

Ep #54: Interview with Scott Corbett – Part 2



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Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

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You are listening to the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast, with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straight-forward advice to, transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply, multiply, multiply your passive cash flow streams.

David: Hey everyone, this is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders mastermind community and the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast. Welcome back. I'm glad to have you on the call today.

I've got with me today someone that you've heard from before. It's my good friend Scott Corbett with Lightmark Media. Scott, how are you doing today?

Scott: I'm doing great, David. It's so great to be here, thank you.

David: On our last segment we talked a lot about online website marketing. We talked a lot of the areas that most dentists and doctors miss just because they—I don't think the service providers to give them really what they need in terms of online marketing is there.

They miss a number of the opportunities that can be used today very simply to better target the specific patients or the audience that they're looking for, whether that might be pediatric dentists, choose different specialties, subspecialties, within the general practice such as cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, sleep disorders, implants, you name it.

There's a lot of different areas that dentists want to target today yet we both see them trying to do it with one big what I call a big billboard or a big business card website that is not interactive. It doesn't engage. It doesn't have the opportunity to capture even the first name and email

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address of a perspective patient who is not ready to call in and make an appointment.

They're just doing some searching, some seeking, once they leave that website, chances are they're not coming back because very few people are ready to take action that day. So we covered a lot of those basics on our last podcast, last interview. Let's go in a little bit deeper and talk about some things that would also help enhance the viability of the online marketing. One of those would be, let's talk about design.

Scott, I see some websites that it seems like whoever helped put the website together just thought they would just take everything they could and throw it at the wall. That is everything they could possibly think of, you know, about the doctor, and the staff, and then services. I mean, once you look at that page for about a few seconds you just like, "Okay, I've had enough. I'm out of here."

Let's talk a little bit about design. What's the best way today in this busy busy world where people have the attention span of a gnat, what do you do to grab their attention and keep them long enough to engage them in a website?

Scott: Yeah, you're touching on something that I just see all the time. It's partly a result of the way that websites get put together. Let's say a doctor has multiple services that he or she perceives to be really important, so you want to put it all there. You want to show testimonials. You want to talk about the doctor himself or herself. You want to just do it all because you're excited about your business. Understood.

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But the fact is that, as you say, people have short attention spans. They're impatient. They've also got dozens of alternatives. When they hit a website, you really only have got a few seconds to make an impact. My advice is to simplify until it hurts. Even ask yourself, "In the first five seconds of someone being on this website, what is the one and only one thing you want to say to that person?"

When I say "say" I kind of have quotation marks around that because you say it not only with the words but you also say it with the images you use, the colors. You say it by being courteous by making sure that your website actually looks good on their phone and their iPad, just like it looks good on their desktop computer. So what's the one thing that you can do to really make your message, to connect with them?

I'll say that that principle continues throughout your website. The homepage is the most challenging place to keep simple because it performs a variety of functions. But what's really working today from what I see are websites that are more or less single column. So you get rid of the side bar stuff as much as you can. You've got a single column. You're homepage design for example is structured hierarchically on a vertical axis.

Your most important thing is in the section at the top. Then you go down to another important section. Then you go down and you go down and if people want to scroll, you let them scroll. You don't overwhelm them with visuals. You don't overwhelm them with competing sections. You keep it as simple as possible. I know it's a balancing act but that's my main advice. People tend to way overcomplicate on a visual basis and what happens

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to the human brain in that sort of environment is it usually just shuts down and retreats.

David: I was looking at a website the other day, a dentist website. Again, visually it was laid out nicely but they had what I think you call the carousel sliders. There were these images that kept changing on that top banner. They were pretty images, you know, I got it. But it was distracting. I think it used to be that website designers, they thought that they need that there to keep the attention. Today, it's the opposite, right?

Scott: Yeah. In fact, we're beyond the realm of opinion now. There's a lot of data out there that shows that those carousel sliders, where you've got the images transitioning out, fading out, or sliding across constantly, usually with a different set of wording that slides with them, people tune them out. There's this thing called banner blindness where people have learned on Facebook and other places to tune out the ads so they can focus on, well, I'll say quote, the real content. But yeah, that's the case with this.

There is lots and lots of evidence that if you want someone to take an action—let's just say that action is as simple as clicking a button to go deeper into your website, then you need to just have one static image, one headline, and one button. That's going to get you better response than these things sliding in and out. It's either going to make people just drop their eyes and go down to the next thing or like you said, it's going to create confusion.

David: What about branding, Scott? The word branding, I think everybody's heard the word brand and we can think of companies that are all known well to us like Nike or Coca-

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Cola or Lexus, you know, big companies. How does brand or branding apply to smaller business owners or dentists in this case?

Scott: Okay, great question. A huge question. I'll get real pragmatic with it rather than what your marketing professor might say. So number one, is your website a happy place? I think you and I were in a Freedom Founders meeting one time when one of our dear dentists, a wonderful man, had a website. And everyone remarked that his website actually looked like a funeral parlor. Basically, it was a black background, really dark, with white lettering. It was very dark.

So this relates to branding too. Are your colors optimistic? Are they positive and are they cheerful? Think about that. There's a question of a logo. All right, a logo, I mean I'm not going to say it's a make-or-break thing for many businesses, but again, can you use that little moment, that little visual anchor that represents you to a) maybe convey something positive about your practice and b) again, have it be something that's memorable and that stamps that positive emotional response in people's minds.

I guess finally I'd say in a world where stock photography and clip art is rampant, don't sell yourself short by choosing some little clip art picture of a tooth with a sparkle next to it, right?

David: Right.

Scott: As much as possible. And again, I know we're in a world of limited possibilities in some ways, but have your photographs on your website that represent your brand. Have your colors, have your logo, have your tag line. You

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know, that slogan that sort of sums up in one very short phrase what you're all about. Put some thought and care into that. Try to have it be an authentic and as much as possible, original representation of your business.

David:

When you talk about tag lines, Scott, that kind of goes hand in hand with what we also know as USP, or unique selling proposition. Every business should consider or develop what theirs is. It's not enough to say, "I'm a dental office." Or, "I treat dental issues" or that kind of thing. You've got to come up with something that really makes your office stand out. What's really unique?

We don't have time to go into the depths of unique selling proposition but you're right, that's again part of your branding, part of your tag line, that just again helps people remember who you are.

I'll just give people a quick example from my standpoint and something that I sort of came up with out of the blue a few years ago. My story is about how I got out of dentistry. So a little different than we're talking about with our dentists in their practice. But how I got out of dentistry, and I looked at it from the standpoint of breaking the chains. So people see me, I have the chains that I sometimes have around my neck when I speak and some of my brochures or on the website.

Many times people will say to me if they've seen me somewhere, they'll come up and they maybe have forgotten my name, this is critical, they've forgotten my name but they'll say, "Oh, yeah, you're the 'break the chains' guy." So you know, there's that tag line or it could be like a logo image, but it's something that they can use to remember your business, your practice, by. That's something that you can dig into.

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Just Google unique selling proposition and again, we can spend a whole episode on that sometime, Scott, which we might want to do for fun. But you're right, having that tag line or logo element is just another good piece.

You talked a little bit about using authentic images, so not using clip art. What about words? Words are so powerful today and you're great, Scott, that's another thing that you're really good at. You're not only a strategic marketer but you are an excellent what I would call a wordsmith, copywriter. I think that came from the fact that you used to teach English, right? Is that correct?

Scott: I did, yeah. I did.

David: Well you combined your knowledge of the English language with your marketing skills. Talk a little bit about words and how they can be used to tie into people's emotions and also with persuasion.

Scott: This is a topic I really I think is neglected if we're talking about the realm of websites and online marketing. First of all, when it comes to talking about your website. People I think they're talking about your business and the services you provide and connecting with your potential patients. Two main mistakes I see. One, falling into cliché. Just sort of trite language, words and phrases that are overused.

Then the second is just saying too much. Let me just make one point. This is not so much about the actual words on the page but it's about the way people read words on the web. Listen carefully, this is big. If you don't take anything else out of this segment, just remember this part.

People don't read on the web the way they read a book or even the way they read a magazine, although it's closer

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to the magazine. The way people read on the web is they look at the elements on the page that stand out. So this is typically if we're talking just about words here, because images and human faces for example is probably the single most looked at element on any website. But if we're talking about just words, what people look at, where their eyes go, and we know this from eye tracking studies.

They only go to three or four different elements. They go to headlines, in other words, that part of the page that's usually at the top where it's presumably kind of stating the main idea. They go to a version of that which are subheads. So as you go down the page occasionally you break up the sections with these smaller phrases, subheadlines. Then they also go to things that are in bullets and they go to captions on images.

Now I could go on and say there's a hierarchy on down. They may go to things that are bolded or beyond that. But the main point here is that what this is all about, what this tells us when we design websites that are actually designed for a response, and designed to convert people to the actions we want them to take, whether it's to call or fill out a form or do something else. You've got to remember people don't read so much as they scan websites.

So the words that you choose in those places where people's eyes tend to go: the heads, the subheads, the captions, and the bullets. You really got to pay very close attention to those elements on the page because that's where 80 percent of the people are going to go.

The parts in between? Probably it's the parts in between that we as highly-educated people tend to focus the most on. Imagine those long paragraphs of text that you come

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across. On the one hand you think, “Wow, this person really put a lot of thought into this.” But the bad news is, too bad, only about ten percent of the people who ever go to that page will ever choose to read these long paragraphs of text.

Focus your effort where it matters. The last thing I’ll say about what that means to focus your effort is to think about your user. Use language that’s meaningful to them. Say things to them in a concise and maybe I should say intensive way, so no spared words. No wasted words. No dead or empty or trite words. Speak to them directly. Like I have said before, try to enter into the conversations in their heads.

David: Scott, what about the use of video today? It’s being used a lot. How important is having some component of video on a website?

Scott: Great question. The bottom line is video is the next best thing to being face to face. What it’s particularly good for is holding someone’s attention as you’re trying to, again, convey a message or start a relationship. Or build trust. It’s the best proxy we have for in person connection.

It’s like around the so called watercooler, you hear conversations where the night after the big show was on, people stand around and they talk about this character or that character and they feel like they’ve engaged with them. They have a relationship with these characters that they see on, in this case, television, or it could be in a film or something. Video is that same way. It gives people the feeling that they’re getting to know you. It holds their attention better because it’s simultaneously an audio and a visual mode.

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It provides a break from what a lot of websites are which is really still mostly static images and static words on the page. So it provides an element of dynamic experience. It's great. Great to use.

David: How hard do you think it is for the average dentist who probably has done a few videos on his or her iPhone just for some fun and social events. Is that something that a dentist can do or is it generally better to have someone who's a professional that can help create some video content that we're talking about?

Scott: Well, let's admit first of all that very few people really enjoy seeing themselves on video. So let's just acknowledge that and say [groans], people are already kind of groaning. But it's really not that hard. In terms of quality, most modern smartphones with some decent lighting can actually take a reasonable video.

All right, so let's just say two scenarios. One, let's say you really realize, "Oh my gosh, a video is so powerful and I want my video to be the best it can be." There's some things you can do. You can either put a Craigslist ad out for maybe a local college student who's got some chops with video editing and have them come in and maybe do some edits and make it nice. There are some ways to get it done on a more professional basis.

Let's say however that you're just not interested in that. All you really need to do is think about what you're going to say, what your message is. Maybe create little cue cards so to speak, they may just be sticky notes. Or maybe your assistant's holding up little prompting cards.

David: Right.

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Scott: Anyway, relax and just try it. I guarantee if you go for a short 30 or 45 second video, if you try it four or five times, you'd be comfortable at some point. You'd end up with something that works better than no video and honestly if you're coming across as someone who is sincere and authentic, whatever imperfections may be there would probably just serve to endear you to the person watching the video, not turn you off. Now the only caveat to that is, people will not tolerate bad audio.

David: Right, right.

Scott: Keep that in mind. We don't need to get into really what bad audio is but it just needs to be clear and easy to understand without a lot of buzz and fuzz and distraction in the background.

David: Yeah, and you can get very inexpensive, wired microphones, little lapel microphones that will work off of a smartphone at Amazon for \$15. So there's no reason not to have good audio, you're exactly right.

I'm glad you said that because, Scott, what I worry about is I know who we are as dentists, and we're perfectionists. So when we talk about video, I don't want a lot of dentists to say, "I can't afford getting professional work done right now." What Scott just said is right. Just play around with a smartphone, get good audio, and just do a bunch of them. Make them short. Short is better. A couple minutes, right, Scott?

Scott: Right.

David: Of different segments. You'd be surprised that you can become really nice and relaxed and that's what you want to come across as. Don't worry about all this professionalism. Sure you can have some of those done if

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you want them but, yeah, I think you're right, Scott. Come across as who you are. If you have a few little errors in there, people think, "Well, that's a real person." They're going to identify with you much better than if you actually are so polished that it just doesn't look real.

Scott: Very good point. Give yourself permission to be who you really are, who you are chairside. My guess is everyone listening here is friendly and personable and relaxed when they're chairside. It's the same thing. Just imagine you're speaking to a patient, a favorite patient even. It's just a conversation.

So yeah, give yourself permission to be yourself. That doesn't mean you're a professional actor. You're not. You don't have to be. In fact, people wouldn't want that. They wouldn't trust it.

David: That's right.

Scott: Yeah, so be yourself. Be human. That's what they are.

David: Scott, here's a big one. Everybody's got a smartphone today. Even my dad who's 85 years old who had a flip phone forever got a smartphone this year. How important is it to have your website to be mobile friendly today? And what do you think the percentage is of those businesses' websites that are not today? How many are not there?

Scott: Well the majority are not there. I can't really overstate how important this is. And if you're not sure if your website is mobile friendly by the way, just do a Google search for it, "Is my website mobile friendly?" In fact, Google itself has a free page you can go to that you just put in your website URL and it will tell you if your website is mobile optimized.

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I think really what you're talking about is the user's experience. How important is it to the user that the website function properly on a smartphone or an iPad? It's critical. The way people use the internet now is more and more from their phones and from their iPads. So your website is only as good as it works on those devices.

Let me clarify one thing too. You may say, "On my phone I can go to my website." Okay, that may be. But for example, is the font legible? A sign of a website that's not truly mobile optimized is where you have to pinch and zoom, you know what I mean by that?

David: Yeah.

Scott: Right? And you have to move things right to left to try to find things. You have to blow things way up with your fingers to get to the link that you want. Websites like that are not mobile optimized. You're making life hard on your users. Quite honestly, they're less and less tolerant of websites like that.

Now you may also notice that if you go to Google now and you search for the best cosmetic dentist in Houston Texas, Google puts this little label on websites that are mobile—I think they say mobile friendly or mobile optimized or maybe there's just an icon of a phone. I can't quite remember. They're letting people know—and that's if you do it on your phone. They're letting people know, "Hey, this is a website that we are validating will provide a better experience for you."

You can probably also guess that Google is now privileging through mobile search websites that are mobile optimized. Obviously, Google's all about providing a great user experience. So it's critical. And it's getting

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more and more critical. Two years from now, probably three quarters of all search activity is going to happen from a mobile device.

David: So if they haven't done it so far, now's the time. Don't wait. Get your website mobile friendly. Big, big critical point.

Scott, let's talk just for a couple minutes about a few of the online analytics that docs could use if they want to do some checking on a website. One thing that you and I talked about is how fast a website loads. If it's very slow loading, again, that's where you're going to lose people. What's a way that people can check and see what their website loading speed is?

Scott: Yeah, great question. Again, this is important on the same two grounds as mobile. A) It provides a better user experience and B) search engines like Google are absolutely penalizing if your website is slow to load.

Okay. I'll just cut straight to the solution to how you know this or not. The service I tend to use when I just want a quick and dirty analysis about how fast a website is, there's this website called Pingdom, almost like kingdom, but with a p. Again, just do a Google search for "pingdom speed test."

There are also others out there. You can just do a Google search for website speed test. You drop your URL into the little box there and click go or something. It will tell you how you rank. It will probably give you more information than you want but it usually grades you. "Your website is faster than 85 percent of all other websites out there" or not.

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So it will tell you, and objectively, because you can't always tell just by going to your personal computer and dialing up your website. Lots of reasons why that would not be a legitimate test. So use one of these services, get an objective answer and it will tell you.

Now, there's some really scary stats about this too. I think it was Amazon who did a study on webpage load speed and basically found that for every second additional that a website took to load, the drop off in people who were willing to wait for that website to load was dramatic. I mean, it was something like 20 to 30 percent of all people per second drop off if they have to wait for your website to load. Remember people probably came to your website through some kind of search results page and they know that back on that page there were 19 other options.

David: That's right.

Scott: Why should they wait for you?

David: That's right. Well, I'm case in point. That's what I do, Scott. We all do it. We want immediate interaction. We want the results quickly. We know that if someone is slow, someone else is going to be faster and we're out of there. It could have been a great company but they just didn't realize that they were creating a barrier to entry by not having the website optimized for being user friendly in this case.

Scott, a couple others. How often do we find—or do you find, I don't, but you do—probably more often than not, broken links on websites? There's links to things and they're broken. How can someone check that? Just to see if their website is working correctly?

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Scott: Yeah. Again, same kind of duel problem. Google hates it and users hate it. There are a variety of things you can do to check this. We tend to use this thing called Google Webmaster Tools. You could probably do again an online Google search that says “broken link checker.” There are all sorts of free services out there that will tell you whether or not you’ve got broken links on your site.

It’s so annoying when—I’m sure everyone has experienced this when you’re on a website and you click a link and you get the 404 error. It just doesn’t work. It’s inconsiderate. And most of the time, people aren’t even aware they’ve got these problems on their website. So it’s just one of those things. It’s like hygiene. You ought to, just like you’ve got to keep your teeth in good shape, you need to have a website hygiene program where you check in with it probably also about every six months to do things like make sure nothing has broken.

I hate to say it, but sometimes websites just break. They worked fine in June but by July they’re broken. Whether it’s because a plugin you may have on your site goes out of date and breaks. Whether it’s because let’s say a staff member did something inadvertently that broke a page or broke a function.

David: That never happens, Scott.

[Laughter]

Scott: Well, not to you, Dave. Not to you. Your staff is impeccable. But yeah, to other people it does occasionally happen.

You just got to check on things like this. I’m not saying you the dentist should.

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David: Right.

Scott: Just make it part of your regimen of business hygiene every so often check on these things.

David: That kind of gets back to again, we try to do things ourselves. The reason I was having you just mention some of these things here at the end, the different analytics, it's not because I want every dentist to go and handle this themselves. If they want to check on the website, yeah, great, but you need to have a great webmaster, a team behind you that is checking all these things for you. We don't have time to keep up with it on a regular basis.

There's another one, Google Analytics, right, Scott? Again, that's something that you as a webmaster, your team can install on a website just to gather data on the behavior of people. How do they interact with your website, right?

Scott: Right.

David: Real quickly, what does that do to help you go give information back to the dentist client about their website?

Scott: Great point. Really, that's a tool, it's a free tool that Google provides where you again drop a piece of code on just the pages of your website. I'd say the main value to most business owners is that it shows you actually how people interact with the website. It monitors specific behaviors.

I'll tell you one kind of real example that has happened to my company twice in the past week. In both cases, we are redesigning websites for people who are upgrading their websites because their business has changed

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slightly and they want to update their brand in both cases. So we're helping them do that.

The question becomes, "How can this website really best serve the people who actually use it?" So what we do is we log into Google Analytics and we can see what people actually do when they come to the website. For example, what pages are most visited? Which is a pretty good indication of what people are really interested in, what they care about, how they use the website. That alone will tell you, okay, so I know that a full 50 percent of everyone who comes to my dental website wants to find out—I'll just say—what are my hours and location. What is that?

How can I make it, as I possibly redo or evolve my current website, what can I do to make that as simple as possible to people? So again, analytic data tells you what people actually do. It tells you what they're interested in. It can also point out some of those other things like where they're bailing out because it can tell you—there's this thing called bounce rate that tells you basically people bounce off the page when they get there.

That may be a little too much for most docs but it's something that any webmaster worth his chops could do for you. It tells you where the places where your bounce rate seems a little high relative to the rest of your site. Maybe there's something there that you could add, like a video, to make it more engaging. Maybe there's a problem. Maybe there was a video two years ago but now that video is broken because it was built in Flash and Flash doesn't work on people's iPhones anymore.

You can really look and see, again, it's like hygiene and health. How's this site doing? How healthy is it? What can it show you about the way people actually use it?

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David: Great stuff, Scott. This has been really informative. I know this is going to be some good information for people.

I'll just say again to my friends, my colleagues, so many of you that I know and so many of that we're reaching through this podcast. If you're frustrated because you have tried other marketing services to help you create your website, you know you probably have one that's outdated, it's not mobile friendly. It's not providing any of the analytics or the user friendliness that we've talked about in this call.

Give Scott and his team a try. I normally don't plug people directly through this interviews but it's such a passion of mine to help my dentists cut through the clutter and get to somebody who can help them with the basics of just good website online marketing. Scott Corbett, Lightmark Media.

Scott, it's Lightmark, L-I-G-H-T-M-A-R-K Media dot com. Scott, you've done a whole for Freedom Founders members in helping them upgrade, revise their sites. You're a man of integrity. I appreciate you. You've done so much for me and my team. And my team loves working with your team. You've got great people on your team. It's all about who you are. You attracted great people.

So again, dentists, if you're frustrated with what you're using right now. I'm just going to say again, Scott and his team are a great place to go to get some help. Scott, you'll do a consult with folks on the phone with their website, give them some tips, and if you can help them, I know you'll do a great job.

Scott: Well, thank you for that, David. It's always a pleasure to work with you and your people. We're always happy to

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take a look at something and we'll try to be helpful. Whether we can help you directly or we can recommend someone else, we're always glad to do that.

David: Scott, thank you very much. Enjoyed this talk today. Great points. We'll talk again soon.

Scott: Always a pleasure, David. Thank you so much.

David: All right. Take care, everybody.

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