

## Strategic Branding and Marketing for Entrepreneurs



**Derek Weber - CEO**

### **About goBRANDgo!!**

No Entrepreneur should have their world constrained by anything other than the size of their idea or the depth of their passion. With youthful enthusiasm, we pay forward the wisdom of our experiences to our fellow entrepreneurs. We bring empowering innovation and imagination to the undercapitalized underdogs; the overworked overachievers. We shift with the landscape of the future, refusing to be static; pursuing efficiency and effectiveness in every endeavor, no matter its size. We communicate with transparency in order to build trust and an environment where new ideas are encouraged to thrive. Our standards promote the true American Dream. We are coaches, we are mentors, we are inventors, we are educators; we are a team of unique and talented individuals united by an innate calling to add fuel to the fire of the Entrepreneurial Revolution. We create opportunities when all seems lost. We provide confidence when faith begins to falter. We illuminate the path towards making a positive impact.

**Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO: Mr. Weber, your goBRANDgo!! website indicates that you empowerize entrepreneurs. Could you explain please?**

**Mr. Weber:** What goBRANDgo! is all about is helping awesome companies who work with awesome people do more awesome things...awesomer. What it really comes down to is we want to provide entrepreneurs with the tools they need to do what they need to do, along with the energy, excitement and motivation to do the things that they know that they need to do. It is not good enough to get somebody all riled up, excited and motivated but then not provide all the tools and guidance they need to succeed. What we really try to do is bring smart, simple solutions to complex business problems.

**CEOCFO: I would think that entrepreneurs would be quite motivated. At some point, is it motivating them to do the things they need to rather than the things they enjoy in the process?**

**Mr. Weber:** We are not working with startups; we are working with companies between \$10 million and \$50 million in revenue. We are working with established companies where often times as you grow your business early on you take on anything and everything that is going to make a buck. Over the course of time, once you achieve a certain level of success, you have to start focusing on what you are best at, figuring out who are your highest performing ideal clients, and how you can focus on getting more of them.

From the motivation side, many times it is showing them the benefits of making very tough decisions that may disrupt their status quo. It is hard to say no to a potential prospect that is willing to give you money, but if it is somebody who is not in your ideal client segment, maybe you should. Not every revenue dollar is created equal.

From a marketing perspective, then really super finally focusing on getting more of those types of companies. Sometimes that means saying no to the other opportunities and staying focused. I know I am saying the word focus a lot, but that is one thing that entrepreneurs all struggle with because we all fall victim to that shiny object syndrome on occasion and we always want to solve problems and create solutions. Sometimes the best solution that you can come up with is deciding what not to do.

**CEOCFO: When you are talking with a prospective client, is there an aha moment when they realize you are doing more than executive coaching?**

**Mr. Weber:** Much of what we do is cloaked in marketing, but marketing touches every aspect of your business. The traditional four P definition of marketing is pretty all-encompassing of the business. It reaches into every area. When we are talking about the solutions that we are going to bring to our customers, we put it in their terms in ways that they can understand and solve their goals.

When work with our clients much the same way as wealth managers do. When you meet with your investment adviser, they ask you what your goals, aspirations, what you are trying to accomplish, and how much you can invest. It is kind of the same thing with us with your business. What are your goals, aspirations, what are you trying to accomplish and how much can you invest in marketing? Your investment adviser will take your investments, and they will create a diversified portfolio. They create an individual investment strategy based on what your specific goals are, and they will put you in different investment vehicles, stock bonds, high-growth investment, etc.

It is the same thing with marketing, but we look at it from a sales funnel perspective. Lead generation, the prospect conversion, client engagement, retention, and referrals. What we want to do is look at what the best way is to diversify your marketing budget throughout your sales funnel in order to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of that sales funnel by focusing on two things: 1) get them more at bats in front of the right type of clients-generate more leads 2) increase their batting average- closing at a higher rate.

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**CEOFCO: *How do you distinguish between what a client thinks they want, what they say they want and what they really want?***

**Mr. Weber:** Often times in any business, and with any solution, people will talk about the symptoms. When you go to your doctor, you are going to tell them what hurts and what does not feel good, and it is up to the doctor to diagnose what that means. You are going to go to the orthopedic and say your knee hurts, and the doctors are going to do MRIs and exercises in order to see if it is a torn ACL or if it is just a sprain or whatever it may be. It is the same thing when we are talking with our clients. They may say they need a new website because their website is old and dated, and that may be the case, but what we are really after and what we really want to find out is what are you trying to accomplish with your site that you currently fall short on. If we see they are really trying to drive new business, then we talk about how a website is a tool to help you drive new business and a tool to help create client engagement or prospecting engagement. Realistically, you need to take a one level up view of it and see that there are actually a lot more things involved than just this one little deliverable. It is about how your company is perceived, and how you share your brand story in a way that is engaging and compelling.

**CEOFCO: *Are there particular types of companies that are more likely to turn to goBRANDgo!?***

**Mr. Weber:** We have had a ton of success in two main areas and highly regulated companies like financial services, wealth managers, broker/dealers, banks and specialty medical companies like orthopedic offices, Low T clinics, Lasik eye surgeons, etc. We have had a ton of success because of the complex marketing challenges these companies have to overcome, and we are really good at working backwards from a problem and creating a really effective solution. Most marketing companies are scared of navigating the regulations, but that is something that we are excited by. It is a logic problem that is fun to figure out for customers.

**CEOFCO: *How do you reach prospective clients?***

**Mr. Weber:** We get a lot of referrals within the niche markets we serve from other people that are in their space. We are heavily involved in many entrepreneurial organizations, and my business partner and I are on the board of several groups that are in those spaces. We generate leads through our website and our own marketing initiatives, so we practice what we preach in many ways.

**CEOFCO: *What is your geographic range?***

**Mr. Weber:** We are based in St. Louis, Missouri, and because we are predominantly referral based, we probably have about 75 percent of our business here in St. Louis. We are scattered wherever the referrals take us, so we have a couple customers in California, a couple in Minnesota, Texas, New York and even the Virgin Islands. We have 25 percent of our business scattered throughout the country.

**CEOFCO: *Was it a decision to go into the industries you are or did it develop opportunistically?***

**Mr. Weber:** We have traditionally gone after and been industry agnostic, but what we found is that success leads to success. We have been very successful in working with our clients in the financial and specialty medical space, which

leads to more referrals and more opportunities to get even better and have more success. It has really been a focus born out of the successes that we have had with our previous clients.

**CEOCFO: *What might be a standard engagement and something a little bit more outside the box for you?***

**Mr. Weber:** Our business is split into creative and strategy. We design and build amazing websites...our creative team is extremely talented. Then we have our strategy side which essentially serves as the outsourced marketing department for our clients. So, a standard engagement is developing a compelling brand messaging, identifying the ideal client profile, building a website that speaks to those folks, and then creating ongoing marketing strategies with tracking mechanisms on everything that allows us to really see exactly what is and is not working.

**CEOCFO: *Do you find that most companies are unaware of who their best customers are and where they should be focused? Is it typically an eye opener when you come in and do an assessment?***

**Mr. Weber:** It is pretty common that they will think all of them are the best, which is not possible, or that they may have a misconception on which one is the best. This is where our customer performance exercise is so important because often times we rank who are "best customer" is by who has written us the most checks. The highest revenue is not always the best client. Sometimes they are the ones that proportionally require a lot more hand holding and they expect a lot more. They could be extremely difficult; their payment terms may be unfriendly, etc. There are many of variables that can be involved, and a many times people get trapped into the cycle of the ever growing monster client, the one that is soaking up more and more of the resources and all of a sudden they are making up over 50 percent of their companies revenue. That is a really unsafe and scary place to be when one customer is making up over half of your revenue because you are one phone call away from potentially being out of business and having a major bad day.

**CEOCFO: *What might be different a year or two down the line for goBRANDgo!?***

**Mr. Weber:** This is an exciting time to be in marketing because literally everything we do is changing on an almost daily basis. From the tools to the platforms to the vehicles, everything is completely in flux. What will not change is the importance of being able to effectively tell the story of the brand and the benefits that it brings to its customers. What is not going to change is being able to clearly communicate what makes you different from the competition. As long as we are flexible and adaptive with the tools and techniques that it takes to get the story of our customers in front of their prospects, then we will be alright.

**CEOCFO: *What surprised you as you have grown and developed goBRANDgo!?***

**Mr. Weber:** You never know what is behind doors number one, two and three, so it is one of those things where you really never know what is waiting around the corner for you. You make decisions with all the information you have at the time, but you never know if it is the right decision or not. For example, for the previous several years, from about 2010 to about 2012 and 2013, we were focused on building ourselves into a one-stop shop of creative shop for entrepreneurs. Once we started see the trends go toward to specializing because of the rate of change, we saw that our real benefit would not necessarily be the one-stop shop, but instead would be the quarterback, to be the one that knew who to use for each of the strategies and tactics that we need to do and for us to focus on what we do best and what we enjoy doing the most. What has surprised me is really the sheer power of focus. When you really buckle down on what you do best as a company or individual and focus on your unique ability and what is the best and most valuable use of your time the results can be staggering. The power that that has both from the enjoyment you will have in your day-to-day life as well as the results that you are going to produce for your clients and the type of environment that you are going to produce for your employees.

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**BIO:** Derek Weber is the Founder/CEO of goBRANDgo!!, a strategic branding and marketing firm for \$10M-\$50M entrepreneurs. Positioned as the champion of the everyday entrepreneur, Derek and his company help established entrepreneurs grow their businesses through branding and marketing and help aspiring entrepreneurs through speaking, writing, and mentoring.

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