**How to Get High Paying Clients**

Hello. Thank you and I want to welcome everybody and thank our friends at SCORE for putting on this webinar. Our friends at SCORE are amazing, whether it is a webinar or free confidential counseling, SCORE is a great friend to small business. I love working with them. Before we get started, let's put our cell phones on Mute .

My name is Steve Strauss, I am the columnist for USA Today, I have written a lot of books including the book on the right inside, the small business Bible. Relevant for the conversation, I create content for some of the biggest companies in the world. Some of my clients include Microsoft, Staples, Bank of America. A lot of other Fortune 100 companies. I am telling you this to impress upon you that what I've learned how to do, you can learn how to do. That's what we'll talk about today. I have a lot of strategies on how to get our high-paying clients and I will get through them and dig in as deep as I can given the time allowed.

Here is the problem. We are the little fish. That is as a small business owner. We are the little fish. And there are bigger fish and bigger fish. It is not always easy being the smaller fish, the small business. We have to wear a lot of hats. And we feel like this. Have you ever felt this way? Even though I've been creating content online for almost 20 years, for the first 10 I was getting by. I was barely getting by and I was writing this column in USA Today and it wasn't that I did not have the talent, I have that. You have plenty of talent. I wasn't willing to work hard, because I was. The problem was I was targeting and getting the wrong kind of client. The business I have now is a creation company, I put on webinars. I write blogs and create videos. I create small business content. Originally I was doing this work for nonprofits and small associations and individuals, great people are not people with big budgets. One day, I stumbled upon the solution.

I was talking to an uncle of mine, I was lamenting the situation and he said I will tell you what I told the young friend of ours, this other friend was a real estate agent. He sold single-family homes and there was a lot of work at this time when the economy turned. The real estate market was not great. It was not easy. With this older gentleman told our friend is you can do little deals, or you can do big deals. You can have little clients or big clients. You will do the same amount of work but you will get paid a lot more for the big clients. The real estate friend of ours decided to go into commercial real estate to sell apartment houses. So for the same amount of work, he got paid a lot more money and turned his career around.

This idea, I looked at different strategies on how you find these high-paying clients. How do you get them? How do you impress them? How do you keep them?

I have come up with 20 different ways, a lot of ways to find and get these high-paying clients. Here is one of them. This idea of finding bigger clients works.

I was down in Los Angeles and have a great story of a company that did this. It was a little animation company 20 years ago and these two people started their company and they were 20 miles away from Disney so these young and embarrassed dose -- so these young animators said they want Disney as our client. But how will we get them? They physically moved 20 miles away closer to Disney. They moved to Burbank, California. In the course of the day there were meeting Disney people and now 10 years later, Disney is the biggest client. How fantastic is that? They decided they were going to get a bigger, higher paying customer. They physically moved closer to the customer.

Let me give you another example.

We can remember DOS. When Microsoft created DOS, they did not create it they had to buy it. They got a deal with IBM to put in software into the personal computers back in the 80s. They did not have it so Bill Gates did the deal and bought the software. That is thinking big. Then they had to figure out how much they would charge, and one of the first deals was they needed to charge 60 or $70,000 and they said they needed to charge over $100,000. Big companies can charge six figures. The first deal they were scared. They charged over $100,000 but they were thinking big from the start.

This is a strategy that I have used. Here's a list of some of the companies that I work with and the whole idea is the lesson is, you need to think big. You need to think a little out-of-the-box. I will give you some ideas today. If one of them works, we will change your life and transform your business.

I will share 12 different ideas. Different ways that you can target and get high-paying clients. Before you do that, I want to go over things that you can do, if you have smaller clients, they are different than bigger clients. But there are benefits to getting higher paying clients.

This is a list that is worth reading. More money, less work. You will get bigger and better clients and customers. You will get repeat business. Corporate clients, large clients, they like doing business with people and they stick around. One of my largest corporate clients I have worked with for seven years on an annual contract but they renew that every year. They like repeat business. You will get more referrals, you can charge more, you can share items, your brand will build by cobranding. You will get bigger deals and you will create a business that can scale and be sold.

You do all the work if you are self-employed. But you're getting corporate clients and you can get big deals, all of the sudden, you will have to hire people and you are creating a real business.

Here are the ground rules. You need them for sure. But they need you also. Large corporations have vendor lists, legal mandates, contracts in which they need to hire small businesses your they need small business and they need specialized business, whatever it is you do, there is a company who needs you.

You have to do great work. You have to be professional and be ready to handle such clients.

Here is a pizza. I want to tell you that I once had a client who wanted to get more business so we did a PR campaign in a pizza restaurant. One day we had a local restaurant critic come in and tried the pizza. They love the pizza and he wrote a glowing story about the restaurant and he got slammed with new business that weekend. He had to turn people away. He wasted an incredible opportunity. This is to say if you get one of these larger clients, you have to understand they are big, they are different than your other clients, small businesses, one of the beauties, you can turn quickly and make decisions rapidly. Big companies do not do that. Decisions, they come slow, there are a lot of layers, they require attention and they expect results. You have to do great work and be worthy of the trust they will put into you but if you do that, you will be rewarded very much so.

The question you have to answer is why hire you? You have to answer about why a large company, corporation, will hire you. What is your value proposition?

A value proposition is a clear statement of the tangible results a customer gets from using your products or services. It is tangible, you have to be able to articulate in your head and into someone else why they need to hire you. Will you get better results? Will you be more attentive? Whatever the case, that's what you need to think about as you start the pitch people.

There are two different ways to get higher paying clients. You can find them or they can find you.

Most of us go with the first strategy, you find them. I will share six different ways where we can go find these large high-paying clients.

We want to make more money. But better is if they find you. And I will share some strategies about getting your name in such a position that they want to work with you. They come to you. It's a fantastic thing when you open your email and you have a large potential client writing to you saying, we want to work with you. That is incredible. That is a lot easier than finding them. But going to find them and pitching them is typically how we start, how people start, let's talk about the for strategy.

How will we find high-paying clients?

There are six ways to do this, one is prospecting. We will go find the right customer and we will prospect and move them. The second is business and procurement matchmaking. It is a way of going to an event and meeting procurement officers, people who buy goods and services and have contracts to give. You will find out what the contracts are, tell them about your company and make that great impression, there are supplier programs, there is social media. We all know about social media, it has changed the game for business, it is another way of prospecting and fine people. You want to get into the big box stores. And the six one is asked.

Let's talk about prospecting. In high school I wanted to make some money and we call this a get rich quick scheme. This is not a get rich quick scheme. This is how to grow your business. What I will say, there are ways to utilize these ideas and get some immediate results, in the next couple of months.

The first big contract will not make you rich but once you start to do this again and again and you get repeat business, it can change your life.

There are several steps when we prospect. The first thing we need to do is make a list of companies that we want to do business with. Companies that we think likely would buy our services. Disney is the biggest of big fish, we need to target Disney so this is what I want you to do. Blue sky, come up with a list of contenders, companies who use products and services like yours, companies that patronize your competitors, a company in your location, I want you to think big, the outrageous and dream big, because that's what will work. That's what we want to start with. And behind your own list of what you know in the world, it will take some homework. You have to do research, use Google, there is industry news and publications, annual reports, look at the competition, that is not insignificant, the last bullet point. You want to look at your competition. If you have people that you compete against, who have corporate clients, that is something to think about. You don't want to steal their business but what you do want to do is know that they have figured things out, and you can do so also. If they found that company, you can also find the company or a similar one. The idea is making a list of likely candidates of companies that you can do business with.

Start with 10, maybe 20. It depends on how much work you want to do. This really can make a difference with regard to how you start.

What we are doing is, I do not like the work, funnel, but this is a funnel and the top is the company that you will work with and lower are the people you want to work with and below that is the contract and the work you will get.

We will start at the top with a list of the right companies.

The second step, find the right decision maker. How do you do this? This is where we stumble. How do you do that? There are some obvious things, go to the company website. We read about who is who in the company and you will get an idea of who the decision-makers are.

You can do a Google search, LinkedIn and Twitter are amazing, let's say Disney is the company that we want to work with, go into LinkedIn and there is a fantastic advance search tool. You can connect with people. If you really dig into LinkedIn they have a search tool that you can put in Disney animation buyer or Disney animation vice president. Whatever it is. And you can get a list of people whose job title is either that or similar to that.

That is amazing. Maybe you have one or two connections close by.

My friend created a company -- I have to slow down. He created the company where he was creating high-end yearbooks for sports athletes. He will put together a highlight reel in a leather bound book. Very high and expensive item. He would sell these to the lives of these people. How would he find these people, he started out with LinkedIn to find the people and their agents, and he wanted to create this whole business and he started to get word-of-mouth referrals. LinkedIn and Twitter is similar. You can find people who are having conversations. Your own network, let's say you find a company and you get a name and you call and you end up with a gatekeeper, just ask them, here's who I am in who would you suggest I talked to. Who might need our services? Who can help me learn a little bit more?

Get your foot in the door and be yourself and ask them who the key decision-makers are.

Once you learn that, as you do your research, what title -- you have to do some research. What are the titles that we will research? It could be the Vice President or senior manager of your division. He might be the HR department, a purchasing manager, the sales director, a sales Representative,

 procurement manager. They buy things for companies. Within LinkedIn, inside of Google, use some of these phrases to start to get your list of people that you want to find. What you're looking for is someone who has the budget to hire you.

Step number three, get the name of the person and introduce yourself to them. I would suggest you start with a snail mail. Send a chunky later, maybe you have a keychain, do you have a gift, find the person's name and get their address and you can write it out how likely they are to contact you. They probably get hundreds of letters a day. But if you send this letter with a hand address, you will stand out.

 Don't forget that to every person, their name is gold. Once you find a person, do not write, dear editor. Use their name.

I am pitched 10 times a day, what does not work is a generic bland boring pitch. You want to get a contract. Same kind of idea, your cold calling, I know what works with me, someone knows who I am, they write a quick email, with a clever idea. This is not dissimilar to what you need to do.

What does not work is to make things generic. Do not send a lengthy letter. What does work is being clever and quick and to the point and make yourself stand out, make it personal. You can say I love the work you have been doing. Whatever it is, make a connection with somebody. You will pitch yourself and then you want to go and meet the person. The whole idea is to find the right company, the right person, meet the person and to create a champion for your business inside that company. Get them invested and excited about you, start a conversation. The whole idea is to find the person, impress the person and meet them on the phone or in person.

The questions they will ask themselves is what problem of mine can you help solve? If you can help them solve a problem you will have your foot in the door and you will have your big client. It will change everything for you if you can solve the problem. Your job is not to sell, the job is to solve.

If they get that you are there to help them solve a problem, if you can make your life easier, we're off to the races.

Finally, you may have to do a page or proposal. There's lots of ways you can do proposals, you can do a Word document, PowerPoint, in person, and request for proposals. They will tell you how they want the proposal done. Here on the left is a proposal I did for Humana. They needed a small business speaker for events that they were doing, and I became the small business doctor. It was a PowerPoint. And that God is unlike client for -- and that got us a nice quiet for a couple of years.

You will follow up and follow-up.

The second strategy, business procurement matchmaking. A matchmaking event is an event where a company comes together in a convention center, these are people who have contracts that they need filled. They need vendors. And small businesses come into these events and have 15 minute meetings with each vendor. It is like speed dating for small businesses. You go to the event it is in your city, there are 10 different companies looking to hire, and you end up getting to meet six of these procurement officers. And you picture business for 10 or 15 minutes. The magic words are procurement and matchmaking in your town or industry.

Here is the MGM Springfield procurement and matchmaking. Springfield is thrilled to be part of the Expo. We are a leader in hospitality. To support this we are committed to awarding agreements. So you're invited to join us for a business innovation Expo. We need people who do casino supplies, food and beverage, and promotional print.

How great is that? You have a print shop, they need a printer. That is a big client.

Number three, supplier diversity programs. The matchmaking things, they are fantastic. I encourage you to do some research and find out if you can find any of those in your town. Maybe it is worth it to you to fly to an event in another state. If they offer big contracts, I have met people at matchmaking events from across the country. They can service these contracts. These are large contracts.

 Large corporations usually have supplier diversity programs. They hire small businesses specifically minority owned, women owned, LGBT own, historically underutilized business to do contracts. Walmart has 1 million employees, they hire a lot of vendors. If you are one of these categories of businesses and you can certify yourself, then you can start to bid on these contracts through supplier diversity programs. You found your company, you don't need to find the right person, go to the website, type in supplier diversity program, you will see a list of contracts available to you to bid on. Perfect. Fantastic. Another way to get business.

 Social media. Another way to find the people that you need to find. I mentioned LinkedIn, I know a woman when the recession hit she had a PR company and she lost 70% of her business. This was in 2007. She did not know what to do. Twitter was new. She and -- she went to twitter and used hashtags of people in her industry. She was in the PR industry and she found conversations and want to people who were tweeting about franchising and she inserted herself in these conversations and she met these people and wanted to help them. She was looking to help. At the end of that year her business grew by 29% because she found a lot of new corporate clients using twitter, hashtags, and using groups and got to know them and impressed on them and they hired her.

Facebook is the same thing. We have the social media tool available, it is called social networking. Use this to network socially. It works well.

Getting into big box stores, I don't have time to drill into this too much but here is the essence of how you do this. Find out who the buyer is. There are buyers for these different companies. You want to pitch the buyer, you find the right company, the right person, and you pitch the person. In this person the person is the buyer.

I suggest you send them an email, emails can get lost. People get overwhelmed. It is better to send a personal letter or go to a tradeshow in your industry. This is a great way to meet buyers. If there is a tradeshow coming up, go to the tradeshow and you can still meet different buyers, different people. You find out who the buyers are and you can meet them. Follow-up with a handwritten thank you note, as a first-time buyer, you have to do something special for the buyer to prove your mettle. It maybe you have to offer free shipping or a discount, you should be willing to do that, you want to get your foot in the door to get into a big box store to have that distribution offer available to you. >> That is fantastic. It may cost you a little bit to get your foot in the door but it is worth it. This is another way to find a big client.

Finally, just ask. Ask people within the company you should speak to. Ask your network if they know anybody. You might go online and engage in a conversation. Does anyone know who I can meet with? Go to LinkedIn. Put out the word. Asking works. People want to help. But they don't know you need help unless you ask them for help. >>

 It works.

That is the first set of strategies. You go out on prospect and find contracts and people and companies that you want to work with.

This is a long-term strategy. This will not happen overnight. You want to get high paying clients and customers to find you.

How do you do it?

You want to become a thought leader/build a brand. Create an online typically brand that people find and they like.

Second, advertising. Advertising, get your name out there. They learn about you via advertising and they come to you. Third is a search engine optimization. When people type in a search term they find your name. They go to your site and go to your profile. They love what they see. That only happens unless you do a great SEO.

We have content marketing and we have referrals. Referrals are a great way to get business. Someone says I work with Jim and he is fantastic, then they come to you. That is the best kind of advertising.

Becoming a thought leader, this is the goal of what I'm sharing today. This is what works with me. I was the USA columnist but I was not getting a lot of work out of it.

 I needed to work my social media following. I had to take what I did, if you have a product business, this is less applicable. But if you have a service business, you are a lawyer or doctor, if you can position yourself as a thought leader, as an industry expert, that will be fantastic. How do you do that? One way is publishing. You write a blog. You speak at conferences. Maybe you get on podcasts. You want to create a social media following. For me, once I have created a significant social media following, that is when I started to get people finding me. They like the idea that I can help share the word to my network about their business. If you become a thought leader and you do what I am telling you here, you will get people to find you. They will want to work with you. They want your distribution system. You can share their message with the world. How do you do that?

You have to have a great website. You have to have social presence. PR. What about your book? There is nothing better in the world and having a book. It's a lot of work but it impresses people and get your name out there. You are known as the expert. You might even want to go on TV.

The first time I went on TV, they got me a local TV gig and I put that on my website. And I became the "thought leader."

Second is advertising. You want to get your name out there and having people find you. You can do this physically, you want to use Google, Facebook, the best thing I know to do when you think about advertising, let's say you are an accountant and you want to do local accounting work. There is the Google keyword planning tool. This will help you find the keywords and phrases and put those in your ad. This is what really works. You find the right key phrases and you create an ad for yourself and you will get clicks. You only pay when someone clicks on your website. Someone sees your ad, if they do not click, you don't have to pay.

You can use industry websites also. But advertising is a great way for getting your name out there where it is television -- whether it is television or whatever.

You can do it online. Facebook ads are a great way to find the audience you are looking for. You will find some big name people.

SEO is a process of creating a website that ranks high in Google searches. How did the companies find people they want to work with? They do Google searches. If you can get your website to the place where it ranks high, fantastic. There are pros and cons, it is free, it is long-lasting but it is time-consuming and it is not easy to do.

Let's say you sell these flip-flops and you want people to buy them. You create a specific page and use the Google keyword planning tool and you create an article. Your blogging about flip-flops and you find links and you get to plug in. This will rank higher and higher and then companies will come to you. People will find you and companies will find you, that is great.

Social media content marketing, I recently wrote a column about these young women, one was a lawyer in the government and the other was a person who did deals on Wall Street. Very smart people. But they were bored with their careers. And they did traveling together. They posted their pictures on Instagram and before they knew it, they got a following because they had these beautiful pictures that were stylish. They became social media stars. They charge $20,000 to have you tweet about their business. And companies come to them. They use social media, the power of social media, to create a name and become a media star.

The other way to do it is to do content marketing. You can create some great content and add links to your content in the article or video and you get it out there and people will start to find it. It gets shared. People start to find you. Content marketing is a great way to find companies. You create good content and you add links you start to share, other people share, and people click back to your site.

Finally, become a referral engine. Here's a book my brother wrote. He did not like writing but he wrote a book about real estate. He got referrals for 10 years off of that. To get referrals, it is word-of-mouth, word-of-mouth advertising. Creating a referral network works. I'm sorry I'm rushing through the slides.

There are 11 different ways on how to make some big money and work less. If you have big contracts, we will have people helping us and you will make more money. You can even work less if you want to.

You have to pitch them, what you find them, -- once you find them, what makes you unique? Who else have you worked with? That is the essence of your pitch in your proposal.

Do you live happily ever after? Sometimes you do. Here are three mistakes to avoid.

Understanding and managing expectations. Large clients expect to be treated well. Do your work as if you're in their league. Do not bite off more than you can chew. Do not fail your client or business or team. You have to be ready if you get one of these large contracts. You want to do the work properly for them and do not put all of your eggs in one basket. >> For things I want you to remember, yes, take it personally. You want to create a personal relationship with someone and if you do that you forge the relationship and they will hire you and if they like you they will rehire you. It is a partnership. You will add extra value and solve their problem. You will have more work that you know what to do with. It is pretty amazing.

This is called, "big money, less work." Your -- I have created this website. Take a look at this and what I will do is share on a deeper level and walk you through the process on how you create a social media following. Have you create a proposal? I will share all of these things on a much deeper level than I can do here on the webinar. But this is a great place to start. If you're interested, I would love to see you there.

Any questions? Thank you for listening. I hope I have inspired you to start to think outside of the box and realizing that this is a viable option.

 Thank you. We will have the Q&A portion of our call. >> If we do not have time to get your question today, we apologize. Mentors are available online after the session that can help you apply the strategies that were presented today. >> What do you do if you are five minutes away, you are close to a client that you want to do business with, but the person in charge does not open the door to listen to what you can offer. What do you suggest?

The issue of gatekeepers is one we all deal with. If you can really try to forge a personal connection with a gatekeeper, with the assistant, and let them know not that you want something from their boss but you have something to offer. You have something that they need. Let them know that.

If you can go around the gatekeeper, that is possible. Maybe you can go to LinkedIn and find a way to find them, maybe you can go on to their website to find their email and if you write to the person directly and the ideas you want to stand out and be personal. Those are the suggestions I would have.

 Can you advise us to what titles are being used by people who buy content or writing?

Usually, it is the marketing people who will do this. Maybe it is public relations, look for a marketing manager, media content manager. It might be editor-in-chief. I run a website for a large corporate client and my title is, editor-in-chief. Those are the people who have the budgets, the ideas who will be buying. People who buy content are usually marketing and PR people. >> How do you learn to create an effective search of key decision-makers? >> I wrote an article about this, if you Google my name in LinkedIn, I walk you through the process of how to do this but if you go to LinkedIn you can find it. You can find a search function and they are, it allows you to click on different boxes of what you are looking for. If you're looking for a title, name, company, it is a matter of digging into LinkedIn and looking at the different options that are available. It is pretty intuitive. You will see you can find what you want pretty easily. >> Where do you find the procurement matchmaking events?

You want to do a search for them.

 You want to do matchmaking in your industry or region and you do that using Google.

Do you happen to know how much the matchmaking events generally cost?

 My educated guess the answer is probably nothing. There may be a minimal fee may be under $50. I cannot imagine it is more than that. The events that I have been to, I have not been charged. I don't think there is a charge but if there is, it is a small one. >> If you have any advice on how to find companies, that are looking for professional videographers, have you find them?

Build your competitors, -- go to your competitors. You want to see who else is buying videography work. Go to your competitors and see what they do, go to their website and find out who they are, do some research. Maybe you ask a company in a different city who has some corporate clients. Send them an email. People like to help. Maybe you offered to take them out to lunch. Can you suggest to me who I search for within the company? People like to help. If you're not being seen as a direct competitor, they can give you advice. >> May have met with somebody at a company, -- they have met with somebody at a company, what is your advice on how many times to follow up?

That is a tough call. I cannot say there is a number. But you know when we are past. We know when we have crossed the line. Someone has to hear about you seven times before they make a purchasing decision. Seven times. Is the first time is an email and the second time is a couple of emails, that is only three or four times. At some point you have to create a sense of urgency. If you can let me know, I would appreciate that. Something like that is important. And if after that, you hear nothing, that is an answer also, unfortunately. >> Who and how should I connect with somebody in the media or radio to do a story?

On my website, I will go to this extensively. For our purposes, the answer is you want to find a writer who covers what the story is. I have written about this quite a bit. You want to find a writer who covers the area that your business is about. But do not pitch a story about your business. You have to come up with an angle about your business, and angle that your business will fit into that is newsworthy. >> You have to come up with a unique story that engages your business and then you can find a writer who will write about that topic. Whether it is a local news reporter or a website, you pitch them that idea. That is what works. Come up with a different angle and find the right person then you write a personal email and maybe even complement them. >> Do you have any advice on how to prioritize methods?

PR is something that you need. It can pay big dividends. If you get a reporter or a writer or editor interested in your business, and they publish something about you, that is fantastic. You can forever more republish that on your website. >> I hired a PR firm and they got me on TV. That was worth paying some extra money because that TV clip ended up on my website for many years. It gave me a lot of credibility.

 Whatever Al that will give you the most exposure is the one I would go with. >> We should mention

 HARO which is help a reporter out. Reporters are looking for experts every day. They are looking for someone about health and fitness, whatever. So go to HARO and you can sign up and you can pitch the reporter.

That is all the time we have for questions. I want to thank everyone for joining today and submitting your questions. We had over 1000 attendees today. If your question was not answered, please reach out to Bhaskar mentor and they can assist you -- please reach out to a SCORE mentor and they can assist you. We will send out a slide deck after the recording.

On behalf of SCORE I want to thank you for taking out the time to attend this session.

 Thank you. We hope you will join us for the next webinar next Wednesday. Thank you again. >> [ Event concluded ]