounds not too difficult. I'm sure it was for him, but...

Derek Pierce: I went through several programmers before him.

Daryl Rosser: That's the part I was waiting for.

Derek Pierce: Yeah. It wasn't like, "Oh I just lucked out." This was after like several ones and a lot of bad ones. SO everything now gets sent to him first. He does them and he does good work for me. But the main thing is we just try to replace as much of the ... Take the stuff that just doesn't matter, like installing plugins. This is stuff that we do on every single site. The posting, this is stuff that takes a lot of work and a lot of effort in terms of keeping up with where the post was made, when the date was, what the URL is. All of this stuff.

What we do now, we have it to where we plug everything into Rank Gold, we run the sort of mission wizard and it will schedule everything for us. And then at the end of it, it reports back to us all of the URLs that it's posted to. That way if you wanted to build a second tier to it or if you needed to send it to send it to a client for reporting or whatever, that's how we do it.

Daryl Rosser: So you basically had issues with your own business, sort of running it, and you decided the quick source to help you out which obviously helped others as well.

Derek Pierce: Yup. Exactly. Whenever I got on the launch leaderboards there were people that would say, "Hey, let's connect and let's do this mastermind." So I had these three or four guys that were like, "Man you need to sell some of this stuff. You've got to sell some of this stuff. There's more money in selling in than what you would ever imagine." I was like, "Really?." Yeah. So that's kind of where it all started from, was that.

Daryl Rosser: Was that helpful? I presume for. Getting into all these mastermind circles and actually chatting with real people that are building businesses just like yours.

Derek Pierce: It is. There are some downsides, though. This was a group that was just, it was a non-paid one. It was just like four guys getting together and we were friends. It wasn't a thing of ... We met each other all through the web, and so we were all over the place. But, I know some of the paid ones, it can be challenging trying to find your spot in some of these. And then people stealing ideas, and stuff like that you know. That happens.

Daryl Rosser: Last few questions then. What are two or three big mistakes you've made since starting out like 10 years ago now? That someone else can avoid, hopefully.

Derek Pierce: The biggest mistakes I've made. Not outsourcing soon enough.

Daryl Rosser: With you there. Yup.

Derek Pierce: Is that a good answer or are you looking for like a bad deal that I did?

Daryl Rosser: If you have one in mind that would be interesting too, but that's good.

Derek Pierce: Dude, I can give you a book full of mistakes. We could be here all night. The biggest thing was just thinking that I'm so good that I have to do everything.

Daryl Rosser: Especially with SEO.

Derek Pierce: I'd look and it and I'd go... Yeah. I'm thinking, "Man, I can knock this out quick. I can do this. I can do this. I can do this." There's only so many hours in the day, and that's been probably one of my biggest pitfalls is that, and not hiring stuff out sooner, not outsourcing stuff, not building teams and not systemizing things the way that I should have. I should have done that way sooner.

Daryl Rosser: I'm with you there. A lot of us, especially in SEO, we think to be honest that we're amazing at SEO, we know all this stuff. Surely, you can't just pay someone to come in and do PBNs and ranking for us and link building and stuff, this technical stuff. If we learned it, other people can learn it as well. We're not that special. As much as our egos don't want to hear that.

Derek Pierce: I totally agree. It's definitely been a challenge. I still run a small team. It's not like I've got this big team. I've only got a couple of people that's helping me, so it's not like I've got a big team or anything like that. Plus the developer that I have that works with me. I know some guys that are running like 10, 20 people. That's just not what I want to do.

I feel like I should have done this, what I've done in the last year or two, I feel like I should have done this a lot sooner and my business would have definitely grown a lot faster than what it did.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. I think it's also kind of scary to add the expense of hiring someone or getting a bunch of EAs or whatever like that. At least in my experience, I've never, ever gone wrong with it. As long as you hire someone good, you're always going to make that money back and then some. If they do a good job.

Derek Pierce: For me it was never a thing about the expense of it. It was always the thing about, I was always questioning if I was hiring the right person. I was always worried that I was like, "Okay, if I hire this person, they don't work out, then we've got to go back to the drawing board." That was kind of the whole thing that was going on in my head and I was thinking like, by the time I teach them this stuff, I could have already done it myself.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. It's true.

Derek Pierce: That was the whole thought process going on. So, it really ... If anybody's putting it off, I would start hiring out people right now. As soon as you possibly can.

Daryl Rosser: It changes, doesn't it? The whole business is completely different when you can just roll something out. You roll it out by ... You come up with an idea and you pass it on to them and it just, the implement it. They get it done. You can implement, you get five people working for you, you can all five of them doing the same stuff and you're just coming up with the idea and it gets done five times. Just as a basic example.

Derek Pierce: And people that you're competing against that are doing this. Let's say we were competing against each other or whatever, right, and you've got a team and I don't. You're going to be so much faster at everything and you're going to reach so much more faster just by having a team versus trying to do it all on your own. There's no comparison.

Daryl Rosser: Yeah. Even with building up affiliate sites and stuff like that. We always say that it's basically like all the stuff, it's just like testing. Build up a bunch of sites and some sites will make a load of money, some sites will make less. So if you have a team, you can file up a lot more sites than anyone else. A lot more.

Derek Pierce: And then when you find the winners, then you go in and you just go after that one niche and you just bombard it. You just build out 10. If you've got one profitable site, you build out 10 more just like it. Then you can start testing around with the link building and you can start doing more aggressive things if you want to. You can start testing with spamming some stuff and you've got these properties now that you can do that with.

Daryl Rosser: Absolutely, man. Hey, that's a good kind of final thought to wrap up the interview on. Where can people find you if they want to reach out or ask you some questions or check out any of your products or anything like that?

Derek Pierce: Rankgold.com is the PBN poster. Also you can go to trafficediesel.com. By the way, I hate that domain name but I've had it for so long. You can find me there, you can opt in for the list or whatever and then you can just find me on Facebook too. You can just look me up. I'm not the porn star though, I'm not the porn star. There's a Derek Pierce porn star and I am not him.

Daryl Rosser: Just like a side job while you're doing this SEO stuff.

Derek Pierce: Yeah. That's not me. I promise.

Daryl Rosser: That's really cool. Alright, man. Thank you for joining me today it's been fun.

Derek Pierce: Hey, thanks for having me. Enjoyed it.

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