



How to Choose a Niche Transcript

David Steele: Welcome to How to Choose a Niche. Today we are going to cover what is a niche and how it differs from a specialty, how a niche can be your key to professional success and financial freedom. We'll cover 11 specific strategies for choosing a niche. We will also cover how to own your niche, which is one of my favorite subjects since I've done it several times. I'm David Steele. I am founder of Relationship Coaching Institute and I have two huge passions in my professional life. One is helping people have successful relationships. And I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist. I got my start in the field in 1978. I've specialized with couples in my private practice for many, many years.

And then I discovered coaching. I became very excited about applying this new methodology for helping people to relationships. I couldn't find a program to train me how to do it, so I kind of had to figure it out on my own, and that was the birth of Relationship Coaching Institute, which is the first and largest relationship coach training organization in the world. So I'm very proud of that. It's a great organization, and a lot of listeners right now are members of Relationship Coaching Institute.

The other big, huge passion I have is practice building, because we absolutely are not going to be able to make a difference in the world if we can't get clients. I'll tell you, it's too much fun being self-employed. I enjoy it. I hate having a boss, and I hate having structured hours like nine-to-five and having to work in a cubicle or something like that. I love the freedom to do what I want, when I want, to be of service to my clients however I want, without somebody telling me what I can do and can't do.

I love working from home, which, since the Internet and conference-calling became prevalent, it's a very, very exciting, progressive, and effective way to be of service in your profession, I've found, no matter what your profession is. And we'll talk a bit about that in this program as well.

When I founded Relationship Coaching Institute, it was absolutely not my desire to just sell training. I wanted to proliferate relationship coaching around the world, and I wanted to train and support other folks that wanted to do relationship coaching to do that, so that we could really change the world, we could make the world a much better place. That's always been my mission. And so Relationship Coaching Institute is a member organization, and we offer training and certification and practice-building support and marketing support.

It's a community of professionals. And it's a niche community. And we'll talk a bit about a niche community a little bit later.

Early on, one of my favorite practice building stories is I honestly spent \$8,000 on a direct-mail campaign to try to get private-pay couples into my practice. A marketing consultant convinced

me that this was the way to go. And it was a HUGE waste of money. I didn't get any clients from it. But it really was a wakeup call for me that money doesn't solve problems in building a successful private practice. And there's people that will take your money and think they know what they're talking about. And they don't.

So I've been there, done that. I've made every mistake you can make and I'm happy to pass along to you the lessons that I've learned that will help you be successful. It's just a huge passion that I have. It's very, very important to me that you be successful following your passion, being of service, accomplishing your mission and making the difference in the world that you are on this planet to make, because I know how important it is to me.

It's a lot of fun. And it's very profitable. I mean, what a great way to make a living: to be self-employed, to be your own boss, to make a difference in the world, to be of service to people. I just can't imagine any better way to go.

Now, there's some folks that wouldn't touch this with a 10-foot pole in a million years. They want a job. They want a boss. They don't want to have to think. They don't want to have to worry about where their paycheck's coming from. But I'll tell you, in today's world, there's no such thing as job security, absolutely none. The most job security you can have is if you have your own business and you are self-employed. So this is even strengthening my passion for helping people have successful practices.

Now, a very, very important part of having a successful practice is to have a niche. And this has been one of the biggest bones of contention and resistance and questions and challenges to the folks in my practice-building programs. So I decided, this time, I'm going to do a whole seminar just on this, on what a niche is and how to choose one, and how to make it successful.

So let's talk about what a niche is and how it differs from a specialty.

I've seen a lot of confusion about what a niche is, and I don't claim to have the last word on what it is, by no means. But here's how I break it down. You have your profession. You might have a specialty in that profession. Then you might have a niche that you practice in your profession. You have your services that you provide the folks in your niche. And then you have your brand, which is how you communicate your services and what you call your business and the image. Whatever's tangible about your business that is your brand.

So there's some questions for you to answer. What is your profession? This is an answer to the "Who am I?" question. And for me, I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist. I've transitioned to relationship coaching. I haven't done therapy in many, many years. So, in my answer to the question, "Who am I?" well, I'm a Relationship Coach.

So, answer this question. When you're asked to fill in, on your tax return for example, the box that says your occupation, what do you put? I put "Relationship Coach." Even though I do a lot of things, a lot of different things, that's my primary profession. So your profession is an answer to the question of "Who am I?" Me, I'm David Steele. I'm a Relationship Coach.

Then your specialty. The question is "What do I do?" A profession is huge. It's broad. It covers a tremendous variety of people and problems and solutions and theories and techniques and strategies. It's huge.

And most of us specialize. Most of us don't do everything possible in our profession. Most of us specialize. For example, my license title is marriage and family therapist, and I have worked with families, but I chose to specialize with couples. So it's the couples part, the marriage part, that I chose to specialize in with my license, even though it covers a whole, broad area of relationships.

So your specialty is what do you do within your profession. It's a narrower area that you focus on.

And in terms of marketing and building a practice, what I've found is it is hugely difficult to be a generalist. People want a specialist. When they are looking for a solution or help or a professional to work with, they want to know that you specialize in what their needs, problems, challenges, and goals are.

This is a highly specialized society, with a huge division of labor. So, in the old days, you might have had the village blacksmith, who just about did everything with tools. Well, now you have people working in factories that put one little widget on one other little widget all day. We live in a highly specialized society. This is just the way we are trained and acculturated.

When we go to the store, we look for specific products. If you want a cleaning solution, you're not going to apply rug cleaning solution to the walls. If you have a mark on the wall, you're going to clean the wall, you're going to look for something that specializes in cleaning the wall. It's just the way our society is and works. So, to be a generalist and to just put your title out there as Relationship Coach, "I work with everybody." It just plain doesn't work. So, therefore, most of us do specialize and we need to communicate what our specialty is.

Next is a niche. The question for a niche is "Who do I help?" Who do I help? So, a profession is who am I? This is your overall profession; the specialty is what do I do in that profession. And then your niche is who do I help? So, as a relationship coach, as a brand new relationship coach, I got excited about relationship coaching, and I asked, myself the question of who needs it? Who wants it? What can I do with this new profession of mine?

I was looking at it with fresh eyes, and I had an epiphany. The biggest epiphany I've probably ever had in my life, and you might laugh it's so simple. The epiphany is this: singles become couples. So, as a coach, if I want to make a huge impact in relationships, the place to start is with singles. Singles don't have a relationship and they want one.

Coaches help people get from where they are to where they want to be. I knew nothing about working with singles, so I was able to approach that with fresh eyes as well. And I developed a whole niche around helping singles. I developed a program for singles, and I developed my whole business around singles -- just one part of my business, not all of it. I even wrote a book for singles, "Conscious Dating," and I even trademarked that.

So, that's my brand, "Conscious Dating." So, niche -- relationship coach for singles in Silicon Valley. That was my niche. My profession: relationship coach. My specialty: for singles. My

niche being singles in Silicon Valley. And then your services, so ask yourself this question. Please write it down. How do I help them?

OK, I have this niche of people, singles in Silicon Valley, how do I help them? What am I going to do with them? For most of us practitioners, this is a very easy question. Well, I'm going to do counseling, I'm going to do therapy, I'm going to help them do their taxes. You're going to do what you're trained to do.

However, since a niche is a specific group of people, they have specific needs. Wouldn't it be nice to know what those needs are and to tailor your services for them? Then you are a guaranteed success, because you designed your services for a group of people who want and need them, you differentiate yourself from others. You will own your niche that way, and we'll talk more about that.

So, your brand is what you call your business or services, and how you communicate it. What it might look like as a logo or a graphic on your website, a brochure. It's what people see. It's the image that they have of it. I chose to brand my relationship coaching for singles as "Conscious Dating." Now, I could just brand it as "David Steele's Relationship Coaching for Singles," but who the heck is David Steele?

If you're single in Silicon Valley, are you going to respond more to an invitation to come to a gathering called "David Steele's Coaching for Singles," or "Conscious Dating for Singles?" So your brand has a lot to do with how you want to resonate with the people you want to reach, the image you want them to have of you, you want it to resonate strongly and be attractive to them.

So, those are some definitions, profession, specialty, niche, services, and brand. Profession -- who am I? Specialty -- what do I do? Niche -- who do I help? Services -- how do I help them? And brand -- what do I call my business or services? What tangible image is it? And we'll talk more about that.

So let's cover how a niche can be your key to professional success and financial freedom. I talked a bit about how fun it is to be self employed, to have the job security of knowing that you're not relying on somebody else's good graces that you keep your job or get paid. And owning your own business is proven to be the best way to financial freedom, and a private practice is a business.

I like to help the members of RCI take a private practice to the next level, from a practice to a business. So, a practice is pretty simple, it's where you see clients. A business has multiple streams of income, it has a whole service delivery system, and we'll get further into that. So, the idea of professional success and financial freedom is that it's not enough just to have a full practice. You want to be well paid, and if you didn't want to work anymore or weren't able to go to your office and see clients, would your income stop? A business is not dependent upon exchanging your time for dollars. That's how you know you've built a business, when you can go on vacation and you're still generating income. You can generate income while you sleep, and we'll talk a bit more about that.

So, there are seven benefits that I can identify of choosing a niche. This is just to motivate you, this is just for those who are internally resisting, saying, "No, no, no! I don't want to." So, seven benefits, these are arguments for choosing a niche.

Benefit number one, probably the biggest one, is you get to push the boulder downhill. That's right, path of least resistance, a lot easier to achieve success in private practice and build a business around it. When you choose a niche, you're pushing the boulder downhill.

For generalists, the people who don't want to choose a niche, they try to do everything for everybody and they don't want to rule anybody out, they don't want to narrow themselves, they don't want to define themselves, they are really pushing the boulder uphill. It is really hard. It's not impossible, a lot of people do it, but it is really hard. So, when you choose a niche, you are pushing the boulder downhill. It is far easier, far more successful.

Benefit number two is you get to follow your passion, which is fun. Which means that you'll have fun in your business; it means you'll bring more positive energy into it. Hopefully you will choose a niche that is in alignment with your passion. If you have a choice, and you do, you might as well choose a niche that you want to serve, that you're excited about serving, that makes you just leap out of bed every day. "Oh, boy, I get to do this!" You get to follow your passion.

If you're wondering, "Well, should I choose this niche or that niche?" If you're making a decision based on what you think you need to do to survive, or what you think will generate the most income, that is absolutely the most ineffective way to choose a niche. Choose a niche that you have the most passion for. You're so excited about it, you would do it for free.

And of course I don't want you to do it for free; I will come to your house and prevent you from doing it for free, but you would. It's just so exciting and so fun for you, then you know you've chosen the right niche. So, benefit number two, you get to follow your passion, which is way fun.

Benefit number three, is you get to be creative. You get to express your creativity. When I transitioned my practice to relationship coaching, and everything was wide-open--I was looking at everything with fresh eyes, I got creative. And I tapped into ideas and strategies for working with singles, and the Conscious Dating program, and a whole relationship coaching training curriculum, involving five stages of relationship coaching.

I got creative like I've never been as creative ever in my life. And it really helped me build my business and become wildly successful, way more successful than I would have been staying in private practice, in my office, seeing clients as a therapist.

So being creative is also fun. It's also very fulfilling that you get to express the potential that's inside you. And it's also the path to success and profitability and having a comfortable income.

Benefit number four is you get to be of service. You get to make a difference in the world in your unique way. If you choose a niche, you truly get to be of service to a particular group of people in much more effective ways than you could if you did not choose a niche. So if I were still a therapist in private practice, seeing just about anybody that walked through the door, I would make a difference in my clients' lives. But I wouldn't have much else to contribute.

As David Steele, relationship coach for singles, author of "Conscious Dating," creator of the Conscious Dating program for singles, gives Conscious Dating seminars all over the country, on and on and on, I make a huge contribution to singles. I'm able to be of service to them outside of my office, nationally, internationally, now and forever.

Which brings me to benefit number five: creating a legacy. Conscious Dating is a registered trademark. It's a whole intellectual property, a program and book and workbook and tools and strategies, and it's going to live on far beyond me. I train other people to do it. My kids will inherit the trademark. It's going to live far beyond me. I'm creating a legacy.

And when you're seeing clients in your office, exchanging your time for dollars, you might argue that you're creating a legacy in that your work with your clients will live on. But me, I've always had the goal of reaching what I call "the public." Yeah, I care about my clients, and I get a lot of fulfillment out of working with them and supporting them and helping them and making a difference for them. But for me, it's never been enough. I've always wanted to stretch my wings and reach "the public," people that, really, I'd like to help them be successful and prevent the need for them to see a therapist. That's always been my goal.

Benefit number five is you get to create a legacy.

Benefit number six is you get to be unique. And you know what? You already are unique. I'll go beyond that. You are the pioneer of your work, of your practice. Nobody does it like you. You have a specific personality. You have specific experiences and skill set. Yeah, you have training that a lot of other people have gone through, maybe. Yeah, you have a similar job title as a lot of other people in the world. But you're unique. Only you do it the way you do it.

That's why there's plenty of business to go around, because there are many, many people that you can best work with that other people aren't going to be as effective with. So there are people that can best get it from you. So the more unique you market--you choose a niche, you express your creativity, you express your uniqueness, you deliver your message your way--you attract people that resonate with you and your message and your uniqueness. You get to own that niche, and with no competition, because there's nobody else like you. You are unique.

Being unique is certainly fun. It's a source of self-esteem. It's a source of--I'm getting into therapy talk now--individuation. It's a source of fulfillment, because you feel unique. You feel different. You know you're not like anybody else. So there's an alignment when you're able to be unique in the world and have that be appreciated.

I'm unique! There's nobody else out there like me. Yeah, some people, they don't appreciate how I come off. Other people do. The ones that do, they're going to be attracted to my work. They can benefit from what I have to offer them. And they're my people. I'm going to take very good care of them. They appreciate my uniqueness. They benefit from my uniqueness.

I have gifts for them. And it's extremely fulfilling for me to give my gifts to them. That's why I'm giving you this information today. It's fun for me. It's fulfilling to me. I couldn't imagine not doing it. I don't want to pull anything back. I don't want to hold anything out. I just want to give it all to you, and more.

So benefit number seven is that a niche is way more profitable and lends itself to multiple income streams and passive income. So you end up making more money from your practice and your business.

I went from being a therapist in private practice, in my office, exchanging my time for dollars, seeing clients, basically selling sessions. That's what I had to sell: sessions with me, to help you with your marriage and your family and your children. I went from that to having programs for singles, conducting seminars for singles, hosting gatherings for singles, training other people to do it, licensing them to do it, writing a book, selling books, having workbooks and professional manuals. Whenever I do a seminar, like this, I record it, and then that becomes another product. On and on and on and on.

So when you choose a niche and then you focus on that niche, it is way more profitable, and it very easily lends itself to multiple income streams and passive income. So that's my best effort to motivate you to choose a niche, to get beyond whatever resistance you might be feeling at the time to choosing a niche.

Several things about a niche. In my opinion, a niche is a business in itself. Now, as an entrepreneur, as a private practice professional, you are allowed as many businesses as you want, as many niches as you can handle. You don't have to have just one. So yeah, I'm David Steele, and one of my niches is relationship coaching for singles and the Conscious Dating program. But you know what? That's not all I do. I have a variety of niches, a variety of things that I do with my day. And you can, too.

So, number one: a niche is a specific line of business, by itself. And in my practice-building programs at RCI, I encourage participants to apply what they're learning to one niche at a time. I strongly encourage them to just go through the entire program and choose and focus on one niche. Do it for one niche. Spend three to six months focusing on just one niche.

Then, once you've launched that and gotten that off the ground, you have time and energy, you want to go on to start your next niche? Go ahead. Once you've launched your niche and you've put your systems in place, it can go almost on automatic pilot, once you've set it up correctly. And that frees you up to, then, start your next niche.

So those are two very, very important things about a niche.

All right. So now I would like to cover 11 strategies for choosing a niche. Have you ever heard that you should choose a niche, and you're wondering how? How can you possibly narrow it down? How can you possibly choose? Have no idea where to start. These are 11 strategies, guaranteed at least one of them is going to work.

You might end up having a cornucopia of possible niches. That's fine, because this is your profession. You're going to be doing this for years and years and years, and there's plenty of time to get to everything it is that you want to do. Me, I have no intention of retiring. This is way too much fun.

So, let's talk about 11 strategies for choosing a niche.

Number one I call the mirror strategy. And if you were to look in the mirror, what do you see? The mirror strategy, it's about choosing a niche of people like you. If birds of a feather flock together, and they do, and you can probably benefit the most from somebody who speaks your language, who comes from a similar place, who has similar values and background and goals and whatever else it might be, then that's probably the best mentor for you is somebody more like you.

It also might be effective to have a mentor that's very different from you. But the mirror strategy is about choosing a niche based on people like you. These are your people. And so, if you think about that, you might have clients that you've worked with or friends that you've made that they were attracted to you or you were attracted to them because you're so much alike; you have so much in common. That could be your niche.

Here in Silicon Valley, when I launched my programs for singles, and I launched a weekly Friday night social for singles, I did a pilot project first, and I did some market research on what the singles of Silicon Valley wanted and needed. And I got lots and lots and lots of ideas. And I put together a Friday night social, because they needed a place to go on Friday night, that was safe, that was fun, where they could meet other singles, where they could learn a bit about life and relationships, and they could express their desire to have a great life and have a great relationship, something that would support them to go in that direction.

They didn't want something heavy. They definitely wanted it to be fun. They didn't want to go to a Friday night seminar or workshop. So a Friday night social was what they wanted.

And being in Silicon Valley, it attracted a lot of engineers. Which worked for me, because I'm kind of a geek, a technical guy. I love machines and electronics and gadgets. I ended up getting a lot of them as clients, because of the mirror strategy, because there was something about them and me that was strongly mirrored. And they saw in me a good mentor for them, because I knew things and I had accomplished things that they wanted to know and they wanted to accomplish, yet we had a lot in common.

That's an example of the mirror strategy. It's a very compelling way to enroll clients: find something in common with this prospect.

So, strategy number two: the calling strategy. This is, what do you feel called to do? I know people, these wonderful, wonderful people that give up their lives and travel to third-world countries and work with people in these third-world countries. They live in squalor. They felt called to really make a difference in other parts of the world. Why? They grew up here. They had all the experiences that you and I had, probably, in growing up. Yet they felt called to be someplace else, doing something else. It's a calling. If you feel this calling, if you have this calling, you cannot deny the calling.

Early on, I felt called to be a therapist. I felt called to have a private practice as a therapist. Everybody I knew, including my family, was saying, "Oh, no, you'll never make it. There's so much competition. It takes years and years just to get a license and set yourself up. You're better off getting into business." But I felt called. I really had no choice.

Strategy number three: the testimonial strategy. This is fun. What do people say about you? If you get testimonials, or you ask people for testimonials, like, for example, a great way to get testimonials is at the end of a great session with a client, or in an exit interview with somebody that you've worked with. Ask them questions like, "How did you benefit from working with me? What have you been able to accomplish? What difference did I make for you? What did I do that worked for you?"

You can also ask them "What did I do that did not work for you?" That would be good feedback. But what they say is gold. Then write it down. Ask them permission to use it. In some professions, it is frowned upon. It's against regulations. But it's always a good idea to collect testimonials, if nothing else for your own positive energy. You can look at them when you need a boost.

What do people say about you? That might give you strong clues to what your niche is. A lot of people I've met that enter relationship coaching have just naturally fallen into this role with their friends. And friend after friend has been telling them, "You know what? I wouldn't have met my husband if it wasn't for you." You hear this enough times and it gives you a strong clue to what your niche might be.

So that's the testimonial strategy. And so the ways that you show up, the ways that people benefit from their contact with you, and what they say about that, can really help you identify your niche.

Strategy four is the attraction strategy. This is, just very simply, who or what are you attracted to, or who or what is attracted to you? It happens. It happens all by itself. You don't have to control it. You don't have to do anything about it. It's going to happen.

So let's say you are in private practice. Actually, this happened to me, by the way. You're in private practice, and you start attracting all these recovering alcoholics. In my case, I am not an alcoholic. I've never been an alcoholic. I've never been in recovery. I'm not an addict. Although I have some experience in my family, like my mother couldn't quit smoking, things like that. But in my practice, I never really wanted to touch addiction with a 10-foot pole. I never sought training in it. It was not one of my specialties.

Yet, there were a lot of couples that came to see me, and a lot of men especially wanted to work with me, who were in recovery. They wanted to work around their relationships with me. Why me? I had no expertise in it. It's not something that I chose but they came to me. It was just becoming a skewed part of my practice. It just found me. It's a niche that found me.

So, what is attracted to you, or what are you attracted to? That can give you some strong clues to a niche.

Number five is the life-story strategy. What in your life story could be a possible niche for you? What tragedies have you overcome? What peak experiences have you had? Something in your life story might really point to a niche.

So, for example, as a kid, my dad, who's an artist, used to take me to marinas and paint boats. And he liked to talk to the captains, and sometimes they would invite us on the boat and we'd go

for a little boat ride. And I grew up in love with sailboats and sailing and the water. To this day, whenever I see a boat or I talk to somebody that owns a boat, I get excited, all over my body. It excites me more than a lot of things.

So it's a part of my life story that could help me choose a niche. Hey, I could be a coach for boaters. And this is a niche that's easy to identify and market to. They hang out together. You know where they are. You know where to find them. If you speak their language, you're one of them. And you're in. You're one of the club.

So that's just a small piece of my life story. There's many, many, many, many others, and any one of which could be a niche.

Number six: The serendipity strategy. This is, what just falls into your lap, serendipitously? Sometimes, if you're not recognizing it, you're not looking for it, you won't even recognize it as a serendipitous opportunity. But if you're paying attention...

So, for example, I published a column in a local parent magazine in my area, and I would write articles about parenting. It's a big area of specialty that I had in the past, and it was one way I was building my practice was to leverage that specialty. It's not what I wanted to specialize in forever. I wanted to specialize with couples and families. But people that have children, they are families. [laughs] That's one direction.

I had a serendipitous event. I had a social worker at a local hospital read one of my columns and invited me to give a presentation to her new moms group at the local hospital. Every woman who becomes a new mom, who gives birth at that hospital, is invited to the new moms group and has contact with this social worker, every one.

So, at the time, I was giving lots of talks, all over, and thinking, "Sure, this is just another one." So I show up, I give the presentation, and they love it. The social worker loves it, she gives me great feedback, and she asks me back. I come back and I give another presentation, and they enjoy it. They get a lot out of it. And I start getting referrals from her.

Now, this could have been just another referral source, or just another presentation. But I recognized that this is a huge referral source, because the hospital's local to my office, this social worker's in contact with every single new mom there. When you have a baby, not only is it changing your life, but it's stressing your marriage, perhaps. Your life is changing. You're in transition. This is a great opportunity, and sometimes a great need for, seeing a therapist.

This woman, this social worker, became the biggest referral source I've ever had. It almost was like every stressed out mom, every marriage that was having trouble that went through the hospital was referred to my office. It was serendipitous. But I recognized it, and I acted on it.

So, what falls in your lap? And when it does, are you going to recognize it and jump on it? It might have already fallen in your lap. [laughs] Oftentimes, though, we don't recognize it. We're too preoccupied.

Strategy number seven: The pipeline strategy. This is thinking about your niche as a pipeline. Well, if I have a choice of niches, I would like to have a niche that has a long life to it, that has a

number of stages to it. So, for me, singles are a great pipeline strategy because they become couples. And then they get married, and then they have children, and then their children get married and their children have children, and then they get divorced. [laughs] So there's a huge pipeline there that starts with singles.

So, for me, the singles, besides being a great epiphany as they become couples, and isn't that a great place to help people with their relationship, it ended up being a great pipeline for my clients, because they would keep on coming back, they would have future needs, and they became my clients for a very, very, very, very long time. They'd work for a while, stop, come back, work for another while, stop, then come back, because I had a pipeline.

If I had just one thing to offer them that wasn't a pipeline, like hypnotherapy for stopping smoking, if that was all I did, if my profession was a hypnotherapist, my specialty was hypnotherapy for stopping smoking, and my niche was smokers who wanted to quit in this local area, well, one or two sessions, they quit smoking. They're gone. That's it. No pipeline. [laughs] It makes it very hard to have a successful practice, because you need fresh, new blood all the time. You need larger numbers.

So if you have a variety of niches in mind, think about which one has a longer life to it, which one is a better pipeline for you, a better pipeline into your practice and has more longevity in your practice.

Strategy number eight is the gateway strategy. Similar to the pipeline strategy, the gateway strategy is, what is the most successful gateway into your practice? What is the path of least resistance, the groups of people that you can reach the most easily? It's just the path of least resistance. It's the gateway.

In Silicon Valley, when I transitioned to relationship coaching, I just found singles to be, by far, the most successful gateway to me. Because couples are hard to market to unless they're in serious trouble. In fact, my niche with couples was couples in crisis. That was my yellow-page ad: "Couples in Crisis." And boy, did I get them. And boy, did I burn out after some years. That was my niche.

Couples are not motivated to do anything about their relationship, or hire anybody to help them with their relationship, unless they're in serious trouble. And in relationship coaching, I'm changing that. I want to change it. It's starting to change. People are seeing the value of being proactive in their relationships. But working with singles was far easier for me as a gateway strategy to reach new couples, and couples that wanted to have a great relationship that their relationship wasn't in trouble yet.

So the gateway strategy: what is the easiest, most successful gateway to enter your practice?

Number nine is the replication strategy. This is, what niche is most easily replicable? What can you just do over and over and over again?

So, an example of what not to do is to develop a niche around, oh, way back when, it was like Vietnam War PTSD. I've seen some practitioners have post-9/11 PTSD, so therapists that focus on the niche of people who have trauma, phobias and issues triggered from 9/11. Well, that is a

one-time event, and it's not going to have a long life, and it's not replicable. I mean, you could try. Next time there's a big terrorist event, then you can call it that niche.

So the replication strategy is, what is the most replicable and staying away from things that are one shot deals or might have a short life. The stopping smoking specialty is an example of something that is not very replicable.

I mean you can replicate it and repeat it with more and more people that want to stop smoking. You can expand to more and more areas before stop smoking clinics but you are going to run out of clients and you are going to run out of business because you are working yourself out of business. And the society is helping you work yourself out of business because smokers are becoming fewer and fewer and fewer. So, the replication strategy is if you have niche in mind or a number of niches that you can choose from. What is the most replicable?

Number ten, the unmet need strategy. This is choosing a niche that has an unmet need that you could penetrate and this is the key to success for any business. It's to identify that unmet need and fill it very well. So, take a look around, you as a professional with your specialty. Take a look around the possible niches.

What unmet needs are there? As a relationship coach, I wanted to specialize in singles in Silicon Valley. The unmet need that I saw through my market research was a safe, fun, educational place for singles to meet. This is what they said they wanted. There was nothing like it. There were bars and meet market and singles events that were scary to a lot of the singles that I was talking to. They wanted a safe, fun, educational place to meet.

So, guess what? That is what I have in my advertisements: a safe, fun, educational place for singles to meet. That was the unmet need and therefore that was what I put together for them and that helped me developed a widely successful practice in Silicon Valley as a relationship coach.

Strategy number eleven is the quick start strategy. This is very simple. From a practical standpoint, what can you launch the fastest? What do you have the most contacts for? What do you have the most in place for? What can you just get started quickly doing? This is the strategy that I suggest when you transition from a job to private practice. So, my quick start strategy when I was doing that was to focus on parents, parenting, children with out of control behaviors because that was what I was doing in my job.

I started doing consulting and then I started setting myself up in practice and getting private pay clients that want me to work with them on that. It was just the quickest way for me to get my private practice going. So, it might not be what you have the most passion for or what you want to do on the long run, but what would get you going the fastest.

You have to survive before you can thrive. And I have seen a lot of practitioners bomb because they have big dreams. They believe in the law of attraction. They believe if you build it, they will come, which I do believe. But they go whole hog on something and they end up running out of money. It takes two to four years for a typical business become profitable. And so you need to be prepared to be in a building process for two to four years before it will support you.

What can get you going the fastest? What can shorten that as much as possible? I was able to build a successful relationship coaching practice within three months. However, I already had a successful practice as a therapist. I already have a lot of marketing experience including not what to do. And I had an exciting new niche to penetrate and that can actually work against you. If nobody knows what it is, they are not going to consider it seriously.

So, what can get you going the fastest? You have to survive before you can thrive. Most small businesses fail. Ninety percent of them do. The reason is they run out of money before they are able to achieve profitability and sustainability. I want to help folks have successful practices. It is my great pleasure to help folks let go of a job or something that they don't want to do and be very successful at what they do want to do. The quick start strategy is what is the shortest route from A to B.

So that, ladies and gentlemen, are my eleven strategies for choosing a niche. If you take these eleven strategies and you sit down and you start brainstorming ideas for the mirror strategy, the calling strategy, the testimonial strategy, the attraction strategy, the life story strategy, the serendipity strategy, the pipeline strategy, the gate way strategy, the replication strategy, the unmet need strategy and the quick start strategy, I guarantee you'll have more ideas than you know what to do with. Then it's a matter of narrowing it down, which is a good problem to have.

Now, when you choose a niche, what do you do with that? That is what we are going to talk about next. How to successfully own your niche.

Step one, do your market research. Two very, very important words. This is what differentiates successful practitioners from unsuccessful practitioners because we live and breathe what we do every day. We are inside our head, inside our skin, we have our own thoughts and judgments about what works and what doesn't work and what we like and what we don't like.

Well, if you want to be of service to a niche, a group of people, you need to find out what they are. Who they are, what they want, what works for them, what doesn't work for them. That is market research and I stumbled upon this by accident because when I transitioned my practice from therapy to relationship coaching, I put together a pilot project in my office.

A four-week meeting where I invited a bunch of singles as many as I could fit in my office. There were 12 of them and I did a pilot project and along the way, I did market research and I talked to them about their experience about being single and dating in Silicon Valley and what they want and what they needed. It really, really helped launch a very, very successful relationship coaching business in Silicon Valley doing this market research. And over and over and over again, I seen the practitioners who are in love with their own BS, they fall flat.

When I see practitioners who are really tuned in to what the folks they want to serve need and what works for them, they really want to be of service to the point where they ask them. They succeed. So, step one, do your market research if you want to own your niche and be successful in it.

Step two, conduct a pilot project. So, based on your market research, put on something to try. And then there's more market research. You'll see how it goes. You get great feedback from it. It will really help you design your services and programs for your entire business. Design your

pilot project and invite folks to join it, it can be low cost, it can be free. It's a tremendous service they are doing for you, helping you build your business and you are going to deliver great value in return. So, conduct a pilot project.

Step three, create a brand identity. And I talked a little bit earlier about what a brand is. The idea being that David Steele relationship coach for singles has limited value as a brand. The others, people that might want to work with me but I can reach way more people as the conscious dating program of Silicon Valley. So, your brand identity is what you are communicating about you and your business and your services. The name you call it. The image it has. So, based on your market research and your pilot project, create a brand identity.

Don't hide behind your brand. It drives me crazy when practitioners market themselves and they have a website out there and I can't find who's behind it. I can't find their name. I can't find their photo. The most effective way to go is both. Have a strong brand but also have a strong presence. Have your photo on every page of your website. Have "about the coach" or "about me" so it doesn't have to be all about you.

You don't want your website to be all about you. Make it easy to find out about you but don't make your entire business all about you because it needs to be about your niche. It needs to be about them. Not about you. David Steele relationship coach, that is all about me. Look at me I have a degree. I have a license. I have a title. I charge money. You want to work with me, don't you? No.

A brand is about the niche: Conscious dating in Silicon Valley. If you're single, you'd like to find your soul mate, you live in Silicon Valley, this is the place for you. Step three, create a brand identity.

Step four is design a service delivery system. A service delivery system. It's creating choices that make sense. If you go to a restaurant, everything the restaurant offers is on the menu. All over the place. There is some organization to it. You have the beverage category over here, you have the appetizers over here but it's all there in front of you. And it's up to you to choose OK, I want one of this, I want one of this, I want one of those.

That is not what to do in a private practice because it puts the entire responsibility on the client to choose what service they want, when they start and where to go next and where to go after that.

So, you design your services for them. You design a service delivery system for them. This is where you start, this is where you go next, this is where you go next. In my service delivery system, I had a weekly Friday night social for singles. Then the next thing that they can do is there is a class that I did once a quarter, a conscious dating class. Then the next step for them when they graduate the class, they are eligible to join the coaching team.

It is an ongoing group of people that learn the techniques and strategies in the class and the coaching team was supporting them to apply them in their everyday life to be successful. Then beyond that, the area that you are stuck is when you need individual coaching. So it is a service delivery system for singles. So, how can you design for your niche to service delivery system that makes sense to them that serves them well?

It is a system. It's not a restaurant menu of well, would you like this, this, this, this or this, this, this, or that, this, this, this and that. An example of what not to do is if you are a coach, to offer a client two sessions a month for \$200 a month, three sessions a month for \$300 a month, four sessions a month for \$400 a month. That is an example of not what to do because as a coach, you know what people need to be successful especially if they are in your niche because they have a lot in common, the people in your niche.

So, you are going to design a service delivery system for them that makes sense that sets them up for success. When they really need weekly meetings then you offer and charge for weekly meetings. You don't offer anything else, you don't give them a choice because that is not a service to them. I mean if you are a client, you say well, I'll choose the two sessions a month for \$200 a month because it's cheaper. Is that more effective? Not necessarily. Design a service delivery system that makes sense that is effective for the folks in your niche. You can download my special report about building your service delivery system [here](#)

Step four, host a niche community. I could go on about this one. I did so in Silicon Valley and man oh man, it really set my whole practice and business up for success. The Friday night socials became a mixed community of singles in Silicon Valley.

Now, I don't have to go on and on about it because I have a place to send you. Go to <http://www.milliondollarpractice.net/nichecommunity/> You can download the mp3 of "owning your niche by building a niche community" and it lays all out for you. And I would like to share some benefits on how a niche community can benefit your practice and I am looking at a page right now. This is directly from this page-

How a Niche Community Can Benefit Your Practice

1. External marketing- attracts people you don't know, who don't yet know you
2. Internal marketing- helps build your relationship with your prospects so they hire you
3. Stimulate word of mouth- participants tell their friends more readily about a community resource than a private service
4. Build strategic alliances- invite other professionals to participate and cross-refer
5. Increased visibility- become the "go-to" resource associated with your niche
6. Low cost marketing- a viable service that can pay for itself and even generate profit
7. Increased credibility- success of niche community reflects upon your abilities as a service professional
8. Increased effectiveness of service delivery system- more people are exposed to more choices of how to engage you and benefit from your services
9. Increased traffic- free or low-cost gatherings attract more people and create more prospects

10. Attracts partners/collaborators- other like-minded professionals recognize the value and want to participate
11. Transforms a “practice” into a “business”- you have a community presence and multiple revenue streams and do more than simply work with your clients on an hourly basis

There is a download link at the bottom of the page to download the mp3. So how can a niche community can benefit your practice? External marketing attracts people you don't know who don't yet know you. If you have a niche community, the community will attract people like birds of same feather flock together. They wouldn't necessarily want to call you for services right away but they are attracted to the community. We need community. We are attracted to community. Birds of same feather do flock together. What do you think social networking is about in today's world?

Internal marketing helps build your relationship with your prospects so they hire you. When you host a niche community then people will get to know you. You become the go-to person for that community. It gives you automatic credibility and builds your relationship with them. That is how you get clients by the way through enrollment, through building relationships.

It stimulates word of mouth. Participants tell their friends more readily about a community resource than a private for-profit resource. So, are you going to more readily refer your friend to David Steele relationship coach for singles or to the conscious dating program in Silicon Valley? Which would you more readily refer to? By far, people more readily refer to community resource than an individual practitioner who charges \$150 an hour.

Build strategic alliances and invite other professionals to participate in cross referral. A community has room for everybody including partners and alliances. Increase visibility. Become the go-to resource associated with your niche. When it came to singles in Silicon Valley, I was the go-to person. I don't do it anymore. I moved on from that to relationship coaching training worldwide but when I was doing this, I was the go-to person. The media came to me.

I was invited to speak. I was to go-to person when it came to conscious dating for singles who want to find their soul mate and have an alternative to the meat market singles thing. This is low cost marketing, a viable service that can pay for itself and even generate profit. So, hosting or sponsoring a niche community doesn't have to cost anything.

Years and years ago, I started out with a Yahoo group and Yahoo groups still exists. And now, there's way, way more resources and that is a whole other area but it is really low cost marketing and you can even charge for admission to the community. For my Friday night socials, I did charge. It's about the same as going to a movie and the Friday night socials paid for themselves even if they were...

Even if I didn't charge, the marketing was priceless. I got clients from it over and over and over again. It was the most successful marketing I have ever done in my life and it paid for itself many times over. Increased credibility in niche community reflects upon your ability for service professional. So, the qualities of your community, what people say about it, the experience they have directly reflects upon you. You will get increased credibility. You will get people trusting you because of their experience in your community.

This increases effectiveness of your service delivery system. More people are exposed to more opportunities to engage you and benefit from your services. So, when I added this to my service delivery system. I reached way more people than I possibly could if the first and only way in the door was for individual sessions with me.

If you have a group, it's another alternative. It expands the options of how people could come in your door and be motivated to work with you. A class in the workshop, even more and niche community just exponentially more. The barrier to entry is very, very low. Anybody can join. Anybody who is attracted, anybody who wants to, anybody who can benefit from it. They don't have to invest a lot of money and time up front. So it is a gateway. Remember when we talked about the gateway niche.

Increased traffic. For you, low cost gathering to attract more people and create more prospects. I did not want to work every Friday night so I brought on partners and associates and after a couple of years, I didn't show up at Friday nights at all.

But, the increased traffic of having free and low cost gatherings and the prospects that are created from that. I had a wildly successful practice. It filled not only my calendar. It filled three associates and a business partner I brought on board. It filled our practices. How else can you do this? I just by accident came across this. Building a niche community is really a very effective way to a successful practice, a wildly successful practice.

Recruit partners and collaborators, other like-minded professionals that recognize the value and want to participate. People are attracted to success. Success breeds success. One thing I've found is that most people are followers and leaders who are able to actually take a risk, step out there, create something, be a leader, then there are followers that become attracted.

They want a piece of it. They wouldn't do that in a million years. It is too risky. It is too scary. It is too hard. Whatever is going on for them, but the fact that you've done it, they become attracted to you. They think you are great and they want to be part of it.

Lastly, transform your practice into a business. You have community presence; multiple revenue streams, and you do more than simply work with your clients on an hourly basis exchanging time for dollars.

Honestly, I went from being a therapist seeing clients in my office in an hourly basis to having a relationship coaching business with multiple revenue streams and partners and associates within three months.

Step six is provide group services. This is the fastest way to private practice success. What I have experienced, going from meeting one client at a time on an hourly basis, to groups; speaking to groups, offering group services, classes, workshops, tele-classes, conference calls, tele-clinics, coaching groups, coaching teams, support groups, any kind of group you can imagine. Very, very effective way to serve your niche, to attract people that are willing to pay for not only your time but to participate in this resource that can support them.

Then step seven is leveraging your niche to build your platform. So, what is a platform and why is it important? A platform is very simply everybody who knows you and when you publish a

book...When you try to publish a book and you shop a book project to publishing houses, the first thing they want to know before they even look at your book is what is your platform? Who knows you? How many people know you? What do they say about you? What do you already have in place?

So, your goal is always to build your platform, to have more and more things in place, to have more and more people know you and more and more people in your mailing list. When you have a niche, you can much more easily leverage that niche to building your platform. Who is going to sign up for David Steele relationship coaches' newsletter? Maybe some people.

But who is going to sign out for free membership in the conscious dating online community? Big difference. I can send a newsletter out to this community, I host tele-seminars for this community. I host gatherings for this community. I have an annual conscious dating success story of the year contest for this community. There are so many things you can do once you choose a niche.

You can leverage that to build your platform. The media will find you. They use the Internet just like you and I do. They search for resources and expertise and ideas online. You want to own your niche. You want these folks to find you. So if you have an area of expertise and let's say, helping unwed pregnant mothers to start a small businesses. This is your niche. This is your passion. This is your calling. This is what you are good at.

You publish articles about it and you have a website about it and you get referrals for it and you build a niche community around it. People are going to find you. The media is going to find you. This is how you become big. I call it going in inch wide and a mile deep. This is how you become big by choosing a niche, becoming an expert for that niche, eventually owning that niche.

People will find you whenever they are looking for information about that niche. An inch wide, a mile deep. The alternative is an inch deep and a mile wide, this is a generalist. If you're a generalist and your prospective clients are searching for information about your area of expertise, your website is going to be way, way, way down the list, and the ones that specialize in a niche are going to be the top results and get that traffic and those clients. The generalist will never be found. If you want to have a wildly successful practice, if you want your marketing to be fun and easy and effective. If you want your work to be fun and easy and effective and profitable, you need to choose a niche.

How to Guarantee Your Success as a Coach

Your support system here at Relationship Coaching Institute is the key to your success.

No-one is successful alone. We have the experience, the know-how, the tools and resources to help you get clients and build a successful practice, but it's up to YOU to use them! You want your clients to hire you and accept your support, and you need to seek and accept our support.

Why join RCI?

Life is all about relationships, whether it is your relationship with a love partner, your family, friends, or business associates. Relationships are the key to being fulfilled and successful in life. As such, relationship coaching is in demand and is one of the top coaching niches. And, unlike all other coaching niches, relationship coaching provides unique opportunities to continue the client-coach relationship over many years, as your clients progress through the various stages of relationship.

Because relationships are universal, no matter what your coaching niche, relationship coach training will always augment your coaching knowledge and skills, making you a better coach.

Founded 20 years ago, RCI trains and certifies aspiring coaches and helping professionals to help singles and couples achieve their relationship goals. It is the first and largest international relationship coach training organization in the world.

We know you probably already know this, but RCI provides you:

- An ICF approved Foundational Coach Training program;
- Over 84 hours of specialty Relationship Coach training that enables you to coach singles, couples, and clients in all walks of life;
- “Done-for-you” programs, client workbooks, resource materials so you don't have to reinvent the wheel - you can start enrolling and coaching clients immediately, earning income right out of the gate;
- Ongoing support and mentoring from experienced, successful relationship coaches to help you build your practice quickly;

- Listings in our online Coach Directory and our Partner websites that target singles and couples and showcase our RCI coaches, providing opportunities for them to acquire clients;
- All training via distance learning over the telephone so you can participate in our training from anywhere in the world. All training classes are recorded;
- Various levels of Membership so you can select the most cost-effective training, support, and mentoring you need to achieve your business goals.

RCI as a Membership Organization

RCI is more than just a relationship coach training school – it is a membership organization that provides training, ongoing support and mentoring to its members, as well as access to a members-only Knowledge and Resource Bank, with hundreds of audio programs, articles and other relevant resource materials members are licensed to use in their practices. This means our members can begin using these products and tools immediately to generate revenue.

Helping You Get Clients

We are committed to effecting positive change in this world by helping **you** develop a successful relationship coaching practice. We provide all the training, support, content, and marketing resources you need, freeing you up to focus on what is really important - growing your business! We do this by:

- Providing turn-key “done-for-you” materials and resources which you can use immediately to generate income by coaching clients and delivering workshops, classes, seminars and presentations. Including:
 - ✓ Client workbooks that you can use with Singles (*Conscious Dating: Self-Discovery and Readiness* and *Conscious Dating: Attracting the Love of Your Life*);
 - ✓ Client workbooks that you can use with Couples (*Conscious Relationships for Pre-Committed Couples* and *Partners in Life for Pre-Marital Couples*);
 - ✓ Client forms, (intake, coaching contract, assessments, etc) and exercises to help you frame the coach/client agenda;
 - ✓ Copies of David Steele's books: *Conscious Dating* and *Radical Marriage* at a special member rate, so you can provide clients with free copies or sell them at your workshops;

- ✓ Coach training guide and program syllabus documents for each of RCI's coach training programs that you can use as an ongoing coaching resource;
 - ✓ Leader Guides that provide step-by-step instructions and agendas for delivering workshops, webinar, seminars and presentations;
 - ✓ “Done-for-you” marketing and promotional tools you can use to promote your services, products and events;
 - ✓ Articles, reports and audios that you can use to provide relevant relationship content for social media and your prospective clients;
- Listing RCI coaches in our [Coach Finder Directory](#) that receives thousands of hits a month, resulting in new clients for our coaches;
 - Partnering with other web sites catering to singles and couples to promote our coaches and drive clients to them;
 - Continually promoting RCI and our coaches through our [public service programs](#) to increase awareness about relationship coaching.
 - And so, so, so much more.

The information in this transcript contains the specific resources, tools and strategies you need to get clients and build a successful coaching practice. Many years of hard-earned experience and wisdom went into this program and we sincerely hope that you will benefit from it. Please know that we are always available to support you in any way we can, so feel free to ask and let us know what you need- <http://www.MeetWithRCI.com>

