



EP 10

**Cleaning Marketing Chat
With John Clendenning**



Azhar Siddiqui: 0:00

Oh, welcome to another podcast. Everyone. My amazing guest is a fellow Canadian today, John Clendenning. I hope I got your last name right, John. Correct. Yeah, You know right now it is November and it gets pretty cold for us in Canada right about now. And John has been running an amazing digital marketing agency called the carpet cleaning marketing masters. I got that right to John.

John Clendenning: 0:27

Yep, carpet cleaner marketing masters. Yep.

Azhar Siddiqui: 0:31

And we're going to just walk through today just to ask a few questions to John on what led him to start out this digital marketing agency, what milestones he had to achieve to get to this point, and where he is with his current agency, and what's going on inside the agency and with himself as well. So welcome to the show, John.

John Clendenning: 0:55

Hey, thanks so much for having me. Appreciate it.

Azhar Siddiqui: 0:57

Awesome, man. So the first question that I have is that where are you with your digital marketing agency right now? What does it look like? If you don't mind sharing the number of clients you have, maybe even revenue and things like that for a person who's trying to start out a digital marketing agency right now?

John Clendenning: 1:17

Yep. Yeah, so our agency we're sitting right around 32 to 34 clients. It's a little vague, because some people are on sort of old lower tier things and stuff like that. But so we started as a general digital marketing agency. And just as a side hustle more than anything else, I've been in the cleaning industry since well, since high school, I did a business thesis in grade 12 or 13 on setting up a business and partner and I were doing it started with window cleaning, wrote a whole entire business proposal took it to the bank, which was part of the project. And unbeknownst to us, the banker gave us the money, thought it was brilliant, never seen anything like it. And that summer, instead of going off and planting trees and all the different things that Canadians do back in the day to make money. We opened a window cleaning business because we had money for vans and ladders, and all that stuff. And spent a couple years at that and then it grew from there. And I opened up franchises I've bought and sold cleaning businesses, and all that kind stuff over my 30 year journey. And somewhere yeah, and somewhere in that I realized that in franchise and everything else, the most important thing as a business owner is to be the hat that you have to wear the most is to be the marketer or understand the marketing of the business. So I invested well over \$100,000. The list is long since it's on an Excel spreadsheet, long since eclipsed \$100,000 of just personal development in marketing and business and all that just to be better at what I was doing. And it kind of stood out and I used to get other friends in the industry, carpet cleaners, stuff like that, starting to ask me, you know, for help and advice on Yellow Page ads in the mid 2000s, and things like that. And that grew into a bit of a consultancy that started speaking at the Chamber of Commerce. We had a recession, we came out of the recession and realized that a lot of the physical marketing and the yellow pages and things like that didn't work as well anymore. And people had left and gone somewhere else.





And we figured out obviously they went online everybody started buying tablets and computers and and technology took off 2008 910 11 So we started getting really I got really good at that for our own company got rid of the franchise website and built our own that was actually built around you know, authority and personality and things like that. And that started working well just like we did with the yellow page ads. Put your face in the ad and put a guarantee on it. Don't worry about your name, that's the least important thing, it's all that stuff. So anyways that grew out to this became a digital marketing you see those a generalist agency and then decided to specialize is a good friend of ours Josh Nelson had a good chat with me a few years ago and said, John, why are you doing everything for everybody and you know, working with you know, plumbers and chiropractors and all that kind of stuff when you know the cleaning industry inside out backwards. And that you name that became carpet cleaner marketing masters. And so yeah, that's the journey where we're roughly around about half a million a year right now and growing. I sold my final brick and mortar service business just this few months ago. Um, and so that 's you know, I've built a team of seven employees that we work with virtual assistants and all of that for over the last number of years. And yeah, it's just adding, you know, we're adding more tools and more stuff and more value to our clients. Now that it's 100% of the focus, and I don't have technicians coming in and out of the office all day long.

Azhar Siddiqui: 4:56

That's an amazing man. Such an amazing journey. You spent 30 years in the industry, and sometimes the answer is right in front of us. You know, sometimes you need that person to knock some sense in you. And same thing happened with me as well, you know, 13 years inside of digital marketing agency, just, you know, the goal was to conquer the city, I'm in Calgary, and little that I knew that, you know, you don't have to kind of dominate the entire city, the entire western, you know, that the Canadian and the US markets are open to us. And so I guess, you know, how long has it been since you started the digital marketing agency.

John Clendenning: 5:37

So 2013 was the first website we ever or I ever built, I learned how to build on self taught on WordPress and started with that, and quickly jumped into Reputation Marketing, realize that the most important thing in a service business is trust, and reviews and reputation before anybody was even talking about it was like, hey, that's where everybody's gonna go. So I ended up doing Chamber of Commerce presentations every month, here and in our area, just teaching those, the director of the Chamber of Commerce said, John, you need to sell your message every single month to people just all different niches and industries that they pulled together, because he got the vision that this was going to be huge. And you know, fast forward to 2021. And we all know that, you know, reviews and reputation are one of the most important conversion principles. That was our first entry into digital marketing in 2013. We were actually doing that teaching that and setting up tools that allowed people to get feedback and reviews a lot easier than just trying to, you know, wing it.

Azhar Siddiqui: 6:42

Nice. So from 2013. When was the time when you decided to call Josh Nelson out and try to invest in a coaching service like the seven figure agency.

John Clendenning: 6:54

Yeah, so it's funny. So we actually met Josh and I actually met, I don't think he remembers it. But at an event in 2013, I flew into Denver, I think it was and went to an event and he was there. And I met Joe Troyer and a bunch of the guys that were like, it was just a really cool event. And I don't know if that was the impetus or something,





but about this time of the year in 2019, he reached out to me and said, Hey, how are things going with your agency and all of those kinds of questions, and we hopped on a phone call. And by February of 20, maybe 2018. Because by February 2019, I flew down to Miami and sat in on one of the three day sessions and joined that coaching program realized it was a great group of guys and been there ever since.

Azhar Siddiqui: 7:46

Awesome. So like, what would you recommend to someone who's maybe inside their digital marketing agency journey right now maybe struggling to invest in a coaching service? Because it looks like that, you know, things started moving forward for you. As soon as you came into the seven figure agency with Josh Nelson, like, what would your recommendation be?

John Clendenning: 8:08

Yeah, but yeah, I've always had business coaches and been in different parts of different programs, Dan Kennedy, Glaser, Kennedy gkc. I see all that kind of stuff. And yeah, I've and the best one I've ever been in a seven figure agency by far, but it's, it's the caliber of the people that are brought in. It is that mastermind effect that Napoleon Hill talked about. And all of that it's you can't like the mastermind effect is compounding. If you've got two people sitting in a room and talking, there's almost a third mind created because you're bantering ideas that are unique. When you get 20 people in a room, it's even amplified even more than that. So it's not only having somebody who's in the industry day in and day out digital marketing, like Josh doing his work, and going, Hey, this isn't working for me, this isn't working for me and sharing and building tools. It's the rest of us, it's meeting people like you, it's meeting all the different members, and at different stages of growth. And you know, you can have a problem that's keeping you up at night, you don't know how to solve it and to somebody else that was so five years ago. And now here's the answer, just do this. So

Azhar Siddiqui: 9:10

Yeah, I was just listening to a podcast, John, Josh Nelson dead with Nick. And Nick used a really cool terminology that, you know, all of us digital marketing agency owners come into this group, and we're not really competitors to each other. We're like running buddies, right? Like everybody's on their own journey. They usually have their niches carved out already. So you know, people can help from one niche to the other, and you know, it's not competition. It's its niche. And then for anyone who's listening, it's such a cool thing to, you know, be a part of a coaching program. And then if you can find a coaching program within your industry, which I think a seven figure agency is part of and John is a part of it as well. I think that just shortens your journey to getting to that. You know, Whatever milestone that is whether you want to grow in terms of people or in terms of revenue and things like that, so that's amazing. Do you mind sharing like, your 30? Some clients right now? How are they spread out? Are they mostly in Canada? Or are they spread out in the US as well,

John Clendenning: 10:19

Mostly in the US, actually. So, um, so back before seven figure agency and stuff like that, I being in the carpet cleaning industry being in a franchise and I think I was able to become a preferred vendor, to a franchise, one of the franchise and present at their convention, and then became a regular presenter and stuff like that. And that, you know, so that was in the US. And then on the island of Samoa, they flew me in for a three day elite retreat to teach some of the high end operators how to run their business and stuff like that, like their experience and their marketing and their things like that, that I was good at. And that was the very first sort of from having random clients just because, or whatever to actually, you know, that was the first 15 or 20. Clients came out of like, one





weekend, an event. Way back when? And then And yeah, so most of them were us, most of our clients are us, we have maybe about 20% of our clients are Canadian, and the rest are all US based.

Azhar Siddiqui: 11:23

Yeah, same here for us. A few of our clients are in Canada, and the majority of them are spread out over the US and as Canadians I guess, so we don't mind getting paid in the US dollars. Exactly. Right. That's an added benefit for sure. So know that. That's very exciting. And then yeah, this organization, you were just talking about? How important is this to find an organization within your niche and looks like that had a huge impact on your business? Are you still part of such organizations? And is this something that you actively seek out?

John Clendenning: 12:01

Yeah, so the model changed slightly. Um, so franchises are good and bad, like organizations, trade groups, associations, by all means. Yeah. And in the carpet cleaning industry, there's a few, but they're a little more scattered than some other industries. But franchises are good and bad. Because on the good side, there are usually a lot of great operators. And that I think, on the bad side, the franchisor typically has a direction they want to go they want vendors to be, give them a break in price, more services, less cost than the general public gets or maybe even exclusivity to their franchise and things like that. So it is a relationship game. And if the person that you have that relationship with, the franchise head office changes, they get promoted and somebody else's in and you don't have that relationship. It's no different than having all your eggs in one basket, it can become a challenge. So do we still work in the franchise's that we do? Yes, but not as prominently as we did before because they brought in other vendors now all this works, let's bring in some other guys. And they'll bring in some major Fortune 500, boilerplate digital agencies as well. And then with all of their money and their booths that are, you know, \$10,000 booths to our \$2,000 booth and things like that. And it just changes the game a little bit but yeah, I mean, it's good to get into those and get your feet wet. But I really think the associations for most industries if you're targeting a niche industry, which you should the association if it's a good one, definitely do everything you can to be involved in that and give away free value, do free training and just become known and prominent and become an authority in that space.

Azhar Siddiqui: 13:39

Yeah, that's a great point John, like seeking out your industry associations you know, whether you're just starting out or you've been in the game and reaching out to these people and you know, becoming a speaker and they're providing free value that just you know, trickles in over time and you know, brings in a whole bunch of qualified people coming to you preposition to buy so amazing tip there. What's your current marketing setup? Like how are you pulling in customers at the moment like what are the things that you're doing so that these people come in and they're ready to go through the sales process?

John Clendenning: 14:18

Yeah, so um, we spend a lot of time and effort on giving away free stuff and being an authority so from free trainings and webinars and podcasts and reports and things like that we do a lot of like we've got a right now on Facebook we're running just an ad a paid ad to give away a free Google My Business guide it's 87 pages it's everything a carpet cleaner needs to know to set up their Google My Business Exactly. And they got the offer to jump on a strategy call with me, which generates, again, people calling whether they ever want to work with us or not. Our team will spend a couple of hours researching their competition and build an entire system. Step by step plan from where they are to where they want to go. They speak to our marketing assistant, which is one of





our reps back employees. And they speak to our marketing assistant first and she gets all the details. And then they come on, our team does the work and they come on a call with me, and I'll walk through an entire plan for them for free. I normally charge 500 bucks an hour for my consulting when I'm hired for that. And that's free for these people who have come through, maybe downloaded the report, or one of our free training or tools, watched a webinar and said, hey, you know what, I want to learn more, we'll do that for free. And we'll give them the step whether we're, they're ready for us or we're ready, or we're the right fit for them or not. We do that and yeah, that helps us it's more about just giving and the right people will find us, um, and that kind of thing. So it's just, that's the type of outreach, we do less outreach on just direct ads to say, hey, you know, where your digital marketing is more about, hey, here's, here's something you can do to improve your business. If you want 20 more ideas, hop on a call?

Azhar Siddiqui: 16:03

Yeah, I think kind of like eating your own dog food there where you know, where we're marketing agencies, and we can do a good job in pulling in our customers to us, you know, that kind of does subliminal things for our prospects. And the other thing that you just pointed out was in the strategy session, and you know, that strategy session is worth something to them. So even if they don't become a customer, it's still like, you know, if it's an hour long strategy session with your prospect, you know, they get a \$500 value out of it as well. So even though they may or may not join this, but you know, they walk away with something tangible, which is, you know, your 30 God knows how long have decades of experience now, yeah, not trying to put an age to that face. But, yeah, that's definitely a huge value. And that's what a strategy session does, that somebody walks out with some information or something tangible, that they can use, either decide to work with the company that is doing the strategy session, or, you know, try to do it themselves. So that's great. So like, this is marketing, and it looks mostly is inbound, you're building out these funnels, and you're pulling these people in, they're booking these strategy sessions with you. And then from there, we move them into the sales process. So what does that look like for you? And how is your team set up for that?

John Clendenning: 17:31

Yeah, so I get a lot of that's handled by the marketing assistant from RepStack. And so it's yeah, it's, there's usually a lot of communication and chatting with them ahead of time, and then then a discovery call of some sort with them. And then onto my calendar, and if it's a good fit, and an obvious fit, we know that by the end of the call, it's like, yeah, I need your services, let's get this done. And that happens, you know, quite often, because it's just they're ready to take it to the next level, we've got packages that fit through, you know, where they are in their business growth.

Azhar Siddiqui: 18:02

So just maybe starting to catch up John, like, maybe just walk me through what packages you have set up, like, you may have, I don't know, like 235 different packages, or how do?

John Clendenning: 18:13

We keep it simple, we got three packages. So we got a base level one that is sort of just I'm helping them with lead nurturing, and stuff like that. It's so our, our lead funnel inputs for them ways to communicate with their leads, chat to text, things like that. So it's a very sort of high tech, low involvement on our end sort of place to say, hey, you've, you're out there in the world, here's some things you can do on your own, but have them all come into this nurturing funnel and make it work. So that's carpet cleaner. Lead Pro is the name of our tool that





we build. And all of the technology that's built around that it brings in their leads from Google and Facebook, and everywhere else, their website, all of it, and it communicates with them automatically. And then they can jump into a text conversation or email conversation or phone conversation right from there. Our main level program, our central packages, we call it, that's where we actually build up their website, personalize it, make it really sticky, make it high conversion. So that you know anybody who makes it to their website wants to work with that company. And then we do all of their organic ranking. So they start showing up in their communities and surrounding communities. We help them move up in the maps listings. And we'll do one of their paid ads as well, whether it's Google or Facebook, that's our main package. That's every service business carpet cleaner, others need to have a bunch of these pieces to work in, they can't just be a lead service and that's it. They can't just be buying leads because as soon as that tap turns off, they're out of business again, so you need to be building a presence in your marketplace. And then we've got our market Dominator package. That's the third one and that's where it's like we're doing the client emails every month and database marketing as well. We get them into doing video marketing, teach them how to do short little videos. to the marketplace to help and teach and become the local authority not sell, just kinda like what we do help and teach your marketplace and you become the guy. And then you can raise your prices, you become the most, you know, premium operator, the most referred to the most reviews, you've got all of that in place. And then when you're ready, you bundle it all up and sell it for three times what anybody else is getting for their business just like I did a few months ago.

Azhar Siddiqui: 20:23

Awesome. And what are these packages priced out at?

John Clendenning: 20:27

Yep,so the base level one, it depends on a couple different services, but it usually runs between three and 500 bucks, there's a couple of add ons that they can do just for that automation software that lead nurturing and pulling all of those things into one place. And then we create all of those campaigns and personalize them with the business. Our middle package, our Essentials one is \$1,200 a month. And that's literally everything in the kitchen sink for way too cheap. But it fits if we know that I've been a carpet cleaner and owned these businesses for, you know, 30 years and stuff like that. I understand sort of the mindset of a one or two truck three truck operation and where the marketing that we're talking about fits in. And then there's an ad spend on top of that, if they want to do paid ads, but we always recommend it. And then the market Dominator package sits just over \$2,000. And it's it allows them to have a bunch of those other services again, so we always say, keep in mind of your numbers where you want to grow next year, if you're a \$200,000 a year company, that's usually one to one and a half trucks at the most I plan to put 20% \$40,000 into your marketing so that you can be a 300 to \$400,000 company next year. And if you're three to \$4,000, put 20% in that 60 grand, and off towards your marketing, we're only a small part of that. But put that in, that's how you grow and scale a company. If you try and keep it at five or 10% of your revenue, going to marketing, you'll never grow, you'll just be doing the same thing you're doing now 20 years from now.

Azhar Siddiqui: 21:54

Amazing. So having these packages, and you've kind of bundled them around the niche that you have you understand the niche inside out, you got a nice entry level package. And then you know your other packages go up in price from there for people who want to grow or who are already in that situation. And I guess your strategy sessions come into play over here where you're asking all these understanding questions and figuring out where





this person is. So like, at the end of the day, are you closing the deals yourself or somebody else helping you out.

John Clendenning: 22:26

No, I am still the because the strategy sessions are so to me, so personalized, I couldn't see handing that off to a salesperson who wouldn't be consulting, I prefer to consult than sell. So yeah, I want to be on all of those calls. Because I want to find out Yeah, like, you know, Hey, your third generation your data, you know, the business has been up and down over the years, what are you currently doing? What's working? What's not working? Okay, what did you do in the past that work that you just stopped doing? For no reason? You know, we that that's that you need an intuitive sense of that, and I can't see handing that off to somebody anytime soon.

Azhar Siddiqui: 22:58

Yeah, and that's, that's such an important part. And, you know, this is another thing that I was just learning today is that, you know, during your sales process, like, you know, you you dig a little bit deeper, you know, when you go into that family business, like you just said that, you know, ask those questions, and now all of a sudden, you're at a very different level of understanding of this client, then, you know, any other marketing agency would be and the report that you would have an I imagine that, you know, once everything is qualified, and if the person has the money, it would be a pretty straightforward sell for you from there on.

John Clendenning: 23:34

Even the ones that don't have the money. If they're going like, hey, my business is way too small. Thank you for taking your time like, I will take the time still talk to those people and help them because we've had them come back a year from now I'll give them a strategy that saying, Hey, here's the dollar level, you need to get to it might even be a side hustle, we've had some guys that, you know, they're their carpet cleaning business is a side hustle, and they want to get rid of their day job and they're doing it, you know, because they have, you know, they've done work at noon or whatever, they've got noon to the end of the day and weekends to do their their cleaning. That's not an ideal customer for us. But I'll still spend time with them and say, Hey, I fully understand the struggle. Here's what you got to do, grassroots from here to here, I'll send you a list of stuff. I'll give you some suggestions, check in with me in a month or two and tell me how far along your journey is. But I want you to have not just a spare \$1,200 I want to have a spare \$2,000. So you could put about \$800 into ADS ad spend as well. And when you've got that built on the side, we can now start doubling and tripling your lead flow. And you will know not only to be just the guy in the truck, you're going to want us to set up a whole hiring funnel to teach you how to hire good employees because you're going to need a second truck and a third truck on the road because you're now in the game.

Azhar Siddiqui: 24:42

Yeah, no, that's an amazing man who loves the process. Love the things that you've set up. My final question for you is, you know, you've walked us through your marketing, you walked us through your sales process, and I'm assuming that you know all these 30 Plus clients that you have right now, you're not taking care of Their fulfilment or their day to day? Or are they still able to just pick up the phone and just call you at any hour of the night? Or how is that process set up for account management?





John Clendenning: 25:11

Exactly. So my very first learning what the term VA was in hiring a VA was, I was trying to go back and figure out, it was either 2013 or 2014. And Chris Christian is still with us to this day. And he was just I, no clue. And he was a young kid and overseas, and he's now been with the company for like, seven, eight years, and handed all kinds of stuff off to him and training and all that kind stuff, and then realize the importance of that really early on, and I've gone through like, you know, people on up work and, and those kinds of things for small projects and had different members of the teams that are either full time or part time and things like that. But yeah, we've really like, especially in the last couple of years, especially with carpet cleaner marketing masters specifically, it's it's been about hiring great quality people, teaching them our mission, teaching them our plan, why we're helping our clients the way we do, we have a help desk setup on Zen Desk that is monitored by everybody else, but me, I'm the worst person to be to be involved in those kinds of things. I don't want people texting me and message me, because I will not get back to them in a timely manner. I'd rather the team get back to them and say, John, I just put somebody on your calendar, go talk to them. Here's what it's all about. Because yeah, the team is empowered to do what they need to do to help the client and our customers first.

Azhar Siddiqui: 26:42

Yeah, usually, as digital marketing agency owners, we think that we can do all of these things, and nobody else can take care of our clients the way we want them to. Yeah, you know, you'd be surprised. And I've seen this over and over again, in agencies where, you know, once they start setting up their operations and their client fulfillments, and their account managers, it's so much easier, these guys are trained to do these things. And they can usually do it a lot better than we can. So we stopped dropping balls. So this is amazing, John, your final advice for any agency owner out there: one thing that they can do to improve their business from where they are? To really start scaling it at a massive level? What would that be?

John Clendenning: 27:26

That would be um, learn to develop really great SOPs, just learn it's a skill, like anything else, you suck at it at first, but get really good at documenting your process, whether you're just going to use screen capture images and loom videos, and then just type it out. But anytime you're doing anything, you're you're you're setting up a Google ad, you're you're setting up Google Analytics on a client site, you just document each individual step you do, and and start handing those off and finding if it doesn't work, where was the glitch handed and then so handing those off to somebody else to do for you. Because that's all that low value tasks to hand off. And then the next transition from there is to train and teach your people that you've hired now to develop their own SOPs. And all you're doing from that point forward is just reviewing SOPs, watching them use it, and say, Okay, you built a new one, but let's spend an hour half an hour however long it takes and let's watch you go through step by step, open it and make sure it's easy enough for a five year old or a grade five person to to walk through and do. And if you've got that and you've got a database of hundreds of SOPs, then you've got a machine, you've got a franchise you don't you're not running the you're not the business is not running you anymore, you're actually running the business.

Azhar Siddiqui: 28:45

Excellent. And you kind of just like what you said, you just eliminate yourself. And now your job is to be at the higher level strategizing, building out these SOPs for your teams to come in and just, you know, follow through these SOPs and if something needs tweaking, you just fix that SOP. And the problem gets solved automatically. Amazing. John, this has been really great talk, man, I really appreciate you taking your time out from your busy





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schedule, giving us the time, we'll make sure that we get this on all the channels that were part of and advertise this as much as possible, but I really, really appreciate it. Thanks for your time, John.

John Clendenning: 29:28

Hey, well, thanks for having me. I really appreciate it. Thanks a lot.

