

**EPISODE 364**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:00] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to The Real Estate Syndication Show. Whether you are a seasoned investor or building a new real estate business, this is the show for you. Whitney Sewell talks to top experts in the business. Our goal is to help you master real estate syndication.

And now your host, Whitney Sewell.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:00:24] WS:** This is your daily Real Estate Syndication Show. I'm your host, Whitney Sewell. Today, our guest is Tim Gordon. Thanks for being on the show, Tim.

**[00:00:32] TG:** Thanks for having me, Whitney.

**[00:00:33] WS:** Yeah. Just before we get into Tim, I want to remind all the listeners to go to [lifebridgcapital.com](http://lifebridgcapital.com). I hope you will go to the contact us page where you can put in your email, your name. We'll contact you personally and try to connect, have a phone call with you. You can go to the Real Estate Syndication Show on Facebook as well where you can get feedback. You can leave questions that you'd like me to ask on the show with all the experts, just like Tim. I hope you're enjoying the show. I hope your business is growing because of it. I hope you know that we're having so many different types of guests on the show, and they're all bringing so many different types of value to our industry and to your business. I hope you can see that. But I welcome your feedback. I would welcome a written rating and review, and I hope you're sharing the show as well.

But a little about Tim, he's bought, flipped, and wholesaled over \$35 million in real estate since 2012. Tim's marketing budget is under \$1,000 per year. He's not used AdWords or direct mail since 2016. He's focused on creative techniques to source and fund deals. So one thing about Tim, especially with our conversation before the show is he is extremely creative about some of

this marketing that he's doing, and I know that you're going to enjoy this. There's a few things that he's already mentioned that I have never heard of before, specifically around meet ups and how he's done those and where he's done them, and some systems he has in place.

So, Tim, give the listeners a little more about who you are and get us started.

**[00:01:56] TG:** All right. Well, thanks for having me on, Whitney, and I'm excited to be here. As you mentioned, I live in Southern California, and I've been involved in the real estate business since around 2012, and became full-time in 2014. I have a background in outside sales. I seemed to parlay really well into wholesaling, property management, and flipping. For the last five years, I've been here in San Diego, wholesaling homes, taking on flips, managing some apartments that I own, and taking on the occasional creative financing deal.

So 99% of the deals that I do are direct with the seller. So my expertise really lies in how to locate those sellers and then how to work with those sellers on purchasing their property. That involves getting really creative with the marketing since I have a very low budget to source these people.

**[00:02:47] WS:** I thought alone. I mean, your budget is under \$1,000 per year for marketing. To grow as fast as you have, I mean, you've had to be pretty creative to make that happen.

**[00:02:57] TG:** Definitely.

**[00:02:57] WS:** I'm looking forward to getting into this and just you sharing some ways of web marketing or creative marketing, things you've done to help really get the word out and how you've marketed yourself that well. So I guess get us started with some of the most important things you've done as far as how you've marketed yourself to be that successful.

**[00:03:14] TG:** Sure. The interesting part is that I think the key element is sort of staying head of the curve. So as – Whenever the herd is sort of going in one direction, it's looking to what's new, what might not be proven yet, and really going in that direction to stand out. For a lot of us, if we're smaller fish and operating in certain markets, we're not going to be able to compete when it comes to a marketing budget or with regards to the expense level that we can go. So it

requires being much more creative.

So, for example, direct mail was a pretty fantastic source of deals back in 2012, 2015 in my market. That was something that a lot of folks were doing. But as the trend shifted there, it was really important to be mindful that more and more people are doing that. There's more competition. So my marketing is going to be less effective, which then led me to go, "Okay. Well, I think I need to shift more towards web marketing. I think that's going to be more effective."

**[00:04:03] WS:** It's neat too to see how other businesses are created out of things like that. You probably know of many businesses who all they do is direct mail for people like yourself.

**[00:04:12] TG:** Yeah. One of my good friends, I'm not even sure if he invests really anymore. His business became a company with direct mail, and that brings up another really – There was a quote I really love to say to folks, which was, during the gold rush, they sometimes say the folks that made the money or those selling the shovels and spades, and maybe not the prospectors. It's just very helpful to be aware of sort of what's going on. If all these direct-mail companies are coming out or all these automated-dialing companies are coming out, then these services are becoming much more available out there. So it's likely your competition is using those things too.

So, yeah, that's something I've had to keep an eye on, and I'm sitting here wondering to myself where do I go next after I reveal all of these secrets. And I'm not sure yet.

**[00:04:56] WS:** Well, I was just thinking about that how – Once all these companies come up that can do all the direct mail for you, well now obviously so many more people are going to do it, because the workload is so much less.

**[00:05:06] TG:** Yeah, definitely. I think it sort of dilutes the effectiveness of the marketing. So it was yellow letters, and then it was handwritten font, and then it was –

The mail pieces are getting more expensive and more customized to stand out and be more effective. I think for a lot of folks, they get comments from sellers just telling them that they're not the only ones reaching them. That makes business quite hard when you've done a lot of

competition.

So I think it's really important that try and focus more on being effective than just sort of listening to an idea and then implementing it without thinking about how it actually works. It's important to evaluate your own skill sets and know how are you most affective, and what do you possess that makes you successful in your field and how to leverage that, instead of just taking information and then trying to be somebody else and run their business model.

**[00:05:50] WS:** All right. So you were doing direct mail, you stopped doing that, and then you started having to get more creative and learning more creative ways to market to sellers. But I guess give us an example, and let's jump into it.

**[00:06:01] TG:** An example of marketing for the sellers?

**[00:06:03] WS:** Yeah. Or just anywhere that you're being creative for investors, anybody, any way that you were thinking outside the box to grow like you did.

**[00:06:10] TG:** Sure. So, in regards to making a website really stand out in ranks, it's really important to drive traffic and get unique visits to it. There's just not a lot of real estate investors where people are going to be interested in visiting my or somebody else's website. A lot of the information is the same. It's kind of a sales pitch to seek their property information.

So to me, it was really important to reverse engineer how to drive traffic. I used to love going to local real estate meet ups, but I noticed that a friend and I had made, commented about this, how we would go to them, pay money, and then walk outside and talk to each other and catch up about our projects. So we're paying money just to talk to each other. We could have just been getting lunch or something. Quite often, we wanted the energy and the connection from these events but the person speaking up there was covering a topic that wasn't relevant to us or they were getting upset because there was, say, 10 to 20 minutes of networking allowed and then we're supposed to sit down and take notes.

So we decided it would be much more fun to create events in a local community where we could meet up at an active project, whether that was a flip, whether that was someone renovating a

multiunit property. But some kind of hands-on real estate experience where you could go there, meet other investors, learn from the property, invest on what they were doing. We talked to their contractor, and it was going to be free of charge. This was a great way to get really energized.

The way that this was promoted and the way that you would sign up for this was all directly through my website. So the perk I would get would be to drive traffic and unique visits to the website. I would build an email list. Then at the event, you get to really network and meet a lot of other investors. There isn't one person with this long topic that they're up there in a PowerPoint about. Its investors walking through a house, talking to contractors. Usually, the agents or secondary services that are involved in the project are there. The energy that we'd get from the events was huge. It was quite a lot of fun. So that was probably one of the most fun ways to creatively drive website traffic, plus be able to network more effectively in a market that I'm operating in.

**[00:08:13] WS:** So I just thought this was a brilliant idea to actually have a meet up at a property that you're working on, or that somebody's working on. I can just see it's going to bring up so many more questions from potential investors or partners and things like that. It's going to allow you to be able to showcase your knowledge of the market and the property itself or maybe what you would do. It's going to do lots of things. I just thought it was a great idea. What were maybe some things that came out of that that you didn't expect?

**[00:08:38] TG:** A lot of networking. I heard of people who developed relationships from those events. So it was a lot of like secondary benefits, and I think what was really important was the intention behind creating this event. It was not – My goal wasn't for this all to just benefit me. I wasn't – We didn't charge anything for the events. It was most often posted at other investors' properties. I think I had a lot of frustration with local real estate meet ups and how the content was really aimed at just a few people, and they weren't that interesting. I think I'm much more hands-on.

So it was really nice to get people together. So I saw a lot of folks who they either started working for people or started partnering and hiring people from these events. I think it energized a lot of investors. So it fascinated me. I realized that a lot of the people who attended these events had actually never walked through a construction site before. So they loved the idea of

investing. They love the idea of being involved in this industry. But they'd never actually walked through a piece of real estate that was throwing down the studs.

But we had one event that was at a multiunit. It was a really creative project this investor was doing, and it was just fascinating hearing them talk about the renovation side of things, plus the landlording side of things, and then the financing side. It was kind of like a bunch of people just like standing around a car with the hood popped up and really taking a chance to examine it. I think the greatest byproduct was the energy. The feedback was – Every month, people are just dying to find out where the next project was and when they could come examine it.

**[00:09:59] WS:** Any pointers that you have now that you've done that to somebody that's thinking, "Oh, wait a minute. That would be a great idea." Anything that I should have my website ready for to be able to drive that traffic or notify people, or how did you prepare for that and how did you let people know? Anything about, I don't know, letting the property owner know or property management? I mean, at our properties, I would want to let them know that we're doing that. Obviously, if you bring quite a few people walking around, you want to make sure they know what's going on. But I mean, I just wonder for yourself. How did you prepare for that or where there things that maybe we wouldn't know to do to let these people even know that we're having this event?

**[00:10:35] TG:** Yeah, definitely. That's a great question. I think on the – I'll kind of break that up into parts. So on the promotion and sign up side, it would be really helpful to have some kind of a short video taken at the properties. So that's probably going to be you or someone else at the property, talking into the camera and just saying the details of the event, so that people can kind of see pieces of the property and know when, where, etc. For the website, it's probably going to be really helpful to have a sign up. So you're probably going to want some kind of a database that's tied into your website. So they can put their name, phone number, email into a box, hit submit, and then you know they're signed up. That's going to be helpful too.

For some reason, if we just told people when and where, that didn't always seem to satisfy them. They wanted to know that they were signed up and that they were in and ready to go. I think that also – It means you can add that into your email list. You can communicate it with them more effectively. So you're probably going to want a reminder email going out a week prior

or maybe the day prior. This can be promoted through real estate groups on Facebook, Instagram. Those are probably the avenues that are going to be used for the promotion and just sort of like when, where, how, etc.

Then for the actual events, I think it's definitely going to be important on the liability side just to make sure that wherever they're going inside this property is safe. So talking to, whether it's the property manager or the contractor. Probably having some type of a release signed. I think that was something we made sure – Before anyone entered a house, we'd say "Sign here." Enter at your own risk. We try to keep the type of projects past sort of the heavy construction stage. I mean, now I'm looking back and maybe we should have had hard hats and required them to wear closed-toe shoes. But I don't think we did.

So those would be some things to consider. Then, I always wanted to get just one of the larger multiunit too, which I think would be really fascinating. If that were the case, it would probably be some kind of a communications with tenants of just like, "Hey, we're having a group come through," and figuring out a way to do that respectfully so that you're not invading any of their privacy, and they know that it's really brief, and they feel comfortable [inaudible 00:12:27]. I guess we wouldn't want the tenants to feel like in a fishbowl and having people come look at them.

I'm not sure how – That's a really good question. I guess I'd probably be getting them purely in like a vacant unit or a very brief walk-through, and then moving them to a more off-site area or somewhere that's out of – It gives the tenants more privacy to discuss, say, the meat and potatoes of what you're going to be going on about.

**[00:12:47] WS:** I could see in the commercial field as far with large multifamily or something. With single-family home, maybe it's probably vacant, right, because obviously if it's during construction. So you don't have to worry about tenants and management really. As long as you know the owner and you probably know them personally in that area. But with multifamily, if I was doing it at a property, I could see, we can have a large group walk around or maybe a little bit. But even then, make it even to seem more like a select group of four or five people. So like, hurry to get in or hurry to sign up, because there's only four spots available. In that way, there's not so many. Then they have it numerous times. In that way, it's not a large group. Then you get

to meet people more one on one as well.

**[00:13:27] TG:** Yeah. That's probably good idea. Make it more intimate. It's fascinating because that was something I was really hoping to do in San Diego, was to find a larger multiunit. We were covering flips and we covered kind of like your standard cookie cutter flip. We covered editions. We covered a smaller multiunit. So it would've been really fun to get someone into one like that. I think there are some different concepts that would have to be considered on a project like that to be respectful of the other folks that are there. Yeah, talking about this is getting me energized to actually try and explore that here in my market.

**[00:13:58] WS:** So what are some other ways? Other than the meet up at a location like that, which I think is a great idea, what are some other ways you were creative or maybe even with web marketing? What are the things we need to know about that worked for you?

**[00:14:10] TG:** A lot of it was rolling around search engine optimization. So it's really about making sure your website is running effectively. So that means utilizing the proper keywords in the website. Then there's different features to a website that are going to make it come into a higher rank into Google such as, there's a thing called an SSL certificate, which basically means the website is secure with someone's personal information. If you look on a website, it will be HTTPS and then the web address. If it doesn't have that S, the website is dinged because it's deemed less secure for someone's personal information.

So there's features like that which are really important. Then video is really, I think, essential. A lot of websites back in the day used these really tacky animations for their way to communicate messages, or photos or, just very cookie-cutter, you know – One person does something and that is just followed in. Video marketing is really effective. I mean, we're doing this interview and looking at each other, and it makes so much more difference. I can see you. I can look at your eyes. I can talk to you. If this were just done over the phone, it creates quite a lot of disconnection. So being able to communicate effectively in video is one of the best ways I think to help build rapport and help someone really humanize the two people on either ends of the computer.

So I put a lot of effort into creating a really good video that tested well for the opening part of my



website. I had a good friend who's a very talented web marketer and has a YouTube channel. He explained to me how if I were just to stand in a video and tell you how great I was and what I can do, it doesn't work very well. It's just off. But if, and this is kind of like this podcast – But if someone asks me questions and then I answer them, then I just seem like a very well-informed person who's sharing knowledge. So in my video, I've got someone, say, asking me questions that are related to what I'm marketing for. And then I'm giving good explanations for it.

The video – I mean we probably had 50 takes in the video before we got right, and we even chose the background properly. We chose the color of our clothes, the background. Everything we did was to try and test very well to convert people to submit their information. So those little details, especially if someone's got a website, which is for me, I say, that's my core source of business. It seems wise that I put a lot of effort into the very first thing that people are going to see on my website. It can feel awkward to have all those takes and to be in front of a camera and to be speaking like that, but, it makes a world of difference. It's one of the most effective ways to market properly, but it requires a lot of extra effort, which I think was how I was able to differentiate myself.

**[00:16:47] WS:** It's normally that extra effort that you're willing to put in is what's going to make you stand out, right?

**[00:16:51] TG:** Yeah. I definitely agree.

**[00:16:53] WS:** That's what most people are not willing to do. So, yeah, that's awesome, and I couldn't agree more as far as the video. So tell me, how did you find somebody to fix your website and do that work? Or did you know how to do that yourself?

**[00:17:04] TG:** It was a mix. I'm a single-employee company, and I really enjoy being very lean. That was some of the best advice that I ever got when I started was just to be lean, keep costs down, and be very mindful of how I spend. I like Elance, which used to be called oDesk, but it's Elance, a lot for sourcing people. So I have a – I tend to try and hire the best people I can find on there. I've learned the hard way that cutting corners on some of the services just doesn't make sense. So I will seek out folks who are really on the high-end, very capable, and then just delegate off.

So I've got someone who handles – Most of the details of the website are handled by them, and I handle the direction of the website and where I want to go, and the keywords that I want to use and the marketing strategy, and then they're who implement it for me. I found that to be really productive. If there's something I can learn and do in about five minutes, I'll probably just knock it out. But if it goes beyond that, then it's always handed off to a web person.

**[00:17:59] WS:** I love that, and we talk a lot about how to use virtual assistance and people like that on the show. So what are a couple other tasks that would apply to us as well that maybe you've been able to hand off to people like that?

**[00:18:10] TG:** Bookkeeping, accounting. Let me think what else. The customer relationship management software that I use is Podio, and it's highly customizable. So I've I employed people to adjust features of that. In fact, I think I hired someone – I probably spent \$100, but it was hiring people to set up the appropriate web forms on the website and design those pages for me for the meet up events to make sure that that all worked and was seamless. Then, I mean, I think, my email list is massive because of those events. Then I think too, for me, it was all people within my markets. So I think those are some of the services I've had the most success with hiring out.

**[00:18:45] WS:** Before we have to move on to a few last questions before we run out of time – Any other ways on social media or things like that that you've used that have helped you as far as marketing?

**[00:18:53] TG:** I used to be a really big fan of Facebook. I dialed back my use of Facebook. I'm not really – I just started to not really enjoy spending time on there, so I don't actually use Facebook anymore. I think it's really, really effective, and I think I'm probably going to have to bite the bullet and go back on there if I want to promote events. So I think Facebook and Instagram are fantastic for promotion or for gaining traction, especially if you're aware of using the right hashtags and things like that.

There's – I can't imagine really promoting, say, these meet up events and not using Facebook or Instagram. I think it would quite necessary. So I was going to do targeted ads too. So there's

things like AdRoll. I think that's one of them where you kind of ask to follow people. So I could even have something where if someone's searching specific keywords or following certain hashtags, ads are going to follow them if I wanted to promote certain things. That sort of takes it on to a whole new level

And for my business, since I'm trying to reach mostly property owners, I didn't see that as an effective thing. But if someone were that first syndicator, I could see that being highly valuable. It would be marketing towards specific hashtags or if someone is a part of certain groups or follows certain things on Instagram. You could design marketing that then follows those people, which is probably one most effective ways you could reach new investors and such as a syndicator.

**[00:20:10] WS:** How do you learn how to do something like that?

**[00:20:12] TG:** That's a great question.

**[00:20:13] WS:** Or do you hire somebody?

**[00:20:14] TG:** That's a really good question. I don't know if I would – I wouldn't consider myself an expert on it, but I would say that I would probably start researching on Elance in regards to companies and services that can help you. It's probably going to revolve around sort of designating like, "Okay, what hashtags do I think people are using, say, whether they were –" I can't remember the word but investors who can – Like qualified investors or what's the word?

**[00:20:36] WS:** Yeah, accredited investors.

**[00:20:37] TG:** Accredited?

**[00:20:37] WS:** Yeah.

**[00:20:38] TG:** So maybe I would be saying, "Okay. Well, what do accredited investors – What patterns do they have on social media? Do they follow hashtags? Are there certain Instagram accounts that they follow that seems to have a high ratio of accredited investors or other

Facebook groups or –” So I guess I would try and reverse engineer, which would be like, “Who am I trying to reach? Whether its accredited investors or new investors? What hashtags, groups, people do they follow? Okay. Now, I know this. Now, I can contact an advertising service that will basically place ads on their phone to people who are parts of those groups.”

So just like, for example, I just adopted dogs. I’m googling all sorts of stuff about dogs. Now, I’m getting all these ads about dog food and animal services and pet insurance. So, those are the services that are being utilized to reach me now that my phone and Internet know what I’m searching. That’s what it would revolve around.

**[00:21:29] WS:** Anyway, Tim, we’re going to move towards a few other questions before we run out of time. But I like to ask every guest that’s directly involved as an operator in the real estate business. How are you preparing for this potential downturn that everybody’s talking about?

**[00:21:43] TG:** I tend to be a really conservative person. I moved to California in 2008 when everyone was losing their house. So I had a first-hand view of just sort of like the world ending. So for me, I like to be very liquid, and I’d have to fight my urge not to buy deals or not to get involved. My default is just to hoard cash and sort of want to sit back.

So for me, I think it’s trying to take the emotion out of things and make it more about the data of behind things. If I’m looking at a property, I want to have a few different outs. But too it’s – Is it profitable? Okay. Can it handle a stress test? Stress testing my finances and my properties and really trying to remove the emotion from things, and that’s what’s important.

**[00:22:20] WS:** Where do you find your data?

**[00:22:21] TG:** A lot of that’s going to be – Well, if it’s rental property, then I’ll be using like Zillow or Craigslist, etc. to see like, “Okay. What are market rents,” and then examining finances behind the property and understanding, “What I can survive? How much of a debt can I survive?” So that’s what I would be using. Now, obviously analyst data for coms and things like that.

**[00:22:38] WS:** What’s a way you’ve recently improved your business that we can apply to ours

or something we haven't talked about?

**[00:22:45] TG:** I think it would be regaining enthusiasm for my business. I think I tend to have a bit of a shelf life with things that interest me. So that means putting myself back out there, talking to people. Being on here is an example of that. Getting energized and then also questioning assumptions and looking at the business model and going like, "Because I've done it this way, does that mean I should stay this way?" I remember my old line of work. I would visit a lot of business owners and be like, "Gosh! They're so jaded. They're so stuck in their ways." So I think it's important to take a step back and just go, "Okay. Well –" Say, someone bought my business and was full of energy. What will they do to change it? What will they do to revitalize this and what things are being done a certain way just out of habit versus what really could we do to grow this? I think it's regaining enthusiasm and questioning assumptions on how things are done.

**[00:23:31] WS:** Do you have investors in your deals?

**[00:23:33] TG:** I do from time to time. For mine, it's mostly private investors.

**[00:23:37] WS:** So what is your best advice for caring for them or taking care of investors, so they want to come back?

**[00:23:42] TG:** That's a great question. I think all of my investors have been friends or relatives. So I've been very careful with anything I do. So I think it's really taking ownership of whatever someone's doing and really making someone feel confident that you're taking this seriously and that the absolute last thing you would ever want to happen is for them to lose a cent. That is so far from even becoming an option.

I've had deals where I did quite well, and I actually gave extra money to some of the investors. So I think things like that. Treating them very well and where they look back at their experience and they don't feel like they were taken advantage of and they don't feel like they were strong-armed and where they look back and think very positively about the experience. By doing things like that, I have folks who were jumping to invest on deals and very eager.

So, yeah, it was very scary for me to take money from people first time. That was something that I had to personally overcome, and I'm glad I was able to.

**[00:24:36] WS:** If you had to pick one thing, the number one thing that's contributed to your success.

**[00:24:40] TG:** I think I would probably say it's persistence followed by a willingness to examine when something isn't working and make changes.

**[00:24:51] WS:** How do you like to give back?

**[00:24:52] TG:** Great question. I love volunteering with kids. I am a surf mentor and a mentor for kids in San Diego who come from group homes and foster homes. So a lot of my energy goes towards getting those kids out in the water and surfing, spending time with them. It's really fun to do more than just for ourselves. So that's something I'm quite passionate about.

**[00:25:15] WS:** Well, Tim, thank you so much for your time being on the show. You've provided amazing value just in helping us being creative with marketing and how you have. I love the idea of having a meet up at the property and some of the SEO stuff and the website design. All the stuff that you elaborated on, I'm grateful. But tell the listeners most importantly how to get in touch with you.

**[00:25:32] TG:** Sure. You can reach me on my website, which is [gordonbuyshomes.com](http://gordonbuyshomes.com). Any phone call, text, email comes directly to my phone. You can also find me on Instagram, which is just @yosoytim, and my email is [tim@gordonbuyshomes.com](mailto:tim@gordonbuyshomes.com).

**[00:25:49] WS:** Thank you, Tim.

**[00:25:50] TG:** Hey. Thanks for having me on.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:25:52] WS:** Don't go yet. Thank you for listening to today's episode. I would love it if you

would go to iTunes right now and leave a rating and written review. I want to hear your feedback. It makes a big difference in getting the podcast out there. You can also go to the Real Estate Syndication Show on Facebook, so you can connect with me and we can also receive feedback and your questions there that you want me to answer on the show. Subscribe too, so you can get the latest episodes. Lastly, I want to keep you updated. So head over to [lifebridgecapital.com](http://lifebridgecapital.com) and sign up for the newsletter. If you're interested in partnering with me, sign up on the contact us page, so you can talk to me directly. Have a blessed day, and I will talk to you tomorrow.

[OUTRO]

**[00:26:32] ANNOUNCER:** Thank you for listening to The Real Estate Syndication Show, brought to you by Life Bridge Capital. Life Bridge Capital works with investors nationwide to invest in real estate while also donating 50% of its profits to assist parents who are committing to adoption. Life Bridge Capital, making a difference one investor and one child at a time. Connect online at [www.LifeBridgeCapital.com](http://www.LifeBridgeCapital.com) for free material and videos to further your success.

[END]