

Interview with Braden Pollock, Legal Brand Marketing

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Here's your program.

Michael Cyger: Hey everyone, my name is Michael Cyger. I'm the publisher of DomainSherpa.com, the Domain Name Authority and the place where you can learn how to become a successful domain entrepreneur directly from the experts themselves. Today's show is focused on the niche, a small area like a segment of a market. The money is in the niches. I really believe that.

I started my last media company on focused on Six Sigma - A methodology that provides businesses the tools to improve the ability of their processes. It truly was a niche - a subset of total quality management that was practiced by almost every company in the 1980s. You probably never heard of Six Sigma but 600,000 unique readers per month relied on my media company and I developed it into an online magazine, a print magazine, a job score and a marketplace and much more. Amazon.com is the biggest online store on the internet. Name something that they don't sell, but before they were Amazonian they only sold books - nothing but books. That was their niche. Many people think that niche businesses are limited, that they can't grow into something big, but really they are not limited. Niche businesses are an easy backdoor entry to the big stage.

Today's guest is going to show us just how he did that. Joining us is Braden Pollock, co-founder and managing member of Legal Brand Marketing, a company dedicated to providing marketing support and coaching to attorneys around the United States. He owns domains including 1800duilaws.com, duiattorney.com and drunkcrivingdefense.com. Braden, welcome to the show.

Braden: Thank you, good to be here.

Michael: Braden you own these fantastic domain names like 1800duilaws.com. From my research it's the largest website on the Internet related to dui defense. And for those not familiar with the acronym dui is driving under the influence of alcohol. Last I read I think your site services

about 14,000 unique visitors per day. How many domain names do you currently own that are related to dui?

Braden: Dui specific probably in the 10,000 range. I own more than that. I own many more legal domains but probably dui is 9,000 or 10,000, in that neighborhood. We lost track a long time ago.

Michael: I bet. And did you launch Legal Brand Marketing just focused only on dui domains and dui lead generation?

Braden: Yes, initially. We branched out into other vertical since but for the past seven and a half years it has been dui only.

Michael: And how many of those roughly 10,000 dui related domain names are built out websites with content?

Braden: I would have to check the latest stats. We launch a few hundred more every week so it's many thousands - maybe 8,000.

Michael: That is amazing. And all of these websites are focused on dui and fall under the umbrella of your company Legal Brand Marketing. Can you describe the mission and purpose of Legal Brand Marketing?

Braden: To make me fabulously wealthy. Isn't that an appropriate answer? The most honest isn't it?

Michael: Alright I'm not going to edit this so...

Braden: I'm okay sharing that with people. I want to retire on a beach somewhere with Frank Schilling.

Michael: I think we all aspire to hang out with Frank on the beach.

Braden: Right. The objective was lead generation. So initially the first website was 1800duilaws.com which if I knew then what I know now would not be my first website. But it was merely a way to help dui lawyers through a national brand generate business because there are so many guys since this

almost eight years ago when I had the idea. These guys had their own little individual sites out there if they had a site at all back then. Believe me when I was marketing back then at the conferences I'd get answers like: What do I need a website for? Nobody asks those questions any more thankfully. But it was merely a way for me to market nationally and be able to provide local coverage at a much, much lesser rate than these guys ordinarily could afford. So I was taking out national banners on yellowpages.com. I don't do that now. It's not as effective as it used to be, but that kind of thing. And these are banners that were \$5,000 to \$8,000 a month and a solo guy can't afford that, a solo attorney. This way they were able to buy into that kind of marketing. We had lots and lots of national presence like that.

Michael: So I did a search using Google Ad Words Keyword Tool yesterday on dui, dui attorney, DWI, a bunch of others. It turned out the phrase dui attorney has an average cost per click of \$43. I was amazed.

Braden: Shhh.

Michael: Yes.

Braden: Don't tell anybody that. There is going to be a lot more competition now.

Michael: Actually what amazed me even more was that Houston Dui Attorney had an average cpc of \$80. Dui Attorney Phoenix, get this, it must correlate somehow to the number of duis in that city, but Dui Phoenix had an average cpc of \$99.

Braden: The highest I've ever seen was Dallas at \$105. He didn't stay at that bid for long. He got wiped out pretty quick.

Michael: But this is the average cpc supposedly.

Braden: That was the highest cpc I'd seen. That was an actual bid. We made sure he paid that. The thing is that the dui defense is a unique industry in law really. It is a subset of criminal defense and the difference between criminal and dui is that while dui is indeed a criminal offence it is non-criminals that

are committing these crimes. So it is the average Joe that gets a dui who has a credit card in his pocket and really wants to make this thing go away. And so it is a pre-paid flat fee service as opposed to many other legal services. And it can be very lucrative. And when you see these super high cps in certain geos it's because it is a major metro, there are a lot of lawyers; there is a lot of competition that just drives the price up.

And major metros obviously it's more expensive in Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, L.A. and Seattle and Chicago. These are expensive cities to begin with. So a dui might be \$3,500 or \$5,000, whereas if you are in Dubuque, Iowa it is \$1,500.

Michael: And the other beautiful thing about this niche that I love is that it doesn't have a long lead time. You know if you are selling CRM Software or something like that you could have a six month or twelve month lead time to actually close the deal. Here if somebody is doing a search on dui that deal is probably going to close like in ten minutes or a day.

Braden: Yes, over the phone typically. And we actually train lawyers to close them on the phone right away, take their credit card number. The person doesn't have to come into the office.

Michael: Really? Okay so your process seems pretty forward. You get traffic to your website, it converts into referrals where you collect information about people, or you have them dial a phone number and that converts into revenue. The attorneys are paying you revenue at cost per lead. What are your best domain names?

Braden: Before you move on I'd like to actually explain that. It is a CPL model typically because we generate leads. Lawyers can't pay for leads usually. Now I don't want to get too complicated, it is a flat monthly rate. So it is an all you can eat. Now we can monthly adjust that rate but we typically don't. We make sure that they get enough volume to warrant their monthly rate. Then we will adjust or do some more marketing if it goes up then we will go back to them but if it is high one month we don't call and say we are raising your rate. But if it is high for six months then we might call them up

but lawyers can't fee split. There is one complicated work around that I won't get into but typically you have to charge a lawyer a flat rate.

Michael: Interesting, but they can buy cost per click ads on Google.

Braden: Every state in the country, every bar in the country won't allow fee splitting.

Michael: Got it. So would you say your dui empire is built on accessible search engine optimization? You have got an SEO strategy that moves your websites up to the top, generates these leads, which you then monetize on a monthly basis from the attorneys?

Braden: I see where the line of questioning is going and the answer is going to be all of the above. We have first of all 1800duilaws is a massive, massive site that we have been building for years and that are thousands, and thousands rates, plus we have thousands of websites which are either feeder sites or redirect or somehow connected. So we are doing everything. We are writing content. Every day we put up new content. We are linking, we are doing social networking, and we are doing everything that you could possibly imagine, Facebook groups, all of them, Twitter. So I think we have left no stone unturned and certainly avenues we have gone down that don't work we stopped that. But we chased after everything from retargeting to everything in between.

Michael: So your company has been around for about eight years. What has been your company growth rate over time?

Braden: The first year was a little tough because people didn't understand what it is that we were doing and lawyers don't trust anybody because they are lawyers. So it was tough to get over that hump. And then after about 12 months we started signing people up and then I bought out another directory that wasn't actually making any money but it had a client base. And I bought it from the most well-known dui lawyer out there because he had built a website for himself and just added people on and so that was the consolidation. And then there was big growth after that. And then for the next five years I had a salesperson and there was steady growth. Then she got

married and left and I decided to take over sales again and there was a big pop in growth.

Michael: So let's see if there is collation or causation there, but I want to go back in time to see how you got to today. So it was about eight years ago that you bought your first dui related domain name. Did you start Legal Brand Marketing first and then say I want to go after multiple areas or did you buy a dui related domain name and say wow this is quite a space? How did it start?

Braden: It was all dui for years. I started buying other names and other legal verticals two or three years ago. And really didn't do a whole hell of a lot with them until recently. So our focus was just dui. Initially it was just the one directory and then it became three directories overnight through acquisitions. I started acquiring, I tried to acquire all my competitors initially and then there were too many and I couldn't keep up. I made offers but you can only spend so much money. And then I started buying domain names building out a pure site and redirecting and just continued from there. And then as I got further into the domain space and learning more about the industry then I started buying other domains that made sense that were good deals. And I am always after a good deal. And then we've since I've gotten involved with Epic and so we have built out a lot of sites on the platform in which case I don't need to focus just on dui, it can be anything. But now we've got a domain administrator and I've got the infrastructure to buy other domains and monetize them.

Michael: So when you started off you started buying dui domains, you started with you first dui domain, how did you pick your first dui domain?

Braden: Initially I thought 1800duilaws.com was very clever, 1800dwilaws.com, and add the toll frees and the domains and that made sense. Now if I knew then what I know now I would not have picked that domain, I would pick duiattorneys.com, (which I own now and I paid a lot more for it than I would have years ago). And I tried to acquire all the other generics. Some of which I have and resold. But a generic makes a lot more sense than the toll free although the toll free in the domain does have value because we can run cpc and we will get calls but no clicks. People will see

the phone number and call it without clicking. So we get some free traffic that way.

Michael: So you would have done with a generic name rather than a brandable name to start with even though you have the phone numbers to go with it first.

Braden: Well the toll free .com doesn't give me any type in traffic. Now it is a brand so now we are starting to get some but duiattorney.com for example and Chicagoduilawyer.com (I own thousands of domains like that) that gets direct navigation, which is just an added bonus, you don't have to build a brand.

Michael: So I did some research on you Braden before the interview here.

Braden: Lies, they are all lies.

Michael: You have been an entrepreneur all your life. When you started this out was this one of the entrepreneurial activities that you had going on the side or did you say I want to be in the dui directory business, I've got a budget set aside, I'll run with it for two years a see if I can make a go of it?

Braden: Believe it or not I have a tendency to juggle various businesses and I have more than I can handle now. But at the time I had another business. It was immigration related and went right into the toilet right after 9/11. So I was looking for something new. And when I got into this space I jumped in with both feet. And it was a full time 95% of my efforts went into building this directory.

Michael: So you were focused on finding the directory structured, finding the articles, writing the articles, what else went into...?

Braden: I did it all. I was researching, I was writing articles, I was buying ad space, I was going to conferences, every other weekend I was somewhere in the country at a breath testing conference or a field sobriety instructor course or a dui legal education training program, I was everywhere.

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Michael: So how did you develop that in the early days when you first started out eight years ago? I don't think you were using the platform that has now become Epic in those days. Were you hard coding the websites and the directories or were you using some sort of script?

Braden: I had a full time in house webmaster. One guy, he did everything at the time and eventually we hired somebody else, and somebody else and somebody else.

Michael: And were you monetizing the business in the early days the same way you are today?

Braden: There has been a lot of spin offs since then but initially it was flat monthly fees for all the lawyers. I probably sold a few text ads back then but that was about it. And that was an evolution so we sold ads for Mission Interbox and we sold ads for auto insurance. Now I am in those businesses as well. But initially we were just selling advertising and that was my first introduction to these related, overlapping industries.

Michael: So in your directory you sell a geographic area, major metropolitan area. So there is going to be one attorney that owns all of Houston, one attorney that owns all of Phoenix. Is that the way it works?

Braden: Correct. My program runs off of counties. Some do zip codes but we license out territories by the county. And so I've got attorneys that cover more than one county. Most attorneys have more than one county. I have a couple attorneys that cover the entire state that they are in.

Michael: And they want to be exclusive to a county or a city or a state.

Braden: They do because they don't want the competition. There is a little bit of a race to the finish, so if someone goes online and they fill out an inquiry I like to think that they fill out three inquires. And the sooner you can get to the phone the better. We coach our clients because if they are successful then we are successful. If we are not successful then they leave us. So we make sure that they are doing all the things right. We make sure they have a smart phone and they are getting there emails wherever they are.

Whoever it is that is taking those calls, whether it's the attorney or whether it's an assistant. And we want to make sure that they get back to the client as soon as possible. And we also say that if it has been more than 20 minutes the lead is stale because they are looking now and searching now and if they have submitted an inquiry through one of our sites they very possibly submitted an inquiry through somebody else's site and maybe that lawyer was available and calls them right back.

Michael: So your business really isn't just about selling advertising and getting them leads on a regular basis. It's making them successful and everything that goes into it. It's the lead-time between when the lead was submitted and when they contact them, it's how they interact with them, it's the technology related to it. So really what you are doing is partnering with the attorneys to make sure that they are successful.

Braden: It's more about creating that relationship than about just having a client. After some time then they can work on their own and their economist. But we like to make sure that they are heading in the right direction so that the program works for them. And then if they have any issues down the road then we will reconnect with them and make sure they are doing everything right.

Michael: So I was thinking about this and how important the lead time is to get in contact with somebody who has a dui related issue, but really you could look at any industry where you are selling leads and say lead time is important. If I call three window washers and I want somebody to come out to my house the first one to call me back and schedule an appointment is probably going to get the job.

Braden: That's right. The first one who is going to call you back also proves that they have better customer service than the guy who calls you back three days later. What do you think about a service provider that calls you back three days later? Well you are not that important to them, right? That is not the kind of service that you want. Are they going to show up on time if you hire them? I wouldn't hire that person. So that is why we say get back to them right away and if they say oh my God it was just one minute ago that I clicked the submit button and now my phone is ringing, your answer should

be well this is the kind of service that we like to provide. And I think it is really any industry.

Michael: I agree. So let's talk about how you built your dui empire. You talked about launching a few hundred domains you said per month. Right?

Braden: Yes.

Michael: New domains being launched per month means that you are taking a domain name and building out a website on the domain name.

(Crosstalk)

Braden: With repurpose content. So we can't launch them that fast with original content. We just can't write content that fast. And we do write a lot of content but we put it on our hard coded sites. So Epic launches a few hundred sites a week for us and that's all repurpose content.

Michael: And when you say repurpose what does that mean exactly?

Braden: It's an aggregated site. It is aggregated content. So all the content whether it's a You Tube video or an Ezine article, that sort of thing, all this content is aggregated which then becomes a new site. So Google is okay with it because all this content is from various sources. All provides attribution so it's legit. Google is okay with it. I've actually been to Google meetings and they have looked at the platform and they are fine with it. So now we have got this site, the aggregated content and it is all keyword based. So that is why these sites work well. And they are ranked fairly well based on that key term. And then of course there is some cross-linking, not too aggressive cross linking. You don't want to do that because then you become a link farm. But the platform seems to work. It's built on a modified Word Press platform.

Michael: Great so how are you finding 200 domain names or how are you finding all these domain names for which you are then launching a few hundred domain names per month?

Braden: Well I had a head start. I had thousands of domains in my portfolio that was redirecting before I started building them out on the Epic platform. Some of them we had hard coated. Many hundreds we had hard coated over the years. But what happened was we would build out a site and then never go back to it. It had no linking, it had no updates so a few would pop up and do well but very few. And most of them was just language and do nothing. So I needed to come up with a better system. So everything that did nothing, that didn't get any ranking we killed those and put them on the Epic platform so that now they get rebuilt and there would be linking and then they would cause updates because that is part of the Epic program is they add new content every week, every couple days depending on the program that you have.

Michael: And is that working to drive up those websites that weren't getting any traffic before? Now they are rising in ranks?

Braden: For sure. I've got sites that are platform created that are number one, number two and number three in Google for the term. They are niched terms but we are talking about sites that are legal terms that are not entirely obscure. Something like DC lawyer. That is fairly broad. D.C. isn't a big state but DC lawyer is a good term. I think I am number four with my sites last time I checked. There are a lot of sites like that, that do really well for that specific term. And the thing is that how many leads do I need from a site like that to give me an ROI? So if you put up a site and you say well it brings me one lead a month well that is not anything to write home about. But what if you have 10,000 of those? Now you are generating 10,000 leads a month - that is significant. And so it is all about scaling it. And that is why I went towards platform development because it is scalable.

Michael: Do you find that the 80-20 rule, the Pareto Principle applies to your businesses as well where 80% of the leads are generated by 20% of the websites.

Braden: Sure and the sites that do well – so for instance we have duilawyer.co which was actually given to me by the registry through their founders program if I built it out. And it does very well. It doesn't do well in Google but it is on the first page of Yahoo and Bing, it does fantastic, and

generates lots of leads. And some generate nothing but when you look at the average over thousands of them it makes money. So the ones that work we give those more love than the ones that don't work.

Michael: Makes sense. So you continue to add more and more websites every single month when will enough be enough. Will there ever be enough? Will you keep going until you have a million dui related websites so that you have got the niche down to dui with my dog in my truck that generates one lead per month?

Braden: It's a good question. I don't know when enough is enough because it's become, I don't want to say easy, but we have a system now in place. We have a back end that we can now manage all the leads and the lead routing. We have buyers so that if it doesn't go to an end user it can go to consolidator and the consolidator doesn't cover that area it will go to the next consolidator once a week. We have this system dialed in that works really well. And what we have done now is since there are not so many dui domains left is we have moved into other verticals because the infrastructure works for other legal verticals. It works for other verticals right? So we are focused on legal and it will take me years to get all those domains. So I don't know when enough is enough. I think probably one day somebody will offer me a fat enough check and I'll take a walk. I don't know.

Michael: When you are looking at your new niches then, you know you have got your dui under your umbrella of Legal Brand Marketing, if you are looking at new niches it is going to be hard to find some fantastic brand like duiattorneys.com for cheap today, but would that be where you would invest in one major brand that would be your directory and then you would start the exact same thing that you are doing right now with 10,000 feeder websites?

Braden: Yes there are two avenues that I would go down. One is creating a directory and the domains are still cheap by the way. We can come back to that. And then create the feeders. So I could bring a whole bunch of local nGeo specific sites that bring in leads. And run through the directory and sell to an end user. Or I could skip the directory (which is the most expensive part of the program) and just sell to the consolidators, which is basically what I consider a wholesale. So for instance I'm a consolidator in the dui space. And

I buy leads from just about every legal directory that generates dui leads. They sell them all to me exclusively or they sell some of them to me. Ones they can't place because I've got the largest footprint in the dui space. But then I've got some, I've got at least two which then go to another consolidator. You send them around enough and then eventually most of them will get picked up. And I try to get \$100 a lead initially but if I can't and I can only get \$7 ultimately it is better than throwing it on the floor.

Michael: So when you are buying wholesale leads from somebody else, because I assume there is going to be other people out there that want to start directories and they want to build it up, but they also want to buy wholesale leads so they can do something similar to what you are doing in a different niche. What have you seen in the past? Do they approach you to sell you wholesale leads or do you have to go to them and say hey I'd like to buy all your dui related leads and I'll pay you this much for the leads.

Braden: Both. It depends. All the big players, the attorneys.com of the world, I already have relationships with these guys. And they know me and I know them. And then there are these new guys that come out of the woodwork. I shouldn't say guys, they are people, my girlfriend would kill me. These new players that are great at SEO, great at linking and they build a site and it is suddenly on the first page of Google and they don't know the industry. They just know SEO. Which they built this great site and they are generating leads and then they will contact me typically or I'll find them as that is a new site that came out of nowhere and I will contact them. And so we will create a relationship. Or maybe I might buy the site. I just depends.

Michael: Braden, first of all your fiancé is going to kill you for calling her your girlfriend, but we will come back to that. So how have you found...

Braden: I hope she doesn't see this. Here she is. That's us.

Michael: Very nice. So do you have a date picked out [for the wedding] or is that a sore subject.

Braden: No date. We are going to do just the two of us. We are going to sneak off.

Michael: So what has been your process to find your 10,000+ dui related domain names? Do you just sit at home and think dui in such and such and you find keywords to attack the dui or do you use the Google Ad Word Keyword Tool or do you use other tools that you have developed? What is your secret sauce to finding so many niche domain names?

Braden: Well if I tell you my secret sauce it will then just become sauce.

Michael: Tell me part of your sauce. Leave out the secret formula.

Braden: Alright again it is all the above. Most of my domains I buy privately now. It has been that way for a long time. So what I'll do is I'll buy a domain from somebody and let's say (I'll make something up) I don't know if I own it, I haven't even thought of it yet, LosAngelesduiattorney.com for example. I think I do own that. So I'll buy that and then my domain administrator will put into our program and she will look for the net in New York for example. And we will hand register a few others that way because I buy (Inaudible 31:14) and if maybe I buy something with a dash she might look for it without a dash. She will find related domains. But otherwise I'm just buying privately. I do buy a lot of drops. Every day I pick up some drops one way or another.

Michael: So you use one of the automated programs to watch for anything that has the letters dui and you will pick them up if they look good.

Braden: I use all the services. Including Epic has a new drop service.

Michael: So you are well known in the domain industry so I would assume that a lot of domainers that own any dui related domain names will contact you. They will approach you. They say I've got the greatest one Braden, it's only \$10,000. What do you do?

Braden: Every day I get somebody who sends this "Here is a great domain that you really want", the dash blanket. Yes I get these crazy emails and they want thousands of dollars and it has a search volume of zero. So I look through portfolios every day. People send them to me and I pick out nuggets

if the price is right that is fine whether it is a \$25 domain or whether it is a \$25,000 domain, as long as it make sense then I'm game. I'm probably going to now get a lot more portfolios.

Michael: I would suspect so. So you are buying .com, .net or .org, you mentioned your .co, but you focus on .com, .net, .org, why do you focus on .net let's say. I can understand .com. It's the beach front resort. I can understand .org for people thinking that it is an authoritative source for dui attorneys, why .net?

Braden: Ask Google because it ranks. Now I don't buy for resale. Domainers do but I'm essentially an end user. So I'm buy domains that I can put a site on, I develop. Most domainers don't develop. So that is the big difference. If you have a domain that is a .net or and .org or has dashes it's not going to do anything for you because it is going to get very little – unless it is some type in and I'm not sure who is typing that in. But it gets some. But once you start adding the alternative extensions and adding dashes or reversing the order of the words you lose all your direct navigation but Google will still rank it if you have a site on it. And so if it is duilawyersandiego.net, that will rank for a San Diego dui lawyer. So there is nothing wrong with that domain if you are going to build it out. But if you are going to buy it to resell it forget about it. If you are going to buy it for direct navigation nothing there.

Michael: But if you are going to buy it and build it out for search engine optimization you going buy all the domains with dashes in them.

Braden: I do have a couple of thousand domains with dashes in them. And you could go on forever, particularly three word or four word domains and start moving around the order of the words and adding extensions for sure. But at some point you have to just stop. So what I will do is I will focus on something that's a particularly strong geo. So for example you mentioned Dallas, right? So I probably (actually I know I do) I have Dallas related – so dallas-dui-attornies.com. I'm sure I own that already because that is going to rank well. But how deep do I want to go? When there are other things that are better. So Seattle, Los Angeles, Dallas or Houston, these make sense but do I

want to buy Mississippi-dui-attornies.net? Maybe not, because it is not going to have the same search volume.

Michael: So you primarily focus on cities when buying domain names rather than states because Houston dui attorney is going to have more search volume than Texas?

Braden: No, it's just that there are not that many states. So I bought all the state variations.

Michael: So you buy states also.

Braden: Oh yes, for sure. Most of them I've bought already. Of course there are a few out there. Somebody offered me Texasduilawyer.com for \$25,000 not long ago. I passed because I have the plural. So there is a few out there but I have most of them. There is a lot more cities to go after and we really want to geo target because particularly after the Panda update the broad terms just don't do as well. So duiattorneys.com is not going to do well for Houston dui lawyer, so I have to go with Houston dui lawyer's site to get traffic there. Obviously it gets some ranking but we have to do both.

Michael: And if I go search on Houston dui attorney right now it seems more and more difficult to get to the top of the first page results because now you have got Google Places pushing you down, you have got all these directories, you know the Google directory, so I'm going to go there right now and see what it looks like because I haven't looked it. Well actually Google placed you... You have got two organic listings it looks like and then a bunch of Google places.

Braden: Right and then everything else is way below the fold. And that is the problem. Once you get below the fold now you have got eight or ten listings above you and you are gone. Even on the first page you are gone so that is tough and that is why we have to compete by building these local sites.

Michael: So you go even more and more niche related.

Braden: Right but if you consider that I have got a client that is paying these several thousand dollars a month for his, and let's assume it is major metro, I have a budget for that. So every campaign, so we don't have this one national campaign. We have a national campaign and then we have the state campaign and then we have got county and city specific campaigns because we have got the client attached to it. Now if there is nobody in that area obviously we are not going to run a campaign for that area. But if I have got somebody for example in Houston paying me \$3,000 a month I can allocate some of that towards the city specific campaign, come of that towards the state campaign and some towards the national campaign and some hopefully toward (Inaudible 38:14).

Michael: So let's talk about your customers a little bit more, the attorneys. So you only sell one attorney per local geo area, what happens when the second attorney who has the largest firm in the area wants to work with you but that space is already taken? How do you handle that situation?

Braden: We have got multiple programs. So we have got other directories drunkdrivingdefense.com is a directory, duiattorney.com is a directory, gotdrunk.com is a directory, dui-dwi.com. So we have got these other directories and I just bought another one actually a couple of months ago called duilawyers.com. That was also a developed directory. So we can put them in another directory.

Michael: So all the directories aren't linked together with the same one attorney per geo. They are all separate directories that you can sell.

Braden: Right. So what happened was...And I think if I was to do it all over I probably would not do that model because we are saddling up more than one horse and it becomes complicated and we get complaints that well you are now marketing my competitor on this other site. So we get a lot of push back but the thing is that I'm not developing these directories. I'm buying out a competitor. I've bought all these directories and now we have these multiple platforms. It gets a bit confusing and sometimes a little awkward but at the same time when I don't have to turn away clients. I can now just ship them over to another program.

Michael: So when the clients come on do they typically say I want to try you out Braden and I will give you one month or I will give you three months or do you lock them into a longer term contract? How does it work?

Braden: No, initially when I first started we had these annual agreements. And I got a lot of push back from people who didn't know who we were and didn't want to be locked up in this contract. And I also realized that I didn't want a bunch of lawyers locked in contracts they didn't want to be in. Right? That was really a bad business model. So if somebody wanted out for whatever reason I would let them out. And then I decided that I just needed to redo my contract. So for many years now it has been a renewable 30 day contract. So every thirty days it just auto renews and they can get out whenever they want. It is a 30 day notice to get out and that is it. And that 30 day notice gives us an opportunity to fix whatever the problem might be. So let's say they are not happy with the program.

Sometimes it doesn't work for certain geos, sometimes it doesn't work for that firm because of the way that they are set up and they just make appointments to bring people in and that really doesn't really work online. But if it is maybe they are not tracking their leads, or maybe we are not doing a good enough job or maybe we think that their CPL is at the right place but really it's not because they charge \$1,500 and so having \$100 CPL doesn't make sense. So then we can adjust. Maybe we will throw some more money at it or maybe we will lower the rate. It just depends on what the situation is. We want to make them happy. We want it to work for them because if we can't fix it for them we are transferring the problem to the next client. And I don't want the turnover.

Michael: So the clients that you currently have, have a 30 day out. Basically it's auto-renewing until they notify you for the 30 days that they want out.

Braden: Right. Everything is automated. So their credit card, or the checking account, gets billed by the database and the emails are routed automatically. Everything is automated.

Michael: Got it so they have got first right of refusal. So if I come in and I am an attorney in an area and I say hey 30 days from now I want that spot on

duidwi.com, you'd say well it's currently taken. I can put you in this other directory.

Braden: Right.

Michael: So how do attorneys find you? Do you actively market to them at the conferences, via mailings, emails or do they go out and do searches and then they find your directories and then they want to be listed? How do a majority of them find you?

Braden: At this point it has been so many years that the dui defense community knows who we are. Thankfully. I used to do a lot of conferences. As I mentioned a couple of times a month I was at a conference. And at the big conferences we throw these parties and do all this and have dinners. We don't do that anymore. We don't need to do that anymore. We still attend the major, the one big conference every year but we don't sponsor the whole thing. We don't have six booths and we don't do all the parties. We go, we have a couple booth spaces and we give out some premiums and we shake hands. We typically don't sign anybody up anymore at these conferences. We just see our clients and they express their gripes and there whatever it is or maybe we up sell them something. But we just kind of get out there and show our face.

Michael: So you have a booth at the conference. So you are there to make sure that people see you, they walk by, you give them a (Inaudible 43:25), you tell them that you are available if they have any marketing needs. You are there to be in front of them.

Braden: Right and the thing is that they know they are going to see us so any questions or concerns that they have they typically save them up until they see us and then we talk about it. So maybe they want to adjust their campaign a little bit to focus on a particular county and so we will talk about that kind of re-allocation of budget at the conference. So the conference is more about maintenance than about new sales. Every once in awhile there is somebody new but we don't really have a lot to sell anymore.

Michael: So it would make sense if I were a conference organizer to clearly bringing you in as a sponsor would be great but having you also speak to train attorneys about how to market their companies more effectively would be a great topic. Do you ever get asked to speak at some of these attorney conferences?

Braden: I do. However I don't take them up on it. And the reason is because we have our own conferences. So it's specifically for dui attorneys and it is twice a year either in Atlanta or L.A. And it is \$10,000. And we get a room full of people. We train them specifically how to market their dui practice and we bring them in exclusively. So we only bring in one person per state unless it is a huge state we might split it in half. So there might be a couple people from Texas but otherwise the New Jersey guys only Jersey.

Michael: So they all feel special. They all know they are the only attorney from that area.

Braden: Yes and we are not training its competitors. And we bring in all of the big dui attorneys and we do a lot of best practices, kind of conversation and I speak about internet related stuff which of course they are not familiar with because they are in court all day. But bringing in other lawyers to talk about best practices is really something that they don't get. So we do all that. It's a couple of days, it's a good program. I've been doing it for six year or so.

Michael: So I want to ask you about other sources of revenue that you have related to the dui business. But before we do that I can't help but think that there is a bunch of dui attorneys or attorneys out there that specialize in criminal defense and want to focus in dui and they look up domain names and everything is taken and they go do a who is look up because they are technologically savvy enough to do that and they see that you own it. Do you ever get contacted by them saying hey I'd like to buy this domain? Do you ever flip domains? Do you ever sell them?

Braden: Yes but not very often because the offers I get are I'll give you \$500 for chicagoduilawyers.com. So I don't. I have my pricing and frankly most of my domains are listed with a price attached to them. But they are end

user pricing. So I never sell to domainers. I will sell to end users if it really makes sense. But it has to be a big player in the state. It has to be a lawyer that covers most of the state - that has a big budget - that is willing to spend the money. And quite often there is a conversation about it because they'd offer me \$3,000 and I tell them why it is worth \$15,000.

After a conversation of well listen how many people are going to type in 'Alabama dui lawyer'? How many of those clients do you want to come to you? How many of you expect them to come to you if you have that primary key term? How many clients do you think you are going to sign up from that? How much is it worth having that brand? Once you have this kind of conversation...By the way how much do you charge per client? \$5,500 right? So how many clients do you need to cover a \$15,000 expense? And after you get through that kind of conversation okay I'll take it. Then we will up sell them and we will build them a website and we will do the SEO.

Michael: But that is the conversation that most domain investors don't want to do. That is the kind of conversation that can take a half an hour to an hour per occurrence to educate the end user on why it's a better value to buy the domain name rather than buying advertising every single month. How do you have the time to do that?

Braden: Because I don't work very hard.

Michael: Clearly that is not the issue.

Braden: I don't have a lot of phone conversations. It's email so it is three minutes at a time except talking to you and then it's an hour. We find a way. We are both wearing a light blue shirt and we have the same pen so it is like twin's day over here.

Michael: It is a twin's day. You are starting to freak me out a little bit.

Braden: I just wanted to point that out.

Michael: So you have got this dui empire online which is now translated into selling domain names also, and building out websites, and SEOing them

and maintaining them and then also maybe doing some advertising and counseling on the side. But you have also got this whole conference business that you will do a couple times a year in a couple locations at \$10,000 a registration and at least 50 people coming. That is quite...

Braden: Not 50 don't really get...I think the most we have every had is 35.

Michael: So when we started this conversation we talked about a niche being a backdoor to an entire stage and how one thing can lead to another. You started out with a website directory. It led into building this empire online. It led into doing conferences to help educate dui attorneys on the content as well as marketing. What other areas has this dui business led to that you didn't envision when you launched eight years ago?

Braden: Well within the marketing business we provide all kinds of services to our clients and while they are profitable it is not a huge business for us. So what we will do is web design obviously and SEO maintenance and hosting. We will do logo design – we do a lot of logo design. And some of them will order their envelopes and letterheads and business cards and that kind of thing.

We do a magazine; we have put together a magazine call the DUI Report, which is typically state wide. I'll do one per state. So we have one in California and one in Virginia and one in Tennessee and one in Maryland. And so the attorney sponsors that magazine and then we mail it out to all – this is the up line. So we mail them out to all the dui vendors because dui refs are public information. So we get that data and we mail out those magazines to everyone who gets arrested for dui in that state. But the attorney pays for it but then obviously I make margin on it and then the magazine is filled with advertising because if it didn't have advertisings it wouldn't look like a magazine, it would look like this neutral resource. But all the ads of course, other than being for the attorney, are for our products. So there is a lot of benefit to that.

So other than that there is a lot of industry that we got into that duck tailed. I mentioned insurance. So insurance, as you know insurance is big business right now. It can be lucrative so instead of selling my leads, my insurance

leads...When somebody gets a dui they have to get new insurance because they are either dropped or their rate goes up to \$6000 a year. So we are selling banner space and selling leads and I ended up taking two weeks off and got my insurance license. So now we have this insurance business and we sell policies. So we will sell what is called an SR-22. So we will sell an SR-22 policy which is essentially dui insurance and then up sell them on renters insurance or homeowners or health or whatever else.

And so all of that is marketed through either directories which have tons of dui exposure or through duiautoinsurance.com, duiinsurance.com, dwiinsurence.com and I have all the variations. I don't think there are any I don't have after all these years because years ago I hand registered duiautoinsurance.com. That is how long ago I have been doing this. And a lot of variations and then the ones I didn't get with the dashes, I just didn't pay for. But I am looking to acquire them along the way. So if anybody else has any feel free to send them over.

Then we were advertising for Mission Interlock. So in many states if you get a dui you have to install a car breathalyzer.

Michael: Do you need to blow into it before the car will start?

Braden: Right exactly. So we were doing advertising for that. And then ultimately I got into that business. So now in multiple states, a hundred some odd stores, I don't know how many locations we have now. We install and maintain these devices. The company is called Smart Start and of course I purchased ignitioninterlock.com, and ignitioninterlocks.com and hundreds and hundreds of variation of that domain. And ignitioninterlock.com actually was just launched into a nationwide location finder. There is tons of information for offenders, judges, probation, lawyers and then of course you can find the location and dial a toll free number and schedule an appointment.

Michael: So are you licensing the technology and now you...

Braden: I license the technology.

Michael: Do you manufacture yourself or do you just...

Braden: I just license the technology.

Michael: So you have got the brand, you have got the locations and then you get them installed?

Braden: Yes, simple.

Michael: So your one directory to start with has now grown into marketing services and the conferences into a magazine into insurance into ignition interlock product...Anything else?

Braden: Domain investing? You know the domain industry has kind of got me down different paths. I'll buy domains that are a good deal even if it is outside of my space if I think the deal is right and then maybe I'll put it on an auction or just hold onto it and wait for an offer to come in. I bought some secure stuff and sold them at an auction. And then it led me into Epic and I'm an equity investor in Epic because I was using their platform, it made sense and then they wanted to get into Legion so Rob Monster called me and said I'd like you to be an advisor. I joined the board and that evolved into me actually writing a check and taking a very small piece. And so I've got that. I think that is it. Give me a minute to think about it. You know we've got a bail bonds site which we don't do anything with. We have got a dui school site (dui-school.com), which is actually number one in Google for those terms. And that is just advertising driven so dui schools pay monthly to be on that program. We have eBooks. If I ask my staff they will say what about such and such. They are working on it.

Michael: That is phenomenal. Before we wrap up I want to come back to one of the points you made earlier. We were talking about domain names and registering so many domain names and I said I'm sure you get a lot of inquires from people saying here is a dui hyphen this, hyphen that, hyphen this which is for sale for \$25,000 you will often say no thank you. But you said domains are still cheap. What did you mean by domains are still cheap?

Braden: Domains – I want to not offend the domain name community – the multiples that are used to sell domains are I believe just not accurate because

in the domaining space most of the multiples are based on parking revenues. Well parking revenues is about the furthest from the money you can be. How many companies are in the middle? How many people are between you and the advertiser, the end user? So let's take for example a dui lawyer who is willing to pay \$80 a click, \$40 a click. Well you have Google, which takes the lions share, and then you have got your parking company and then you may have some other intermediary and an above.com. And so they are all taking a piece. And see you get a fraction of a fraction. And we don't even know how much it is. So they are the furthest from the money. But the multiples are based on that number. And even that number which is maybe two times, or three times, well three times that's a 33% ROI? Out in the real world people would kill for that kind of return. Which is why the suits are coming in and they are buying these big portfolios. Mark Check and all of these big guys.

So if you take that domain as based on that multiple and you use a different monetization method like Legion which there are still people in the middle but you get a little bit closer to the money. Or if you are an end user - So for instance ignitioninterlock.com is worth a hell of a lot more to me than it is to a domainer because I provide the service. If you take a domain out of the domain space and you sell - iCloud.com was worth nothing until Apple bought it. To them it makes a lot of sense. Or cloud.com, or anybody who is going to actually use that domain. What was the domain I used earlier. For example Alabamaduilawyer.com. Well to you and I what is that worth? It's worth more to me that it does to you, because I can do Legion. But to an Alabama dui lawyer it's worth the most. So that is the point about all domain are cheap because the revenue model is just not right. So I think that if we can change that revenue model it can make more money. It just has to make more money for that person so now the evaluation system is entirely different. That is what I mean. It's just the wrong people valuing based on the wrong metrics.

Michael: So is it fair to say that your advice to entrepreneurs is to not allow intermediaries that are helping to monetize your business but go directly to as close to the end users as possible so if you are selling advertizing don't use two or three services, go sell the advertising yourself.

Braden: It depends on your objectives. Now I say the metrics are wrong because it's the wrong end user, it's the wrong user of the domain. But if you are Mike Berkins and you have 80,000 domains you can't build them all out. You park them and you take as much parking revenue as you can then you have to have those intermediaries because logistically you can't really do much more. Now maybe he can build them out on a platform and he can start putting more time and effort but frankly domainers are lazy. They don't want to put that much work into a domain or into a portfolio. And frankly when you have thousands it is difficult to do. But if you took out one, if you had one domain and I say here monetize this the best way you could you wouldn't park it if you had one. You would develop it and you would do a Legion or you would build out a product, if it was a product domain you'd put an ad feed on there.

If you had whatever product – a plasma TV is what is in front of me right now, or keyboards. If you own keyboard.com and that is all you own you wouldn't park it. You would put maybe an Amazon and you would sell keyboards. If you were selling a crap load of keyboards, you are making a lot of money, you would probably start buying keyboards from China and doing fulfillment because you want to get close to the money.

And so I think that is what people do is they go after the ones that make a lot of money, then try to take the intermediaries out and get closer to the money. So that is good. It is just hard when you have a volume and domainers are focused on that volume. So that is the difference. I try to break my portfolio into sub-portfolios and then monetize each portfolio independently. And frankly I can't focus on one unless it is big. If it's 1800duilaws.com, I can focus on it because it makes a lot of money and we can dedicate staff time to it. Did that answer your question?

Michael: That did and so what is the one piece of advice that you would give to an entrepreneur (not a domain investor that wants to buy 10,000 or 100,000 domain names) but an entrepreneur that wants to build a niche area like you have done with dui eight years ago, what is the one bit of advice that you would give them to start off on that path?

Braden: Well you need to find the right product. Ideally a product that is profitable. A product that doesn't have a ton of competition. There needs to be opportunity there. So if it's something that everyone has done... You know insurance is tough because everyone is going after insurance. Not to say there isn't business there but it's tough. But if you go after –I see these people who come up with these crazy domains and they wonder why they are not making money.

What did I see once – vampireteeth.com. What is that, right? How many people are searching for vampire teeth and how much profit can you make selling vampire teeth? I mean this is a real example. I think Morgan Linton was telling me about this that somebody emailed him, or something very close to vampire teeth. Well there is not a lot that you can do with it. So there may not be a lot of competition but that is because there is not a lot of money. So find something where there is a market. In dui defense there is a big market for it, but there is maybe other kinds of law where there is not a big market.

People try and sell me these domains and they say this is a great domain. I say yes it is a good generic domain but there is no market. No one is buying those leads. So you need to find something where there is strong market like home remodeling, window replacement, flooring. If you get a flooring lead well what is the average ticket price of new wood flooring? And I'm not in this space. So that is why I am willing to talk about it. But I'm going to guess - \$10,000? I know how much my house was and it was substantially more than that. So that is a high ticket item. So what is the lead worth? It could be worth a couple hundred dollars. Or home security is another one. Where people sign these contracts for three years and they are \$35 a month and it is all profit and commissions are \$350. So, another good space to be in. So look at, if you want to do leads, look at lead values. If they are buyers then the value is in the lead first before you jump into it. That would be my suggestion.

Michael: Great advice. If you have a follow up question for Braden please post it in the comments below. We will ask him to come back and answer a few of them. If people want to follow you Braden are you on Twitter or any of those social networks? Are you on an open networker on Facebook?

Braden: Yes.

Michael: So people can find Braden on Facebook. Braden thank you for taking the time and coming on the show!

Braden: You are welcome, my pleasure.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. See you next time, bye.

Watch the full video at:

<http://domainsherpa.com/braden-pollock-legalbrandmarketing-interview>