



Transcript

Episode #001

“The one where we start at the beginning.”

ilovemarketing.com

Dean: I'm Dean Jackson, he's Joe Polish, and this is the I Love Marketing podcast.

Hey everybody, this is Dean Jackson. Is this Joe Polish?

Joe: Yeah, this is Joe Polish, and I was not going to say anything, Dean. I was going to wait for you to actually say, "And, this is Joe Polish!"

Dean: And this is Joe Polish.

Joe: It sounds dramatic, because all of our listeners, this is going to be some pretty serious business you're about to listen to.

Dean: It really is. I tell you, I'm excited about doing this. I think this is going to be a really great thing.

I remember when we first starting talking about doing this, that this would be the kind of podcast that I'd want to listen to. That's what I'm thinking of. Like we always talk, and we always talk about marketing, and we always come up with great stuff, and share great things. But nobody ever gets to hear it. And I thought, this would be a great way for us to do that.

And I was just telling you that what I really want to do is, over the next several months, it's like I'm challenging both of us, I think, to spend really over the next several months here, try and get everything that we know about marketing out on audio.

The interesting thing is it is kind of is going to keep us growing, I think, because I don't think we're ever going to run out of things to talk about, cool things to share, because it's always new marketing developments. You know?

Joe: Yep, exactly. And we know a lot of stuff, so this will actually be really valuable, I think, for us to flesh out some of the things that me and you only talk about privately.

And for everyone listening, collectively, me and Dean both absolutely love marketing. We've read countless books, attended many, many seminars, spent thousands of hours in private discussions with some of the greatest marketing minds in the world, not only seeking them out, but doing sought out by people to talk about marketing, teach marketing, implement marketing, share marketing, how to make money, how to get better clients, how to streamline entrepreneurial systems.

So there's just a lot of stuff that we've learned over the years. And either one of us are ever going to come from a place of being so ego-centered that we think we

know it all and this is the best way. So, we're both students of the game, and we're all players and participants, too.

So, that's what I request out of anyone that listens to us is be coachable, be open-minded. Marketing is very interesting. A lot of times, marketing doesn't need to make sense, it just needs to make money, and it just needs to work and be effective.

So, you're going to hear some things that will cause you to question what you may have heard from other people, other sources. And most of what we're going to share, though, although a lot of it will be creative brainstorming at times, both myself and Dean have made, for ourselves, millions of dollars, have generated for our clients – collectively – hundreds of millions.

So, we have experience, real world, and we'll talk about things that work in the real world today, online and offline. Both of us learned marketing literally, I think, right out of the womb. Right, Dean?

Dean: Right out of the womb. I think that that actually is a great place to start, because I know that there's so much more to it than just knowing the book learning about marketing. And I know that both of us that the experiences that we've had, and the application of all of the things that we've learned have really kind of shaped who we are as marketers.

And I'm always fascinated, because you and I haven't talked about this before, but what I'm really fascinated by is how people get the earliest love of marketing.

And I remember for me, I remember exactly the things that have impacted that. And I'd love to hear those for you, too.

Do you want me to start or do you want to start?

Joe: Yeah, you start, because I want to see if I can one-up you after I hear your rags-to-riches story.

Dean: I figured that. So I was thinking about this, that for me, the earliest thing that I can remember about being impacted by marketing is starting with a distaste for real work. And I say that because I remember back in...

Joe: You know I'm sitting here going, "Well, is that just because you're just a lazy bastard or because you really are smart, and you really see that people are trying to accomplish things in very difficult ways?" I think it's a combination of both.

Dean: I think so too. I look back and I remember this distinctly, because I remember getting my very first job, my first and really only job that I ever had in terms of like an hourly wage job. And it was going into 9th grade, and my friend Neil and I both got jobs at the

same time at the bowling alley, as pin chasers. And I remember that we were getting \$2.50 an hour. That was the minimum wage then.

And I remember that we would go to the bowling alley and, on a Saturday, it would be all day long, you'd be working 8 hours. And we would come out of there, and for that day, what would you get for 8 hours at \$2.50? You'd get less than about \$20, right, for that? But they'd take off taxes for that, so you'd end up with very little money.

And I started realizing that the hourly thing, there wasn't any leverage in it, because you're working for all of those hours.

And around that same time, I had a paper route. And one of the things that we would always get to do was do new subscription solicitations. I know you've done that, too. But one of the things that our newspaper had as a special promotion, were these coupon booklets that were just local coupons that were for money off on local restaurants, and at the bowling alley, and all these local discounts.

And the books sold for \$3, and it was total commission. And if you sold any of these booklets, you got \$1.50 and the newspaper got \$1.50.

And I remember going around to these. And I figured out very early on that the coupon on page 3 was for a free whopper that it wasn't anything required, no purchase required, nothing like that. It was just a free whopper. And I realized that that's almost the cost of the whole booklet.

So, I had my pitch to people. I'd go to the door and I would talk about the coupons, and I would say, "The coupon here on page 3 is worth, if you just use that one, you get your money back right away."

And people would buy up these booklets. It was a pretty easy sale, because there was all kinds of really good savings in there for \$3. It was essentially like buying \$50 worth of savings for \$3, on things that most people would use.

And so I remember going around and selling these. And I had a pitch where you could get 2 booklets for \$5, and people would actually buy these things. And by going and knocking on doors, I think I calculated it out that you could make something like \$15 in an hour selling these booklets door-to-door.

And I thought, "Man, that is just so much better than doing something for an hourly wage." So, I could work way less time, make more money, and go bug my other friends that worked at the bowling alley by spending all the money in the arcade.

Joe: Well, you know what's funny about that? Well, I think I'll let you finish this story. But I've got something that's so darn similar to making more money with a paper route, selling subscriptions.

Dean: Yeah.

Joe: Would you like me to share it right now, at this particular moment? Yeah, I used to deliver newspapers also, and I actually had a paper route. But the real icing on the cake that actually made me more money was selling the subscriptions, which was optional. I didn't have to do it, but we would.

And there would be a guy that kind of like managed a few of the troops, and some of these kids delivered papers and some of them just sold subscriptions door-to-door. And I won a trip to Disneyland, I don't know, I was probably like 13 or 14. I don't know, 13, 14, 15 years old. I can't remember.

And I won a trip to Disneyland, because out of 2,500 different kids in the Phoenix area selling subscriptions to the Arizona Republic, I sold the most subscriptions. And I won this trip to Disneyland for doing it door-to-door.

But, I actually made more money literally doing the sales, than I actually did delivering the papers. But delivering the papers gave me a real affinity with the newspaper.

And unlike you, that that was like your bonus, was, "Hey, you get this coupon, and it's worth almost..." you obviously made it easy to make a buying decision, the way you approached it.

I actually used kind of like a feel sorry for me plea, and I would open up like, "I'm trying to win a trip to Disneyland, and if you help me out here..."

There's all kinds of ways to appeal to people's decision-making process. Whereas you used a real smart, bonus-driven sort of offer, I just wanted them to feel sorry for me and by based on sympathy, and the fact that this was a kid.

Dean: So, you haven't really changed.

Joe: Yeah, I just still try to make people feel sorry for me, and they just throw money at me. It's crazy.

One of my first exposures to knowing how to engage people's emotions, and there are many different ways to do it, was when I was a little kid, 4 or 5 years old. My mother died when I was 4, and my father was a locksmith, and we lived in a small town called Kerrville, Texas.

And my father used to sit me up on this counter, because he was a locksmith. And in the front of the house, he had like a little locksmith shop. And in the back was where we lived. And people would come in, and I'd be sitting on the counter with all these keys. And they'd come in to get keys made and talk to my father. It was kind of back in the day, like probably the old school barbershops where people would just come by and they would hang out and talk. And my Dad would make keys and work on resetting tumblers and fixing locks, and that sort of stuff.

And I would smile. And when I would smile, people would give me tips. And I learned the power of a smile. And so, in a lot of ways, I was using a smile as my marketing way to get people to actually reward me.

I guess, maybe like at the zoo, where people throw like bananas to the happy monkeys and not at the ones that look mean or something, I don't know. But, I never even really thought of it that much until we started to decide that we were going to do this I Love Marketing podcast.

There you go. I think that my first attempt at marketing was not a headline in sales copy or a video on a website, it was a smile on my face to get people to give me tips. And I didn't do anything except try to look like a happy kid.

Dean: Well that's great. You know what? You say that, I could picture you as a little kid with that big goofy smile. Just a little kid version of your goofy smile now.

Joe: Well you know, there's all kinds of different things to now. Now it's name dropping and famous people, and just being Joe Polish, you'd think, would be enough.

But let me, you are known Dean, as the guy that – I don't think you ever came out and said this; I'd like to actually hear your background on this – you're known as like the first person to ever use an opt-in page using online marketing, which you've been doing online marketing for many, many years in the very heyday of the Internet.

And you created an opt-in page. That's a big deal. For people that are out there listening, if you've ever had an opt-in page, an opt-in page could also be called like a shy yes page or landing page asking for an email. What are all the different terms that you've heard opt-in pages called?

Dean: Yeah. Squeeze page.

Joe: Yeah, that sort of stuff. Is that true, or did someone just make that up to make you sound smart or something?

Dean: Well, I don't know that anybody keeps official records, but I know for sure I was the first person that I know of that was doing it. And I'll tell you where and how that came

about, was I realized that the idea of getting somebody's email address was probably the most valuable thing that you could get out of a visitor coming to your website.

And, the first one that I ever did was for a real estate website. And the innovation that I had was making leaving your name and email address the only option.

Now, there were people who were using forms, where you could put, "Leave your name and email address," because there were autoresponders around.

But this idea of using a one decision web page, is what I was calling it at the time. So when I made the LivingInWinterHaven.com website, that was the very first real estate website that I did. And the idea was that I set it up to be and to mirror the table of contents page of *Cosmo* magazine, where you have all these cool headlines, all these cool bullet points.

And instead of saying, "click here," like a regular website would say, "Get a free guide to Winter Haven real estate prices, click here," or "Search all the homes for sale in Winter Haven, click here," I would make the page just like the table of contents. So you could see all the stuff that was in there.

But the only change that we made was saying, "Free inside. More inside. Free inside." And all the way down, you see all of these things, and then both the top and the bottom of the page, there was an opt-in that said, "Get free instant access, just leave your name and your email address."

So, people got to see all the things that they were going to get in exchange for their name and their email address. And that was the only decision they could make. There was nothing to distract them.

Because if you come to the website, you come to a website and you look at the options there. If there's any other option aside from leaving your name and your email address, you're going to click on all those other options.

So, my idea was if you eliminate that option, then more people are going to take the only option that's available to them.

So, it was more of a focusing tool. It was something that would eliminate the distractions of people clicking around and getting lost and clicking on other websites. You just focus them, and the only decision they could make is "Would I like this? Do I want to get all this information?" And they would leave their name and their email address.

And then, when they went inside, that index page then was now all of those links were clickable. Now they all said, "Click here. Click here. Click here. Click here."

So, it was kind of like the checkout aisle, where you see *Cosmo* magazine at the grocery store, and you see all those cool headlines on the cover. And you can only kind of glance at the article while you're in line there. But mostly, people make their decision that they're going to buy this magazine based on the cover. That's why they spend so much time and money on making those covers as compelling as possible.

So, that's how that got started.

Joe: Can I say something, too, about what you just said about people standing in line at the checkout counter?

I guess in grocery stores, it's probably better to have like a line where people are forced to look at all of this other stuff, vertical versus horizontal. Because then, if they just walked up and they weren't surrounded by all this other stuff, their point of purchase sales would not be the same.

Dean: Uh-huh. I bet you're right.

Joe: That had nothing to do with anything, but I just thought it was funny. Because I was sitting here thinking there could be all kinds of different ways you could line people up in order to set the stage for them to actually buy something.

But here's the important distinction, though. See, even if people click around and look at all of those things, the fact that you got their email makes all the difference in the world, because you can continue to communicate with them afterwards. And you end up having some control. You have permission, because they gave it to you. They granted you the ability to have their email.

Have things changed all that much today, since? What year was that, when you first did that?

Dean: Boy, that was like 1997, I think, something like that.

Joe: 1997? Has your philosophy changed much about how you set up a website?

Dean: Not really. The long form version of that Living In Winter Haven is still exactly the same. The cosmetics have changed very little. The idea now that even shorter is better, that we use a little an even shorter version of that, where it all fits on one screen, where it's all viewable, that one gets a slightly better conversion rate.

The good news is that when you figure out what motivates somebody in something like real estate, it's largely going to stay the same. It doesn't change all that much.

When you figure out, crack the code for a good opt-in page, it's got a lot of legs.

When we set up Eben's opt-in page for Double Your Dating, I remember when he was first getting started with that, we set up the very first page for Double Your Dating, and the copy that we set up then is almost identical to the copy that they still use today for the opt-in page.

And I remember doing the little testing on that. It was sitting up in Eben's office/bedroom at the time, making little changes. We'd let 200 people come to the site, we'd get how many people left their name and email. And then we'd make a little change, and got to where the opt-in was working really well, and just continued to stick with that.

But when you get that name and email address, it just opens up so many opportunities then to just have a dialog with people.

Joe: You know I don't know when I first heard it, but it was probably around that time, where starting to refer to different ways to market on the Internet – and I still like this – is “push, pull, and dangle.” You've heard that before, right?

Dean: I have, but I don't know the...

Joe: The source?

Dean: Yeah, yeah. I don't know the source, because I don't know the depth of it. So maybe you can explain that for me.

Joe: Well, you know it's like the 3 things that you can do to market on the Internet. 1) You can pull people to your website. And you could hope that there's something compelling and interesting on the website, so they're going to actually buy from you. They just go to your website and if you've got something for sale, they buy it. If you're trying to use a website to raise donations for a charity or foundation or cause, they just make a contribution, whatever.

The action you're trying to get them, you pull them to the website. You do that through anything from search engine optimization to running Facebook ads or banner ads or whatever, to outside marketing, going on TV, radio, in print, whatever. And you pull people to the site.

Dangle, in your particular case, you offer them like a free report or you offer them “Free inside,” “Get free instant access,” that sort of thing, and you dangle something for free or something enticing that they want to get to. And by doing that, you get them to give you their information, their email, their phone number, their address, their whatever. Typically, it's usually just either email or first name and email.

And then, you push. And what push is, is even if they click out of your site, you can continually communicate to these people. And you control what's pushed out to them, be it RSS feeds or email. Now with Facebook, you can post. All the different vehicles that you can push out.

So, I think if people just look at their web marketing as push, pull, and dangle. A lot of people just pull. They're just trying to pull people to the site, but they're not doing great capture, they're not pushing out. And if they do dangle anything, a lot of times, it's really boring. It doesn't hold much value. Or you're trying to offer so many different things and no one knows how to make a decision.

One thing I have always liked about your thinking, as it relates to marketing, is your clarity. You're really good at simplicity. Like you made this statement, "A one-decision web page."

What's kind of cool about Google, if you could just think of all the different things – now Bing and many different search engines – but the thing is if you just think of simplicity, there's so much stuff that could be stuffed on a web page. And so many people try to get their page to do so many things.

And if you just think from the mindset of the user, how do you make it simple for people to visit, and then know what the hell to do or where to go, and set it up so that you have the best advantage of working with them, selling to them, communicating with them, after they decide to leave?

Dean: Well, you know it's, I like this. So, the order is pull, dangle, push. That's, I guess, how it works, right, with you? And that's similar to the formula that I was working from when I was setting that up. That I had this formula that was, "Eyeballs, plus emails, plus hearts equals faces."

So, ultimately, when I was developing this for the realtors – and this is totally applicable to any business, really – each step in that formula represents one kind of benchmark, one action that you can get somebody to take.

So, when you were talking about pull, that would be getting eyeballs to your website. So the only question you're trying to answer when you're trying to win eyeballs is, "What can I do to get somebody to go to my website?"

And once they're there, once they're like on their screen, they're looking at your website, then the next step in that formula, you've accomplished that goal. You've accomplished the first benchmark, which is getting them to the site.

Then the next step in that formula is to attract their email address. So that's where I decided that having it be the only option was the thing that got the very most

email addresses. The higher a priority that you put on it, the more compelling it is and the more people will leave their email address.

But then, once you've got their email address, you've reached that second benchmark, and the third one. So, it's eyeballs, plus emails, plus hearts, is now we want them to share the desires of their heart, to tell you who they are, what they're looking for, the types of homes they're interested in, their mailing address. They're kind of identifying themselves to you, raising their hand, and engaging in a dialog.

And then, that equals sign represents the transition kind of out of that cyber world and into the real world, into a real relationship with an appointment.

So, that formula could work for carpet cleaners, where what are you going to do to get somebody to go to your carpet cleaning website? And when they're there, what can you do to get them to leave their name and their email address?

And when you've got their name and their email address, how can you communicate with them so that they'll engage in a dialog with you? And ultimately what can you do in that communication to get them to invite you over to their house?

Or, if you own a restaurant, what can you do to get them to come into your restaurant? Or if you're a chiropractor, what can you do to get them to come in to your office?

All of those things where you're now getting somebody off of the web and into your office, or into your restaurant, into a relationship with you.

Joe: Yeah, exactly. It's another form of sifting, sorting, and screening, which I originally did before, and you did too. One thing I should probably mention, for people that don't know our backgrounds, is both me and you learned direct response marketing offline. At least when I got introduced to marketing, the Internet didn't exist as a commerce vehicle.

We were writing sales letters and using snail mail, and we still do. Paper and postage and space ads. Not so far back in the days when people were using X-Acto knives in order to typeset and layout newspaper ads. I came after that.

Dean: Dude, I was.

Joe: Were you?

Dean: Oh, man, I'll tell you what. The very first thing that I did, like I'm talking like 1989, there was no like desktop publishing. That was for rich people. That wasn't even a thing yet in 1989. It's amazing.

Joe: Well, I should say that I do remember actually making ads and writing up letters and using whiteout, because the spell check thing, I didn't have it.

But the point is it's still sift, sort, and screen. Marketing is a positioning game. And it really is about positioning. And if you want to get the right types of clients, it's like fishing. You're going to fish with a certain type of bait and you're going to attract certain types of fish. And if you're fishing in a stocked lake, and no one is biting, you've got to really look at what's the bait?

And we live in a world where, say the United States, if you're in the United States or Canada and you're listening to us, there are literally thousands, thousands of people surrounding most people literally within, walk outside your house, your office, your whatever. Your prospects are all over the place, people that will give you money. And you're right smack in the middle of a very stocked lake of potential buyers. And if no one is biting, then either you're not fishing, you're not putting out the right bait, and you've really got to take a look at what you're doing, and it's got to make sense.

I guess, Dean, to kind of take it to the very basic level. We are talking about marketing. We are talking about marketing methodologies. We love marketing because it's such a really cool thing. And I'd like to ask you what does marketing mean to you? What is it? What is your definition? What was exciting to you about selling and marketing and all that?

How did you fall into it? I'll share my story of what it means to me, and everything, but I'd love to get your perspective on it.

Dean: Yeah, sure. I look back now. It's amazing now to look back and to see the progression, because it's amazing how you have so much clarity now, on things that you did then. And either you kind of didn't realize it at the time, but now you know, "Well, of course that worked. That makes so much sense, why that is so."

I remember when I started in business, my first thing that I did was as a real estate agent. And I remember getting my real estate license in November of 1988. And I remember, at the time, I was straight out of school, I was 21 years old, and I was just kind of thinking to myself, because I knew that impression of selling those coupon booklets door-to-door, now I know what that means. I know now, because I know Dan Sullivan, and you're a good friend of Dan Sullivan, that that was a shift into the results economy and realizing that that was a bigger opportunity than being in a job situation, where you're getting an hourly wage, or a salaried position.

Joe: Yeah, yeah. Can I say something? Let me interrupt you right in the middle of this, because, yeah, Dan Sullivan, who you mentioned, he's the founder of Strategic Coach, which is a very high-level coaching program for entrepreneurs. He says you can be either in the time-and-effort economy where you get paid hourly, or you can be in the results economy where it's not based on time, but it's based on results.

You can make enormous amounts of money, like people like Richard Branson and Bill Gates, and Warren Buffet. They're not getting paid by the hour. They're getting paid by results. Or you can get paid hourly.

So, you're talking about when you didn't have those words for it at the time, but you saw that, "Well, working by the clock isn't probably the smartest way to actually get paid."

Dean: Right, that was exactly it. I'm so fortunate to have kind of learned that lesson early, early on.

And so that guided my decision-making process, when I was getting into business. I realized that getting into something like real estate is an opportunity to purely be in the results economy. And I knew that you could make good money for being good at what you do.

And I remember, it's amazing how, and we'll talk about this a little bit later too, but when you talk about good money, when you say those things like "back in that time," it's like making a 6-figure income was really good money. That's your thinking level. That was my thinking level. I'd be interested to hear what yours was.

But I remember thinking like, "If I could just make like 6 figures, that would be like I'd be on easy street." And so I remember thinking...

Joe: Now you're probably annoyed if you don't make 6 figures in a month, but that's no big deal.

Dean: Yeah, exactly. And so I remember, I was young, 21, and I remember having the foresight to think that, "I think it will be best for me if I focused my attention on working with people who are buying their first home and working with townhouses, people who own townhouses," because I knew that they would be younger people and my age wouldn't be as much of a factor as it was if I were selling luxury homes.

And I learned quickly that my age really didn't make any difference. But the fact that I had a focus, a target market right from the beginning. I was focused on those townhouses.

And at the time, they were about 350 or 400 townhouses in Georgetown, where I was. And so my, I started researching them and put together these graphs with all the prices. And 1980 prices were just going straight up. It was great.

And I remember the day that I got my license, the very first day, November 15th. Because there is a period of time from when you take your exam for your real estate license, and then the actual time when you get your physical license, and you can actually trade. There could be a 3- or 4-week window there.

So, our manager would let me come into the office and set up my desk and just be part of the office and everything, and access all the computer and get all the sales data, and all that stuff. So, I was kind of researching the townhouses and I had these flyers all made up that I was going to hand-deliver these flyers whenever I got my license.

And so the day my license came, November 15th, I hopped in my car, had my flyers all done up, and I started out delivering these flyers to all the doors, to every door of the townhouses. And in the second townhouse complex that I was delivering these, I met a lady who was coming in from the grocery store, and I was handing out my flyers. I had a graph that showed the townhouse prices.

And I was talking with her, and she said, "Yeah, we're looking for a house." And I remembered that I had seen one on inspections that morning, that sounded like what she was looking for. And I told her that. And she, I said, "What time does your husband get home?" And she said, "5:30." So I made an appointment with them to go and show her this house at 6:00, because she knew the street that was the area that they wanted to be in.

And so we got over to that house. They loved it. They put in an offer that night on this house, the very first day I got my real estate license. So I get this house sold, get their townhouse listed, which sold the very next day. Because, again, the market was really kind of hot right then.

So, here it is like less than 24 hours after having my real estate license, I had my first listing, my first sale, and my first listing that had sold. And all from just kind of like focusing on that target market, having a specific plan for going into something.

So, at that time, I had totally leveraged that because I had just delivered those flyers. And then I went out and delivered the flyers that I had just-listed their house. And then the next day, delivered the just-sold flyers.

So, all of a sudden like within a 4-day period, all of these townhouses had at least 3 flyers from me. And I ended up getting even more listings in there. It was like within 3 months, I had literally taken over the townhouse market in Georgetown. And it was just from focusing on that as a single target market.

I look back now and I realize, "Well, of course." That's why completely, totally makes sense to focus all of your attention on a single target market. But I didn't have those kind of words or that kind of experience for it, at the time.

Joe: Well, yeah, and I think the ability to focus is way beyond going and sitting somewhere and planning. The ability to focus is critical when you're out there exerting lots of energy. It's a difference of shooting with a rifle versus a shotgun. How much impact are you going to make?

Now, I want to talk about the subject of focus. And at the time we're doing this podcast, we don't have it up on ILoveMarketing.com, but I think we definitely should put it up there, is you have a 50-minute focus video that you did, a presentation that is awesome.

And one thing that many people in the marketing world know of you and refer you to, is a guy that's a really clear thinker, and someone that really knows how to focus in. And you teach marketing to people, which you're really well-known in the real estate industry.

How many realtors, do you think, have adopted some of the marketing strategies that you have developed and created, if you even had to put a number to it?

Dean: Yeah. Thousands. I don't know exactly. If you look at, good grief, we did big, 500- to 800-person events every month for 14 years. So that's 5,000, 6,000, 7,000 people a year for 14 years. That's a lot.

Joe: Yeah. That's a couple people, like 2 people.

What I'm saying, though, is you've got all these people, including people that are listening here that hear a lot of stuff, and there's a lot of different options out there. And one of the things about the whole creative world of marketing and selling is there's a lot of different ways that you can skin a cat. And that's like an analogy. I don't want anyone listening to this physically go out and skin a cat. That would be very cruel, bad thing to do.

There's many ways to accomplish many goals and try to go out and do a lot of stuff. But people that can't identify and select a target market, they can't nichify what it is they're doing, they have a really hard time when they think that everyone in the world should buy their stuff and is a prospect.

Focusing applies more to just setting priorities and where you're going to spend your time. It has everything to do with your success as a "marketer."

So, what could you say about the whole subject of focus? Focus in general for a person, and focus as it relates to marketing?

Dean: Well that example is a great example of focusing on a target market. And later on, one of the books that's made the best impact on me about focus like that, is a book called, *The P&G 99*. And that P&G is for Proctor and Gamble. So there's a book called, *The P&G 99*, and it's all the principles that they used to kind of guide their operations and their marketing. It was written by a guy who's a former P&G marketing guy.

And one of the things that really stood out to me, the number one thing that really jumped out at me, is that the idea of planning to dominate.

And so, when you hear those words, that's their #1 guiding thing is that they're going to pick a market. They're not just picking the market to kind of go and in and dabble in it. They're going into that market with an idea that they're going to dominate that market.

So, they're not going in with the idea of, "Let's just test some laundry detergent." They're going in with this idea that they're going to completely dominate the laundry detergent category.

So, that leads to really identifying the narrow, narrow niches within that. I just read recently that Proctor and Gamble just had their 23rd billion-dollar brand. So, they've got 23 separate brands that do over a \$1-billion a year in sales. And that's fascinating, because when you just look at the laundry detergent category, they've got Tide for people who want to get their clothes white. They've got Cheer for people who just want to wash all their clothes at the same temperature. They've got Era for people who want to get out tough stains. And they've got Sunlight for people who want their clothes to smell great.

So, every sort of subcategory of that laundry detergent category is a market that somebody could dominate.

So, that's where I kind of got a real clear vision of that idea of narrowing that target market and planning to dominate it. When you look at it as a stratification of your market, if you're looking at a real estate market, you've got the condos, you've got town homes, you've got kind of family homes, luxury homes, homes on golf courses, all the different types of strata that you can identify, that people would be looking for specifically.

And each one of them is a very specific target market. And it's always so much easier to go into a market like that and to be the dominant player in any one of those niches.

Because once you start dominating, the profits are so much better, because it gets easier and easier once you're established as the dominant brand in that category.

Joe: Yeah, no totally. Say that again?

Dean: I was going to say, what would be the equivalent, like when you were starting out, is carpet cleaning the first business that you were in?

Joe: Well, I, no, no. Actually one of the first things I did, I delivered papers, I sold gym memberships. In terms of a business, one of the very first businesses I was in, which failed, was I took all of the money that I had saved up delivering papers, and tried to sell advertising space on the outside of phone book covers. That was kind of a funny business, because knowing how lazy the average person is, instead of them even

having to crack open the phone book, there would be like this phone book cover to protect the phone book, as if anyone would actually want to.

And then there was an alphabetical listing, but it would only have one person, A, B, C, D, of what they are. And we would sell like a little ad. And we would never, of course, sell A to Z.

But basically, there would be like a name on the outside, and it would be like this thing you would have a little metal rod, kind of like a binder that you would throw a phone book in. So we tried to sell advertising space on it. That was one business that didn't work really well.

I did, however, give everyone their money back, because we never actually published the darn thing. That's a whole other story that we'll talk about, maybe on the IHateMarketing.com website or something, because that's one that actually sucked for me.

But basically, that was one of my first businesses. But the thing with carpet cleaning, the example I would give was when you have a carpet cleaning company, you can sell to anyone; apartment complexes, middle class, poor, wealthy.

And one of the things, even to this day is we do this, my company, Piranha Marketing, is the largest provider of direct response marketing information training, advice, strategies, ad templates, promotions, campaigns, you name it, to the professional carpet and upholstery cleaning, and restoration industry, people that do fires and floods and that sort of work.

We constantly teach them to target people that have more money. You can do that through certain types of subject categories, if you want to nichify, going after pet owners, allergy sufferers, people that live in very nice homes, high commercial, that sort of stuff.

And even with me selling marketing advice, because even, again, to this day, Nightingale-Conant, having the #1-selling marketing program at Nightingale-Conant, there are many different ways to sell marketing advice to people. But one of the niches that I sell to is professional carpet and upholstery cleaners.

So, there's a lot of general marketing advice that both me and you offer and do to anyone. Like anyone that listens to this podcast could be in any sort of business.

Now, in the cleaning industry, I niche the advice. Professional marketing, direct response training for carpet cleaners, upholstery cleaners, fire and flood damage restoration companies, that's different than someone that's selling marketing advice to personal trainers or someone that's selling marketing advice to chiropractors, or real estate agents.

Dean: Right. I was just going to say isn't it amazing though how it all crosses over?

Joe: Oh, totally.

Dean: So, most of your marketing knowledge, the progression, and the same thing for me, but progression for you as I've seen it, is that you really kind of learned your marketing by applying it to your own carpet cleaning business, and then realized that you could take what you've learned and leverage that by offering it and licensing it and selling it, and training other carpet cleaners to do the same thing.

And now, all of those lessons that you've learned there, the next level up now is that you've become this marketing genius that is advising all kinds of businesses.

Joe: Yeah, exactly.

Dean: Yeah, it all learns, and it's funny because it's the same kind of progression. I like everything that I learned about marketing started out with applying it to my real estate business. And that led to that same path of licensing and selling and training other realtors to do the same thing. And then, taking that marketing knowledge and applying it to other businesses outside of real estate.

And I think that the real point of that is that it doesn't matter what business you're in when you fall in love with marketing. The best thing that you could possibly do is apply what you're learning in marketing to the business that you're already in.

Joe: Exactly. And you, everyone, I think, would be really well-served to say, "I want to really create just this beautiful painting that I love. And the canvas of where I'm going to do it is my own existing opportunity, whatever that is, right now."

And if you don't have one, you're going to have to figure that out. But you don't want to try to paint everything. You want to paint like something that you can say, "Okay, this is my R&D lab. This is where I'm going to test everything out. This is where I'm going to try it out."

And the cool thing about marketing is you don't have to be perfect. And in many cases, a lot of it is playing a game where you're not going to win every battle. But if you win the war, you're going to have a very profitable business, you're going to make a lot of money. And, lo and behold, you're going to have a great impact, because marketing applies way beyond moneymaking ventures. You can use marketing to meet the love of your life. You can use marketing to save animals from cruelty, to getting put to death, whatever your cause is.

You take Bill Phillips. Let me use that as an example.

Bill Phillips wrote a book many years ago called *Body For Life*. That was his first book, and I was Bill's marketing consultant before he actually wrote that book and during the time he had written that book. And I was teaching the same marketing strategies I was teaching carpet cleaners to Bill Phillips in the nutrition, fitness, supplementation industry. And I gave him an idea that not only made millions of dollars, but also helped grant a lot of wishes for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

And to this day, that same campaign has granted, at this time, over 550 wishes to kids. And that's a very big deal.

So, you can use marketing for anything. You can use it to make money. You can use it to fund causes. You name it. And whatever you have that you're working on, and even if you're working for a company right now, if you really start thinking about like what you had said, Dean, about in any company who are the clients, what's the niche, what's the target audience that if you put your time, your effort, your communications into them, is going to give you the biggest return, the biggest bang for your buck?

Dean: I think you were telling me that when you were thinking about getting out of the carpet cleaning business, because you didn't think it was a big enough opportunity that somebody had told you that you were just going to end up taking that same... Tell that story, because I don't remember it exactly.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Actually, yeah. Take the same habits I had built, and I would be applying the bad habits to something else. Okay, yeah. It's a good story.

A lot of speakers have like their signature stories, and they have things and a lot of them are made up or embellished. This is absolutely true. This really did happen.

And I went jet skiing when I was early into my carpet cleaning business. I'd been doing it for almost about 2 years. And I was frustrated, and I worked my ass off, and I was working many hours a day and I wasn't making any money. As a matter of fact, I was going broke. I was actually in credit card debt. And it was costing me more money to stay in business than what I was actually grossing. And if you want to grow broke, go broke sitting on a couch, watching TV. There's more intelligent ways to go broke than cleaning carpets and sweating your butt off 10 to 12 hours a day and still not having money. And that was sort of the position I was in.

So I was frustrated, but I didn't want to work for anyone. I was a young guy. And kind of like you, I saw that in the time-and-effort economy, getting paid by the hour and having a boss, was not how I really wanted to live my life. I wanted to do my own thing. And at the same time, I didn't know what the hell I was doing.

So, I had a friend that I went to high school with that invited me to go jet skiing. And so the only reason that I went is because he said that the guy that owned the jet

skis was this multimillion-dollar real estate investor. And at the time, entertainment wasn't like in the top of my list. I was broke, I was in debt. You don't think real well when you're in that sort of pressure situation. And so that's where I was at.

But I was like, "Oh, this guy has a lot of money that has the jet skis. Maybe I could talk to this guy and see it as an opportunity to progress me somewhere than where I was at in this crappy carpet cleaning company."

And so I went jet skiing. And I finally had an opportunity, because there was 4 of us on this trip and this guy had 2 jet skis. So, while 2 of the people we were with were out jet skiing, I finally had an opportunity to sit down on the tailgate of this pickup truck with this guy down at a lake here in Arizona, Saguaro Lake.

And I said, "You know, I own a carpet cleaning company, and I've been trying to do it for a while. And I'm certified, I've gotten training in it. I'm real good at it and everything. But there's really not a lot of money in it. And I hear you do really well financially, and I was wondering if you could maybe share with me some opportunities or different things I can go into where I could make a lot of money."

And he said to me, he goes, "Well, are there any other people in your industry that are making a lot of money?" And I said, "Well, there's a couple of companies in the Phoenix area that make over \$1-million a year. To me, that's a lot of money. But they've been around for many years, they're established," and I was just coming up with a list of advantages that they had that I didn't, and why I couldn't make money in it.

And he said, "Well," he goes, "If there's other people that are making money in the business and you're not, there's nothing wrong with the business you're in, there's something wrong with you."

And I was like, "Well, no, all people care about is price. I'm certified. I've gotten training, I do a really good job. I don't use bait-and-switch, like a lot of these companies do." And he said, "Well," he goes, "You're like most people. You think the grass is always greener on the other side, and that if you're going to go into a new business, that somehow that's going to be the answer to you doing really well."

And he said, "What you need to learn, young man, is fundamental business skills, fundamental business habits. Because if you think that you're going to go into a new industry, you're going to spend another 6 months, another year, another 2 years learning the technical skills of another industry, so you can go out and repeat the same bad business habits that have caused you to be a failure in this one so far."

And I mean that totally like hit me like a ton of bricks. And it's not what I wanted to hear, but at the time it's what I needed to hear. And that guy was probably my very

best coach. I can't remember who it was. I've long forgotten. It was a one-day experience that was probably the equivalent of about a 15-minute conversation.

However, it impacted my entire life, because I left that trip and I said, "You know, the guy's right. I'm a young guy. I've got use of my limbs. I know how to read. I can work. There are people that are making more money than me that don't seem to be as smart as me. And why the hell am I not doing well and they are?"

And so what it got me thinking about was, "There are just things I don't know."

So, I made kind of a pact with myself where I said, "I'm not going to get out of this carpet cleaning business until I actually learn how to make it work. Because if I do, it's a copout. I actually am thinking that.

So, I didn't like the business. But what I didn't like is people have this term, Dean, where they're like, "I don't want to play games," in relationships. They're like, "I don't want to play games." And so they don't go out and they don't date, and they don't give themselves an opportunity to meet anyone because they don't want to get hurt.

And it's not that people don't want to play games. People love to play games. It's just playing a game that you actually win. If you could win the game, you'd be playing games all the time. And, I don't mean by manipulating people, I just mean setting it up so you actually know how to make it work.

If you don't know how to make a business work, I don't care what you're doing, the business sucks. But a lot of people that are in the business they're in and the job they're in, if they were making a lot of money, they wouldn't hate it. They would love it.

And it's not always about money. A lot of times, it's complexity. It's, a lot of times, about where your passion's at.

I'll tell you, though, most people that are selling a boatload of stuff and doing really well financially don't want to go shut their companies down. I don't know many people that shut down really profitable companies.

So, I left that trip and I said, "I'm going to learn how to make this business work." And that's when I jumped head-first into reading and studying, and said, "I'm going to learn what other people do." And it didn't even give me an answer to my problem. The biggest problem I had at the time was not technical skills, it wasn't management, it was simply marketing. I didn't know how to get people to hire my services.

And so that was the mindset shift that I first needed. So I acquired the mindset first, and then the marketing. Introduction to direct response marketing actually came

a couple of months after that trip, where someone gave me a copy of the Gary Halbert Newsletter. And we'll save that for another episode of I Love Marketing.

Dean: That's perfect. I was just going to say that I think that would be the perfect place to pick up next week.

Joe: Awesome. So, let's do it. We'll talk about that. And any final words from you, Dean, about focus? Because after someone has listened to us, you have a really good perspective on simplicity and clarity, and we're going to spend a lot of time on this podcast, for people that listen in, where I will ask Dean questions about focus and simplicity and setting your life up.

I'm known for ELF marketing, doing things, using marketing strategies that are easy, lucrative, and fun. You're known for simplicity and elegance and before, during and after, what to do before sale, during the sale, after.

So, we're going to talk about all that in future I Love Marketing podcasts.

But, famous last words about focusing to leave all of our listeners with?

Dean: I think that the big lesson from tonight was what you just said at the very end there. That it's not about focusing on another business. It's about starting with what you're already doing and making that one your laboratory, making that work.

I think what we should do is we'll put that focus video, the 50-minute Focus Finder video, up on ILoveMarketing.com, so that people can watch that. Because any ideas that people get are going to require focused attention on implementation. And I think that would be a great foundational thing for people to have.

Because I think going forward, we're going to have lots of things that people are going to be able to implement, things that they're going to be able to do right away, but being able to sit themselves down and focus long enough to actually make it happen is going to be a very valuable skill for them.

Joe: Absolutely. And if anyone feels at all overwhelmed at any point, watching Dean's video on focus is a total cure, in many cases, for overwhelm. So many people I've recommended watch this absolutely thank me afterwards. So, I think it could be some of the best 50 minutes that you'll ever spend in your life, just on getting things in priority.

So, thank you, Dean. And to all of our listeners, I hope you found this valuable, and you better stay tuned for the next episode of the I Love Marketing podcast.