

EPISODE 722

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:00.0] 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]

[0:00:24.4] WS: This is your daily Real Estate Syndication show. I'm your host Whitney Sewell. Today, our guest is Lauren Brychell, thanks for being on the show Lauren.

[0:00:33.1] LB: Hi Whitney, thanks for having me.

[0:00:34.6] WS: Fusing traditional and unconventional methods to market not so glamorous asset classes, Lauren has overseen the marketing efforts for Spartan Investment Groups, Properties and corporate company to bring brand awareness and increase occupancy across the board. Her experience includes building brands from the infancy stages, launching new product lines and advertising. Lauren graduated from Belmont Abbey College with a bachelor's degree in business management with a concentration in marketing and a minor in entrepreneurship. Lauren, thank you again for your time in being on the show, grateful to have you.

Your expertise is needed in any business, right? It doesn't matter if it's real estate or what it is, we have to increase our brand awareness and think about how we are presenting ourselves through our future clients and how to find them. But grateful again for your time. Give us a little more of your background and maybe what you're doing at Spartan and let's dive into your super power and you know, how you can help us and the listener to accomplish the same goals as you're doing for Spartan.

[0:01:34.6] LB: Sure thing, thanks Whitney. I grew up in Palm Beach Florida and I played golf all my life which eventually took me to Charlotte North Carolina where like you said, I went to Belmont Abbey College and studied marketing entrepreneurship. Right after I graduated, I built a brand for a light extraction technology. The tech startup and I brought that product to market and I then went into the CBD oil industry which is a totally different change for me.

From there I did lots of different roles, from national advertisement placements, I launched a pet oil brand, I oversaw our influencer marketing. All kinds of great experience there and then I had always had an interesting commercial real estate so after my time with CBD oil. Industry was kind of after I launched the brand and I was kind of looking for the next thing to do, I really wanted to move to Denver Colorado where I found Spartan and the rest is history.

Here at spartan, I oversee all of our corporate marketing and property level marketing. We have 11 assets under management right now so I oversee all of that and like I said, corporate so anything from events, advertising, social media, website, everything like that. Communication is a big one, yeah.

[0:02:48.1] WS: What's the last part?

[0:02:48.6] LB: Communications, sorry, monthly communications.

[0:02:50.7] WS: Yes, no, that's awesome, well, that's a lot, that's a lot to take a hold of and manage no doubt about it. You know, let's just jump right in a little bit to the, let's say on the corporate side and just how, you know, maybe some daily activities that you're doing that the listener and I should be doing as well, just to increase brand awareness or some tips that you have for us.

[0:03:10.2] LB: Sure. I'd say, the most important thing these days is social media. We post daily on social media, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, we post things that really engage the audience such as people in team posts, we do property posts, construction updates, things like that that our investors and are potential investors really love to see.

That's something we do every single day, like I say, we do monthly communications of all of our property updates and how the properties are doing a performance, occupancy, any sort of marketing updates that we've done and then we're always updating our website, keeping it relevant, looking for other advertising opportunities. Scott Lewis, our CEO does a lot of speaking, Scott and Ryan both do a lot of speaking engagements and podcasts.

Webinars and mastermind so making sure those are out for the world to see.

[0:04:00.9] WS: Nice, well, you know, the listeners probably know that name or Spartan Investment Group, especially Scott and Ryan. The entire team I think has been on the show at one time or another. Now Lauren as well. Let's dive in to a couple of those things you mentioned, just a little bit more, when somebody thinks about a daily post, obviously we do numerous daily posts as well for our group but however, when you're first getting started, just making the first post can seem like so daunting, right? Just stepping out there. But just creating content can seem like a mountain to climb, right? When you first get started.

Any tips on like how you all come up with content that you could help the listener kind of get past that hurdle?

[0:04:39.2] LB: Sure. I would say don't ever be afraid to kind of see what your competitors are doing and others in the market just for inspiration." Having 11 assets under management right now, it's pretty easy to come up with content, you know, we doing construction to this property, we have a couple of ground up developments, there's always things going around, renovations, new paint, you know, that's always exciting. Like I said, our team is always doing speaking engagements and stuff like that so we always post that for the world to see.

But yeah, like I said, don't be afraid to kind of see what other people in our industry are doing. I mean, that's a great way to get started.

[0:05:12.5] WS: What skillsets do you need to be able to do that or do you outsource some of those things? You know, Scott speaks at an event, you know, you have that, let's say you have that recording, you know, are you then doing everything to make that happen, are you hiring some of that out, what does that look like to manage that and make that happen?

[0:05:29.6] LB: A little bit of both, I have a VA in the Philippines, it helps me out with some graphic design stuff. I do a lot of it myself and then we also do have a graphic design company as well as the VA to help with certain things such as in our websites and our infographics and sometimes our presentations but we use a lot of different platforms such as Wave for our podcast post, Canva for some easy graphic design things, Hootsuite for posting and scheduling posts.

Kind of a mix, yeah.

[0:05:58.4] WS: Nice. Well you know, let's jump into the investor updates. That's something obviously we do on a monthly basis as well, sometimes more often depending on what's happening. But any tips on, I mean, that level of communication is so important, every investor call that I have, you know, everybody's so concerned with communication and our investors love getting that update and usually more detail, the better but I wonder, anything that you all found that investors have just loved, that you have put in there.

[0:06:26.9] LB: Sure. I mean, our number one thing is being transparent so even if the property didn't perform as well as we would have liked it to that month, just keeping it transparent and having a solution to how we're going to fix the issue. That is our number one thing. I would say number two is, investors really love seeing the effort that you're putting into the properties, if we did a huge billboard marketing campaign, we always put a picture of the billboard in there.

I mean, they love to see the active things that we're doing in exactly an example. If we do Facebook ad, maybe putting an example that Facebook ad in there just so they can see exactly kind of what we're doing.

[0:07:01.3] WS: Nice. What's your all's frequency, is it monthly as well for investor updates?

[0:07:05.5] LB: It is, yup.

[0:07:07.6] WS: Now let's move to – you talked about like updating the website, you know, a lot of the listeners may have their website now, they may not but any tips that, or things that you

found. You know, when do I need to update a website and when should I be thinking about revamping it completely or adding more things?

[0:07:22.8] LB: Sure, we just did a big revamp, I believe early this year or yeah, early this year which took us probably four or five months actually get around to completing because it's such a big process. I would say, you know, monthly updates are pretty important so like I said, we always have new engagements, new articles coming out, putting those on your website on a monthly basis is important.

If your asset's under management change or you add things to your portfolio, that should be updated immediately, we were just awarded a place around Inc 500 so that went up there immediately as well, monthly is definitely good to keep an eye on things.

[0:07:57.6] WS: Is that a skillset that you have or something that's in house or something that you hire out?

[0:08:03.2] LB: A little bit of both so we hired out the overall design of the website and then I do the monthly updates and things.

[0:08:11.5] WS: Okay, as far as that brand awareness and I wanted to back up a little bit for the listener who is just, you know, getting their syndication business started, you know, maybe you can provide some tips to you know, it will say they don't even have a logo yet or name or – but they're headed that direction. Any tips on just some first steps there to get their ball rolling, whether it's logo.

You guys just kind of overwhelming too at first, even before we ever had any content, you know, how should we think about branding ourself?

[0:08:41.0] LB: Sure, I would say branding is extremely important. I would even go ahead and say hire a third-party company to do your branding. You know, it might cost five to \$10,000 but that's going to be so worth it to have a beautiful logo, everything matching, all your style guides consistent with everything they're putting out there.

Just so when people see your brand, they could start recognizing it and it looks professional and you really looks like you have all your things in a row there.

[0:09:08.8] WS: Yeah, would you just highlight maybe a day in your position and maybe if somebody like myself or someone else is hiring somebody for this marketing position, what should we be looking for, what are the skillsets that that person definitely needs to have to be successful in your role?

[0:09:27.3] LB: Sure, I would definitely hire someone with a vast background of marketing different types of things. Every industry has different things that they need to market to be successful so I think having a background of you know, marketing CBD and tech products really comes together to be able to market a different asset class. Like okay, let's use some things, you know, billboards from here and national ad placements from here and they're all tie together.

I would say having an overall understanding of SEO and a little bit of website design experience, graphic design experience is also helpful. So you don't have to outsource everything and then obviously social media being able to tell what time of day to post, what types of posts really get engagement, what people like to see is really important.

[0:10:09.4] WS: How do you communicate with the team to be able to retrieve this content or I am sure there is team members that probably don't create much content or do you try to get content from them, how do you educate them and just communicate about what you need to be successful at marketing their brand?

[0:10:26.1] LB: Sure, so actually we just implemented this in all of the properties to have our property management help me do the marketing for everywhere that is local down in Texas since they have a better understanding of things going on in the community. So we put together a whole style guide and a whole marketing finder of things like this is the kind of look that we are going for. Here are some examples, here is the kind of captions you should be writing, you know put together everything that you'd like, style guides, fonts, colors, everything. So they have an example of what they're looking for.

[0:10:59.1] WS: So on the property level, just make sure I understand, on the property level your management group there of course and those people also employees of Spartan, is that right? If I remember correctly.

[0:11:08.7] LB: Yeah, we do have our own management in house.

[0:11:10.4] WS: Yes, okay. So that maybe a little different if you have third party management and may not be as easy to get them to help with this but maybe, you know depending on your relationship there. So ultimately you just laid out a process, is that right? I mean this is exactly what we are looking for and you're encouraging them to create content and then send that to you?

[0:11:27.9] LB: Exactly, yep. I encourage them to create it, send it to me for approval or anything or design help and then we go from there. I also encourage them to do a monthly posting calendar to kind of write out what they want to do in a month. So there is kind of a flow to it and it keeps it easier for them too to have ideas.

[0:11:46.1] WS: Yeah. Okay well, let's talk about those properties a little bit. I know you also have some great skillsets as far as marketing these asset classes and keeping them full and with a low budget and things like that. You know keeping them occupied and what you all done to advertise.

[0:12:01.6] LB: Sure, so we have done everything from billboards to radio ads to Facebook marketplace postings, a lot of free things that we like to do. We'd include Craig's List, Facebook Marketplace, just putting a really low cost Facebook ad targeting that specific area. We have all kinds of data on all of our customers so we could target specific neighborhoods and blast to their neighborhoods like, "Hey, you know storage is really close by, here is a free month" or you know whatever, we're deciding to do.

We've also done local newspapers and we've talked about doing little restaurants and some restaurants have those printed out papers on the placemats and whatever. So we talked about doing that. I mean the ideas are endless.

[0:12:46.5] WS: Nice. Let's go back to you said data on customers, how do you collect that data sure?

[0:12:53.3] LB: Sure, so we have an in house, Lindsay Lewis is our director of business intelligence. She has all sorts of systems including Alteryx and she has Tableau to make all kinds of graphs and stuff. So she collects all of the data for us. We pretty much tell her what we need and she finds it. So for example, we have a boat storage at beside of Fort Worth and one day I wanted to send a mail to all of our – to every boat registration in the area. So she was able to pull that info quickly. We sent a mailer out and then there was that so.

[0:13:23.0] WS: Nice, you mentioned like you get that data on your customers and even advertising to their neighbors, how do you do that?

[0:13:30.6] LB: Sure, so like I said, I mean we just get the exact zip code of where they're at even down to the street address and we are just paying a Facebook ad for example right into that geo targeted area.

[0:13:42.4] WS: Nice, do you all have somebody staff that will do Facebook ads as well or is that something you can hire out?

[0:13:48.3] LB: That is all me actually, yep. All the Facebook ads, Instagram ads, we do Google ads on everything and also YouTube ads.

[0:13:57.0] WS: Okay. So what about mobile home park versus self-storage, different types of advertising?

[0:14:03.9] LB: Absolutely, so the two RV Parks we have here in West Texas so there is not a ton out there. They are in the oil fields, so that one we've done a lot of radio ads for actually because people are always driving around town, there is not a lot of places to put billboards or anything. So radio ad has been big there and also targeted Facebook ads. Also down there corporate customers are big thing with the oil companies. So we'll go directly to the oil companies and say:

“Hey, we have a discount for corporate housing, if you bring in a group of 10. So that’s been really successful for us.

[0:14:36.5] WS: Radio ads that is probably the first time I’ve heard of that that it just shows that you need to know your market, right? What’s working there and how people, how you’re going to connect with their customers.

[0:14:47.0] LB: Absolutely.

[0:14:47.8] WS: That is so interesting. Anything else as far as marketing on the property level or for the corporate side that you want to share with us before we move to a few final questions?

[0:14:56.5] LB: Sure, I would say it is really important to have boots on the ground at whatever property you’re trying to market because you can easily miss an opportunity if you are not there in the community, seeing what’s going on, the events happening, if there is a school nearby sponsoring the sports team for example, you know, leave your fliers for self-storage at an apartment building across the street. So I would say it is really important to just see exactly what you are dealing with right up close.

[0:15:20.9] WS: What is a way that you have improved your business, the marketing side of Spartan recently that we could apply to ours?

[0:15:27.1] LB: Sure, so we really have been focusing on the branding. So you know a lot of people, we’ve sent out surveys to our current customers, it is like, “How did you find out about us? How did you choose us?” A lot of people said, you know location or they just notice our branding and they kept seeing it. So kind of keeping top of mind is really important so.

[0:15:46.9] WS: So that survey, what do you do with that information then? You know let’s say in a numerous people, okay they saw you this way or they like this about you, can you give us an example and what you did with it?

[0:15:58.3] LB: Sure. So a lot of people who said location was the reason they picked it is probably because the storage facility was close to their house, which means that we should definitely be geo targeting just within five miles. So that really helped us out, yeah.

[0:16:10.4] WS: What about on the investor side? Do you ever do a survey on your investor base to help grow that side as well?

[0:16:16.9] LB: Not necessarily surveys, we do ask investors when we have a call with them like how did you hear about us, a lot of times it is on podcasts or the STR website or it is just a referral. So we actually don't do really any paid advertising for the corporate side right now.

[0:16:31.4] WS: Okay, what about the number one Lauren that's contributed to your success?

[0:16:36.9] LB: The number one thing like I said earlier I think it is just my vast background of marketing different products and asset classes. I mean you really have to think outside of the box for some of these things and having that cross experience really helps.

[0:16:51.6] WS: And how do you like to give back?

[0:16:53.5] LB: I like to give back by actually educating my peers. I would say a lot of people my age don't really understand anything about investing or passive investing or that they need to be investing for their future. So I really like to educate my friends and family on how to better their future.

[0:17:10.8] WS: Yeah, that is awesome. Lauren, I am grateful for your time and just your willingness to share what you're doing for the Spartan team there and you are definitely an expert in this field or they wouldn't have hired you. I know those guys as well. So grateful for your time. Tell the listeners how they can get in touch with you and learn more about you.

[0:17:25.5] LB: Sure, so you guys can email me at lauren@spartan-investors.com.

[0:17:31.3] WS: Awesome, that's a wrap Lauren. Thank you so much.

[0:17:33.5] LB: Perfect. Thank you Whitney.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:17:35.1] 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.

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[OUTRO]

[0:18:16.0] 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 for free material and videos to further your success.

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