



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 146: My First 100 Clients

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- Brian Miller: This is Brian Miller, Executive Director of Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for sure, I'm joined here today, as I am many weeks of the month, by Mr. Chad Hall, the President of Coach Approach Ministries. Welcome, Chad.
- Chad Hall: Thanks, Brian. Always a pleasure to hang out with you. I don't know what your other weeks are like, but I enjoy these weeks.
- Brian Miller: I get to interview people from all over the place about other things, but I really do enjoy our partnership and friendship and by golly, I think everybody agrees we're funny.
- Chad Hall: Yep. If they don't think we're funny, they're not listening closely.
- Brian Miller: If they just physically move closer to the speaker-
- Chad Hall: Get a little closer.
- Brian Miller: ... It's funnier.
- Chad Hall: Yeah.
- Brian Miller: No doubt.
- Chad Hall: Rewind it, listen to it again.
- Brian Miller: Chad the topic today is about a blog post I wrote a couple of weeks ago, "How to Get Your First 100 Clients." I thought first about writing how to get your first 10 clients. And then I thought about writing about how to get your first 50 clients. And then as I explored my own client list, I was just closing in on 100 clients. So I thought this is an interesting topic, I think it's something I would want to read, it's how to get your first 100 clients.

Brian Miller: So I dug into it. And here's some things that I found, after having almost 100 clients, not one client came from my website, reading my blog or social media, not one.

Chad Hall: Not one. Ever. Wow. What do you make of that?

Brian Miller: Well, I think, it's really good information to know. Because there's something, and we've probably even hinted at it. That, you need a website, you need social media. You might need a podcast, you might need a blog post. I've had all those things, and not one client from that. So it could mean I'm not harnessing that well.

Chad Hall: It could be.

Brian Miller: But it could mean, that's not the best place to get your first 100 clients.

Chad Hall: Well, and probably where we'll go with some of this podcast is, looking at where do your clients come from? What's the decision making process? How did they find out about you? All that. What's the process by which people choose to work with you? And people have to find out about you. And, we'd like to think theoretically, "Oh, they're going to read my blog. And then they're going to want to know more, and listen to the podcast and then whatever." And then they're gonna say, "And that Brian Miller is so awesome. I want him to coach me."

Brian Miller: Yes.

Chad Hall: Life rarely works out the way we think it should.

Brian Miller: No. That's right. I remember seeing an episode -- I think it was Jerry Seinfeld's where he interviews comedians, he was just saying that, people think there's somebody that goes around and knocks on people's doors and says, "I hear you're funny."-

Chad Hall: ... "I'd like you to talk in my club tonight. 'Cause you're really funny."

Brian Miller: It doesn't work like that.

Chad Hall: By the way, it doesn't because, we're funny and no one's ever come to our door.

Brian Miller: We have a podcast! That's, it should be on the top 100 comedy blog, podcast, but it's certainly not.

Chad Hall: I think it's 105.

Brian Miller: But but not one client came from my website, reading my blog or social media, not one ever. And, I think what that tells me, as you're thinking about get your

first 100 clients, don't put, I don't know what percentage of energy into that. Don't put much energy into your, not that you don't need a website or a Facebook page. But don't spend much time. And, what I've definitely seen from people I've worked with is, they'll make a website, nobody calls and then they'll look at the website and go, "Oh, yeah. It's not good."-

Chad Hall: ... "Oh, I need a better website."

Brian Miller: I need a better website.

Chad Hall: Yeah. If you're in a business where you get traffic to your website, and you get people to buy products or something like that, that's a whole different thing. And, so you hear people like Donald Miller or whoever talks about, the power of your website? And maybe there are coaches out there that, that's what they do. Most of the coaches we know that's not it. To me, where I think the value of a website is for a coach is two things, one, it clarifies your own thinking. So if I can talk about it on my website, I can talk to somebody at the Rotary Club, about it.

Chad Hall: So if it's just, help me process that information and put it out there in a public way. So that then when I'm talking about it in another situations, I'm more prepared. "Okay, that's helpful." And then, I think the other place that websites really help coaches, again, not like super-duper going to get you a bunch of clients help, but is it beneficial, it's beneficial that people might check out your website to make sure you're legitimate. So maybe I decided to hire you through a different doorway. But the website's more of like a collateral contribution to my decision making process or my comfort level in working with you or it's a resource that I go to, once you're my coach.

Chad Hall: But the idea that someone's going to be googling, "I need a life coach," and they're going to find your website and say, "Wow, I'm hiring this guy."

Brian Miller: Not going to happen. It's not going to happen, and even the stuff you mentioned about a resource, it all sounds great. It's still not, I don't think in the first 100. It's been almost, I mean, that's not been the case.

Chad Hall: Yeah. So if you're looking for where you're going to invest your time and energy to actually get clients, that's not it.

Brian Miller: No.

Chad Hall: Where did your clients come from?

Brian Miller: So, my first 20 clients came from wherever I could find them. Just people I, they were all people, there are probably two categories. Most of them were people I knew, that I reached out to and said, "I'm coaching and I'd like to coach you."

Chad Hall: So, your immediate network?

Brian Miller: My immediate network. People I knew well. Yeah, I knew them. They knew me. And, they said, that they must have had some thought of, "Yeah, I think Brian could do that."

Chad Hall: Here's what I hear in that. So, I think the faulty strategy, the I'm going to use my website, I'm gonna Facebook, whatever. We always say people do business with those they know, like and trust. So the strategy is, "how can I get some people to know me, like me and trust me?"

Brian Miller: I already do.

Chad Hall: Well, a better strategy is, who already knows you, likes you and trusts you. Those would probably makes some good clients, right there.

Brian Miller: And they do make good clients. They've been, one of my very first clients if not my first client, is still my client eight years later. Yeah. And that's-

Chad Hall: Wow! He hired you to write his first book, and he hasn't yet written it. But he's close, sir.

Brian Miller: No, he valued coaching.

Chad Hall: I'm just teasing.

Brian Miller: He's in an organization that he wanted them to value coaching and he hired me as his coach, and he, to this day, after eight years, I mean, certainly several times, I said, "let me get you a different coach." Let me get you experience. I mean, he's moved up. He's now leading an organization, a pretty good-sized organization. He's like, "No, that time is valuable. I want that space to think? And I trust you." And, at that leadership level, sometimes it's just important. It's more important to say, "I know I can say whatever I need to say. And trust you."

Chad Hall: So, Brian, usually on these podcasts, you're kind of asking me some questions. I like this-

Brian Miller: Yeah. We turned it around?

Chad Hall: I think we'll turn the tables.

Brian Miller: The other place I got from that first 20 years, I would go places and talk about coaching. So for me, well, I started teaching classes pretty quick. I loved it. So a student or two, hired me, came up and said, "Can I hire you as my coach?"

Chad Hall: That's one, again, I think a lot of people have that potential. And they don't do it because they think it's awkward. It's awkward to ask somebody who already knows me. It's awkward to ask a person who's a parishioner if I'm a pastor, or a student, if I'm a teacher, or whatever. And if you're going to have clients, by the

way, if you're going to be a coach, you have to have clients. And, if you're going to have clients, you get to just dial down the awkward gene, whatever that is that says, "Oh, that'd be uncomfortable. That'd be kind of weird." And some people are even like, "Oh, that's unethical." It's unethical for me to ask a friend. No, no, it's not.

Brian Miller: No, the two longest coaching clients I have right now are my two best friends. I've coached them for eight years. Yeah, they're my best friends. I didn't know them beforehand. No. I didn't know, they were my best friends beforehand. And you think could that be awkward? Could be, but it's not. It is not awkward.

Chad Hall: Yeah. Well, and it's a professional service. It's valuable. And why wouldn't I want to buy it? You know, that's the thing. And if you can make in a way that it's not awkward for them to say no, then go ahead and ask them. And, I think especially new coaches just have to get over the being timid about putting it out there, saying I would like to coach you. And, I'd like you to pay me.

Brian Miller: They did, they paid me right off the bat.

Chad Hall: What, was that awkward for you?

Brian Miller: Was that awkward for me, for them to pay me?

Chad Hall: Well, eight years ago was it awkward to ask them to be a client?

Brian Miller: I started... no, because in fact, I don't want to put a caveat here, but that I got my training through my denomination. And these guys were denominational leaders. And it was just the, you've talked to me about wanting coaching to be important, then this is some place you've got to put some value. And there's just got to be some pay to it. I certainly started at lower pay and worked its way up. But no, I don't feel like that was awkward trying to think of any other, and as a true coach, if you, we all fight the expert gene. Talk about the awkward gene, we need to dial down the expert gene too.

Brian Miller: If I'm not the expert, what's the problem with me coaching these people? I'm not the expert. I'm really good at coaching.

Chad Hall: Yeah. And I think that the little switch that might happen or help for people is to go from thinking, I should ask you to be my client, because I have some insights that you probably need, like-

Brian Miller: ... They're my best friend. Why don't you just tell me?

Chad Hall: Yeah. And when you switch that from expert to more of a facilitator, more of a coach, I think the better way to go in and say I, "I'm your friend, or I know you will, your life is worth having a coach." 'Because what coaching does is enhance what's already good and so it kind of goes in with less of a, "I know what you

should do your broken, and I could fix you." And more of, "I see you as somebody that could benefit from coaching because your life is so valuable. You're running on all cylinders. You know, I see a lot of good that's happening in your life. You're the kind of person who could benefit from coaching, because coaching is for people who are doing it right."

Brian Miller: And here's how they respond. They don't respond, saying, "Well, I appreciate you noticing that my life's valuable." That's not what they hear. They think, "there are some things, there's some places I'm trying to get to there's some things I'm trying to figure out. And having somebody to have that conversation with would That actually sounds really helpful." That's the response I get. And I also think about whether, did I asked 30 people or, 100 people and 20 said yes? No, actually, I probably asked 20 people and 20 people said yes.

Chad Hall: Wow.

Brian Miller: I had just, I had somebody who's taken some classes from us. I've always encouraged them to do this. Who are 10 people you could coaching right now. And she knew she wanted to do some coaching. So she asked six because she wanted two, she got five.

Chad Hall: Wow. Yeah. But again, I bet they already knew her, liked and trusted her.

Brian Miller: They're colleagues. I think that's a great place to go is a level that's colleague. I had some people that were higher leaders, I think, but if you're a pastor, it's not awkward to say I'll coach other pastors. It's not.

Brian Miller: They don't feel that way.

Chad Hall: No, because you're not saying I'm farther down the road than you are. Look up to me. That's not the way coaching works. Thankfully. Yeah. So Brian, where have some of your other clients come from?

Brian Miller: So let me say this, that I think it's important. Out of that first 20, 'cause I looked through the numbers, eight of those first 20 clients were key to the rest of all my clients. Those eight in some way facilitated or networked the next 90, next 80 clients, I think that's important to know you think, "Oh, I'll just get started. I gotta get some people." But I found they're the ones, I don't know, not necessarily that open the door, but if you create some kind of, and I did this actually, not geographic, but how you got from this client to that client. You could draw direct lines, somehow network wise.

Chad Hall: But again, people are going to hire those they know, like and trust. And, it's the network is how they're going to get to know you. They're going to hear the referral. They're going to hear the good news from the person they know, that can vouch for you. It makes sense to do what kind of spread organically the way

of friendship would? Who are you going to become friends with? A friend of a friend.

Brian Miller: That's right. And so in this blog post I wrote, which I'll put a link on the blog, on the podcast page here too, but I used probably loosely but in Acts 1:8, Jesus says to His disciples, He says, you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And so I'm not talking about making disciples and maybe it's a stretch to think about coaches, but I clients but this is the way I think about clients. You start in Jerusalem meeting the people that you know, people that are right here, I don't have to go look for them. I already know who they are. I just need to go talk to them.

Brian Miller: And then Judea's, geographically, a bigger territory around Jerusalem, it's the surrounding areas. So that would be the next step. These are not just, Judea is not just people I know it's people I know, who they know. It's another step out. And then Samaria, is just a little farther out and the network. It's bigger than that.

Chad Hall: Yeah and I kind of think of Samaria as being like the neighboring entity.

Brian Miller: It is the neighbor. Yeah.

Chad Hall: And so, like for you, you started with pastors, denominational type people, church leaders. And, those initial eight go you more people probably in that same type of world. Eventually you started coaching people in a seminary setting?

Brian Miller: Yes.

Chad Hall: Okay. That's a neighboring. I mean, if you didn't go into the medical field.

Brian Miller: Here's what I wrote, Samaria can't be answered unless you have a connection. You can't go in there. You can't start by looking for clients in Samaria.

Chad Hall: And that's a mistake I hear a lot of new coaches make. They say, "Hmm, what's a good marketing niche? What's a good area that I want to coach? I'm going to coach retiring professional athletes." I mean, I can make a case for that, what am I going to do after football?

Brian Miller: Right, and they've got money.

Chad Hall: They got plenty of money and they're going to end up broke and penny less and whatever. Or they're going to work with me. Okay. Who do you know, that knows, people in that world?

Brian Miller: I made a website-

Chad Hall: I got a website.

Brian Miller: ... Called retiredathletes.com. But it's not really drawing.

Chad Hall: Yeah. For some reason.

Brian Miller: I know, it's beautiful.

Chad Hall: No, and unless extreme example that I have actually heard that one, that specific one.

Brian Miller: Have you really?

Chad Hall: Yeah, twice. The more frequent one that I hear is, "I want to coach doctors. Doctors are stressed." And you can really understand what a great, and I almost want to become a doctor so I can hire this coach just sounds so great. Except again, it's, "I'm going to create a website. I'm going to somehow, these people that I don't know, are going to get to know me and hire me as a coach." And that's not a stretch to Samaria, for these folks. This is a stretch to Rome. I mean, this is, you're not there. You don't know anybody who's there. You just imagine it would be a good clientele. And it might be, for somebody who was in that world or at least neighboring and could get an introduction into that world.

Chad Hall: And a good example of that, we do some work with the Christian Medical and Dental Association. And the guy who really got coaching going in that was not a doctor. He had a doctor.

Brian Miller: That's right. I've done a podcast with him. It's Ken Jones.

Chad Hall: Ken Jones. Yeah. And pretty soon he's coaching all these doctors, and who did he know he knew his own doctor who wanted him to be his coach, and it just snowballed from there. But it wasn't just somehow building a bridge into that world. He had a bridge, it was a person.

Brian Miller: And it was organic to, he did not seek out his doctor and try to turn him, his doctor. It actually worked out. So what I found is in this first, even 10 to 20 clients, you probably don't know what your niche is, you're just trying to get somebody who knows, likes and trusts you enough to let your coach them. Then you start to find out what the problems are, and people what you resonate with. Even as you coach people, it's interesting, what the coach gets out of coaching is actually solutions. You start to hear solutions to problems. They're not your solutions. They are other people solutions. When you start to collect those and that becomes a framework of some sort. So then as you're reaching into Samaria you've already, that's, your niche gets defined in Jerusalem and Judea as you find work.



Brian Miller: And you find what's organic. Because we've seen this several times where people are saying, "My niche is, say, doctors," and then they go Coach 10 to 20 people that they know they can get the coach them. And then they find out that they're coaching military people or whatever. Because that's, you know what, that's who they know. And, they now see obvious networks open. Samaria opens up, you're probably not going to get to decide what Samaria is for you. It's going to be decided for you, but it's going to open up.

Chad Hall: It's going to reveal itself to you.

Brian Miller: It's going to reveal itself.

Chad Hall: Yeah. I really like that that image and that picture, and it growing organically. I think that a lot of this is your you coach based on your reputation. And it's, who knows you? Where do you have a reputation? And as your reputation spreads into a Samaria, the door opens for you to coach more people there. But, until your reputation is there gets you entre. You can't just kind of go in reputation-less and expect people to say, "Oh, yeah, I'm gonna hire you." No, Why would I?

Brian Miller: No. Right. That seems awkward.

Chad Hall: Yeah, that's right.

Brian Miller: That's what's awkward. That really is awkward. Here's the other thing I found in the connection to Samaria, is that in Samaria, you can get multiple clients at once. Or you then get referral clients. So you don't, in Samaria you don't have to necessarily go ask people, "Would you be willing to be my client?" That's where the connections come in people. So an organization may say, "Can you coach our staff?" Wow, you get six clients, right now. That's better than one client.

Chad Hall: And to make this really big picture. I don't know a coach who's making a full time living as a coach who doesn't have that kind multiple clients at one time. At least as part of who they're coaching. I'm not saying they don't have some kind of one person here and there. But they're able to go into an organization, to a tribe, to something, and they're getting multiple clients at one time. And that way, you're not having to just keep kind of filling the pipeline.

Brian Miller: Right? And that's very do-able, and it becomes, so working these networks produced multiple clients all at once. That's the big learnings from my first 100 clients.

Chad Hall: Brian, where do you think your next 100 clients are going to come from?

Brian Miller: I think and it's interesting and maybe I wonder if I'm wrong, because after all, we said here I think my next 100 clients will come, now that I have been in Samaria, now that I'm beginning to see even now -- I think I'm just now beginning to see what my niche is -- that I will design, I don't know if the

website... I'll have more of a framework where I can be able to say, "Here's, the problem I know this organization probably has, and here's what I can do to fix it." And then, approach those organizations.

Brian Miller: Most likely, for me not to be awkward it needs to be through somebody I know. So, probably, I'll ask the CEO of the organization I work with, who should I be talking to?

Chad Hall: I could see that for you, I could see that you've gone from kind of coaching individuals that you know, who know you, you've coached leaders within organizations. And that's kind of been your Samaria. I could see that you really build a reputation for being able to coach organizations, or coach in a way that supports organizations. And so you don't get locked into one type of organization. You begin to say that's the thing that these have in common and they can begin to introduce me to other organizations that can benefit from what I bring.

Chad Hall: And in that begins to expand out. So if you're, and that's what I've heard from you over the years, that is really your niche. It's you're a good leadership coach, and not just the leader, leader, leader of the organization, but really helping people of any leadership role or position in the organization. Make the most of that and then helping them make the most of it in a more synergistic way with each other.

Chad Hall: And that's true. That you don't have to get locked into "Oh, that's only for schools or that's only for an insurance company or"-

Brian Miller: ... or churches.

Chad Hall: .. Or a church or whatever, that can be true for organizations. So it's more of a vertical or a more of a horizontal kind of spread.

Brian Miller: But I need to make those connections or organically in the network. Somebody I'm coaching now needs to, I say needs to connect me. I don't mean they need to make the introduction necessarily at all.

Chad Hall: But they might and so your-

Brian Miller: They might.

Chad Hall: ... You're coaching the leader of a seminary. And to say to him, "What other leader of an organization do you know that you could introduce me to, that they might benefit from coaching?" And I just want everybody to hear that's different than, "What other seminary leader do you know, that you could introduce me to". That's probably keeping it too small. Which is another thing people struggle with down the road. They keep their vision too small. They don't really understand what the similarities are with their clients. So that they can go find

new ones. They just think, "Oh, it's only this sector." And it's usually not confined to one sector.

Brian Miller: No. So that'll be new discovery, but it was just really interesting to go back through the first 100 and wonder where they came from. And what the connections were. I didn't mention the last place is "ends of the earth." To go to the ends of the earth requires a boldness that is rare, I wrote, "of all the disciples was the Apostle Paul who ventured out unafraid and entered into conversations with people who had no idea who Jesus was. He's gone..." , so far I've had exactly two clients from the ends of the earth.

Brian Miller: You can waste a lot of time trying to get these clients.

Chad Hall: And for you, what has "ends of the earth" meant with your clientele?

Brian Miller: Yeah, I'm actually trying to remember exactly who the two were. I think they were probably referrals maybe from somebody else. Who I didn't really know.

Chad Hall: Okay, yeah.

Brian Miller: And I did some sessions with them. And that was it.

Chad Hall: And they probably didn't then turn into people who referred others?

Brian Miller: No.

Chad Hall: They were kind of, they literally were the end.

Brian Miller: They did not turn into others and I don't regret it, or anything like that. But... Oh, I know. I do know where a couple came from too. I was trying to think what exactly I was, because it's been a while since I looked at it. So I went through another nonprofit organization. It was trying to get coaches for nonprofits in particular. And I signed up to do some coaching for that. And I got paid a little bit for that. And those were, the one of them was pretty close to the worst client I ever had. I remember coaching him while he shopped or something, you're like, that's not what this is! And I don't know how you communicate. It was interesting, he was doing some interesting things. But, it's again, when you get, I don't know, you give away free coaching. They weren't paying me.

Chad Hall: They weren't paying, the organization, the sponsoring organization was paying. Yeah.

Brian Miller: That wasn't good. That was discouraging. And, yeah, they're not your clients; they don't pay well. You're much better off getting your own clients.

Chad Hall: Well, and I think that's something for people to take away too is okay. It's Okay, you have 100 clients, they're going to be a few duds. And you don't want that to

be the trajectory. You know, at first I had great clients and now they're all duds. But if you have a few dud clients here there that is really normal. I mean, I can remember a dud client, I was really excited to get him as a client until about the third session. And then I was like, I gotta get... the only client I ever fired. And, so people shouldn't be discouraged if they have a few duds along the way.

Brian Miller: No, two duds may, I don't have the right word. I want to be careful here too. But one of them, if you ask him how good a coach I am, he will rave. And I don't have any idea why. Because, but he will rave about it. And the other one, I did end up getting another client through that connection. Who I thought was great. So you never know. You want to be out there. And not feel bad about that.

Chad Hall: So if people are going to have one takeaway from your first 100 clients, what would you want them to take away?

Brian Miller: One... I don't know if I can say one, but one is, start with, just coach who you know.

Chad Hall: Coach who you know.

Brian Miller: Those people know, like and trust you, and if you can't get people who already know, like and trust you to hire you, at some level, you're not going to convince anybody else.

Chad Hall: You may want into the custodial services.

Brian Miller: Like and trust you that well. It's worth the risk of putting it out there and saying this is what I'm doing. And the second big take away is that, Samaria is where you can make a living, but you've got to start in Jerusalem and Judea, to build enough network to make the connection into it.

Chad Hall: That makes sense. Well, Brian, congratulations on 100 clients.

Brian Miller: Thank you.

Chad Hall: That's awesome.

Brian Miller: Appreciate that. And we want to thank those listening too, to our podcast today. Coach Approach Ministries is a non-profit coach training school. It's done it over 15 years with over 2000 students involved from all over the world Chad: Australia, Japan, Canada is that a foreign country?

Chad Hall: Unless you're in Canada.

Brian Miller: Yeah, that's correct. And we'd love to help you start your training or to further your training. And you can just look us up at [coachapproachministries.org](http://coachapproachministries.org) or contact me at [bmiller@ca-ministries.com](mailto:bmiller@ca-ministries.com).

Brian Miller: We'll see you next week.