

3 Lessons that Helped Our Client Make \$100,000



Part 1: Know Your Niche

We love helping local businesses succeed, so when a medical clinic in our own backyard came to us with a problem, we leapt at the chance to help.

Their dilemma: no web presence. No website, ads, or landing pages. Zilch.

They knew that they needed to cut down on their cost per lead (CPL), because while traditional advertising was working, it wasn't very cost effective. Our challenge was to take a modest budget and establish a digital footprint for our client—something that would win new leads and cut costs.

In this three part blog series, we'll explore the THREE BIG LESSONS that helped our client turn an \$8,500 budget into \$104,000 profit... in only one month!

 **Lesson 1 is how to create a great website and choose your demographic.**

 **Lesson 2 is how to train your staff to close more leads.**

 **Lesson 3 is how to choose your marketing channels and why you should never rely on just one.**

Newsflash: Your Website Matters

It's 2016, so it might shock you to learn that anywhere from 26 – 46% of small businesses don't have a website. What's even more shocking is that 41% of small business don't think they need a website. But your website is so much more than a glorified brochure.

In the right hands, your website:

- Draws in qualified leads and wins new business.
- Moves visitors through the buying cycle.
- Offers content that makes visitors want to return.
- Communicates your niche.

Establishing a niche is important, because it's the only thing separating you from every other business with similar offerings. We call this "positioning."

There's no cookie-cutter formula for discovering your positioning, but you want to play to your strengths when displaying your unique value. For example, you could emphasize a cutting edge treatment that your competitors haven't adopted yet, or you could position yourself based on the depth of your knowledge on a particular topic (e.g. if you're the go-to solution for migraines).

The benefit of a positioning strategy is that you focus on your strengths, narrow your audience, and face less competition within your specialization.



How We Identified the Highest ROI Opportunities

Every digital agency under the sun can sit down and talk sexy web design. Most even deliver. But a great looking homepage is a far cry from what a real website is about.

The first thing we did, long before we talked about what the page should look like, was learn what our client wanted from their website. We sat down with them (in person!) and found out that both television and print ads were costing them well over \$100 per lead, and they wanted a better solution.

Next, we figured out what set them apart from other medical clinics—especially other local practices. We talked about their treatments, the conditions that saw a highest close rate, and which patients were paying the bills.

In other words, we were establishing our client's area of expertise and their target demographic in order to achieve a clear goal.

We learned that our clients excelled at solving knee pain. They offered cutting edge, FDA-approved treatments that stood head and shoulders above anything their competition could offer. Not only that, but we discovered our client preferred treating knee pain issues. They had huge success in solving these problems, which meant a high close rate.

We also learned that our client's advertising to that point hadn't been very focused. Like all unpositioned clinics, their marketing targeted "everybody who is sick," which meant that they were easily outmatched by closer and cheaper clinics. Consequently, they were only marketing to people within 10 miles of their clinic.

We knew they could do better.

Overcoming Our Client's Pain Points

Early on, one of our biggest challenges was that our client wasn't convinced their target demographic lived online. They were primarily targeting people over 50—an age range that most people don't associate with internet consumerism, despite stats that tell us 65% of 50+ users engage in social media and that this demographic outspends younger adults online 2:1 on a per capita basis.

To convince them, we dug into our research, and pulled some numbers. We found 120,000 50-64-year-old men and women on Facebook alone, located within 25 miles of Salt Lake City.

We expanded our reach beyond 10 miles because we knew that people were willing to travel for best-in-class service. Studies show us that 60-75% of people over 50-years-old suffer from at least one chronic health condition, and we wagered that people suffering from knee pain would leap at a solution, even if it meant a short drive.

The beauty of positioning our client as the go-to name in knee pain relief was that we could expand or narrow our target demographic as the situation demanded. Both are equally important, in different contexts:



You narrow your demographic when you need better leverage against the competition. Labelling an entire city as your demographic doesn't work—you should focus your marketing on the people that most often seek you out and that you help better than anyone else.

You expand your demographic when you're competing for bottom dollar within a very small radius of your business. You can't expand without a solid positioning strategy, be-

Another big pain point on our client's part was that they didn't know if they could go toe-to-toe with other clinics, when they were taking their first steps on the internet.

To help smooth out this issue, we researched their competition. We measured:

1. Who we were up against.
2. The messaging/imagery of their ad campaigns.
3. The emphasis of their landing pages.

We wanted to see who was standing out among their competitors, and how they were leveraging digital marketing to their advantage. We compiled all of our competitor research in a swipe file (Evernote), so that when we sat back down with our client we could show them which landing pages were working... and which missed the mark.

We all realized that there was a noticeable lack in solid knee pain experts in the local area. Suddenly, we had the positioning strategy we were looking for.

Remember: you don't have to pursue the same strategy as your competitors. Learning which channels you shouldn't pursue matters just as much as learning which strategies work.

The Actionable Insights We Gained

Once we'd pinned down our messaging and target demographic, it was time to (finally) put what we'd learned into action:

- We built a website for our client that specifically catered to their niche offering. We took special care to inform people that they solved knee pain like no other, without excluding other patients.
- We invested in Adwords marketing. We knew that we were aiming for highly targeted traffic, so specific advertising that generated quality leads would go a long way.
- We invested in Facebook advertising, because we knew that a huge portion of our demographic lived on Facebook and that the CPC on that platform was super low.
- We advertised through Pandora. We knew that we were targeting a specific age-range and geographical area and we that audio advertising might appeal to this demographic (and possibly outperform static text/visual ads).
- We sowed the seeds for long-term local SEO results, using both main keywords (e.g. "knee pain relief") and long-tail keywords (e.g. "non-surgical knee pain treatment").



Thankfully, we'd done our homework upfront and were able to anchor all of our marketing around our client's niche. Not only was their offering unique enough to bypass a lot of their competition, but it also satisfied a need that we knew would draw an audience.

And that was just the beginning. At Be Top Local, we firmly believe that the best marketing strategies fall apart without proper follow-through. We took a very hands-on approach in training our client to get the most from their new advertising mediums.



Part 2: Staff Intake Training

In part two of our three-part blog series, we continue talking about the lessons we took away from an experience with one of our clients—a local medical clinic in Utah—which turned an \$8,500 budget into over \$104,000 profit in one month alone.

In Part One of this series, we talked about how knowing your niche improves your marketing campaign and sets you apart from your competitors. Now, we'll look at why a digital agency that follows-through even after your website is built matters so much.

After all, all the marketing in the world won't matter if your staff isn't setting appointments.

Old Habits Die Hard

When a local medical clinic approached us last year, they had no digital footprint whatsoever—their marketing campaigns to that point had only extended to newsprint and television. Our challenge was to build them a website and improve their cost per lead.

But we knew that a new website alone wasn't going to cut it. After all, turning your website into a marketing machine is only half the battle. The other half occurs in your reception area—both in person and on the phone.

We knew that our involvement couldn't begin and end on the internet. To actually transform a business, we needed to break some bad habits and streamline front-end efficiency too.

To be clear: their front desk is run by friendly, professional people, but some inefficient practices meant that a lot of leads stopped in reception and never made it through the front door. While the phone lines were busy, potential new patients slipped away.

To rectify this, we coached their front staff in some phone training, which had three clear goals:

1. Always focus on setting an appointment.
2. Quickly answer all relevant questions needed to secure an appointment.
3. Redirect other questions back to the appointment.

Let's face it, when you've spent \$8,500 of your marketing budget to make the phone ring, you don't want to lose those hard earned leads to a busy phone line.

The point we kept returning to throughout our phone training is that most questions can't be answered over the phone. Receptionists are not qualified doctors with access to a patient's medical records, so the best response to 99% of questions is, "That's a great question for the doctor. Let's get an appointment scheduled so s/he can answer it."



How Phone Training Improved Our Marketing Campaign

A streamlined front-end wound up being vital to our marketing efforts—it meant that leads were quickly turned into appointments and nobody had to suffer through long hold-times. This was important, because our investments were churning out more leads than ever before, and the old system would have slowed to a crawl under the volume.

We complemented our phone training by:

1. Creating optimized landing pages and a few simple booking forms to take the weight off of front-end staff. Within a month, these forms resulted in 203 new leads and a 61% new patient booking rate.
2. Collaborating on even more goals with the front-end staff, with the express purpose of booking more appointments. These included the goal to follow up on all voicemails and form submissions within five minutes—a huge improvement when this process once took days.
3. Arranging for someone to always be available to answer new queries and bookings, even though the clinic was closed on the weekends.
4. Incentivizing this fast-response time. The doctor agreed to pay a small commission for every appointment booked.

All of these changes would have been great on their own, but together they proved to be a tour de force that processed hundreds of qualified leads as they came in.

It's important to note that we started staff intake training before we launched our targeted ads, so that our client's didn't waste a dime of their investment. We didn't want to fumble through the early stages of our marketing campaign, so we made sure that patient acquisition was streamlined before we started funneling in new leads.

While a new website certainly helps, our client wouldn't be enjoying nearly the same results if their front-end staff didn't step up to strike while the iron is hot.

The Bottom Line

Your website is never finished.

The best digital agencies are those that are considering more than just pretty web design—they're constantly experimenting, tweaking, and improving the experience to make sure that your website stays relevant. They're also invested in your success, and will have follow-through tactics that make sure your business is squeezing every last drop of value from your website and your marketing channels.

Part Three of this series will talk about the marketing campaigns we launched, which ad channels we chose, and why we made the decision to split our already modest budget four ways. Keep reading to find out why the most important lesson we learned from this entire experience is that you should never rely on just one channel.



Part 3: Never Rely On Just One Channel

In the final instalment of our three part series, we look at the marketing channels that resulted in one of our biggest success stories last year—a campaign to help a medical clinic in Utah. You'll learn which channels hit pay dirt and which (to our surprise!) bombed. You'll also learn how we cut their cost per lead by more than 300%.

How to Choose Your Marketing Channels

Yes, you read that correctly: marketing CHANNELS.

It's foolish to devote your entire budget to just one advertising avenue, even if your digital agency says they've seen huge success with that channel in the past. The truth is that you have no way of knowing with 100% certainty which channels will work.

That's why you need to carefully consider the following criteria when choosing your marketing channels:

Where your audience lives You need to know if a market exists before you throw money at an advertising channel. Knowing whether or not your audience already uses the platform you're advertising on is the difference between a successful campaign and a flop.

The approximate cost per click It's important to know roughly how much it will cost to reach your target demographic on a particular platform. This factor alone doesn't make or break a marketing campaign though—a more expensive channel is a good investment if it wins you more qualified leads.

The quality of your leads Some platforms allow you to narrow your targeting more than others. Generally speaking, the more focused your marketing is, the better your leads, because you get to go straight to your target audience.

Which channels are working The reason you invest in multiple channels is to find the most qualified leads. Once you've found a channel that works, shift your budget away from underperforming channels and reinvest in what's working. Also, never stop experimenting—you never know when you might find a diamond in the rough.



The Channels We Invested In

Using the above criteria, we researched multiple platforms to figure out which marketing channels might benefit our client the most. We had an initial working budget of \$8,500, and we wanted to invest every penny of that as wisely as possible.

Before we invested in any channel, we used \$100 of our budget to run a test that helped us estimate how successful our campaigns would be. Thanks to this test budget, we learned how to improve our landing pages and we also gained insights into factors such as cost per click (CPC), click through rate (CTR), bounce rates, time on site, and of course, cost per lead (CPL).

When our test results came back (and they were very positive!) we decided to invest our budget in the following channels:

1. AdWords

We wanted to win qualified leads, and we knew AdWords would deliver better than one-size-fits-all display advertising. AdWords let us advertise to people actively searching for knee pain treatment, making it a worthwhile investment even if the cost per click was higher than other forms of advertising.

2. Facebook

Cost per click on Facebook advertising is very low, making it immediately appealing. We especially wanted to get in front of mobile users, and Facebook ads let us put targeted advertising directly in front of our target demographic, across all platforms.

3. Pandora

Pandora had been incredibly successful in our previous campaigns, so we decided to try it with this client as well. Pandora let us target a particular age range and geographic radius with banner ads and audio messages, which we thought might be successful.

4. Organic Local Search

We didn't just invest in paid ads, we also invested a portion of our budget into search engine optimization. We knew that even if this didn't see results in the first few months, this channel was important for the long term success of our client.

The Results

After our campaigns went live, we tracked and measured the results to figure out which channels were good investments, and which needed rethinking. Here's what we had to show for our efforts:

- Sessions: 6,611
- Users: 5,090
- Contact form submissions: 102
- Unique calls: 101
- Average CPL: \$42
- Qualified leads: 203



What we found was that our Facebook ads were easily our best investment. In the first month alone, we generated 3,955 unique visitors for our client, and our cost per click was a low \$0.37. We had invested less than a quarter of our starting budget in Facebook ads, so we had plenty of room to grow.

The AdWords pay per click ads lived up to our expectations. Our average cost per click with AdWords advertising was \$1.44, and that was only improving as time went on.

Our investment in Local SEO didn't win many immediate returns, but we also expected that. When we started our campaign, our client had a brand new domain, with no links or search engine ranking whatsoever. The fact that we saw 95 unique visits in the first month pointed to an investment that would pay off in the future.

But the biggest surprise after our first month was a dismal showing by Pandora ads. Though we invested the most time and money into Pandora, both Facebook and AdWords advertising outstripped it. In the end, at almost a \$300 CPL, Pandora wasn't going to work for this client.

And here's the lesson: no matter how successful a marketing channel was in the past, you can't assume it will work every time.

Pandora has, and continues to be, a great platform, but for this particular client it simply didn't win the quality leads that Facebook and AdWords did.

The Takeaway Lesson

When our client came to us, they'd relied exclusively on traditional advertising and they wanted to lower their cost per lead. After one month, we managed to turn our \$8,500 budget into \$104,000 profit for our client, and we drastically improved their cost per lead—lowering it to \$42, down from \$118 with print ads and \$173 with television ads.

This success was the direct result of investing in multiple channels and measuring the results. Without this approach, we wouldn't have enjoyed the runaway success of Facebook ads with this particular client, and we might have made the mistake of looking to previous successes alone to dictate where we invested our budget.

Today, we continue to collect data and use our insights to improve this marketing campaign. Our cost per lead is now an exceptional \$28—an atypical result that not every client will enjoy, though it does showcase how hard work and initial research pays off.

