



## Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

### Episode 20: Update Your Website

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#### [Intro Music]

**Brian Miller:** Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries podcast where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by the president of Coach Approach Ministries, Mr. Chad Hall. Welcome, Chad.

**Chad Hall:** Brian, as always, good to be with you as well as with the millions, if not billions, of listeners to this podcast. Did I overstate that?

**Brian:** Well you might have. What's exciting to me is it's more than dozens. It is more than dozens. It's hundreds at this point. In today's episode, we want to give our listeners a challenge. We want to talk about updating your coaching website. People are going to equate your ability to serve them by the professionalism of your website. A great website may not close the deal, but it will get you into the competition. There are a ton of common mistakes people make with their websites. Today, we want to go over a lot of dos and don'ts for websites. Chad, you've been giving this a lot of thought recently, haven't you?

**Chad:** I love thinking about websites, have for years. I designed my first website in the late 1990's for one of the first companies I started. It was probably horrible, if I look back on it now, but it's a lot of fun, but yeah, I give this kind of thing a lot of thought. Both for Coach Approach Ministries and of course, for the coaches we have in our community.

**Brian:** A website is a must these days, isn't it?

**Chad:** Yeah, I mean some people say, "Eh. I don't want to fool with that. I don't want to do a blog, or I don't want to do a whatever," and bottom line is, you have to have a website. I mean, in today's world, that's how people know you exist, that you're legitimate. Even after someone maybe meets you at a conference, or a workshop, or wherever, if they are at all interested in you and potentially working with you, they're going to go check out your website to see if you're legit. Honestly, if you don't have a website, unless you've got some kind of funky marketing strategy that's really, really unusual, you've got to have a website, even just a basic one. We'll talk about some of that today.

**Brian:** It makes me think of when I've designed my own business card. You want to get as much on that business card as possible, and then you look at it, your design, and you think, "That looks awful."

**Chad:** Some of the things with a website don't come intuitively. It's a lot of trial and error, a lot of best practices, and you know, one of the things with websites, or business cards, or any kind of marketing paraphernalia is that what stands out today, blends in tomorrow, and there's a fine line between standing out and being just weird or being terrible. It's a little bit of a tough target to hit sometimes, but it's not impossible, and hopefully, some of what we're going to talk about today will help folks with that.

**Brian:** I have a friend who is in another business. She's a piano teacher, and she's told me that she wants to get a website up, but I think maybe the first thing that people do it overthink it. I think she's thinking too deep of does it have to have a blog, does it have to have all the bells and whistles? I've told her, I think she just needs to get a website up that says, "Here's who I am. I teach piano."

**Chad:** "Here's how you can contact me. Here's what I can help you with." Boom. That's really my philosophy on this, Brian, and when we did a blog article on this a while back, there are always different levels. I always think of it in kind of four levels of websites, and the most basic one is really what most coaches need. It's essentially an online brochure. For the most part, it's static, it's putting you out there, it tells a little bit about what you do, who you are, what you can expect, and then on the far other end of the spectrum is a website that's very dynamic. It's probably you're more running a web-based business on that end, and maybe part of your web-based business is coaching. Most coaches are more on the static, online brochure end of things. People can check out that blog article to learn about those four different categories, but I think that's one of the biggest lessons is you've got to right size the website to who you are, how often you want to be engaging it, updating it, what you want people to get from it. Don't copy someone else's website and how they do it, and go, "Oh wow. I want to have a website like the New York Times." No you don't. You want something, typically, pretty straightforward and basic.

**Brian:** Yeah. It doesn't have to take payments. It doesn't have to sell products. It could just give the basics of your business and have a contact phone number.

**Chad:** That's right. By the way, if you hire a web designer, they're not going to tell you thing because guess what? They're in the business of designing websites, and they want to do as much design as possible for you. They're going to probably encourage you to think about, "Someday you may want to take payments, and we want to build that on in the front end," and again, maybe for some coaches there's truth in that, but for a whole lot, just a basic site with the essentials is really all you need.

**Brian:** So I remember sitting down with a colleague who was getting a website ready for an organization I was a part of, and he knew I had a background in tech, and he was asking me what my thoughts were for the website. I was thinking different things we could offer, different ways people could interact, and he said, "What font do you think we should use? What do you think the color palette should be," and I looked at him like he was from Mars. I thought, "I don't understand that question," and I think I was right in the sense that when I got my first website for coaching built, the first question the designer asked me is, and I thought this was brilliant, "What do you want people to do when they get there?"

**Chad:** Yeah. If I were thinking through, Brian, a list of dos and don'ts, the number one do, well probably the number one do would be do something that fits who you are, that fits your level. Basically, just do

have a website, but the second thing on the to-do list would be exactly what you're talking about, some kind of call for action. Think of the website as an instrument that accomplishes something, and so think about what's the something you want it to accomplish. You want people who come to learn, to know you, all that, but you want to take some kind of action as a result. What's the action you want them to take? So design the website really around that key action that you want them to take, and here's the key, you don't want them to hire you. That's not the action they're going to take after engaging your website unless you've just got some kind of whiz, bang, awesome website, they're not going to say, "Oh wow. I've learned so much about Brian Miller, I'm going to click here to purchase 10 coaching sessions." No, they're going to click to get more information, to schedule an introductory appointment, something like that.

**Brian:** Oh, I got you. So you don't walk up to a girl and say, "Hey, let's get married," and they say, "You know what, I've checked out your website. Let's do. Let's get married." You want to ask for something much less than that, a date or a phone number. That's what you're talking about is make a step that's a good step but a good first step.

**Chad:** That's right. Websites are great places for people to know you well enough to take the first step, to go on a date, and a date is I want to learn more. I want to get to know you even more. I'm going to check this out, but if you think that you're going to have such an awesome website that people are going to marry you, metaphorically, from it, you're going to be severely disappointed.

**Brian:** That was my whole dating life, was being severely disappointed.

**Chad:** Where did you come up with that strategy of just going up to random girls and asking them to marry you. You improved dramatically.

**Brian:** That's probably not as far off base as I wish. Now you've got me rattled just a little bit. So let's think if our listeners are going to make a brochure type of website, and I don't know if you can answer this question or not, maybe it's too specific, but what kind of action could you put on a very basic website that wouldn't be, "Call me to sign up?" Help us out, Chad.

**Chad:** Yeah. Look at your niche. So if you have a really clearly defined niche, let's say you're niche is maybe for newly promoted managers, someone new to management. So they've gone from individual contributor to manager. You may have some kind of downloadable resource that is, "Find out the 10 essentials for every new manager or 10 things to stop doing, 10 things to start doing for every new manager." That's an easy baby step for someone to take. You're probably going to give them that resource in exchange for their email, and then you can begin to build a relationship with them via email and their resources. If you're niche is maybe you help pastors prepare for sabbaticals. That's a coaching niche, and you might have a, "Call me, set up a 30 minute, free coaching session where we'll explore what you want to get from your sabbatical. No obligation, whatever." I'm not a huge fan of free 30-minute coaching conversations because somehow, to me, that feels a little bit somewhere between let's go on a date and let's get married. It's like let's go on vacation together. It still may be too big of a step. Depending on your niche, that may be a good fit where people think, "Oh yeah. I want to get that conversation, and you've got to be clear, it's no obligation. Any kind of step that they are taking, they have reached a level of interest just based on what they know about you through your website, or

whatever. Maybe through a workshop or other ways they've gotten to know you. They're now ready to go from being anonymous to you to being known, and so they're saying, "Hey. I'm letting you know, I'm interested, and I would like to get some kind of value from you at this point," so that's the kind of action step. In our CAM website, the action step is download *The Beginners Guide to Christian Coaching*. That's about as easy of a step as you can take.

**Brian:** It is and as I listen to you talk about that, I have to be careful here because when I think about just having a website that has my basic information, it's just a brochure, a nice brochure, but then you say, and I've heard many, many people say this, "Maybe you want to try to get their email address." It has that feel of, "Well all you've got to do is hook up a 9 Volt battery to it," and I'm like, "Oh a 9 Volt battery. They won't shock me. I get that," and then when you say, "Just get their email address, and start that." "Well you do have to hook it up to a nuclear power plant, and make sure that you understand how to put the rods in to keep it under control."

**Chad:** There's some yellow cake Uranium involved.

**Brian:** It does have that feel of a huge jump, to me, where people make emails sound so simple, but it sounds like rocket science, to me.

**Chad:** That's a great point. Let's say you've got a brochure type website, and you don't want to collect peoples' email addresses. A simple thing is a contact form.

**Brian:** Yes.

**Chad:** And so any website developer or even some of the do it yourself website platforms have a contact form built in. All a contact form is is people fill out a form on the website, and it emails it to you. Now you've got a relationship. Honestly, if you've got a brochure type website, you're probably not collecting hundreds of emails each week. You're getting a few emails every week through your contact form. People are maybe requesting that free session, or they're requesting some kind of resource from you, and you're able to just respond to those without any kind of complex, automation. You don't need to regulate the salinity in the water to keep those rods cool. There's a clear science to this. It's you get an email, and you reply. By the way, if you don't know how to reply to emails, you probably shouldn't have a website.

**Brian:** That's right. That's much better. So once there, then there are some upgrades you could make. If you have Gmail, you could have Gmail automatically reply and send out a free resource that you have, or you could set up a canned message which is a great piece so you don't have to retype everything every time. That's really helpful, Chad. I appreciate that. So let's talk about another do. I know you've mentioned before to me, and you say it on your blog, do talk about results.

**Chad:** Yeah and in fact, I know we have a webinar, probably by the time folks are hearing this podcast, the webinar will have already happened, but we're talking about... Well know, I take that back. We've got it scheduled for later next year too. How do you talk about results and client results without promising results? Because we can't guarantee results. It's up to the client. What we want to do in the website is talk about what can a person expect? What can they anticipate if they really lean into the coaching, not just they pay their money, but they really do what it takes to be a great client, what can

they expect? The key is that people don't buy coaching, they pay for coaching because they want to buy the results that coaching can get them. The easy ways to talk about results, one would be client testimonials. That's a picture of the results, and by the way, you want to sort of help massage those testimonials so they do talk about results. A lot of clients are willing to write a testimonial, but they don't really know how to write it. I know plenty of coaches offer to draft the testimonial for the client and let them then adapt it, or just check off on it, or whatever. Testimonials that speak to results. "Finally I got organized and was able to accomplish so much more than before." "Finally I was comfortable as the leader of staff as the church pastor." Whatever the results are that you anticipate your client's getting. You really need to talk about those.

**Brian:** That's helpful. I was looking at a person you and I know who's a really good coach, and I was looking at his website, and underneath where it talked about coaching, the first thing it had was the definition of coaching from the International Coaching Federation, and then it went on to talk about the process. That's an easy mistake to make, but we need to stop and think that when we buy Raisin Bran, we don't buy it because they figured out how to put tricerglutamates, good luck with the transcript on that, by the way, because they've figured out how to process raisins into dry wheat in a certain way. I would never buy Raisin Bran because of the process that they have invented to make it. I eat it because it's delicious, and satisfying, and gets me through the morning, or whatever. You know what I'm saying? People buy results. They don't want to know how the sausage is made, and in fact, if you tell them how the sausage is made, they're probably less likely to buy it.

**Chad:** That's right. That's why I don't want to know how sausage is made because I love the taste. I think you're exactly right. If we go into, "Here's what coaching is. Here's how it works." The thing we've got to remember is we geek out on coaching because we love coaching. Our clients don't geek out on coaching. They don't love coaching. They tolerate coaching because of the results it gets them. They engage coaching because it benefits them in some way. A lot of people have a hard time getting their head around coaching. They don't need to get their head around coaching until they really become a client. Then maybe they need to be educated a bit. They just need to understand, what would working with this person get me? That's again, you hear us talk all the time about a coaching niche. This is why it's so helpful to have a more clearly defined coaching niche because you can talk about specific results instead of general results like, "Your life's going to be better." Well, okay.

**Brian:** That sounds good!

**Chad:** That sounds really good. Maybe too good to be true. You want to talk about results, you can do it through kind of bullet points, stories, testimonials, before and after, that's always a great way to highlight results. One of the things I've learned from Donald Miller's story brand, marketing workshop is he says, "Be clear about what success and failure look like." So a person works with you to experience success and avoid failure, and you don't want to overdo the failure stuff too much, but you need to put a little bit of that in there just so your potential clients can understand, "Oh. I work with Brian, I become an effective leader who's able to get the most from my team and actually enjoy being atop this organization, and avoid burnout, and ticking off everybody, and making enemies, and losing my wife and my kids, and living in a van down by the river, whatever. That sounds like failure, right? I may have overdone that just a little bit, but you get the idea.

**Brian:** Well I was thinking about even in a marriage example, do I want to end my marriage with we're old but we coexist, we live in the same house, we didn't get divorced. To me, that would be a sense of even talking about failure. That's not what I want. I want it to be dynamic, and interesting, and those things. You put me in a mindset that I think is really helpful for our coaches in thinking that people don't like the process. You made me think, I don't like the process of going to the doctor. Those are the things that stop me from going to the doctor to think too much about the procedure, but I do want the results. I want to be healthy, I want to feel better, I want to live a long time. I don't like the process of lawyers. That is a boring, tedious, almost mean at times process, and that's going to keep me away from that, but I do want the results of security, or finality, that a lawyer can give me. None of us want to think about our coaching profession in that way, that it's like a colostomy, or whatever. Not a colostomy, a colonoscopy. I went too far.

**Chad:** You might have gone too far, yeah. I don't know what you're doing with your attorney. Oh, no. That's not...

**Brian:** That was the doctor. That was the doctor.

**Chad:** Oh. Got it.

**Brian:** No, but that's a different mindset of thinking people don't love how the process is made. That's for us to geek out on, but how do we put on the website what results people will get.

**Chad:** And to put it in the profession that's even closer to coaching, think of a marriage counselor. Again, I don't think that's a miserable process, to talk to a marriage counselor. Maybe it's even neutral. Maybe it's even slightly enjoyable, but no one pays the money to go speak to a marriage counselor for the slightly enjoyable part of those 50 minute sessions. They go talk to the marriage counselor because they want to improve their marriage. That's the result. They want to avoid days marked by more bickering than holding hands, or whatever. Even if the process isn't miserable, even if it's slightly enjoyable, that's still not what people are paying for. So on your website, you need to be able to describe in vivid, technicolor detail, the results that people can expect by engaging the coaching process, but even better said, the results they can expect to experience by working with you. I would say talk mostly about your clients, mostly about the results they can expect. Talk some about you and very little about the coaching process. You'll get your chance to talk about the coaching process when people reach out to you and want to know how do they get these awesome results. Your website's not really the place to go into deep detail about that.

**Brian:** I like your analogy about marriage counseling. I pastored for 20 years, and so the wife would come to me and say, "Hey, we want to get marriage counseling, but my husband just doesn't want to come." Maybe after a conversation with him and saying, "It's not going to be as bad as you think. I'm not just going to take her side, and we'll have a good conversation," he's still hesitant, but he comes in because he wants to resolve. Then he does find out that it's actually somewhat of an enjoyable process. He's surprised by that, but we're trying to get him over that first hump of saying, "This is going to be okay," and I think this is a better attitude for a coach to have, to get away from the thought of, "You're going to love this process," but what are the results? So then you went into something else, Chad.

Personal, how much do I need in this website? How much of me do I need to share? What's an appropriate level?

**Chad:** One of the guiding principles for me, I didn't come up with this, I borrowed it from lots of other people, the principle is, people do business with those they know, like, and trust. You need to tell enough about yourself on the website that people can begin to know, like, and trust you. They need to get some sense of you. Now I'm cautious there because I don't want to say the website is all about you. It's really about your client, and the client is the hero of the story. You're just there to help them be the hero, to facilitate that, but they do need to get to know you just a bit. They need to know that you're credible, that you're a real person, is there going to be maybe a good chemistry fit, that you are real. So I would suggest some kind of about page that is friendly, that lets your personality come through. Well I guess if your personality is friendly, then that page should be friendly. If you're not friendly, the super serious whatever engineer type, that's fine too, but let that come through. You want to attract people who are attracted to you legitimately. Don't airbrush, don't photoshop your personality to try to make it palatable to everybody. So talk about you, but make it confined on an about page. Let it be in your voice. Don't let it sound like somebody interviewed your next door neighbor to find out about you, where it's vague and all this stuff, but also don't make it too braggadocios. If the "best thing since sliced bread" is part of your about page, you've probably gone too far. What would you add to that, Brian? What have you noticed?

**Brian:** A mistake I've made is to make it too specific. So to say, "I've pastored for 20 years," I think there's something in me that says to name the church, maybe name the denomination, and I think that probably communicates the wrong thing. It might communicate too small a sliver there for you, but that you've been a pastor of a church for a number of years, that you participated in denominational leadership. You don't want to be so specific that you start thinking, "Well I guess I've got to be a fundamentalist, general, separatist, Baptist to hire this person, or I wouldn't feel comfortable."

**Chad:** I'm from the schism of 1842.

**Brian:** That's right. Not 1841 because that's false.

**Chad:** They're all going to hell.

**Brian:** Chad, I think you've done some great work helping people think through what they need on their websites. Any final thoughts on this?

**Chad:** I would just say unless you are obviously capable of it, and you're probably not, and this is hard, this is a hard lesson to learn, it's hard for you and I to learn this lesson.

**Brian:** We've done it both ways. You've told me, "Yeah. That's not so good Brian," and I'm almost grateful I've been able to say that to you once as well.

**Chad:** A lot of these do I yourself websites, maybe you can get by with. They're kind of pre-designed, kind of drag and drop, just filling in the content, but even if you don't think you can afford it, probably worth investing to get somebody to help you with it, or if you're going to pay for a do it yourself, or if you're going to go with a do it yourself, you probably need to pay for it because there are certain levels

at which if you're paying a monthly fee, it's almost pre-designed, and those aren't bad websites. Things like Squarespace. Don't learn code.

**Brian:** No. Don't try to be the best designer in the world either. Get some help. If you're not willing to spend a couple hundred dollars on this, then you're probably not really thinking you're going to make a couple hundred dollars off this. So you've got to be able to invest a little bit of money into your website to give that professionalism you're looking for.

Chad and I want to thank everybody so much for joining us today. You can find out more about us by going to [www.coachapproachministries.org](http://www.coachapproachministries.org) and downloading our free eBook, *The Beginner's Guide to Christian Coaching: How to Have Powerful Conversations That Really Make a Difference*. See you next week.