

Full-Service Digital Marketing Agency providing SEO, Pay-per-Click, Content and Social Media Marketing for Big and Small Businesses in the B2B, B2C, and eCommerce Industries



Bryan Phelps
Founder & CEO
Big Leap LLC

“There are many touchpoints that happen in a customer’s journey, so the companies that we have seen be successful with online marketing are taking a holistic approach and are taking advantage of all of those online channels.”- Bryan Phelps

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CEOCFO: Mr. Phelps, would you tell us the vision when you founded the company in 2008?

Mr. Phelps: The company back in 2008 was a little different than it is today. It was the same kind of industry, but I was working solo and doing some consulting with various companies. The thing that kept surfacing was that many of the companies we work with needed more help outside of their internal teams. They wanted an agency with the resources and expertise like Big Leap has, to help them. As we saw that need continue to pop up, we expanded our team to a full-service agency to solve the issues that we felt other agencies were not successfully addressing. We sought to correct those issues and have been successful. Today the agency offers services like SEO, PPC (pay per click), content marketing and social media. We have about thirty-five experienced people here on our team and that is where the company is today.

CEOCFO: Why is the holistic approach successful for you?

Mr. Phelps: With digital marketing especially, more and more we see is that it is very rare that any customer of a business only interacts in one way. For example, if you were looking for a local business, you may search for that on Google and find a business. But from there, you can go to their website, do some more online research, look at their reviews and local listings, look at their social media channels. There are many touchpoints that happen in a customer’s journey, so the companies that

we have seen be successful with online marketing are taking a holistic approach and are taking advantage of all of those online channels.

CEOCFO: *Do find that most businesses understand? Do you need to do a little educating when you first interact with a prospective client?*

Mr. Phelps: Digital marketing is definitely becoming more common, but we do run into it quite a bit where we educate clients. To help things move along, we have different tools that we use that give us multi-touch attribution. Over the course of a client's customer journey, we can see what all the touch-points were and then weight them in a few different ways, such as the first interaction with a business. That way we can show our clients how the channels are working together.

CEOCFO: *Does it really matter to customers at the end of the day, if they are getting the traction they want?*

Mr. Phelps: Over the last ten plus years, we have seen with both small and larger businesses that we are getting better at understanding those results. They understand the service better as well. SEO back in 2002 was kind of a buzzword, and people checked it off their list, saying that they were doing SEO, but they did not really know what it was or what they should expect. That has changed quite a bit. We have worked with some of these clients five or more years and they understand what they are buying and what they should be given. We run into people that mark it off as a checkmark and do not pay enough attention. The kinds of businesses we have seen do really well are the ones that understand it to some degree and interact with us during the process.

CEOCFO: *What is the common thread among your clients?*

Mr. Phelps: We work with a big range of clients in a variety of industries. The one characteristic they share is that everyone we work with that has been successful over the long-term understands the value of online marketing. We work with a lawyer in Sand Diego who is a solo practitioner, but he invests a lot of money in online marketing. In general, we work quite a bit with technology clients and software industry, as well as franchises and multi-location businesses. Sometimes there are only two locations but we have clients that have over a thousand locations.

CEOCFO: *How are people coming to you?*

Mr. Phelps: We are very referral driven. We do some of our own online marketing, which drives some clients but something I think which is important to understand for any company is how people in your industry find your types of businesses. For the types of clients we work with, we found that it is not as common that they are actually searching for an SEO company online. They are actually getting referred to from colleagues or people in their industry. Or we have quite a few clients that work for one company and when they change to another company over the course of a few years, we often have the opportunity to work with them again.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us an example of when a company would turn to Big Leap?*

Mr. Phelps: We had a software client that was at a location near ours and we got to know them. It was a niche software product and they were well known in the industry. However, if you searched for their particular software, they were nowhere to be found. That led us to think that there was a lot of competition and that maybe they were not competing well.

Or that it may be a technical issue that was keeping them out of search results. We worked with them and did a technical audit of their website to try to understand what was happening with the website that was making it hard for search engines to find them. We went in and did an audit over a few months and identified a few of those issues and worked with their team to correct those. We saw a quick turnaround over a few months. After our audit, they were ranking in the first three positions after searching for keywords and were on at least that first page for many more.

CEOCFO: *Do you get many clients that want the whole package?*

Mr. Phelps: It differs by company size. We work with a lot of companies that are a good size, as well as a lot of successful companies that have small marketing teams. In those situations, we will usually handle a lot of their services and run their social media as well as their SEO and paid search. Those relationships can work out well. We have become their digital marketing department in a sense. Some of our bigger clients may have large marketing teams, sometimes 50 to 100 people within a marketing team and they may ask us to help with a certain aspect of what they are doing. There are many companies that you do not necessarily need them fulltime, they will see a person in-house. In those situations, they may work with us just to help them with an individual service.

CEOCFO: *How do you match statistics with trends and gut-feel?*

Mr. Phelps: We try to think beyond the general trends. Obviously, Instagram is growing at a crazy rate, especially now that they have an advertising platform that is open to the public. We look at it on a client-by-client basis. Instagram may be growing really well, but that may not be a good fit for our B2B software company, and it may not be their first priority. We do try to keep a close eye on those trends when social networks are growing. Snapchat is a good example of how they have evolved and become a larger platform for businesses targeting consumers than they used to be.

CEOCFO: *Where does geography fit in?*

Mr. Phelps: Geography comes into play in many scenarios. Google a few years ago came up with an update for search results to try to understand when somebody is looking for local service and show them local results. An example is if you type "plumber" into the search bar, many times Google will show you local plumbing companies, so they understand that is more of a local search. For companies that are targeting people in a local area, that is usually one of their top priorities to show up in the local search result.

CEOCFO: *What has changed in your approach over time?*

Mr. Phelps: One of the things that has changed a lot in the last couple years and is continuing to adapt. In the past we always focused on a keyword that someone may be searching for, and we are targeting keywords with SEO and/or paid search, but what we have seen over the last several years, especially the social network side, is that we really want to be targeting audiences and the right type of people and building those audiences. People are coming through many different channels and we can collect an audience. If someone comes to a website, we can start to target them through social ads or marketing and banner ads as well. We try to bring in the right people from all those sources and try to keep them in our marketing and sales bundle to the point of becoming a

customer. I think that is something that people are getting more familiar with and the companies that are more on the leading edge of marketing are starting to focus on targeting audiences versus keywords.

CEOCFO: *How do you keep from becoming overwhelmed with all the moving pieces?*

Mr. Phelps: We recommend that people focus on one thing and taking it to the finish line versus spreading yourself thin and only making five yards of progress in ten different directions. If you are a plumber, focus on Yelp. Yes, there are many people on Instagram and there is an opportunity there, but get good at something first and then move on.

CEOCFO: *Why choose Big Leap?*

Mr. Phelps: Big Leap is an agency that I created. We think we do a great job with some of the common issues that people have had with agencies in the past in terms of not understanding what the agencies are doing for them, kind of that black box deal, poor communication, not get the reporting from the account manager. I think we they have gone to the other extreme of trying to over correct on that and let people know the impact of that. The direct line of communication is always open and whatever format works. We deliver those results and communicate properly. We have many clients that we have worked with for a long time and that refer people to us. That is what motivates us, doing a good job for our clients and that has helped us grow considerably.

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

