# STARTING & GROWING AN

CONSULTING
BUSINESS



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# 7 Steps To Starting & Growing an SEO Consulting Business

### **Quick Summary**

I always provide a quick summary at the beginning of my content so that you can decide if this is for you or not

#### This is a quick step by step of what you will learn:

- 1) You will learn how to find businesses that need your help with online marketing & SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
- **2)** Following my "*Pay It Forward Method*" I will show you how to stand out against the competition.
- **3)** Master following up with businesses so you can maximize your potential to close clients.
- **4)** Create awesome proposals for recurring services you can charge businesses \$500-1000/month

- 5) Learn how to close sales like a boss and build your confidence
- **6)** Onboard those new clients with ease and build scalable systems for every new client
- 7) White-label & Outsource as much of the work as possible so you can focus on acquiring new clients and making money

Want to know the exact instructions to implement this strategy?

Great.

So let's get into the details.

This post is for 3 kinds of people...

- 1. For people who want to quit their job and start their own business
- 2. You've been an online marketer for a while and simply are not having success with your current path
- 3. You are somewhat experienced with this industry already but perhaps you are having a hard time scaling.

So now that we have that clarified are you ready to dive in?

Here we go...

This post is really for those that want to start a **real business**.

You will be helping businesses and companies grow with digital marketing & SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

An example of this might be getting a local Electrician to **rank at the top of Google**.

So when people are searching for an Electrician in their local area they show up at the top.

Business love this...

Why?

Because they get the bulk of the phone calls and job opportunities.

Did you know that this is literally a billion dollar industry?

Yup...

There are **endless numbers of businesses that need help** generating more leads and sales through the internet.

#### The best part?

You can charge a lot of money for these services.

People are more than willing to pay you top dollar for them.

Most services can be priced between \$500-1000 or more per month.

Pretty cool, huh?

#### What would having even 10 of these clients do for you?

Could you quit your current 9-5 job?

Would you be able to pay off debt?

Buy a bigger home?

Have more free time to travel and do the things you love?

#### Let me explain:

1. You will first need to develop a strategy for acquiring clients that you can charge for these services.

I typically like to go after local businesses

2. You will need to learn how master sales and how to close those clients on a monthly recurring service such as SEO.

Being a good salesmen is a very valuable skill and will **undoubtedly** be the most valuable of them all.

3. Next you will need to learn how to actually fulfill the work and develop a system for onboarding & reporting.

This way you can automate delivery and scale with ease.

4. Finally you will want to focus on outsourcing as much of the work as possible.

This will allow you to spend the bulk of your time back on #1 and #2, acquiring those clients and closing them.

Make sense so far?

#### The Process

In this post I'm going to share with you what I like to call:

# The Pay It Forward Method

This is the exact process I use to get business owners excited about working with me.

Getting that first client is always a hurdle...

But here is the thing..

Once you've accomplished this you will be beyond excited to keep going and getting more.

When I first started out doing this I tried a whole wide range of different things.

But..

I finally landed on The Pay It Forward method.

#### It looks like this..

It's a process that will always work and continue to be effective, 1, 5 or even 10+ years from now.

This involves helping a business owner with their business for free.

You will be offering a consultation or simple service without asking for anything in return.

That is the true definition of **Paying It Forward** 

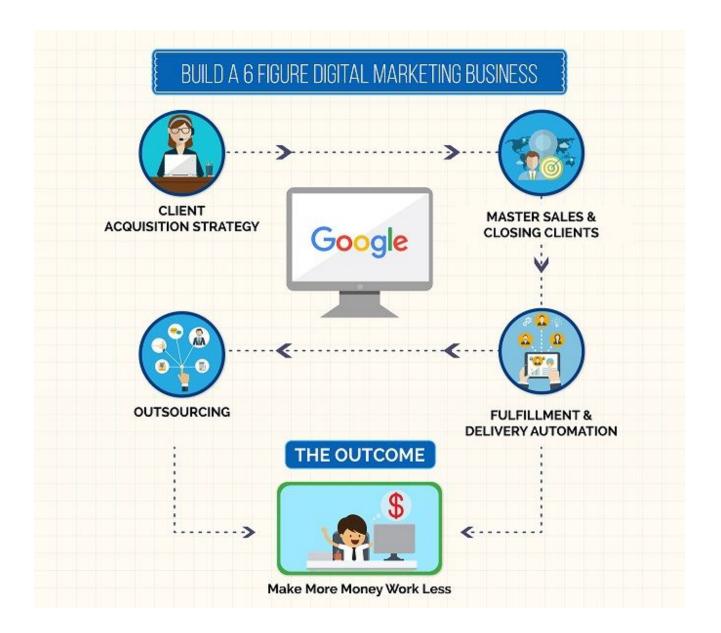
Following me so far?

After reading this post you will have all the tools and knowledge you need to go out and apply this method as well.

#### Sound good?

This plays a key part in the first 2 steps I mentioned above.

Here is a diagram that shows you again what that looks like visually:



## Step 1 – Finding Prospects:

The first step is actually finding businesses that **NEED** your help.

I'm going to keep it super simple in this post...

So as soon as you are done reading you can actually **take action** and apply this right away.

Sound like a good deal?

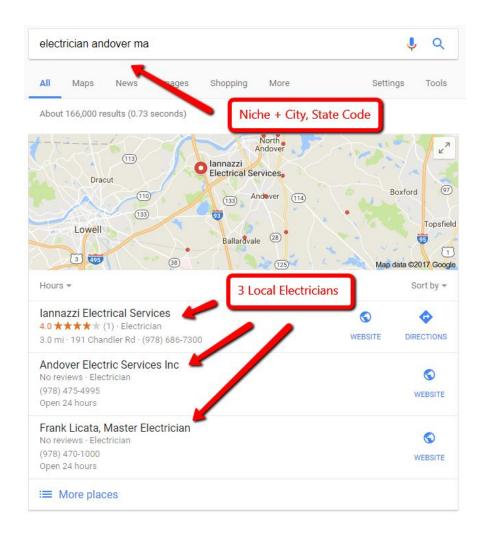
I like to go after local based businesses so that's what we are going to focus on.

The way to do this is come up with the niche you want to focus on and do some simple Google searching.

I'm going to use the local town of Andover in my area and go after Electricians.

I'm searching for "Electrician Andover, MA"

#### It looks like this:



Now let's just say I had moved to Andover, bought a new home and discovered some electrical work was needed.

I'm also brand new to the area so I don't particularly know anyone yet.

Which means no one is referring contractors to me.

#### Ok, so now what?

It is very likely the first thing you will do is head over to Google to search.

Most people will type in the exact same phrase, or possibly "Electrician Near Me"

Google will identify these businesses based on your geographic location and show them in the map area.

#### Make sense?

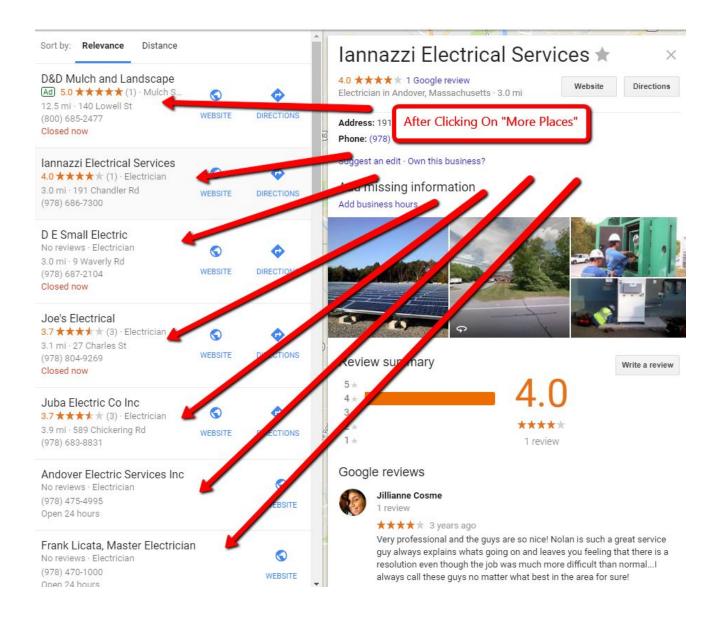
I don't have many reviews to go on based on these 3 results.

Iannazzi has 1 review but I also discovered the review is 3 years old.

Now at this point, as a person seeking help I'm either going to call them first and just call down the list till I can get someone.

I might even dig through the "More Places" results to find electricians with some reviews.

#### This what that looks like:



Going through these results further you can see Juba Electric Co Inc has 3 reviews but they also don't show up in the top 3.

#### Now within a matter of minutes I was able to discover a few things about Juba Electric:

• They are not in the top 3 map area which means less potential to get phone calls

- The website they have is not mobile friendly which is going to lead to a poor mobile experience
- They have a negative review which may turn away potential new customers
- The Google Business page is not 100% complete due to missing business hours

Now in terms of the services I could offer to this Electrician there are a combination of things just looking at these 4 areas.

This is where the work of the **Pay It Forward Method** comes into play.

Of those 4 things I discovered 2 of them are very simple to solve and require me to spend absolutely zero dollars.

Think about it...

- The Google My Business profile missing the business hours is a simple fix and requires less than 3 minutes of work.
- You can also use the Whitespark Review Handout Generator as a tool to help this business get more positive reviews.

I also like to create a <u>review link using the Google Maps API</u> to help them easily get more reviews from existing customers. Now you can see how quickly I discovered 2 very simple areas I can focus on helping this business with.

And get this..

#### I found this all within a few minutes of searching.

Pretty straightforward, huh?

You too can easily pick a niche, and focus on your own area.

I like to start with towns within a 15-20 mile radius of where I live.

#### Why?

This should give you more than enough businesses to seek out that might need your help.

Businesses also generally prefer to work with local people from my experience.

#### Here are some quick pointers on what to actually look for...

- Websites that are not mobile friendly and are outdated, use the mobile test tool to confirm
- Businesses that don't have a website at all (becoming less and less common)
- An incomplete Google My Business profile (you might see 'Own this business?' in the listing meaning it's unclaimed)

- Businesses not ranking high (top 3) in the map area
- Websites missing a <u>Facebook pixel for re-targeting</u> purposes –
   You can use <u>Facebook Pixel Helper</u> for Chrome for this
- Businesses with a poor reputation such as zero reviews or really bad ones

Still with me?

Cool

Here's what's next...

## Step 2 – Creating a Simple Video Offering Value

The best way to convey this information we've discovered is to show it to the business owner.

You must do it in such a way that **you are willing to go above** and beyond to help them.

Make sense?

Unfortunately there are many people who offer these same types of services.

They assume spam emails and automated phone calls to businesses are going to get them sales.

This simply does not work..

So unfortunately for us **most business owners have their guard up.** 

This is why it's absolutely critical you utilize The Pay It Forward Method to stand out from everyone else.

Is this making sense to you?

We are going to use a few tools to quickly and easily show them the problems we found.

You are going to do it in such a way that you are both discussing the good and the bad about your findings.

I do it in such a way that I come off as transparent but honest.

People resonate with that..

#### This is how I do it...

1. **Download** <u>Use Loom</u> for video recording.

This is free to use and will allow you quickly record a simple screen share video.

You can instantly share these videos after you are done recording.

Refer 3 people and you will get unlimited videos and recording time which I highly recommend doing.

2. **This is optional** but another simple "show off" you can do is to run a free scan over on Moz Local of their business.

This will find business listings that have duplicates or missing information.

These listings will be sites similar to Yelp or Yellowpages...

#### Why is this important?

The more of these listings they have....

And the more consistent they are...

The higher the chances of them actually ranking top 3 in the maps.

#### 3. Open the required browser tabs:

- Open the business website
- The mobile test tool I do this even if the website is mobile friendly and show them it's all set.

- Moz Local results
- The search you did to find them In my example 'Electrician Andover, MA'
- 4. Use Loom to record a quick 5-7 minute video explaining your findings.

Be genuine and talk about what is actually positive and what's not.

Mention if the website is mobile friendly.

Explain how they could be getting more phone calls if they ranked high in the maps.

Show them how you could help them get more reviews.

Easy, right?

Offer to jump on a phone call to discuss further.

You should also give them something that they can take action with based on what you talked about.

### Step 3 – The Follow Up

Ok

By this point you should be well on your way to creating short *video* audits and creating *helpful short videos*.

The purpose of these will be to show business owners **you actually** want to help them.

#### Make sense?

Now we are going to discuss the follow up.

This is so important...

If you miss it will mean that all the time you put into Step's 1 and 2 will be wasted.

Want to know one of the biggest mistakes I made when I started?

I spent a **TON** of time creating videos.

But here is the thing..

I was actually uploading them to YouTube before sending them out.

#### This is not good for several reasons:

- I didn't really know if they watched my video
- It took forever to process, upload and add the title to the video
- The amount of time I put into video uploading and production was making it harder to get motivated

Here is what I did to save tons of time...

With <u>Use Loom</u> you will get an email notification once your video is viewed.

The video is also uploaded instantly..

And you get the video URL copied to your clipboard for you.

Problems solved!

Good...

Now that I've saved you countless hours by using Loom how about that follow up process?

This is how I do it..

#### Here is my typical system for follow up:

1. Confirm before you even make your video that you have some way of actually sending it to the business owner.

This means you need to make sure you have an email address you can send it to.

This is super important..

Usually you can find the contact email on the "Contact Us" page of the website or somewhere in the header or footer area.

2. You are going to need a good email address for yourself that won't raise a red flag.

If you want the simple route just make something decent with Zoho

Mail for free.

3. Create a simple spreadsheet for tracking your outreach efforts.

Google Sheets will work just fine for this.

Once you really get going you might eventually want a solid CRM like Nutshell.

4. Craft a nicely designed email that simply let's the business owner know that you recorded a helpful video for them.

#### Simple, right?

Don't try to be sneaky or say anything strange.

Just be genuine and reach out with an honest tone.

It will be key to close the email with something along the lines of:

"If you liked what I mentioned in the video, when would you be available for a call to discuss further?"

Why, do this?

This is important because you are asking them to take action on getting in touch with you.

5. Use **Hubspot Sales** for free to track your email opens.

This way you will know if they actually opened your email or not.

Now at this point I might typically wait a day or so

If I don't get a reply I will take some extra initiative and *call the* business owner.

I know for many of you...

The idea of "cold calling" is pretty scary at first.

Most won't even want to follow up with that call.

#### But here is the thing..

This year I interviewed numerous 6 and 7 figure agency owners..

Yup..

I asked every single one "How did you get clients when you started?"

The #1 way they got all got sales is by simply picking up the phone.

But..

John, I don't want to cold call!

In my eyes, you are no longer in the position of cold calling.

You are actually calling with a unique angle you can use..

Let's consider it a "warm call".



#### All you have to do is ask if they received your email.

If they say no...

Just ask them to take a look and get back to you when they have some time.

#### Sound good?

If they push you for more information you can simply say:

"Well I sent you over a video with some information I thought you would find useful about your business"

You will want to keep the details light..

You want them to watch and understand what you **SHOW** them in the video.

Why?

This is what will ultimately get them interested in speaking further.

You may find you will have to express what exactly you said in the video.

It's not a big deal..

This may turn into a conversation about discussing it further or someone simply telling you "I'm not interested" which is fine.

#### The angle you need to absolutely remember..

I've actually had business owners tell me they were not interested.

But here is the thing...

When I offered to help them 100% for free they would ask me:

"What is it exactly that you do again?"

Which opens up the conversation to start a free consultation.

If you are willing to go that extra mile people will be receptive and open up to listening to you.

Make sense?

Here is what I recommend for a super simple freebie.

I'd suggest helping business owners with their Google My Business page listing.

Why?

It's so easy to fix or improve.

You are basically uploading some photos..

Fixing business hours..

Adding business categories..

And all of this can be done within mere minutes.

What about turning this "free help" into paid services?

# Step 4 – Creating Your Proposal For Paid Services

So let's say you've got your first "free consultation" client.

Awesome!

The idea by this point is that you've taken some time to show the business owner how you can help them.

You have also have taken the initiative to do something that will **benefit them**.

When I first started I used this as an opportunity to get *really good* at building simple WordPress websites.

This led to me getting paid for building them for local businesses.

I even bartered website design for common services!

Some examples included house painting, plumbing, and I even got a huge discount on my driveway re-paving!

Pretty sweet, right?

Eventually you can start up-selling your services.

Before you do that though...

You must absolutely make sure you have established some trust before you take this path.

Let's say you've taken the time to optimize a Google business page listing.

Possibly you even built a free website..

#### You now have established that trust.

So long as you did a good job and made the business owner happy.

You next step will be to create an amazing proposal so you can sell recurring services.

#### Here are some examples of those:

• Local Search Engine Optimization – \$500-1500/month or more

- Facebook Advertising \$500-1000/month or more
- Google Adwords Management \$300-3000/month or more
- Website Design \$500-3000 one time
- Website Hosting & Maintenance \$50-100/month

#### I highly recommend really specializing at first.

Why's that?

So you can get **really good** at understanding one of these specific services.

There are tons of ways you can help businesses with digital marketing and lead generation.

Just don't try to "do it all" right away.

At this point you should have at least 1 service in mind.

Don't worry, you may not know right away.

That's fine.

Just consider that the better you get at providing a specific service the more effective results you will get.

Are you ready for the next step?

Do you want to really "wow" your prospects?

You will need a solid proposal that you can use to seal the deal.

Want to customize your own proposal template?

Try using Google Slides.

It's super easy to use and perfect for this.

I also like <u>DocuSign for Chrome</u> so you can easily get signatures for your work.

### Step 5 – Closing The "Sale"

You've sent your proposal by this point.

It's quite possible days could go by without any sign of closing the deal.

Sucks, right?

I have tried a combination of things in regards to closing the deal and actually getting paid.

Here are the tips I suggest you follow during your phone call regarding paid services:

• **Listen** – Don't talk away on any form of sales call, just let them express their pains and frustrations

• **Ask Questions** – Based on the feedback you get during the initial "listen" phase you should spend some time asking questions that really "dig" into those pains..

You want to really let them express those frustrations.

Your objective is to give them a clear path on how **you will solve** them.

Make sense?

**Use Deadlines** – Sometimes having a hard deadline on making a decision will help.

This is the ultimate scarcity play and it works.

#### Here's how:

Tell them you are raising the price if a decision is not made by X.

You can also tell them you are going to work with someone else in that area instead if they don't work with you.

But..

Don't come across as rude doing this, be very casual about it.

• Results Speak For Themselves – Let's say you've now worked with other businesses for a bit. You are finally at a point where you've done some free consultations. And... This "free help" has allowed you to get some testimonials and positive results. You can use these to your advantage because now you have actual **proof** that you've done this for others. Make sense? The key here is to stay firm and don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Another very important mindset shift.. Don't be afraid to charge what you are worth I highly recommend checking out some books by Grant Cardone if you want to learn how to really enhance your sales skills. It won't happen overnight and likely will take a lot of practice. But..

Here is the thing..

The more time you spend prospecting and getting to this point..

The better you will get at it.

### Step 6 – Onboarding The New Clients

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You know how to get your first client..

And...

You've got a way to acquire more...

But now....

Your next step will be to onboard the clients.

This is where organization and process plays a critical role.

#### Why?

Because without it you'll waste time and potentially money..

This is how I do it...

Setup an account on <u>Trello</u>..

Create a simple step by step "to do list" for collecting customer information.

This might be getting access to everything you need..

Their website...

Google My Business...

Google Analytics...

And likely Google Search Console..

Ask the right questions to learn everything you can..

Who are their competitors?

What keywords do they want to rank for?

What are their goals?

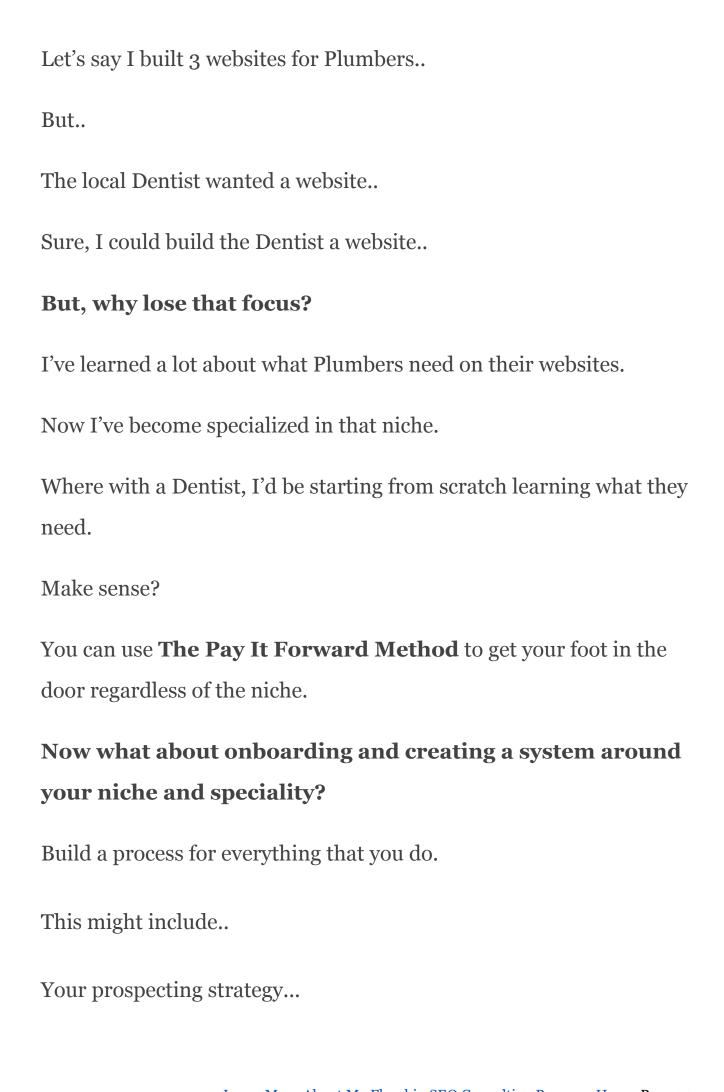
What have they done in the past?

Simple, right?

There are a couple of other key factors you need to consider at this point.

- 1. Who is your target customer
- 2. What is the process after I onboard them

Let's first clarify your target customer... Quick example.. I've decided to focus on Electricians and help them with Local SEO. Meaning... I'm only going to approach electricians that are currently not ranking in the Google maps top 3. You may have decided you want to do local SEO for HVAC companies and just focus on that. Put some real thought into the **NICHE** you want to work in. The key will be to get very specific about who your target market is. Why is this important? Well... Regardless of what niche and specialty service you are offering.. The more you help businesses in that niche... The more **SPECIFIC** your services become a benefit to them. This means you can easily continue to acquire new clients due to the proven results you've had in their niche.



Sending proposals... Onboarding your clients... Reporting... **EVERYTHING** I have a step by step Trello board I use for each and every new client I bring onboard. It gives me a 100% clear idea of exactly what I need to work **on** for the client. This helps me make sure I'm getting everything done for a Local SEO campaign.

Since you opted in to download this eBook you should get a copy of my Trello board in your email.

### Step 7 – Outsourcing

Outsourcing, what a beautiful word.

Sending video audits...

This is my favorite part of digital marketing and building a client based business.

Why?

Because there is always someone available to do the work on your behalf.

#### You can look at this a few different ways:

- **Option A:** You do 100% of the work yourself
- **Option B:** You outsource portions of the work and do other parts yourself
- **Option C:** You outsource 100% of the work to another company.

Option C is Generally considered "white-labeling"

This is where you hand off everything to another company.

I love this..

Why, you might ask?

They do all of the work and reporting.

This is by far my favorite of the 3 and it's currently what I do now.

You have to figure out what works best for you.

Option A is good initially for learning purposes and understanding as much as possible.

Having an understanding of what you provide is important.

Especially so you don't get ripped off trying to outsource...

Most people will start here depending on the services you provide.

You should always have a solid understanding of what it is you are selling.

Option B will allow you to scale...

It will likely earn you the most money...

And still gives you the time to focus on what matters...

This is sort of like a typical agency structure.

Let me explain...

You have a CEO with hired employees and everyone has specific roles working on specific things.

Pretty common company structure..

Your choice if you do this with..

Service providers..

Virtual assistants...

Or even decide to hire actual employees..

Option C will reduce the margins you make on your work.

Mostly all that's involved is...

- A phone call a month with each client to keep them updated
- Sending over reports letting them know about progress.

This is by far my favorite method as it means *I have zero* employees.

#### And get this...

I can 100% focus on sales and client acquisition!

The white-label company handles all of the work for me.

I also have the most freedom.

Awesome, right?

This also means I don't need to constantly be seeking out "what's working" in the world of SEO.

That is the outsourced companies responsibility

I can focus on selling and talking to existing clients.

Exciting stuff, right?

I will share with you one of my favorite vendors for outsourcing.

The Hoth has a wide range of packages available for just about anything you could need.

Yes..

They are more service based..

But..

They do great work and offer a great white-label solution for anyone looking to outsource SEO.

At this point you should already be feeling a lot more confident about going out and starting to position yourself as someone businesses will trust to hire for SEO work.

#### Let's do a quick recap on everything I've discussed so far:

- You know how to find business owners for prospecting by searching through the Google Map pack and discovering who needs help
- You know how to position yourself as unique and different from all of your competitors using the "Pay It Forward Method" by creating unique videos sharing some upfront value
- You know that follow up is key and you know how important it is for success (most marketers miss this important step)
- You know how to pitch local SEO services to business owners based on map pack issues or lack of visibility
- You have a lot more confidence selling SEO as a service
- You know the importance of a good onboarding process for each and every client
- You now understand that you don't have to know everything about SEO in order to sell it, you can simply outsource the work and focus on sales.

And there you have it!

You now have a complete overview of how to start an SEO consulting business from scratch.

Just like I promised, I literally gave you the complete overview of the system here and with enough detail for you to implement and succeed.

At this point you have 2 options...

You can take everything you learned here today and start applying it on your own and getting your first clients coming in.

This stuff works and its worked for hundreds of my students, so I'm confident that if you take action you <u>will</u> see results.

Or if you want the easier path where I basically do 97% of the work for you, then check out my <u>SEO Consulting Blueprint course.</u>

Inside we'll go even more into detail of what we covered today (more examples, more case studies, etc) as well as cover even more advanced strategies we didn't talk about here. Stuff I wouldn't dare share with the public cause its that good.

Now the content is great, but what's really special about this course is that I really do 97% of the work for you by providing you with all the systems, procedures, templates, scripts so you don't need to come up with them from scratch.

I have an entire vault with pre-recorded sales calls closing deals, interviews with agency owners, an entire 6 month SEO action plan and tons more real world case studies of how I use the "Pay It Forward Method".

In addition, you'll get **personalized support and coaching from me** and other students inside our Facebook group in case you ever get stuck.

I hold nothing back and I invite you to try it out 30 days risk free

Because I truly believe in "Paying It Forward" I'm actually going to provide you with another awesome bonus.

I call it my "Agency Template Pack"

#### This includes:

- -An example "Pay It Forward Method" audit video that landed me a \$750/month client
- -My email template for following up with your audit videos
- -My proposal template you can copy and modify
- -The high quality Infographic in full resolution

Grab the Agency Template Pack here.

Thanks for reading!

I hope this eBook has you motivated to get out there and start your own SEO & digital consulting business!

If you truly want to build a real business doing what I've shared with you, go ahead and pick up my <u>SEO Consulting Blueprint program</u> today.

Have questions for me? Reach out here.

#### - John Shea

