



Richard: Hi everybody, Richard Tubb here with another interview. And today I'm joined by Derek Brown, the managing director at Pronto Marketing. Now, Pronto Marketing creates and manages all the moving parts of your Internet presence without it costing a fortune.

In the previous life, Derek actually worked at Microsoft where amongst of the roles; he was the director of product management for small business server. Since homing Pronto Marketing, Derek and his team in Thailand had helped hundreds of businesses with their website design, copywriting, SEO, social media and more.

Derek thanks so much for joining me today. How are you doing?

Derek: Good. It's a pleasure to be here Richard.

Richard: Fantastic. Now, you and I had known each other for a number of years now. In fact, I think my MSP was one of Pronto Marketing's first clients here in the UK. And you really helped my business to – the best way I could put it is to stop procrastinating about getting a good quality website live and doing what it should do, generate leads.

So, for anybody who's not familiar with yourself or with Pronto, perhaps you can give us a bit of background, share who you are, where you'd come from and a little bit more about what Pronto do.

Derek: Okay. As you mentioned, my background before founding Pronto, I was at Microsoft for 13 years. When I left, one of the things I've thought a lot about, I wanted to start a copy in. I thought about a need out there.

I actually went back to my experience when I was responsible for Windows small business server and how small IP service companies struggled with marketing. And I would go out and do road shows and user groups and SMB Nation and all these sort of things. I would hear that same thing about struggling in marketing and the number one reason you would hear was lack of time.

So when started Pronto Marketing, we thought about how we could we help a small business execute on their marketing. The same thing was also true just in life outside of SMB of MSPs.

If I was at a barbecue with a friend who owned a small business on Sunday, he said, "What should I do?" and I would say, "Send a newsletter." I would be a 100% sure he will never do it. He wouldn't have the time and he'd get busy and he'll have clients on Monday morning and you're in the tornado and the work doesn't get done.

Our idea when we started Pronto Marketing is we really wanted a do-it yourself service so that for some portion of small business marketing activities, we take responsibility and work like an extension of their team. So from designing a website to writing a copy to hosting, developing it, doing updates, posting blog post, sending out email newsletters, optimizing SEO, adding new blending pages or forms when they're needed; to do that in a subscription based service. It was affordable and a full service for the small

business. Today, we have over a thousand clients and the vast majority of those are some flavour of ITs servers provider or MSP.

Richard: Got it. Now, as I alluded to, my MSP used to be a client of Pronto Marketing way back in the day.

Derek: Yeah.

Richard: And the reason why we worked with Pronto Marketing was because frankly Derek, we were procrastinating about getting a website up there. And I don't think that's unusual you know, there's not a day goes by when I go to a networking event, meet an IT business owner, he hands me his business card and he says, "Oh, and ignore the website. It's a work in progress."

Why do you think so many IT companies seem to struggle or procrastinate when it comes to developing their website?

Derek: I think there's a couple issues. I mean, again it's the first is it for every small business owner, your first and foremost a technician or an expert and whatever it is you do, be it a baker or an IT guy. Anything outside of that is going to be a lower priority.

I also think there's sort of an allusion in some respects that a website should be easy. And I think especially if you're an IT and a technical guy, you sort of it's not totally abstract; you need a server and you need to do these things. And you got and go down that do-it yourself path and I can just find you don't have the time, it's hard to keep up, it needs to be updated and it's hard to be good at something that you don't do very often.

So it becomes this frustration and then many times the alternative is like, "Well, we need to get help" or you're going to go to an agency and maybe they're either very expensive or they do parts like, "Yes I'll develop your website but you need to have someone write the copy" or they'll do pieces of it that you have to put together. And then at the end, they'll just hand it back to you and say, "Okay. Now, update and take care of your website."

I think, it's that struggle of time and managing those resources and a little bit of the allusion that it should be easy when in fact it's not.

Richard: Indeed. I speak to a lot of IT businesses who probably classify themselves as like a jack of all trades, anything that's got a plug on the end of it; they expect to be experts in. And of course, even though most IT businesses would know

how to put together a website. You hit the nail on the head actually, finding the time to do it and to keep it going is incredibly difficult.

Moving forward then, what's the typical result of business should they expect to see when they got their website in order?

Derek: Right. Well, I'll just give you an example. At Pronto, when clients come on board, they give us their link to their Google Analytics account so we can track their performance and the great things in the website. Typically, if they had a website for some time, we have the historical data at all.

On average our clients see about a 51% increase in organic search traffic within about six months. Most of that or all of that I would say is not anyone big thing, it's frankly not rocket science, it's about doing a lot of little things well; just getting the website setup right and doing things right and the content right and Google local places right and lots and lots of little things.

I think an expectation should be, that your traffic increases and you want your leads to increase but if you want more leads, you need more traffic. First and foremost, to be getting that traffic and then secondly, to get a website that's converting leads.

Richard: Got it. Now, of course it's all well and good; building a new website and putting it out there, but in a very short period of time it becomes stale. From your perspective, how would you keep a website fresh and how'd you keep it generating good quality leads?

Derek: Yeah. I think it's important to be doing updates on a regular basis; that's why we setup our service around and "All you can need. Tell us when you want anything updating and make it easy." Because if it's hard, like even if you a new team member joining your team and you want to update the R-team page but you need to crop the photo, you need to write the bio, you need to remember how to put it on the webpage and of course there's been a dozen get done.

But, the first part of that process is you want to be updating your site on a regular basis; you change your service, you added your services, you added a person, either of that or an open blog aside for a second. But those website refreshers are important because they keep your website fresh in the search engine.

Our process is been that made that easy, "You know, we just hired Richard. Here's his picture, here's his LinkedIn profile. Put him on the website." And we write the bio, get the picture right and create it.

The other piece is keeping your website fresh in terms of content and that can be blog content, it's great for that. It's not just from an SEO's perspective but it's also a perspective of people coming to your website. It's a first impression on your business. Nothing looks worse than you come to a website and there's like a new section or a blog section and the last updated 2013. And, I've seen worst.

What does that say about your business? So this guy is really on top of things. What's going on here? Are they going to be focus? Are they on top of their business? So I think it's really important to watch what you buy off, you do it in a way that people are seeing things really fresh and updated and it's clear; it's a reflection on how you're on top of your business.

Richard: It's so important isn't it keeping up to date for that impression you get. Just a side-note; I was chatting to a PR company here in the UK, they should remain nameless. I'm really impressed with the conversation I had with them but when a way did my due diligence, looked at their website and of course the new section haven't been updated since 2011.

As you say, immediately all those questions popped into mind you know; are they on top of things? They talk but do they follow-up with actions? That type of things.

Derek: Right.

Richard: Yeah. That keeping content fresh is very, very important.

Derek: You know, some things that I hear sometimes is some way, "Well, my business comes from referrals." And you know, if you're doing your job well in a business like an IT server provider, it should be. But, you know that always underappreciates.

How many referrals did you get where the referrer said, "Hey, you should go check out their website. Here's the website. Bob's doing a great job for us." And they go to your website and they decide you know, I respect the referral but I don't, this pace is kind of like what happen you with the PR company.

And they walk away. You don't know what you're losing even if you feel like you build your business referrals, that it's unfair. You could be the best IT guy in the planet but if your website sucks; there's immediate connotation about the quality of your work that you might do for them. That's greater fault.

Richard: Absolutely. You probably never get to hear about those leads. They just never get in touch do they?

Derek: Right. No.

Richard: Yeah. When we're talking about contents and keeping the website fresh, in your opinion having worked with lots and lots of manage server providers and IT solutions providers, what type of content should be featured on their MSP website?

Derek: Right. I think one we've gotten strong about is like I kind of put it in three parts and the first is the home page. Really for a kind of lead generation business professional services; your ideal scenario is it that homepage close this lead and they pick up the phone and call you or send you an email or fill out a contact us form.

You know, you just want them to come to the website and goes, "This company will solve my problem. I need to get in touch with them." They don't necessarily need to read lots and lots of inter-page content on services.

First and foremost, I would have a compelling homepage that tells your story; "Here's who we are. Here's our value proposition. Here's what we're good at. Here's a testimonial or few from clients. Here's how to get in touch with us." Then as a second level, I do think a certain amount of, what I'll call inter-page content; "You know, we do this kind of network services. We provide these kind of security services. We're active in these verticals." Those can be important because x number of people want to go to that next step like, "Okay. It looks like a good company but do they address my issue or my need?" And will go do that kind of next step of due diligence. I think it's important to take them through that step.

I would say the third piece of content is more as it relates to marketing you're doing is if you're doing any kind of ad words or email marketing or display marketing or anything like that; you really should be building or having someone build landing pages for you that their specific to that advertising and that offer.



You don't want to just like say you have an offer, get your free security audit and you'll land them on a homepage that may have something about security audit but they got to kind of scroll through and look through a lot of information. You want them to land on a specific landing page that's got a form right there, that's got a picture and the security audit and it capture those leads.

I would say it's those kind of three pieces: a home page, that you hopefully just closes the deal right off the bat; inter-pages, for the people who want to dig around and get some specific info, also could help us specialize SEO sort of queries; and then do the extra work if you're getting SEO marketing to have specific landing pages to capture those leads, it makes a huge difference.

Richard: Got it, makes a lot of sense. Now, you touch upon it a little bit earlier in our conversation about blogging. Most MSPs when they think of content, they think, "Well, I really haven't got the time to be doing blogging, to be writing blog post." Why should a business be blogging in the first place?

Derek: I think there's a couple of reasons for it. One that we talked about earlier; it's a great way to keep your website fresh and just kind of showed that you're being updated. If you're doing original blogging of your own, it always helps with SEO, those things get index and the more activity in content, the search engine see that's better. It's also an opportunity for you, to position yourself as an expert; and it's you writing about such and such topic.

I don't think you have to do it a lot. I mean, really a well written once a month blog post would be about a thousand times better than no blog post. I think if you can't commit to it let's say once a month, then you do risk that looking out of date, but I don't think it's something that you have to feel like you're doing even on a weekly basis. I figure one or two at a month, I think that's probably realistic and doable.

Richard: Its interesting Derek. You know, I preach the virtues of blogging. I would say, I built my entire business off the back of blogging and the MSP business before but interestingly people say, to me they say, "How do you write so much content for blog post." The secret is, I don't actually write that much

I think there's almost, once you start doing consistently, like you say once or twice a month; it actually gives the illusion that you're generating a lot more content than you do because you can reuse that content and share it in different ways. Which I think, brings me on to my next question which is, the role that social media plays in generating traffic for a website. Talk to me a

little bit about how Pronto help people on the social media side things because they do go hand in hand nowadays, don't they? Social media and the website?

Derek: Yes. It's important to get those things setup and have an integrated kind of presence and branding across them. That's something we setup and take care about all our client when we get them started. Social media, it can depend, and for business and professional services, how much traffic comes from that?

Again I think it's important part of the checklist. I would say for most professional services, I wouldn't over invest in there but I will keep it fresh and I will keep it active, it's not that hard to do; just pictures of what you're doing or things little news about clients and stuff. I think it all just takes a few minutes here and there to do that. I think it's important and part of the online presence for any small business.

Richard: Understood, so you were telling me out there a little bit about how you might manage some of your client's Facebook profiles for instance. To what degree do you actually manage that Facebook profile? I'm presuming you help them post content but maybe when it comes to Christmas party pictures and things not so much.

Derek: Yeah. We kind of have a couple levels of the service. One is, getting everything setup right. Two, we can make sure that if there's content or syndicated content or blog content or things that we can manage for them, we keep those feeding into their page. But on third piece, we often call our social media program one plus one equals three, which is we need you the client to provide some things like those Christmas pictures that we can't provide.

Its social media and you should be showing that kind of face of your business and your people. And so, it's not really that hard; you just kind of get it setup right in the beginning and then kind of put it on your tick-load list to update periodically.

Richard: Yeah. You can action some of it but obviously you can't act so sure everything about the process, it still need that personal touch. But I guess when it comes to producing good quality copy blog post and other market material that's on your website and that. How important is a good quality copywriter for a website?

Derek: It's really important because it's perhaps underappreciated but a good copywriter can encapsulate your story and write it a way that's both pleasing



and well written to read and clear; so someone can go through a few sentences. I'm not going to read a book about you but a few sentences and go, "Okay. I get where this person started, where they're coming from, what they're expertise is, why should I trust them."

Our copywriters are well-trained and they have their kind of checklist and things that they need to say and points they need to made. It's a professional discipline. Some people have a real talent for being able to do that.

Richard: Absolutely. I mean, I pretty much write for a living now but I still re-chat some copywriters. It's fascinating when I introduce MSP clients to copywriters. They typically do an interview. The MSP tells the copywriters what they're trying to say, copywriter gives the text back and the MSP says, "That's exactly what I was trying to say." But it isn't as simple as that really, isn't it basically?

Derek: Yeah.

Richard: Yeah. Cool. Quick question, you know I mentioned that you're based in Thailand now. How would you even ensure that the content you generate at Pronto is your client is (I guess the best way I put it) geographically specific?

Derek: Yes. We have a majority of our copywriters happen to be Brits, so that helps. In every client, we got to know their business enough to speak to things that might be regional things apart or the vernacular that might be used to say we're in the tri state area or something that even a somewhat local copywriter might not be quite aware of that phrase. We take a little time with the client both us our on boarding process as we write and as view with them, to make sure we've got the tone right of what they want to say, that it sound appropriate for their market.

For that part of our business, we employ native English speakers; that along with the discipline to just communicate with a client, it gets it right.

Richard: Understood. We talked a lot about outsourcing website. There's going to be some MSP, some IT businesses that are listening to this and think, "Well, I got a decent website. Not really sure I need to outsource it." In your opinion, what are the signs that businesses should be outsourcing their website design and maintenance?

Derek: Well, I think there's a couple; is your website really up to date? And not just up to date with content, but are you for instance optimize from mobile 30, 40, maybe 50% of your traffics come in mobile these days Is it working? Are you

really integrating it into your activities? If you were a campaign and you want it a landing page; do you know how to do that and would it get done and who would do it? I think there's those elements that are important.

I also think about the cost to solo working with Pronto and I think about the value of the MSP's time. Yes, you could do it but of all the things you could focus on today or in this week, is that actually the highest and best use of your time? Should you be talking to some clients or trying to get some referrals or recommendations or following-up on a sales lead or something like that? I think it's a combination of the two; of what's the value of your time and also realistically, are you going to get things done in a right way.

Richard: Makes a lot of sense. We touched up on the value that Pronto bring and we'll come to you for just a second. Now you got a special offer for listeners of the podcast as well. But before we do that, I just want to close off really (to understand) what do you think are the most common mistakes that you see MSPs making with their website?

Derek: I would say a couple common mistakes that we see: one would be getting over ambitious in terms of website and this is the website that often either never gets done or has inter-pages or places on the website that are under construction. If you're going to do it yourself or if you go out to someone else to do it; keep it as simple as possible. A website is never finish, so don't try to feel like every page and everything and every use and every widget you ever imagine you wanted has to be on that website in the beginning; get the few critical pieces right and then kind of step by step go forward.

Richard: Yup. Makes a lot of sense. I see a lot of MSPs treating their website. I guess they're trying to answer all questions, when of course a website should be a little bit like a CV. It shouldn't try and give the whole story. It should give an introduction to pique people's interest and ask them to follow-up and get in touch for more questions.

Derek: Absolutely.

Richard: Yeah. So Derek we eluded a little bit earlier but you put together a special offer to our listeners of the podcast. I've got, you're allowed to share but perhaps you could tell us a little bit more about the special offer.

Derek: Sure. The way that Pronto service works is we have a one-time \$500 setup fees. That's all the design, copywriting, social media, everything we've been

talking about here. Then 30 days after that it's \$247 a month, for the all you can need service.

What will do for the listeners today is if they click on that URL, it will take them to a special page and they can get \$250 off or 50% off on the setup fee for being one of your listeners.

Richard: Fantastic! And I've got the URL here; its <http://tubb.co/prontomsp>. Using that link listeners can get 50% off the setup fees for the service.

Derek: That's right!

Richard: Fantastic! Well I appreciate you're extending that offer to everyone; that's really cool. As I've said, for everybody listening, I've known you for a long time Derek and I used to use Pronto Marketing for my own MSP business quite back in the day and lots of my clients use Pronto Marketing at the moment. So it really is a great service, very light price for anyone that's procrastinating your thinking about how to they're going to get a website, I've been running and it's a service that I would recommend.

So, thank you so much for your time today Derek. I guess if anybody is listening they want to find out more about Pronto Marketing, they'll find you on social media, how would they find you?

Derek: Well, just search for Pronto Marketing and we'll pop-up at the top at the top of search results.

Richard: There you go. You were practiced what you preached, you got everything down for the SEOs. Well, Derek thanks again for your time today, really appreciate it.

Derek: Sure. Thank you for your effort. It's great opportunity to be on the show. Thanks.