

# 117 - How to Work With a Marketing Agency with Stevie Brown

**Stevie V Brown 0:00**

It's really important to be, yeah, engaged with their business. And similarly, I think, you know, we have clients that in, you know, at times, they might not be having the best time, things are going wrong in their business, they're having commercial issues. You know, for us, it's about a partnership. That's why longevity is important and the benefits of that are being able to stand by them when times get tougher. You're not just like, oh, well, thanks, 'Sorry, you can't pay me any more. So we're going to just run away'. It's like, okay, cool, 'Well, let's have a look at what we can do whilst you're going through this time, and then we'll, you know, we'll bounce back together. And that's a really, really important aspect of what we try to build for the client experience as well.

**SEOLeverage Podcast Intro 0:41**

Welcome to the SEOLeverage podcast, where we talk about search, marketing, and conversion.

**Gert Mellak 0:51**

Welcome back to SEOLeverage.com. This is episode 117, my name is Gert Mellak and today I have a special guest. I'm really happy that you could take some time out of your schedule for us, Stevie Brown, welcome to the show.

**Stevie V Brown 1:06**

Thank you very much. It's good to be here.

**Gert Mellak 1:08**

It's definitely great to have you on the show, we got introduced by a common friend Anfernee Chansamooth who's already been a guest on the show. So big shout out to Anfernee. Absolutely amazing as we just determined as, as a connector of worlds, I would say.

**Stevie V Brown 1:25**

Absolutely. He's phenomenal at connecting people and our fantastic content writer as well. So

**Gert Mellak 1:30**

Absolutely, he definitely is, we get to, we get to work with him as well, at some point that everybody who cares should definitely do it. Stevie, you're a marketing strategist, you've got 20 years of experience and worked with some of the biggest names people would recognize, like Nestle and L'Oreal and, and brands like those in marketing. And now you're

specializing in creating outsource marketing teams, which I found really, really interesting. And we're going to have a lot of questions about it. But you also have a book, 'The Care Factor Fix'.

**Stevie V Brown 2:03**

Yes, correct.

**Gert Mellak 2:04**

And I would say let's jump right in there. What is the Care Factor Fix all about?

**Stevie V Brown 2:10**

No worries, yeah, love to talk about that. So 'The Care Factor Fix: How to Finally Get Results from Marketing' is a model that I developed when I was actually undertaking my master's in digital marketing. And so of course, you have to do a research study. So I was really fascinated, because I'd been advising businesses for years before that, and I was finding that a lot of them were saying, 'Well, you know, we tried to work with this marketing service, but it didn't work'. The marketing didn't work, or the relationship didn't work. And there was this phrase 'didn't work' and I was really fascinated, 'What does that mean?' What do you mean, it didn't work? In what way did it not work? And so then when I would talk on the converse to marketing providers, they will say, 'Oh, you know, small business clients, you know, they can be an absolute nightmare. They don't understand what we're doing for them', etc. And so I wanted to really investigate what was this kind of problem? What was the disconnect between the two sides, and that was where my research took me. So I interviewed and did questionnaires with both sides of that, that sides of the fence as it were. And then I looked at the results, and I kind of had a number of revelations that helped me to develop this model called "The Care Factor Fix".. And so, C A R E stands for commitment, accountability, realism, and engagement. And those four factors are what I've uncovered are really the recipe for a great relationship between a small, medium business and then marketing services provider. And so if I delve in a little bit, and just explain what each of those pillars really means, in practical terms.

**Stevie V Brown 3:47**

So, COMMITMENT, what we found was that a lot of businesses, they really weren't that committed to the marketing process. So it was as if they sort of thought, 'Well, I think I've got to do some marketing, but I don't really fully understand it, I'm not really prepared to invest in it'. And so what would happen is, they would sort of dabble in it, you know, they just dip their toes in the water, they sort of have a go, and they've worked with a marketing service provider for like, a month. And then they 'Oh, I didn't work, it didn't work, so I'll stop', you know, and I found the flaws, you know. As you know, all too well, it's not a magic, you know, it's not a silver bullet, it's not a magic, you know, answer to your business woes. If your business is in need of clients, well, you know, you probably should have started your marketing a lot sooner, um, you can't expect to just start and do a month's worth of whatever it is and then just expect the, there to be kind of a magic stream of revenue coming in through from that. So what we found was that this lack of commitment was really leading to them just jumping to a conclusion that you know, marketing doesn't work. And similarly, that can happen on the side of marketing providers as well, right, because they don't commit to the client so they're not invested in the business. They

don't listen to the client's needs or the objectives. They don't try to align the strategy to the objectives that the client wants to meet. So the commitment piece was really about having a strategy, agreeing to put a strategy in place and invest in that, and then agreeing to stick to it, as well, not just jump around and change up and change all the time, and commit to a budget and marketing budget for the year that you're going to invest as a business owner, that's going to help you to grow your business ultimately. So that was the commitment phase.

**Stevie V Brown 5:24**

The ACCOUNTABILITY PHASE, is also that idea that, you know, a business owner will say, 'Oh, well, you know, we've got a marketing team now, so they can deal with our sales'. And it's like, no, sales is a separate function. So marketing is what's going to, you know, draw the horse to water, as we say, and sales is what's going to make it drink. So, it was this idea that, you know, a lot of business owners felt that once they were investing in marketing, therefore, they had no responsibility whatsoever for the growth of their business at that point. And, you know, I always talk about businesses is, and I think it came from probably Peter Drucker originally, but correct me if I'm wrong, but you know, he talked about businesses, three things, its marketing, and its innovation, that's it, that's all you have to do, innovate to your needs of your customer, and then promote it to them. And so, you know, often what happens is a business will try to get somebody else to deal with the problem of marketing, because they see it as a chore or a problem, which in itself is a problem, right? Because then the attitude and the mindset is not there. So they see it as a chore, they shove it off to somebody else and then you know, they sort of expect to spend 50 grand and get \$3 million worth of business from it. And you know, it's not going to happen. And so they, they don't actually take accountability for their business. So that's one of the learning. So, you know, for any business owners listening, you have to be responsible for the development and the growth of your business. So innovating your products and services and then ultimately, you know, once those are promoted, you still have to take those inquiries, those people that have come in and shown an interest, and you have to nurture them, and you have to drive them through your sales process. So those are the two main ones.

**Stevie V Brown 7:01**

And then the realism and the engagement pillar. Realism is about being realistic about timeframes and budgets. So you know, often the expectation of what can be done within a timeframe and that happens both ways, you know, both ways, marketing providers expecting clients to just jump and turn things around like quickly and they met, they can't necessarily, they don't necessarily have that much time to do it. So you have to be realistic about the time that your client has available, and how to utilize that in the best way for the things you need. But the client equally has to be realistic about how much time it takes to deliver marketing, and also the results, how long it takes to see, then, you know, if you think SEO, you know, is your domain and it's like, well, we're not going to just put something, you're not going to do some, some SEO, and tomorrow, all of a sudden, your website's, you know, gonna just shoot up the round. So it takes time, right? It has to seed whether it's content, whether it's, you know, whatever it is, so, I'm sorry, you're gonna you're gonna comment on that Gert.

**Gert Mellak 8:00**

No, no, no just nothing.

**Stevie V Brown 8:01**

That's your, that's your every day be like. That's right, I've heard this song before. And so and then the final one is the ENGAGEMENT. And we want clients, obviously, as marketers, we want clients to be engaged in understanding and learning about what we do. But sometimes clients can be engaged to the point that they try to take over, or they try to tell marketing providers, this is how you should be doing your job. And, you know, obviously, people don't respond too well to that. So it's, it's really more about engaging in the right way. So we need you to engage, you know, as a client, we need clients to engage as the subject matter expert, that's where they can be super valuable. Because if we're creating content, if we want to get messaging right, positioning, if we want to understand more about their industry, then, then coming to the table, as the subject matter expert really helps the marketing to, you know, to come to life. And then you know, and subsequently, you know, you you are not going to get a great result if you're constantly engaging in the technical aspects of the marketing, because you don't need to be doing that as the client, you should be getting on with, you can, you've got all your time freed up, now you've got an outsourced marketing team. So it's like, off you go, be free, you can now focus on other aspects of your business. So that's the really important part. But the engagement works both ways. And marketing providers need to engage with the client's business and not just provide, you know, cookie cutter approaches and be able to tailor things and be flexible about how they tailor because clients look for that they want some level of customization often, and it's important that you can align to their objectives and really build them something that's going to work specifically for their business. So that's the that's the overview of the four pillars.

**Gert Mellak 9:47**

I love them. I have five stories where is the new point of the care fix.

**Stevie V Brown 9:53**

I'm not surprised.

**Gert Mellak 9:55**

It's interesting. I love that you, I love that you interview the other side, as well. Obviously, as an agency owner, I'm biased here. I've been doing this for 20 years as well, but it is it is definitely true. Like, I feel very often people think, okay, um, my business is going well, I don't need marketing. Now, my business and my numbers are going down, now let's switch this marketing thing on, my business is going to grow again. And when it when it goes, well, we switch it off again. So this is, this is really something I'm struggling very often in, in calls when I tried to explain what we're doing here. Why are we actually doing it? So I'm, I'm always big on the 'Why' with clients and with my team.

**Stevie V Brown 10:34**

Yeah, absolutely.

**Gert Mellak 10:35**

If I had a feeling they don't understand why they're doing this, I have rejected some people already because I feel that we're just not the right fit. Because if people are going to do SEO for three months, and then cancel because they're not making more sales, we have an issue, right? Then, because I think it's then my fault, because it didn't make the expectations clear, or the timeframes clear. They absolutely have this, this feeling that people just think of marketing like, like something you have to do if the business doesn't go well. So obviously, you did something wrong. So now just switch his marketing on, so, so the salespeople are busy. And then let's see how fast we can switch it off. I see this with one question very quickly, when people say, after how many months can I turn this off? Literally the question I'm getting.

### **Stevie V Brown 11:21**

Yeah. Well, wow. Yeah, no, I'm not surprised. And, you know, this is the thing. And this is, this is this is common, right? This is exactly what I found a lot of marketing providers, those sorts of stories. And you know, if you're not, and that's the commitment, right, they're not committed to it there. And what I found is that, when you get and we all go on our journey as a business owner, right, we start at a certain stage, we kind of break through different brick walls as we go. And I tend to think my mountain, like, I started my business like a mountain, and you're going up the base camps, and then you get to a base camp, and then you're like, right, what's the next peak we need to hit? And I think, you know, this is the same with with the marketing mindset that people develop as they go through their journey as a business owner. And if your marketing mindset is all well, I'm only going to do marketing, when you know, we are panicked, and we don't have enough clients, that's a problem, because it's not going to change the world overnight, and then you're just gonna be disappointed. And the challenge with that is that then the, the marketing provider gets a bad wrap. It's like, oh, well, you know, we tried these marketing people, and it didn't work. And it's like, well hang on a minute, where's your accountability in this because it has to be a collaboration and a partnership. And it does need longevity to it. And what I found is that when you talk to business owners who are quite established in their business, you know, they have a sense of absolute certainty about the ability for their business to continue, no matter what. They know, their business is continuing, and they have a plan for that, they are looking to the future. They're thinking, three years, five years, 10 years ahead, what's their exit strategy? Well, when you talk to business owners that are still quite early on in their journey, where their at is, they're sort of talking about whether they'll have enough revenue next month. And when they're talking like that, they're not ready to actually commit to using external providers for their marketing, because they're not going to be, they're not absolutely certain that their business is going to continue. And so because of that, they're frightened to actually commit the money and commit to doing a strategy and commit to making a partnership. And I think that's a really big challenge. And as marketing industry providers, I think we all have to be aware of this. And if we're getting those red flags in our clients, we actually have to say no to those people, because otherwise, you're just setting yourself up to fail. It's gonna be a nightmare, you're going to hate it, they're gonna hate it, and you're all gonna end up, you know, thinking that it doesn't work at the end of the day. And so yeah, it's really fascinating. But I, I've got a bit of an analogy for you about the, you know, turning it on and off thing I always say to people, marketing is like a bucket of crabs. Your business is a crab, it's at the bottom of the bucket, and you've got to get it to the top. So the little penseses are going to do a scramble

scramble, and you get it to the top. And then you can't stop doing your little pensees, right, you've got to keep scrambling, because if you start you're going to fall straight back down to the bottom again. It's so competitive, whether that's SEO, Google ads, social media, everything. You're always competing to stay at the top of the newsfeed or the search, search results, etc. So you know, it's a bucket of crabs and if you think you can just stop and it'll, you know, turn it off again, and you don't have to start all over again. Well, then you're really mistaken, right?

**Gert Mellak 14:37**

I love that. I love the crab bucket. I usually talk about the watering a tree. So you plant a seed, you don't stop you don't stop watering after a month just because the tree isn't there. You kind of, you kind of need to trust the process for a while and maybe much longer than you want because they know after two months is they're still no tree, right? But you kind of have, have to have faith in the process or at least in marketing, in the person you work with and the agency you work with, and then just keep watering. And even if the tree has been growing already, you just need to continue watering it, because otherwise it's going to die, right? I like the crab one, it's really funny. That's so, so, so interesting, really. One, one thing we found really on the engagement part as well, is what we have here. We are very lucky, I think, because, lucky because we made it to I think, we have a really good retention rate with clients or clients, usually they'll join us, most of them will stick for years. We have clients that have been renewing month after month without long term agreements for 12 years right now. And we're really, really happy about it, let's put it this way. But we've also over the years put a lot of effort in into this engagement part if you want. Where we say hey, we really first of all, the onboarding process for us really means quite, quite a few calls, quite some time trying to understand the client's business, making sure they we, we get a an understanding where they want to go and what which part SEOs search marketing reputation can can play in this. But then also, we have regular check-ins, we have workshop calls with them, etc, we send them media updates every couple of weeks, we have a lot of back and forth, just because by focusing on, on the communication, there's just so much value coming across. So we had one client, for example, which has literally in one of those conversations, build a six figure business on the side for them, just because we just met their experience in their area, in their local environment, in their industry with, with what we can do from marketing perspective. Whenever I see this client, he thanks me again, but this was eight years ago. Just because it was, it was just, it just made sense back then, right? He told me something I told him, Look, this is what I can do. Let me try something over the weekend. And on Monday, he was started selling. And it was really interesting. This doesn't happen all the time. You can't, you can't kind of set the stage for it. But it's definitely not going to happen with agencies that kind of minimize communication to clients as much as possible. You see, we only have a sales rep without experience doing everything. And then really, for us, especially right now, and we saw a big shift with AI coming. For me, it's all about knowledge extraction right now. So we are not so worried anymore about how are we going to produce different pieces of content. It's more about how can we extract all the knowledge possible from my client? From their videos, from their podcasts, from the interviews, from their courses, etc. And then put it into shape and for my need for marketing. So we have a lot of engagement, really tight contact with every single client right now, to make sure that we really make this happen.

**Stevie V Brown 17:43**

Yeah, that's amazing. I mean, it's so important to have the onboarding process, right? Because there's a lot of education, as well, as in there that you need to really do with clients. And they want to know that because they want to understand what they're paying for and what you're doing for them. And I've heard lots about agencies that, you know, business owners say, 'Oh, well, you know, we paid them all this money, and then we didn't hear from them, you know, they sent us the invoice and then we never heard from them again, and sort of thing' that's like, what were they doing, you know, there's no update, there's no recording, there's nothing. And like you, we've I mean, we've just redone ours, we've just mapped out our onboarding, or in fact, our total client experience from when they first see our marketing through to our sales, through to when they come on board, through to year two, because you're not ever really applying until year two, right? It's when they return that they really become the client. So we've we just got a map that all out and we've changed it again. And we've added education and so now you know, when our clients on board with us and we always did discovery so similar to you, we want to always have a really good discovery session, you know, we do a couple of those, or however many we actually need, really understand their business because we can do our research who would do that anyway. But no one knows their business better than that they do. So it's great to just scrape from their brains and try to kind of , you know, transfer as much knowledge as possible. And it's it's really important to be yeah, engaged with their business. And similarly, I think, you know, we have clients that in, you know, at times, they might not be having the best time, things are going wrong in their business. They're having commercial issues. You know, for us, it's about a partnership. That's why longevity is important and the benefits of that are being able to stand by them when times get tougher. You're not just like, oh, well, thanks, 'Sorry, you can't pay me any more so we're going to just run away'. It's like, okay, 'Cool, we'll, let's look at what we can do whilst you're going through this time, and then we'll, you know, we'll bounce back together. And that's a really, really important aspect of what we try to build for the client experience as well.

**Gert Mellak 19:41**

100%. As an agency, it seems like you become like a trusted advisor. I have clients here that are more for the, I think they renew, some of them renew because they want to talk to me sometimes and get some coaching. I really love them. Some of them they have a really good SEO process going. They just follow the, follow the guidelines, my team and I set up for them. But they really liked it because we get to connect about business once in a while with me, about opportunities, but yeah, it's really it's really interesting how this relationship evolves, right? I want to, I want to switch a little bit from a client's perspective. So if you're, you have a client who has been doing reasonably well, they kind of want to grow, they're, they're ready to take marketing seriously, they might have been dabbling here and there and got to a certain point with Facebook ads, with some Google ads or whatever. How do you think they should approach this? I mean, there's one big question, I understand you're biased, I am biased, but this in-house interests versus outsourced? What is, what is, I have my opinion, I'm going to share afterwards. I'm interested in yours?

**Stevie V Brown 20:47**

Yeah, well, yeah, of course, of course, I'm biased, because we literally do our, you know, build an outsource marketing team, that's what we do. But the reason that we do that is because it's for a very specific niche of client where they are beyond that stage of what we call DIY marketing. They've, like you said, they've been doing a few bits and pieces here and there, but it's probably not very cohesive, there's not an actual marketing strategy that pulls it all together. And also, let's say they're working with, you know, they're working with you on SEO over here. And then they're working with some other agency over here on ads, and you didn't know anything about this agency. So it's all just, you know, nobody's talking to each other. So there's sort of the person in the middle of it all and actually, they can't really manage all that and run their business as well, right? It's too much. So it just becomes too much. So they're kind of at that point and, you know, often they do try to make that decision. So you know, what should I do? How do I proceed with marketing? Do I bring in a marketing manager into my business, and that means I have to go out, I have to write a job description, a job ad, I have to find a recruiter, I have to interview people, bring them on board, I've got to do contracts, the HR aspect, set KPIs, give them goals, I mean, oh, I'm exhausted just thinking about it, right? And this is the challenge for them. Because having done that, and I've seen this happen, because I've had clients or prospective clients come and talk to me, after they've gone ahead and done this, they've hired somebody, but they couldn't really afford to hire a senior enough person that could actually deliver a strategy, and then make all the marketing happen. And so either way, there's one of three things that I find happens. One is, they get a junior person and they go through all the, you know, requirements that we just discussed. And then of course, they've got to pay salary and super and bonuses and buy equipment and insurance and everything else, and manage. They now have to manage this person. So now they've got a person that is not senior enough to actually create a marketing strategy, who is looking to them to say, what do you want me to do? So yes, I've got some experience in marketing, but what do you actually want me to produce, and then you end up just managing that person. The other way it goes is they hire someone more senior, so now they spend all their budgets, and they that person says, 'Great, I'll put the strategy together' and then that person says, 'So what's the marketing budget, because I need to now go and get all these providers to deliver the marketing'. So you just spent 150k, or more on a senior person, and now they want at least another 100k or more to actually go out and deliver the marketing, or you've spent 80 to 100k, but you are still in the same problem that you had before, where you have to manage this person. So obviously, when you outsource, and especially if you go to an agency, or you know, someone like ourselves, where we're going to build a bespoke team, and bring in the specialists that are needed to do all of the different jobs that sit in strategy, you're not gonna have any of those challenges. You're just gonna hand it over to us, and then we're going to be able to take it out, we're going to put the strategy together, we're going to find the right people, we're going to put it all in place, I'm going to manage it all for you. So yes, I'm biased, but for me, it's just a much better way for most businesses and actually cost them less overall, I believe, than the methods that I've just described.

**Gert Mellak 24:03**



I love that. I definitely agree with that. I will also, one thing I've always encountered is that people think marketing is one person.

**Stevie V Brown 24:10**

Yeah,

**Gert Mellak 24:10**

So, should I, should I hire a secretary or should I not hire a secretary? Should I hire a marketing person to do all this marketing stuff? Why should I not hire a marketing person and they were starting. We had clients, we used to do a lot of lead generation in the past, we're still doing it but not so much. And people were comparing like our budget, I think it was like, like a retainer 2, \$3,000 retainer per month or something like this. They were starting to compare our budget with one marketing person which here in, in Spain, at least back then was, was reasonable. They would have been probably winning in their head, hiring somebody full time rather than paying an agency for this but another said yeah, but it's not only one person because we've got one person running the ads, one doing the copy, one doing the design, one doing your website work, which this person should also be doing. And then we had also doing the SEO part where there's a link below, there is an SEO writer, there's a consultant who strategize. So you're not looking at one person, right? So suddenly you're looking at 20,000 instead of 2000. And then the equation obviously changes. So we have this, this feeling like, like, it's like you have an IT guy, you have a marketing person.

**Stevie V Brown 25:20**

Yeah.

**Gert Mellak 25:20**

Is this going to be solving everything?

**Stevie V Brown 25:23**

Yeah. 100% agree. And that's the thing. It's, it's yeah, you're right. And I don't actually know that many people who are super multi-talented marketing people that can turn their hand to any marketing function, right? So I'm pretty handy. I can whip out an email marketing campaign, I can build a WordPress website, I can write some content, you know, I can do a lot of stuff that a, that this marketing person needs to be able to do. But I'm not a specialist in SEO, for example, right? That's why I have people to do that for us. I'm not an expert in writing content that's optimized. I'm not an expert in Google ads. I know about these things and yeah, sure, I can switch some buttons on, but that doesn't make me an expert in every area. Like I don't know, any marketers that can be an expert in every single aspect of marketing, it's too big, right? There's too much to it. So yeah, a 100%. You're absolutely right, that's a really good way of looking at it. A lot of that, that says like, you know, I can hire one person or hey, you can get access to a global remote team of like, 20 people. Which one do you want, you know, 20 experts or just one generalist? I mean, yeah, absolutely.

**Gert Mellak 26:28**

That's right. It's really, it's really tough. I think especially also, when you think about hiring, how are they going to judge who to hire, right? They can't even have a conversation, right? It's, I couldn't I couldn't hire a carpenter tomorrow. I'm into woodworking, but I can't, I couldn't hire a carpenter and judge on their skills. Definitely not, let alone somebody from a plumber or electrician or whatever, we have no idea about their industry, how do you do the hiring, right? Do you just take the reference and believe everything that's in the curriculum and to have been working with with such and such brand, and now they're already qualified for your particular business, it's really tough. I mean we have, we have been helping clients finding SEO people that would then work with us, so for me in an ideal scenario, when somebody is at a certain stage is, that they have one person doing like, some sort of CMO, or at least part time CMO, like Anfernee, for example, does as well, where, where they would work with us as an agency. So we would have like, pretty much in house or at least every day, we'd have like a part time person responsible for dealing with an agency or with the agencies involved. So there's like what, it's not necessarily the business owner who needs to respond to every single email, but there is like one person who kind of organizes everything. For me, this is like the ideal scenario, I do not believe it makes any sense for, for people to have their own marketing team, because it's just not good. I have yet to see an in house marketing team that's really up to date with what's happening in the industry because they usually very, not all of them, obviously, a lot of them are playing maintenance mode, which is okay. We just maintain, we know, we need to run three campaigns a year, so we still run three campaigns a year, we've always done Facebook, let's still do Facebook, might not have heard about TikTok and ads just yet, just because they always do exactly the same thing. Whereas as an agency, it's it's survival mode, right? You can survive as an agency if you're not up to speed. So I feel you get like the best of both worlds, if you have like a CMO role and and then work with an outside outsource, pod managers, marketing team or agency.

**Stevie V Brown 28:31**

Yeah, I think that can be ideal for businesses that can afford that. And they're at that size, I think, you know, having that person that's the representative. As long as you know, I think one of the challenges we've had before is it gets handed to the ops manager. And that's not the right person to manage marketing. They don't know anything about marketing. So yeah, but I think that can absolutely work and that would definitely be an ideal scenario, just have one contact, so you're not scrambling to get ahold of the business owner all the time, because they should be busy running their business.

**Gert Mellak 29:03**

Absolutely. So somebody now has is, committed to marketing, they are going to outsource this to an agency or someone like you, where you build the team. What are like a few first things they should be thinking about?

**Stevie V Brown 29:19**

So the very first thing that we're going to talk to them about is what's their annual marketing budget, because that's what we're going to use to build their strategy. And, you know, there's a lot of consultants out there, and I used to be one myself where we would say, yeah, we'll do a

marketing strategy for you, but that's fine. But the problem with that is that, they're not building it to a budget based on specific costings of providers. So, you know, we ask, what's your annual marketing budget? And if you're committed to this process, then that shouldn't be a hard question to answer, right? Because you have a company budget and there's a line item for all sorts of things like your accountant and your insurance and whatever else and there's a line item for your marketing. And so whatever that line item is, is, you know, you come to us with that and then at that point, you know, we would look at building a strategy and we would align it to that budget. So they need to be thinking about what their budget is, we usually advise a guidance of seven to 10% of their revenue for their marketing budget. And, of course, it varies a little bit by the type of business or the industry, you know, whether they're really high costs or product costs or things like that. But generally, that's a good global benchmark that we advise. So once they've determined their budget, then they need to also have a think about who's going to be in their business that's going to be involved in the process. So what'd you say? Is there a CMO type role? Or is there a coordinator or someone that's going to be the point con, you know, the point of contact for it? Or is it going to be themselves, in which case they need to carve out some time, and it is not a huge amount, because we really try to work very hard on making it less time for our, for our business owners. We try to make decisions for them, so they don't have to be involved. So we make the marketing decisions and get them to make the business decisions, but essentially, you know, the engagement requires some level of time and effort to be put in. And then, you know, if they're looking to kind of decide on providers, they should really be looking for a values alignment, you know, is the provider interested in that business and what they do? Do they have a passion for it? Don't necessarily have to have experience in their industry, because one of the things that we do as marketeers and I certainly love is that, we get to learn about 100 different industry, so we learned so much. And there's so much that's transferable. So that can always, that can always be learned and that's comes as part of the discovery. So I think the main thing is being, is having that check with yourself that you're committed to the process, making sure that you've made way for marketing to happen for your business, and then really confirming your budget and then working out Have you actually got your house in order. So once you know you're going to engage someone to do your marketing, and they're going to start promoting your business and pushing people to your website. What happens when they get to your website? Have you got your housekeeping in place? Like is there a way in what I call it, way into your business? You know, some people talk about a lead magnet, but how are they going to engage with you, if you haven't got that in place? We do all that stuff as well for our clients, right? Because they often don't and we kind of tidy it a lot and say, right, we need a lead magnet or we need a consult or whatever. But really think about what's going to happen after you get your leads in, you know, inquiries to your business or people on your mailing list. Are you ready to take them? Are you ready to deal with them? Are you have you got a process in place to sell to them or whatever your next step might be? So they, once they know that the kind of like, yeah, we know that where marketing is going to fit into our existing infrastructure and then we're committed, we're ready to go, we've got clear business objectives, we've got a budget, then it's time to start having a conversation with someone like ourselves or, you know, a marketing, consultancy or agency that can take on your marketing.

**Gert Mellak 32:58**

What should people expect in terms of results, timeframe, and margin, y'all you also have those conversations. So they're committed to now now kind of Yeah, unwillingly, but they didn't know they need to do this. They just designed this position, this line item, as you say, okay, to Yeah, to an agency, that there must be the question. Okay, when How much am I going to get back? When am I going to see something about this? And this all obviously, the cost is not only this line item, it's also the internal costs that need to be assigned. For this person that works with an agency or the time that takes the photo shoots to a website that needs to be built, or whatever it is, how do you frame the results people can expect from marketing once they go into it?

**Stevie V Brown 33:45**

Yeah, so we always talk about the fact that it does largely depend on what is put into a strategy and how much budget we're spending and you know, scale and all sorts of things like that. But what we try to talk about is the different types of channels and how they can have, obviously, they will have different metrics. So the way we manage that in our businesses, we have a dashboard that we plug all their, like their Google Analytics, and the, whether it's Meta or their LinkedIn, whatever is relevant to what we're doing their email marketing, we plug it all in, and it spits out the results. And it shows those live. So we build that for them once they come through the onboarding process. And then those metrics are explained to them as well through education and a glossary that says this is what these all mean. But largely speaking, just to kind of, you know, a sort of top line view of that, as we say, if the activity is the objective of the activity is to build awareness, then it's less measurable than if the objective of the activity is to generate immediate leads for your business. So awareness-building activity, of course, can also generate immediate leads. It depends on what it is. So if you're putting an ad out and they're going to click and you know, obviously sign up, then that can be an immediate, but sometimes that also has a result of just being about presence of their business. You know, we know that we're going to send ads out to the world, we're going to get impressions from that, some people are going to engage, we're going to get reach, and then some people will click. But some of those people that saw the ad, but didn't click might click at another stage. So we're going to try to remarket to them and all of those things. So, you know, we talk about the fact that awareness-building activity and awareness messaging is a less easy measure, but we'll be measuring it with metrics like impressions and reach, and clicks, and possibly engagement rate, for example, on social media. Where if we're doing direct lead gen activity, and it's more, say Google ads, for example, or actual lead gen through LinkedIn, which is something we often do as well, then we're measuring it more on number of connections, or number of people who filled out a form or ask for a sample or book to consult, depending on what was right for each business. So we very much bespoke talk about the results, but we also talk about things like, you know, when it comes to building a new website, there isn't a result on building the new website, other than you got a new website. The result comes from us then being able to build obviously grow the traffic to the site, and also improve it for search engines, through activities like SEO and content marketing. And so we talk about it very bespoke, clear with clients, because we have to get everybody to understand the nuances. But what we very clearly say to all clients is marketing is not sales. Marketing is measured in lots of different ways, through awareness, to engagement to

conversion. But when we talk about conversion and marketing, we mean taking an action, not necessarily buying a product or buying a service that comes at the next stage. And that's generally how we, how we kind of delve into to results. And we do let them know as well that they can't expect overnight results. We have a 90-day kind of onboarding process with our clients where they're going to have 90 days where we're going to do the discovery, we're going to do the strategy, we're going to do the housekeeping jobs that need to be done, and then we start promoting their business. So that's why we need to be on a long journey, because it's not going to, we're not going to be promoting from week one, we're going to be doing a lot of background work in the initial stages.

**Gert Mellak 37:17**

Now it makes a lot of sense. We talked about, about a dozen similar terms where we say, hey, SEO is just now moving forward, something you do. It's not something that's going to go away, like marketing should be something from day one that you do. People think, okay, my business is online, I just need a laptop. And then I'm, then I'm ready for delivery, but they can't count on the budget necessary to actually build up the awareness and get some some people that are qualified coming to you, and then even the sales process. But definitely, to make sure people have this, this idea in mind that this is just something part of what their business isn't what their, part of their business foundation, right? And the way we talk about results very often this is just trying to go backwards and say, okay, somebody who, who actually turns into a lead probably has seen you somewhere and probably has inquired about, about your business, they probably have seen what comes up on page one, when they type in your business name after they heard about you, they're going to look at reviews, they're looking going to look at affiliates who want to rank for your brand name, they're going to look at competitors who rank for your brand name, so maybe some reputation work to do it, as well. But even going backwards, they might have just inquired something about your industry and might have wanted to, to learn which of these petitions actually are noise isolation, have noise isolation. Whereas one of those topics that you say that you get to know across the the years in marketing, right? So it's, it's really interesting to kind of work backwards today, so they understand, 'Okay I must show this to a lot of people to find somebody ready to do this'. And once you work backwards, it seems to be a little bit clearer, but obviously, there are results sometimes where we're having like a campaign or a site that already gets some traffic to a particular article that just didn't put a lead magnet in and you put a lead magnet in. And suddenly there are leads coming in, which is great. It's just an overnight results, so to speak, and have other things that just take half a year, a year or even more in order to build up, right, based on the budget?

**Stevie V Brown 39:16**

And but it's not even an overnight result. Because to get to that point you had to do learning, right? You had to test you had to learn and

**Gert Mellak 39:23**

I should have, I should have made the quotes, yeah.

**Stevie V Brown 39:24**

It reminds me of Melanie from Canva. I was at a talk with her one time and she said I'd like to tell you about my overnight success. It took the 11 years and it's like yes, exactly. Because everyone's sudden like 'Oh Canva, yeah, where did that come from? Then, she's like, 'I've been doing the hard yards in the back, in the back of my mom's garage'. You know for all this time and it's the same thing, right? We learn and we evolve and a lot of marketing you know, as you know, it's test and learn. You don't, you know, there isn't a black and white answer, it's not straightforward always. So I think it's yeah, that that's the thing that clients have to really understand and I think that business, marketing providers need to teach, we need to educate people about how it all works as well, because you can't expect to have, you know, a client saying, 'Oh, well, you know, you didn't get me this result or that result' or, you know, 'We didn't get any sales from this email campaign you sent out', if you haven't explained to them what to expect from that email campaign in the first place. We have to be more clear as an industry with prospective clients about what those results are going to look like in timeframe.

**Gert Mellak 40:33**

Absolutely yeah absolutely. And that makes it makes a lot of sense and I was just thinking about one company we were working with here and also like lead generation you know, it was ecommerce, it was ecommerce actually. And they had this, the, the the founder was still in the business, he was like 70 years old or something like this, always talking about the times when he went door to door selling with a catalog in his hands, right and, and having having those people to kind of divide sales from marketing now that have been growing business to really good size. Honestly, he did really great work back then. Now's it's okay, now this is different. And now we just bring people here, but the sale is still yet to be made and there's no conversation. There's no, no, I give you this one table because I have more margin there, etc. Things like those. That was really, really, really fun, fun stories. But yeah, definitely, you just need to need to keep going, you need to kind of have see, see this, that the big tree is not going to come overnight, need to keep watering and, and it was a small tree at some point. And people people tend to forget this right if you buy a house and have a big tree in them in the yard, but this was a small tree at summer, right 20 years ago. And it's so funny how people framed his marketing process. Awesome. Now this is such such good advice we feel a lot about, about obviously how to, how to think about it, how to commit to marketing, how to make this a really important part of your business how to how to assign budget for the long run, really make sure that you have the resources also internally to actually not only, not only start this process, but but keep it going. I really appreciate how generously you have shared your experience here. Ah Stevie, there are definitely going to be a lot of people who are going to want to read your book, The Care Factor Flx, and we're going to link to it on the show notes over at [SEOLEverage.com/podcast](https://SEOLEverage.com/podcast). This is episode 117, if somebody wants to reach out to you, wants to have you create their outsourced marketing team, how they can can they get in touch with you?

**Stevie V Brown 42:33**

Yeah, perfect, thank you. So if they head to our website, which is [thechangestarter.com](https://thechangestarter.com). And once you get on the site, if you're on the desktop, you can see a little button for book consult. If you're on the mobile site, you'll probably have to go into the menu and just click on contact. And

you can fill out a form there, you can book a time with me. And we can have a marketing accelerator session to discuss how we might be able to help you going forward. And I will better say this as well. Otherwise, Amp will kill me. If you go to the [change starter.com](#) forward slash podcast gift, I think that's right, we'll get you to link it in the bottom anyway, Gert. That is a little page of bonuses and you can actually grab the link to the book there. But we also have a quiz on there. And it's a great way to determine where you're at in your journey with The Care Factor Fix. So that model of those four pillars, you can actually test those out by answering the questions on that quiz. And it'll give you a score as to whether you're actually at the stage where you might be ready to discuss an outsource marketing team.

**Gert Mellak 43:39**

I love that. Thank you so much Stevie, it was great to chat with you, definitely going to reach out in the future and we talked about some some more interesting nuances around marketing, know all the little bit more. Thank you so much, Stevie.

**Stevie V Brown 43:52**

Thanks Gert, thanks for having me.