

FREE article collection

Marketing thoughts from



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How I made a fortune in 2 hours - and you can too!

A rejection that led to a million dollar business

Back in 2000 I had a call from a guy who was making his own product in his garage and wanted to sell it on the Internet. He had been searching for a while for distributors of his product, with little success.

I went a met with this guy and his wife and we discussed at length what they wanted the web site to do. I gave some recommendations on what the site could have to complement their wants.

I went away and developed a proposal to meet their needs. I returned a few days later and went through the proposal bit by bit.

As you do after a pitch, I asked for the business.

"That meets all the needs we've identified together. Would you like us to work with you on developing a site to sell your product?"

Nope, the kid up the street is doing it for \$300

"No. We're going with the kid up the street. He's doing it for \$300. He is still at school - he's apparently a computer whiz."

I tried to discuss how our proposal met their needs better than the kid up the street, but to no avail.

Six months later I was surfing the web when I remember these prospects. I logged on and took a look at their site.

Basic principles of web design

Now, there are some basic principles you have to follow with web sites.

- It must load very quickly
- If you are selling products, your shopping cart must be fully secure
- Need lots of information about products
- Need to be optimise for search engines

There are more aspects of course, but I could go on forever.

The site that the kid up the street did was designed in such a way that whatever visitors did manage to stumble onto the site would very quickly leave. I rang the prospect and suggested a few changes that might help the site (it took over 2 minutes to load!).

His words were, "I know the site is shocking. It's done nothing. I've been trying to get the kid to fix it, but he hasn't. I'm trying to get my \$300 back."

I kept in contact with the prospect, sent him a Christmas card, sent our newsletters, etc. Then just over 18 months ago, I met the prospect again.

I asked him how his sales were going and he said,

"People just won't buy over the web."

"Hopeless. You can't sell our product over the web. People just won't buy over the web."

I suggested to him that the US was a very viable market for his product and that it might pay to target that market once he sets the site up properly. I asked him if he wanted me to requote.

"No thanks. If you think a web site could be so successful, then you set up a site and you can be our Internet distributor."

Like most web developers, we talk about how good we are. We never like to actually have to back that up!!

We hadn't really started our own web shops yet (like most web developers, we talk about how good we are. We never like to actually have to be able to back that up!!).

But I thought it was about time we did.

So we developed our own site. My costs were something like this:

- **Web site design** - \$0. We did that ourselves. Took a few days.
- **Web site hosting** - \$18 per month
- **Secure web site shopping cart** - \$30 per month (first month's trial free)
- **Programming** on the site - \$250
- First bit of **PR** the site received - \$0

I've made that sound very simplistic. There was a lot of time spent on the concept of the site, along with developing information for the site, writing copy, getting testimonials, optimising the site for search engines, etc, etc, etc.

Just four- (4) weeks after we launched the site we got our first bit of PR. It was on a current affairs show that featured the product and its benefits. That program finished at 7 pm and I wandered into the office at 8 pm.

Just before I left home I asked my wife how many orders that program would have generated. Her guess was 20. Mine was 50. Our average sale was \$50.

The telephone was ringing as I walked in. I answered that - it was a lady wanting to order our product. The same time as I was dealing with her the fax was receiving. That was an order too.

I picked up the telephone to ring my wife to let her know we had made at least 2 orders.

The message bank tone was on the line. So I checked the messages.

"You have 53 messages."

I thought we might have been onto something!

I had a separate email account that the orders came into. I pressed the 'Send/Receive' button on my email program. I was hoping to see 'Downloading 1 of 50'. I didn't get my wish.

"Receiving 1 of 1,082"

All orders.

After those emails had downloaded, I pressed "Send/Receive' again.

"Receiving 1 of 854"

All orders.

I kept pressing that button all night long. And the orders kept on pouring in.

And on and on it went. For days and days and days. For months (even now, 18 months after the show was on, we still get enquiries generated from it!)

- The orders didn't stop for three- (3) months.
- Our fax machine went 24 hours a day for a week.
- We put in two- (2) extra phone lines to deal with the enquires.
- We employed a dozen people to pack and post our products.

It was a fluke!

Well, I'd probably agree with that, except for this next point.

We've done it again about three- (3) months ago. Not quite to the same extent, but great sales nonetheless.

And we are going to do it **yet again** via a different medium (free offline publicity again) in about four- (4) weeks.

We continue to make great sales each and every day for a few different reasons.

- Because the **product is one that is repeatedly purchased** (it's a cream)
- Because we constantly provide our customers with **great information**

- Because we constantly **provide our customers with offers** (a recent free shipping offer sent sales through the roof)
- Because we have **10,000 email newsletter subscribers** who receive regular updates
- Because we have **8,000 Free Report subscribers** who receive an information-packed and very valuable report every six- (6) months
- Because **we encourage repeat visits** to the web site

That web site is one of the world's best web sites in it's niche (if not ***the*** best).

We have a person employed full-time to add content to the site. Another takes care of the orders each and every day (the process is perfectly streamlined). And yet another markets the site.

I've been involved with some very successful businesses. From public companies to massive chains. But, without a doubt, the best business model I have ever seen is a web based business.

Done correctly from the very start, a web business can give just about any business a tremendous advantage over their competitors. And it can be the perfect sales and distribution channel as well (not just an exercise in branding or information provision).

When you select a web developer to develop your site, look for a track record. Have they developed successful sites before? What's their track record like? Do they have any work you can look at? What is their area of expertise?

Hope that helps.

Getting free publicity to kick start HUGE sales

I could start and finish this article with two words. And in those two- (2) words you will more than likely recognise a billion dollar business that has been built on free publicity.

The two- (2) words are these:

Richard Branson

I love seeing Branson in action. He's just another ruthless businessman with his eye on the bottom line every minute of every day.

But through a mixture of a very savvy PR brain and outrageous stunts he has built a fabulous fortune and positioned himself as Mr. Nice Guy, whilst methodically taking advantage of that image at every turn.

I saw Branson on a recent Australian TV show. It was a top rating football show. Branson knows absolutely nothing about Australian Rules Football. Not a thing.

He didn't know a thing about football!

But he was invited on because of his persona as a **high profile** and hugely liked figure. This TV show is, by the way, one of Australia's most watched shows.

And Branson is smart. He didn't just go on and have a friendly chat about business and his keys to success.

Nope, not Branson!

About five- (5) minutes into the interview Branson called out and was quickly surrounded by **six- (6) gorgeous bikini clad women.....fully body painted.**

The colours were the same as his newly launched credit cards

By an amazing (!!) coincidence, the colours that the women were painted were the exact same colours of the new credit card that Branson had just launched.

And he managed to get a good ten- (10) minutes of coverage on the girls and himself, all directly connected to the new credit card.

And the local newspaper covered it all again the next day. And the next. I can't remember what the launch was, but I know I can guess: Branson, half naked women - all doing something outrageous.

The **first rule** of getting publicity is to **do something newsworthy**. Simple. More on that later.

Rule 2 is to avoid bad publicity. Don't be offensive. Nothing will get you destructive, bad publicity quicker than being offensive. That sort of bad publicity is not what you want (some bad publicity *can* be okay, but **good is better!**).

Okay, pretty easy so far!

Be nice and be newsworthy

The best way to get **favourable publicity** is to do something that is nice and newsworthy. By "nice" I mean positive.

Let's say you are a professional runner on the way up. What might work for you is to align yourself with a nice charity.

- You would generate lots of positive stories from that.
- And that would mean column inches.
- And a lift in your profile.
- And a distinct point of difference to every other athlete on the way up.
- And all that adds up to you being a more attractive proposition for sponsors.
- Which means more profit.

A quick hint here - choose your charity wisely. Like any business, there are well run charities and poorly run charities.

We do some work with [RACO CareFlight Queensland](#). This is a great charity in our experience. They do magnificent work and, in recognition of our little bit of support, bend over backwards to help us - from media releases, to providing testimonials, to giving us plaques for our 'brag' wall.

Grab hold of an organisation that is progressive, aggressive and not possessive (I had to get that last 'sive' word in there and that was the best I could come up with!).

Don't back the wrong horse

It would be disappointing and ineffective to align yourself with a charity that is unable to harness the power of the media to best advantage.

You need to kick a goal with everything you put your efforts in. Make the right choices!

Another excellent way to get free publicity is to **be an expert**. I've found this to be a particularly effective method.

- **Run a survey** and announce the results
- Make an **informed statement** on a topical issue
- Make a **prediction**

Both of those aspects, being nice and being an expert, would be decent newsworthy stories.

But even more newsworthy is

BEING OUTRAGEOUS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Take Richard Branson as an example. Take the Wrestling characters! Take a well thought out promotion. Okay, okay.....that last one is not quite as outrageous as the other two- (2), but could be just as effective!

How about this. Let's say that you are about to open up your computer business in a small shopping centre.

Chances are you will:

- open the doors,
- take some ads in the local newspapers and
- put a sign up.

Yawnnnnnnnnnnnnn. Boring. Dull. And not newsworthy.

Finding a good computer shop is as tricky as.....**finding a needle in a haystack.**

Picture this.....

It's Saturday morning. The computer store is opening for business. Part of the shopping centre is cordoned off. **Hundreds of people are lined up.** As they get nearer to the end of line they have to walk up a ramp. And put on a cowboy hat. Then they take a step forward.....and fall into a huge haystack.

Once in that haystack, the person **flails around** for exactly one- (1) minutes. They are ripping and tearing into that hay. Searching, searching for something.....but what??

A needle of course!

And if that person finds that needle in a haystack, they win a top of the range home computer and a top of the range computer for the local school.

There would be pony rides, fairy floss, free balloons, a clown, 'broom' horse races.....a whole lot of fun!

(And **the smart operator** might even ask for a \$1 donation for each needle search - all proceeds donated to a local charity. That nice sized (oversized) cheque would be presented by the business owner the next week to the RACQ CareFlight team, standing in front of the RACQ CareFlight helicopter!)

Free publicity isn't difficult

Free publicity needn't be difficult. I've been involved in some outstanding success on a national level, state and local level.

One of my favourites is **some work we did for a local landscaper**. He donated \$300 worth of trees to a local primary school for National Tree Day. We invited the local media along to the handover, with the idea to hand the trees over to some cute kids and teach them how to plant and care for trees.

I expected the local newspaper reporter to front, with the result being a tiny mention on page 72.

We **made the front page** of the city's largest newspaper, as well as **page 3 on another**. Both with big, colourful photographs and terrific mentions of my client.

The **local TV news** started and ended their bulletins with the story. And two- (2) radio stations mentioned the 'event' in their news bulletins for quite a few hours.

Great publicity can be the result of an incredible amount of hard work. Or just a simple release. The key is a newsworthy story - if you have that, you have a great chance for free publicity.

Why service firms usually completely muck up their marketing! (Yes, the word was "muck"!)

It can be tricky marketing a services firm. The rules that apply to other forms of marketing simply don't apply. No matter how hard we try.

You see, marketing a product and marketing a service are chalk and cheese. Many marketers see the success of a product and think that with the same strategies, that they can do the same with a services firm.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Don't stress if your service firm marketing has been difficult. It usually is. Keep reading and I'll give you some ideas that will bring your peace and profit.

Using the 'usual' product marketing techniques will not work. Some techniques might work well, but certainly not all.

- People **don't take a look at an ad in a newspaper and buy your service**
- people **won't see your service on TV and buy on the spot**
- People **cannot pick up and test out your service** before they decide to buy

Because you are selling something that cannot be seen, felt or heard it makes your job very difficult. And this is why it is so important to get leads, demonstrate your service and close the sale.

Selling services is **about getting leads in** and converting them to sales. You cannot skip a step and go straight to the sale. Not like in a store where there is often only buying, but very little selling.

Lead generation is the critical thing for a service business. You need to have a system for continually generating leads in your business.

Here's a few lead generation leads we have used just this past week:

1. Took a **display ad** in a major city newspaper (business section)
2. Distributed our **newsletter** amongst targeted businesses
3. **Introduced our business** in person to targeted businesses
4. Developed **relationships with key contacts** and prospects
5. **Direct mailed** a promotional card to 120 local businesses
6. **Networking**
7. Visited a **web forum and answered questions**
8. Developed a **FREE Report**
9. **Rewarded a client** for referring us a new client

Let's take a look at what we've done:

1. **Display ad** - it's been our experience that print ads (and PR) do not influence people at all in their choice of a service provided. Which begs the question, "Why did we do it?"

Because we're always trying new things. [The ad we took](#) was a little unusual and didn't really push a specific service we provide (or even us). It's a decent sized ad and should generate visitors to our web site.

Our web site does generate us leads - and for some reason those leads are usually excellent. I think (and I hope) it's because the no BS nature of the web site. The quality client's we attract are drawn to our philosophy and make contact.

So, the ad works well at getting people to our web site. Once people visit our web site, they quite often contact us.

2. **Distributed our newsletter** - our newsletter works very well at generating leads. It's an informative newsletter and in it we often talk about specific jobs we are doing. That seems to remind our prospects of the services we provide and initiates contact.

3. **Introduced our business** - this was the way our newsletter was distributed. [Bianka](#), our marketing Manager, walked around the neighbourhood personally delivering the newsletters and introducing herself.

This dramatically increases the impact and readership of the newsletter.

4. **Developed relationship with key contacts and prospects** - although not truly a lead generator I'll include it here. This is simply relationship building. And people are much happier to do business with someone they already have a relationship with. This works wonderfully well.

5. **Direct mail of promotional card** - 120 cards sent out for a less than 2% response (we have 2 meetings next week with people who contact us after receiving the card).

This one is like the ad. Untargeted mail doesn't work as well as many other techniques, but we are happy to give it a try as we do get clients from it. One of our oldest and dearest clients was initially found through a mail out to people we didn't know.

6. **Networking** - if it's a 'networking' function organised by an industry or government body, then avoid like the plague! These functions are next to useless for developing any decent opportunities.

Real networking, where it's somewhere like a charity dinner where you mix socially with others, is an excellent way to generate leads. Plus you get to have a nice meal and a few wines at the same time! And you still get to call it work.

7. **Visited a web forum and answered questions** - no good. I do this one because it's related to [my book](#). Visiting forums has generated us some work (such as writing copy for a Melbourne client just a few weeks back), but not enough to justify a lot of time.

8. **Developed a free report** - this is an excellent lead generation tool. We are starting a classified ad campaign next week where we encourage contact with us to receive a free report. This dramatically increases our response rate.

9. **Rewarded a client for referring a friend** - a fantastic idea but almost impossible to measure. It all comes back to relationship development - and that's great for business.

(I should mention here that the best thing I've ever seen or done for lead generation is give a speech. If you give a speech on your area of specialty, you will guarantee plenty of leads if your speech is half decent.)

What can you do in your business to keep those leads pouring on in?

The key to lead generation is to be doing something all the time. If you are using 20 lead generation techniques, then the chance are pretty good that they won't all stop at once!

Focus your efforts on getting the lead. Be systemised and organised. Do something **every single day** to help generate a lead and before you know it you will have a very healthy business.

The top 10 mistakes most web sites make

And why a web designer is usually the worst person to design your web site

I look at a lot of web sites. And mostly I shake my head in disbelief.

Before I start, I want to give you some idea of why what I'm about to say is relevant.

1. I run a couple of web sites that make good money. And by good money, I mean real good money. So what you are about to hear is from someone who actually knows what he is talking about. Yep, I know that's unusual in this world of hyper hype, but there you go!

To give you an example, one of our sites is one of Australia's leading health products web sites. we once did in the \$100,000's in sales in a 2 hour period.

2. My business develops web sites. And the sites we develop work.

- We had one web site we redeveloped go from 780 visitors a year to 35,000 visitors a year (and then to 114,000 visitors the next year).
- A recent site had achieved just 1 sale (worth \$400) in 12 months of operation. We redid that site and the very next month the site had \$68,000 in sales.
- Another redeveloped site went from 70 visitors a year to 22,000 in a year.

I'm of the very firm belief that web sites don't work effectively for many businesses simply because they are not developed correctly. Who's the blame for that?

Web designers are to blame!

Designers know how to make something look pretty. The web isn't about looking pretty. The web is about giving web site visitors exactly what they want so that your site meets its objectives.

Our biggest issue with potential clients is often they have had a poor experience with a designer who doesn't fully understand what a web site should have, should not have and should do.

When we suggest that the site could do very well with some adjustments, it's often a case of the person thinking "Nope, the web doesn't work for us."

The top 10 mistakes most web sites make

1. Not enough content

All your visitor wants is information. They want that information now. They want information that is relevant, precise and fresh.

2. Content not being added on a *very* regular basis

If you do not update your web site with new information at least every couple of days, then you are making a big mistake. No question about it.

If you visit a web site and nothing has changed for six- (6) months, would you go back tomorrow? Chances are you wouldn't, because you'll assume there will be nothing new.

3. Web site takes too long to load

In this day of instant everything, your web site has to come onto the visitors computer screen in a flash! If your page doesn't load fully within 10 seconds (that's on what's called a 56k modem) at an absolute minimum then your visitors will not wait around.

With one of our sites, we added an extra picture to the Home Page. This added an extra second to the time the page to come up on a visitors computer. Sales went down 10% instantly. Because of one- (1) second!

It's that critical.

4. Using 'Flash' movies

'Flash' is a program by a company called Macromedia that allows web designers huge scope in what they can do. A Flash movie can look fantastic with plenty of moving parts and sounds. Designers love them.

If your designer suggests the use of Flash on your web site, get rid of him. Using Flash is a huge mistake.

All a Flash movie does is increase your site's load time through the roof (and the visitors will simply not wait) and keeps your visitors a step further away from the information they want.

Our research shows that about 25% of people do not even have the software installed on their computer to actually see the Flash movie (the visitor can go to the Macromedia site and download it - another 2-3 minutes - it ain't going to happen).

5. Decent copywriting

Good copy is very important for any web site, whether you sell products online or simply have an information site.

After we changed some copy on one of our own sites, sales went up 40%.

Quality copywriting keeps people's attention and keeps them on your site.

6. Not personalised

The web is, by its very nature, an impersonal medium. You need to personalise your site as much as possible to create a sense of trust and sense of personalisation.

People like to deal with people. That's the reason we have a ['Team'](#) page and staff profiles on this web site. If you see that this article is written by Brendon, then you can [check me out](#) and that increases the sense of 'knowing' me (at least a bit).

7. Sense of security

This one should probably be higher up because security concerns are ***the number 1 reason that people don't buy over the Internet.***

If you sell a product online, then not only does your shopping process need to be fully secure, but **it also must be seen to be fully secure.**

Tell your customers every little bit about the security of your web site. Allay every fear they could possibly have. As soon as you do that, your sales will increase.

8. Not optimised for search engines

This one should be up higher too!

There are many, many ways to market a web site. But for the majority of web sites, having a high listing in the major search engines can be hugely important.

By 'optimised' I mean that the site is developed and maintained in such a way as to achieve those high ranking. This is a science and an art in itself.

A quick example: the term 'psoriasis' (a skin condition) is searched for about 51,000 times per month in the major search engines.

- Let's say you manage to get to number 1 in the search engines for the term 'psoriasis'.
- Let's say 60% of people click your number 1 link.

That's about 1,000 visitors a day.

- Let's say you convert 5% of visitors to a sale.
- Let's say your average sale is \$50.

Being number 1 in the search engines has just generated you \$2,500 a day in sales. That's over \$900,000 a year!

That's how important a good search engine ranking can be.

9. Poor navigation

Your navigational structure needs to be incredibly simple, incredibly easy and incredibly clear.

Not everyone has great computer skills. The more people who struggle finding the information they want, the less chance you have of having a successful site.

10. Know your market

This one seems a bit obvious, but I'll include it anyway.

We did some work on a client's site who had not had a sale for a year. Not one sale. The only thing we did was change the price from Australian dollars into US dollars.

Sales started that day and haven't stopped.

Americans are very, very reluctant to buy in any other currency than their own. If your market could be the US, then you'll need your prices in US dollars.

=====

As I've written this top 10 list, I've been thinking of more and more mistakes that web designers make (Frames are another big mistakes. If your designer wants frames, get rid of him. The reasons why are too numerous to mention!).

It all comes back to usability. Make your site as user friendly as possible - have a search facility, have a simple navigation system, follow up on your emails.....the list goes on - and you'll reap the rewards that a great web site can bring.

A designer is good to construct your site. But have yourself or your marketing person give an exact brief of what your site needs.

Good luck!

The **WORST** advertisement I have ever read - if your ad writer does this.....**SACK HIM!!!**

I'm sitting here reading a marketing magazine (the creative genius behind it called it....'Marketing'. I actually love the name. Perfectly descriptive and you know exactly what it is about). Anyway.....

.....in the back of the magazine they have the usual classified ads. One such ad reads something like:

=====

Top 5 reasons why this ad is effective

- * It shows who we are
- * It tells you what we do
- * The ad contains a cute image
- * It tells you how to contact us
- * It ends with our logo

We write great ads. Ph: 5555 5555

=====

That is the worst advertisement I have ever read!!

The clowns who wrote that should be taken out and made to tear money up.....because if their own advertisement is any indication of their copy writing ability, that's exactly what they are doing with their client's money.

Your ad needs to do this:

1. **Grab ATTENTION!!**
2. Make an offer
3. Tell the person what to do next

(**A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, **A**ction)

AIDA is an age-old formula for writing decent ads. Stick with it because it works. Don't be clever. Don't be too smart. Stick with the basics because they work!

Do that and you'll make sales. Ponce around with trendy, pretty sounding ads and you'll waste your money.

- Tell the customer about what you offer.
- Make the customer an offer.
- Tell him what benefits he will receive.

- Ask him/her to buy.
- Tell them exactly what they must do to buy.

How to sell anything to anyone, and have them begging for more!

Okay, so I lied!! Maybe.

If you read that headline above, then you're probably expecting an article on selling. But **this article has nothing whatsoever to do with selling!**

But if you do what this article says, your customers will buy from you all day, everyday. And keep on coming back to buy again!

Selling implies getting someone to buy something they don't really want.

Forget about selling. Forget about making sales.

Turn your thinking completely around from what you want to:

Helping your customers get what they want

If you truly want to help your customers get what they want, then you will be successful.

If you help people get what they want, you're not really selling. You are getting people to buy. And people are happy to buy. Especially if they believe that you are helping them, to get exactly what they want and need.

I was speaking with a client last week. We were discussing putting on a real-time (instant) booking form onto his resort web site. He had spoken with web developers who offered him solutions. Now we were discussing my recommendations versus the competitors.

I said this:

"I do believe that our solution is the best one for a variety of reasons. If I thought the other one was better then I'd say so."

My client said, "Yep, I know you would."

What a great client! And as modest as I am (Not!), our relationship has developed over a few years because we have always, always, always given him the absolute best solution possible.

Assess your customer's needs and offer a solution

It's why fully assessing your customers' needs is so critical. Without a thorough analysis you aren't really in a position to offer decent solutions.

Only when you know what your customer actually wants can you give it to them.

Zig Ziglar once said, "You can get anything you want in life by helping enough other people get what they want."

Ask question after question after question after question, until you know exactly what the client wants and needs. Then offer a solution based on that. What could be easier?!

It sounds so incredibly simple, but very rarely happens.

- The last time I walked into a computer store, the salesperson tried to sell me the financing of the computer before he had even assessed what sort of computer I needed.
- The last time I bought a stereo, it wasn't a question of what I needed. It was more a question of the salesperson blurting out all of the features of the closest stereo (or was it the stereo with the highest markup - I'm not too sure!).
- The last time I wandered into a mobile phone shop, it was more about separating me from my cash, rather than making me a happy customer.

To sell anything to anyone simply find out exactly what your customer wants and needs and then give it to them!

What's in a name? An opportunity, that's what!

Getting your business noticed is critical.

A take-away food shop underneath our offices has changed hands for about the 4th time in sixteen- (16) months. It's been a loser for every single owner.

The new owner will come in, as usual, and try to stamp his style on the business. With this take-away there are some good reasons to rename the business - but that's not always the case, of course. If you buy McDonalds, then my advice is to to keep the name!

But what to call the new take-away?

In talking with some people, the general consensus was that the name of the business wasn't really relevant as it was a simple takeaway.

The thinking was that people don't choose a take-away based on the name. In fact, none of the people I spoke with were able to name the take-away shop closest to their home.

But my thinking is this.....THE NAMING OF ANY BUSINESS IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL!!

And it's critical because it will set the standard for what's to come. It could be the biggest, the best and the boldest statement for the business and set it on the path to success.

The main thing you want the name to do is make a statement.

You want the name to stand out and say something about the business. It might be:

- a descriptive name,
- a name that reflects your positioning (such as a 'groovy' sounding name),
- a trade name.

But your name must mean something to your customers. If it doesn't, then you have missed a **huge opportunity** to make a connection with your market.

This is what I might call the take-away business:

"The new takeaway between the pizza place and the bakery!"

Descriptive, different and definitely delicious!

People are going to sit up and take notice of that! They might think it's a strange name. They might think it's a great name. Either way, that name will get their attention and they **will** remember it.

The next thing I might name the business is.....nothing.

Well, not actually nothing. But I wouldn't name the business. Let me explain.....

What I **would do** is confer with the most important people in my business.

My customers could name the business!

I'd create a little competition - **"Name this business!"**

I'll take two- (2) weeks to find a winner. Maybe everyone who comes into the shop can pop an entry into the barrel. Winner gets thirty- (30) free lunches.

And you know what I'll have at the end of that two- (2) weeks:

- 1,000 or so customers who have contributed in some way to my business
- 1,000 or so names and address of previous customers
- 1,000 answers to the question: "Why did you choose to come into my take-away today?"

And then I'll pick my winner (or put up a "Top 5 names" list in the shop and ask every customer to tick their favourite) and announce that on a huge banner outside my take-away.

And then I'll send a postcard to the 1,000 or so entrants thanking them for entering, informing them of the winning name and inviting them to bring in the postcard for a free can of soft drink or coffee with any other purchase.

Now, not only do I have a name that will be great, but I have a relationship with 1,000 or so customers and all of those people know that my take-away is consultative, eager to please and just plain nice!

Like Arnie, "They'll be back!"!

Because they'll have a reason to return (to receive the freebie) and because they have a relationship with me and my shop. Sure, not everyone will return, but a higher than average % will.

Now isn't that a better way to choose your new business name than just picking one that sounds nice?

Put much thought into your business name. It is critical to set just the right tone, to get across just the right message and to get the attention of your market.

How to attract as many hugely profitable customers you can handle - do just 2 things!

Do you know who our best customers are?

That is a ridiculous question, I know! Because you are reading this article and can't actually answer. But that's okay because I don't like being interrupted!

Most businesses best customers share these attributes:

- very cheap or free to attract
- keep coming back to buy
- recommend you to other people
- are profitable

Sure, that's not the case for everyone, but it is for many businesses.

This article is about how to attract customers who are just like the ones you have now.

You've probably heard the old cliché that **word of mouth is the best form of advertising**. It's a cliché because, like most clichés, it's 100% correct.

Word of mouth referrals are fantastic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is this:

When someone tells someone else about your business there is an implied endorsement of your business.

Because people mostly tell friends, relatives or work colleagues about other businesses, it follows then that the word of mouth referral is coming from a respected and liked source who has credibility with that person.

Which means this new customer already has some trust of your business - and because perceived risk is a major choice influencer *when anybody buys anything* (this is why the brands are so powerful - they have the trust of the marketplace) you are far more likely to make the sale.

And customers who are referred to you this way are far, far more likely to buy than just about anyone else.

So word of mouth really is a wonderful way to get new business.

Word of mouth is one of the most poorly marketed forms of business marketing. It's one of the best ways to attract new and great customers. But it's one of the worst marketed areas.

This is what we all need to do

We need to encourage word of mouth referrals as much as we possibly can. It's so easy to do. **Here are 2 very simple ideas:**

1. Reward those people who refer you business. Anyone who refers us business gets a small gift. It might be a bottle of wine, tickets to a show, a game of golf. Whatever.

I've had some people tell me that giving a gift to someone who has referred us a client could be seen as wrong.

What a load of rubbish!

If someone is nice enough to refer a friend to me I am going to say, "Thanks."

This person is putting food on our table, a roof over our head, supporting jobs for the team, and helping us to grow our business.

It's a hard, tough world out there in business and as businesspeople we should appreciate help from others. We should reward those who assist us.

My mum taught me to say "Thank you" whenever someone helps you in some way. I think it would be very rude if we didn't at least say "Thank you." And my mum would be angry if I forgot my manners!

2. Ask people to refer their friends. This could be:

- as simple as ringing up clients and asking them to refer others
- it might mean a 'Bring a Friend for free' voucher to encourage a trial
- maybe offering an incentive for each person referred

I want this to be a short and sharp article.

Referred clients can be your best clients by a country mile. Do everything you possibly can to encourage your current clients referring your business to others. Do it now! (And don't forget to thank clients who refer you others. Or I'll get my mum onto you.)

The 3 step guide to winning prestigious business awards - and getting the biggest bang for your buck

How and why you MUST win awards

I first realised the power of winning prestigious business awards back in 1999 when my brother Pete won one of the major awards in the city we both live in.

I had the chance to, up close and personal, see the incredible impact that an award can have on a business. And what an impact it can be!

But before we get into that, let's talk about how you win.

How to win: Step 1

This step is, without doubt, the number 1 reason many worthy businesses do not win business awards. It's the most neglected part of the entire process. And here it is.

They don't enter awards!

Mmmm, bit obvious isn't it. Even sounds a bit smart by me! But it's true! Consider this.....

There is a major business award in the city I live. It goes for 4-5 months. each month there is a category winner for the various categories (6 in all). At the end of the year the category winners go up against each other as the grand winner for their category. Those winners then are judged for the supreme winner.

My experience over a number of years with these awards tells me that they don't get a lot of entrants.

That experience of mine I'm talking about includes award organisers phoning me up and saying, "Brendon, we haven't got many entrants for category A. Do you have any clients you want to nominate and put a proposal forward for?"

Step 1 is enter the award you want to win.

How to win: Step 2

Make it as easy as possible for the judges to select you.

- I've seen entries for awards that request a 500 word application, run to 4,000 words.
- I've seen award proposals handwritten and presented on dirty paper.
- I've seen award proposals that did not address one- (1) criteria that was requested.

Judging awards is a difficult thing. The judges not only have to find the most worthy winner, but the result has to be completely transparent.

If an award committee asks for a 1,000 page typewritten application, then that's what they should get. If it's 100 words over, that's one less reason to give you the win.

It goes without saying that your proposal must be beautifully presented, flawless and stylish. A graphic designer can turn your boring word document into a work of art. And here is the time to do it.

It's also important to make it as easy as possible for the awards team should you win. We'll include a high resolution logo, a backgrounder on the company and its history, and a contact person for further information.

Maybe, just maybe, the judges see all that and think, "If these guys win we have to do less work chasing up all this information for the media and our graphics people."

How to win: Step 3

Give the judges exactly what they want.

Here's where you need to do some detective work. But it's work that can pay off.

If we develop a proposal for a client to enter an award, we'll take a very close look at who the judges are and what areas of specialisation they represent.

If 2 of the 3 judges are Quality Assurance experts, then we would certainly put our client's quality assurance commitment as a central theme of the proposal.

If the selection panel included a know environmentalist, then our proposal would address the issues of environmental awareness, recycling and the company's commitment to the environment.

It's common sense. If people have a particular interest or specialty they will be drawn to that proposal with which they can connect.

I'd like to thank the Academy

".....and my mum. Wow!! I can't believe I'm here. I just don't know what to say....."

You've won! Congratulations. Okay, what's next?

Firstly, have a drink to steady your nerves. Now have another 10 or so to celebrate your win! Because in the morning you are going to start on a campaign that ensures you get the most out of your magnificent win as possible.

**You should win business awards because it will equate
to more profits for you**

People attach enormous credibility to awards. My school won our Under 10 Grand Final in football. I still remember that clearly. If we had of lost I wouldn't remember a thing! We won a shield!

Now is the time to leverage your win as much as possible.

Your strategy might include:

- Media Release to every relevant media in your industry
- Direct Mail campaign to your customers announcing the win (see below for an example of what you might write)
- New signage
- A party with your customers celebrating the win
- Attaching the words "Award winning" to any marketing collateral you develop for the next 50 years!
- Display the awards for all to see
- Announce the award on your web site
- "We're a winner sale" - boastful but true!

Awards bestow instant credibility and integrity on your business. It's like a fantastic third party referral from someone whom your customer respects saying "Buy from this business with confidence. We've checked them out and they are one of the best around."

Award wins are great

Award wins are great because they provide incredible recognition and credibility for your business. Once you win an award you need to leverage that win as much as possible

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Example letter to customers announcing your win:

Dear Bob

We take great pride in developing a quality business and do appreciate you recognising this through your continued support. Your patronage means a lot to us as we have grown the business and tried to become the best business we can.

You might not know that on Saturday night we won the Best Business Award. It was a terrific thrill for us to be recognised in this way and I am writing to say thank you for your help in making it possible.

Without wonderfully supportive customers like yourself we wouldn't have a business, let alone a business that has received such fantastic recognition.

Etc, etc.

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Give all the credit to your customer

What you have done in your letter is give all the credit to your customer. That will make him feel a part of your business. He'll feel a sense of ownership. And that's great.

You've also reinforced that you are a quality business (you told him outright) and you praised him for having the good sense to recognise this.

Enter awards and you will win one. once you win one, leverage that impressive win as much as possible

Good luck with your entry!

Why your marketing should be as cheap as chips

(If your marketing isn't, then you're doing it wrong)

Chips are cheap. Real cheap! Depending on the Fish & Chip shop you go to, the minimum can be as little as \$1.20. That's cheap!

That's about how much your marketing should really cost you.

Okay, so there might be an initial need to fork out some cash but by the time the dust has settled, you should have all that cash back and then some.

You see, your marketing shouldn't cost you anything. If your marketing is smart, targeted and effective you should make a healthy profit. Your marketing shouldn't be viewed as an expense.

- **Measure the response** to every marketing technique you implement
- **Measure the number** of enquiries it generates
- **Measure the number** of sales it pulls in

I once did a marketing plan for a client who ran a decent sized retail business. His two- (2) major advertising expenses were:

- Yellow Pages - \$45,000 pa
- Full page ad in a state-wide magazine

The first thing I did in his business was survey his customers and ascertained where they first heard of the business (I also went and surveyed his main competitions customers - found exactly the same results).

The results were this:

- They saw his sign

Something like 95% of customers in his industry live within 5 km of the business they use.

I can't remember the exact number of surveys (something like 400 rings a bell) we did, but not one person had found him through the Yellow Pages. And only 2 had ever read the magazine he was advertising in.

We cut his Yellow Pages ad down to the bare minimum and cancelled the magazine ad. **That very simple survey saved him \$70,000.**

Although it's not always that simple to measure the impact of your marketing, you have to try mighty hard to pinpoint where your customers are finding you from.

People loved our TV ads.....d'oh!

(I once ran radio ads for an private hospital's emergency room. Our assessment surveys found that 25% of people heard about the emergency room from our TV ads.

The unfortunate part there was we had never, ever had TV ads!

Radio ad impact will often show up as 'word of mouth' being identified more often as a choice influencer. People think they heard about your business from a friend, when in fact it was the radio being on in the car!)

The message I'm trying to push here is to measure your marketing impact. Sure, it's not easy to do, but being in business is tough - you need every edge you can get.

Good luck!

The amazing money-making power of a \$200 piece of software - no business should be without it!

I'll get straight to the point.

Almost every business I work with neglects their customers.

Sure, it's not a nasty thing. It's more of a negligence that doesn't really hurt the customer, it just means that the business doesn't work anywhere near its true potential. And that's bad enough.

Your customer list can be your biggest business asset. I'll rephrase that. Your customer list is your biggest business asset.

Consider this:

I have 2 clients in exactly the same industry, servicing much the same market. One markets extensively to his previous customers. The other doesn't.

The first client's biggest sales come from previous customers (almost 50%).

The second client has 15% of sales coming from repeat purchasers.

The difference: hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Keeping a customer list, with whatever relevant information you feel necessary, is an absolutely, really, truly excellent idea!

Once you have your customer's details you can keep in touch. And it is a terrific idea to keep in touch - the more you keep in touch the more customers will buy.

Just how do you get your customer's details? Many businesses get their customer's name and contact details as a matter of course, but for other businesses it can be a little harder.

Here are some techniques that work a treat:

- Point of Purchase competition
- Warranty cards
- Surveys
- Ask! "Would you like to be included on our 'Special Customer's' list? We offer our special customers special deals."

Once you have your customer list you do this.
Ask them to buy.

They are highly likely to! And you can tailor your offer exactly to suit the customer.

- You sold 412 tennis racquets. Good for you.....now send out an offer for tennis balls!

- Had a good month selling printers. Now make an offers of print cartridges to those same buyers.
- Sold plenty of suits? Wonderful news.....now ask those same people to buy business shirts.

Keeping track of all your customers can get messy. Maybe the details are in your accounting program and difficult to export. Maybe your database is a collection of names and address in a shoebox under the counter. Or maybe you've never considered a database before.

ACT! now

Do this. Go into your local computer software shop. Ask for a computer program called ACT! ACT! is a relationship database with which you can feed in the information and set it up so it reminds you to perform whatever tasks you set.

- I once did a **2,000 piece mail out** with ACT! It took me five- (5) minutes to set up the system to write a personalised letter to every single customer. After that I hit the print button and I was done.
- With ACT! you can **import in data from almost any other database.**
- I had a client with a **shoebox of paper** as his customer database. We dragged it out, entered the data and starting marketing to his list. He made sale after sale and the value of his business increased substantially.

The **main reason** a customer leaves a business is because he feels the business doesn't care about him. Not bad service, not high prices, not poor quality. But because they feel the business doesn't care about them

- That means **better customer retention**
- That means **happier customers**
- That means **more referrals**
- That means **a lower average customer acquisition cost**
- That means **more profit**

With a decent customer database base such as ACT!, you can keep in touch with your customers with ease - say hello, make an offer, wish them happy Christmas. Then they'll know you care (if it was easy to keep in contact with customers - as easy as ACT! makes it - every business would keep in touch).

Relationship databases like ACT! aren't just a glorified address book. The functionality that they provide, such as having fields to list your customer's birthday, children's name and favourite football team (along with about 30 other specific things) means **your marketing is pinpoint accurate.**

I've just read through that article and it sounds a bit dull even to met (and I wrote it!). Buy a bit of software and do this and that. Sounds quite dull.

But I strongly urge you to do it. Just keep on making contact with your previous customers. Make an offer tomorrow. Send a Christmas card. Send a newsletter. Make a birthday call. Make another offer.

Selling is about relationships. Build the relationships you want and the rest will follow.

How to select the best web designer for the job - every time!

The critical choice that could make or break your business

Selecting a provider for any service or product brings with it inherent risk.

- Is this person safe to buy from?
- Will they be reliable?
- If the product doesn't work, will I get my money back?
- How will I be treated?
- Will what they do work?

And buying a service, such as web design, is even harder. Just how do you compare one design to the next? After all, most designers can make a web site look nice.

So how can you be sure that the web designer can offer you what he says he can? And how do you know what he has to offer is what you need?

Compare apples to apples

Compare apples to apples. Because of the nature of the industry, many of the people who provide us with a brief for what they want the web site to have or do, do not have the ability to truly know what the best solution is for them.

I know that sounds a little harsh, but I'll stick by it!

Before you select your web designer, you need to have **a highly detailed brief** of exactly what you want and need the site to do. Only then can you compare apples to apples.

And only then can you assess the merits of each web designer who is pitching for the work.

One of our biggest advantages over the years against other web designers is the fact that we have had such high profile successes. From the Gold Coast Marathon web site (used to get 780 visitors a year. We redid the site - they average 780 a day now!) to the success with resort web sites to our own web sites.

What this has meant is that we have developed proposals with the added advantage of having the experience of knowing how to develop the site for best advantage and how to effectively market the site.

They are two- (2) huge advantages.

Here is what I would judge with a web designer

Examples of previous work – look at other web sites they've done. Do you like the look of them? Can the web site be found in search engines? Does the web site do what it is supposed to do?

Experience – how much experience do they have? Not how many years, but how many web sites? Have they been in the industry for a while or are they new?

Technical Expertise – this relates to such things as search engine optimisation, load time, usability, browser compatibility, etc. In their discussions with you did they address each and every one of these vitally important considerations? Or did they only talk about the look of the web site, i.e. how pretty it will be?

Testimonials – do they have any? Are they easy to work with? Do they do what they say they are going to do?

Specialisation - can this designer provide the specialist skills your site requires.

Guarantee – does the web developer offer a guarantee for his work? This is an important one - if your designer doesn't offer a 100% money back guarantee, then he is really saying , "I'm not too sure I can do this job." And you don't want that.

Price - I'm the world's biggest believer in value over price. If the designer provides good value, then that's more important than price.

Point of Difference - why should you use this designer? Does he have something the others don't?

But wait, there's more.....

It's pretty rare that you will be able to perfectly compare apples to apples when comparing web designers. Even with a highly detailed brief, many will add their own interpretation and recommendations to the mix. And that can be a positive thing.

Other things to consider:

Is the designer easy to work with? If you designer is impossible to get hold of, never returns your calls or over-rides your decisions, then he may not be the person for the job!

Can the web designer relate web site jargon in layman's terms – you want to understand what they are telling you. The web can be a tricky place for the unwary and you need to be able to understand everything about your site to achieve the full benefit.

Hidden Costs – will the web designer charge you every time you need to make a minor change to the web site?

Customer service – have they made themselves available to you to answer questions?

During your initial discussions with a web designer, **did they endeavour to establish your needs?** Or did they just try and sell their product even though it might not be what you want?

Do you like them - I'm big on this one. I think most of us can intuitively feel if a person is decent and honest. If you just don't like the designer, then that's a good enough reason not to select them. Our first impressions are usually correct.

At the end of the day, you have to get on with the web designer. After all, you will be spending a fair bit of time together.

Make or break your business

Done right, a web site can be a tremendously valuable asset. It can make or break your business.

Don't go with the trendy little advertising firm that makes pretty sites. Go with the firm that can best do what you want and need them to do.

How to blow your profits through the roof..... even without extra customers!!

Most people will tell you that to increase your profits you need to do two- (2) things:

- 1. increase your number of customers,**
- 2. reduce your costs**

And whilst they are excellent ways to grow your business, I'd like to add a couple more into the mix here. And I know just what you are going to do.

You are going to say, "Of course. That is so obvious."

But even though it may be obvious to you and I, it isn't obvious to the vast, vast majority of businesses I see.

Your customers are gold! Being customers, they have 2 fantastic things you should love about them.

2 FANTASTIC THINGS ABOUT CUSTOMERS

1. They are **far more likely to buy from you again.** That has to do with knowing you, knowing where you are and knowing they can trust you.

For most businesses, that costs plenty of money to achieve.

2. They **tell their friends about you.** A tremendous source of new business for many businesses is referrals from happy customers.

And it's been our experience that referred customers will buy more from you than customers who find you through any other means.

But encouraging referrals, as excellent an idea as that is, isn't what I'd like to talk about here.

One of the easiest ways to increase your sales

The first thing I'd like to mention is one of the easiest ways to increase your sales. This technique is so simple, so basic that I'm constantly amazed that all businesses don't devote a major part of their efforts to it.

Because all successful operators do this. And I just guarantee that just about all unsuccessful operators don't.

I'm going to use an example. It's a boring example because every man and his dogs uses it. But I'll use it because most people reading this will be able to identify with it. And that's important.

Example # 1: "Would you like fries with that?"

What a magnificent question. It's a simple question - a basic technique - that has generated millions and millions of dollars in sales.

They are called **add-on sales**.

Did you read above where I mentioned your customer is highly likely to buy from you again? Do you know when he/she is most likely to buy from you again?

That's right.....the customer is most likely to buy from you again when they are already buying from you.

They are at their most receptive. They have indicated their trust in you (other they wouldn't buy). They are in a buying mood.

Ask the customer to buy again whilst he is in the process of buying

Now is the time to **ask them to buy again**. Not sometimes. Not maybe. But every single time your customer buys from you, you should offer another item.

But be smart about it. Add value to whatever they have already purchased. Keep it related and relevant and you will make more sales. A ton more sales.

But get this. Even though this is an obvious and incredibly simple way to make a heap more sales, I cannot remember the last time anyone, anyone at all, offered me an add-on sale.

Let's say you sell sofas. That's a decent sized purchase for most people. How do you think you would go if you said,

"Madam, that's an excellent purchase - the colour is simply divine. I'd like to show you something that I think you will love.....this coffee table complements the lines of the sofa, etc, etc. Would you like to have the table to complement the sofa?"

Now, the customer isn't going to say "Yes" every time. There's no question about that.

But a good 20-30% of the time **you will make that add on sale**.

Give it a try and reap the rewards.

Maximise sales with this one- (1) easy technique!

The second thing I'd like to talk about is making as many sales as possible. And increasing the number of sales you make can be as simple as pie!

Read on for more.....

For this example, I don't want to use McDonalds. I'll use myself instead.

I've never considered myself to be good at selling. In fact I've never thought of myself as a salesman of any type. I very genuinely believe that **I never actually sell anything.**

But I've always been far more successful at having our clients buy our services than anyone else in our business.

So this is what I did. (And this made our sales jump by many, many thousands of dollars per year.)

Each of our team came along with me when I went to see prospective clients. We made notes of every variable we possibly could. Those differences were interesting, but not really relevant to the message here.

The message here is this:

Find the most successful salesperson you can find in your industry and copy him or her. And even benchmark against successful salespeople from any industry.

It's that simple!

One of the most interesting things that our team discovered was that I didn't 'sell' any of our clients.

We discovered that all I did was:

- asked lots of questions,
- listened to the answer,
- suggested solutions, and
- provided reasoning for the recommendations I gave.

The entire team started doing this - we practiced many a long hour - and immediately our sales conversion rates went through the roof.

Do what works!

- If it works, do it.
- If it doesn't work, don't do it.

Examine the variables in your organisation. Survey your customers and find out why they purchased. Find your best salesperson and closely review what they do.

With all of that critical information you have a wonderful start to push you sales through the roof. Start today!

Why you should pay me \$10,000 for five- (5) minutes work

I want to say right at the start that I don't usually charge \$10,000 for five- (5) minutes work. But if I did, you should pay it.

As a guy who predominately sells services - whether it be marketing, media or web consulting - I'm constantly asked to justify my fees.

Now, before you get bored, this article isn't me trying to justify what I charge. Or what anybody else charges for that matter. This article is to try and set out the thought patterns of those who are successful and those who are yet to reach success.

The multi-millionaire client said, "I'm not going to pay you that!"

I had flown into Sydney for a meeting with a potential client. We discussed at length some marketing work we could do for him (he'd been referred by a friend) and the client was impressed and excited.

He had a reputation as **a tough negotiator** and a guy who got you down to the absolute best value you could give. But I was ready for him! I had gone over every possible rejection and counter argument until my mind was frazzled.

The tactical advantage I had was that I was confident we had the knowledge to make this guy some serious money. I wasn't too keen to budge at all.

The structure of the deal was for a commission to be paid on success. No sales = no money for us.

So, I made my first offer this way.

"Our fee is X% of sales," I said.

Okay, not so sophisticated but direct. I had in my mind a whole speech of why we represented great value at that price. I was just waiting for the client's counter-offer before I started.

His counter-offer wasn't what I expected.

"No, I'm not paying you X%. I'll pay you Y%," he came back with.

He offered to pay me 25% *more* than I asked for!

I was about to open my mouth and start to justify my price when it sank in. The client was paying me 25% more than what I asked for. Boy, am I a great negotiator or what??!

Right about then it struck me just why this guy was a hugely successful businessman.

- he didn't think like everyone else.
- he didn't try and screw me down over every dollar.
- he didn't want to pay me the lowest possible amount.

He was the exact opposite.

"I want to pay you more than anyone else pays you so that you will make more money for me. If you make an absolute heap of money, it means I am too. That's what I want. I want you in my corner, fighting as hard as possible for my business," was his reasoning.

And good reasoning it was too.

He is one of the few businesspeople I have ever dealt with who take that attitude. And, not coincidentally, he's probably the most successful businessperson I have ever dealt with.

Here's the question

Would you pay me \$10,000 for five- (5) minutes work?

Of course you'll say "Yes".

Because you just know there is going to be a good reason further down this page!

And that answer is this

.....actually, before I give you the answer: **Would you pay me \$100,000 for five- (5) minutes work?**

"Yes" is the right answer again.

Here's the answer.....really

Before you can answer the question truthfully, you have to ask this: What value do I get for my money?

Only then can you make an objective decision.

I'd happily pay someone \$100,000 for five- (5) minutes work if the benefit to me was a profit of \$101,000. No problem at all.

I'd be even happier to pay that \$100,000 if the profit was going to be double that.

The power of one- (1) email

I don't know if you know the power of TV. If you don't, it is simply amazing. It's life-changing for many people. It's incredible.

1. I have personally generated enormous sales from a story on a TV show (done that twice now).
2. I have a client who added millions in value to his company after a major TV program featured his product.
3. I am just about to have a feature article on one of my distribution company products in one of Australia's biggest magazines.
4. I have stories being considered for major exposure on TV shows for various clients right now.
5. I have well-established contacts with a number of influential players within the media industry.

It could be as little as a phone call for your product or service to receive coverage that is worth hundreds of thousands of \$\$\$ to you.

The feature article example in point 3 above came about from a simple two- (2) minute email from one of my team to a journalist contact. That's an article that could very easily add \$500,000 in value to my company.

Sometimes it can be that easy.

Who cares about price!! It's all about value.

I wanted to use big numbers above to grab your attention. They are all true figures by the way.

But the point I really wanted to get across to you was the need to look at the value for whatever it is you are buying, not the price. The price is irrelevant.

The price makes no difference whatsoever. It's all about value. Keep that thought in your head.

Now whenever you buy any marketing product - whether it be advertising or consulting hours or copy - look at the value.

A few years back, I paid a guy to do a sales letter for one of our web sites. We paid him his money, he did the job and that was that. Nothing really happened on the web site. No great sales peak. No massive jump. Nothing at all.

The next guy wanted 4-times the first guy!

I was referred another copywriter. He came with the highest of recommendations from a friend of mine. I paid this guy something like x4 the price of the first guy (I can't actually remember how much more it was). **The first guy was something like \$500, this second guy was \$2,300.** Something like that anyway.

And I don't mind saying that I was a little nervous handing over the cash. \$2,300 is a lot of money in anybody's language.

But my friend was there to, figuratively, hold my hand as I pulled my wallet out. Boy, am I'm glad he was.

I paid, he worked, he left. I sat and waited. And waited.

The site this new copywriter worked on very quickly increased it's number of sales by 40%. And of those 40%, just over 20% are repeat purchases. So the value to me of that copywriting is way, way above the 40% increase in sales.

The value is hundreds, maybe even thousands, of times more valuable than the first copywriter.

And that is an example of why value is far more important than price.

Hope that helps you to continue to look at the value of what you are buying. It's the value that makes any purchase worthwhile.

Brendon

Post Script: I wrote the above article in June this year. Just last week (August 15) that client was featured on one of Australia's major current affair shows. The impact from that appearance is very, very significant and bears out the message of always look at the value, not the price message I'm trying to articulate.

The simple way to have your newsletter professionally printed - for hundreds of \$\$\$ less than you would pay a printer!

Our business sends out a newsletter every 3 months or so. usually around 500 copies. We always used to struggle with the designing and development of the newsletter.

To get a quality newsletter, we needed a professional printer to print it. To have such small quantities printed meant we paid a decent amount per copy. It was a bit of a catch 22.

We have come up with a way to get professionally printed newsletters for just a few cents a copy.

How we've saved ourselves hundreds and hundreds of dollars!

We've had our designer do a newsletter template for us. We've had 5,000 copies printed off on a very nice paper.

The template has sections for stories, headlines and contact details.

We simply write the newsletter and insert the template into our laser printer - within a matter of minutes we have hundreds of great looking newsletters on a great quality paper.

All for just a few cents a copy!

It keeps our clients informed of what we are doing, our prospects aware of the services we offer and it really helps how we are perceived.

If you have a possible need for a newsletter, a template might be just the thing to save you BIG money.

Cheers.

The choices we make - understand this and you could make millions!

Whenever we develop marketing strategies for a client's business, we look very closely at the choice influences on the target market. That is, why do people buy from the businesses they do.

This afternoon my son and I went to a computer store and purchased a CD labeling package. From there we bought lunch from a takeaway joint, drove to the beach and sat on a bench and ate lunch.

My son is only 10, but I try and get him to understand business when there is a lesson to be learnt. My children call them "One of dad's business lessons."

Today we talked about **what influenced our decisions.**

The computer store was about 20 km away from my home. I passed probably four- (4) computer stores on the way.

Taking a look at our influences for going there, my initial reaction was to say I had no idea why I chose that store.

But on reflection, there were significant influencing factors at play.

Here are my major choice influences on selecting the computer store:

1: I knew the computer store had what I was after. I was a previous customer and had seen the sort of product I wanted there before.

2: I knew where the computer store was.

3: I knew the computer store had plenty of parking.

4: I perceived a reduced level of risk in the purchase. The store is part of a national brand. Because of this, I perceived that if the product was broken or didn't do what it said it would, I would get a refund without any hassle.

(An important point here is that whether the business actually would have refunded me is beside the point. My perception was the thing influencing my buying behaviour.)

Let's take a closer look at my choices

Previous customer - the fact that **I was a previous customer** of this business made it HUGELY more likely to deal with the business again.

I knew **they had what I wanted.** And I also knew the store offered a range of similar products. This gave me choice, which gave me options.

I felt more comfortable knowing I would **have a choice of product** and would be able to select the best solution for me.

Knowing **where the store was** - in its simplest form, people cannot buy from you until they know what you offer and where they can buy it from.

Plenty of parking - I could say this is about convenience, but I'd be lying. It's about me being lazy! I knew that at this store I would only have to walk 50 metres, as opposed to walking 500. (That's real lazy I know!)

Less risky - perceived risk is usually a major component of any purchase.

And why did I choose the software I did?

There were three- (3) products to choose from. I selected the one I did because it had **the complete package** - software, labels, label applicator.

On some separate labels I was considering, the packaging said "**Compatible with XYZ software.**"

My assumption was that was all the software was compatible with, which then severely limited my choice of software. So I selected the one that had the complete package, safe in the knowledge that everything was **perfectly compatible** (less risk again).

Another consideration was that I had seen the brand I purchased during a web search. This consolidated in my mind the **quality of the brand** as a worldwide company.

What about advertising?

I haven't mentioned **advertising as a choice influence**, but I have little doubt it did make an impact. The store I used advertises relentlessly and is very well branded. I can't think of, or remember, any advertising from a local computer store.

The specific software wasn't advertised, but the positioning of the store as a store with a huge range of stock is relevant and a major consideration.

Terrible service didn't matter

Have I received great service from this store in the past? Nope. In fact, I'd class the service as awful. Absolutely terrible in fact.

Today was no exception. No staff to answer any questions. Unanswered phones (3 of them in fact - all kept ringing).

And a 15 minute wait to get to the checkout because there was so many customers buying so much stuff!

So, nope. The level of service wasn't an issue.

That's all very interesting Brendon, but what does all that mean for my business?

The reason people buy from certain suppliers is a result of many influences. Our job as marketers is to identify what influences the people who are our target market.

What influences their buying decisions?

It's easy to find out.

If I had a computer store, I'd **take a look at everything my competition does.**

I'd **research the market** as much as possible.

I'd **survey a whole bunch of people** who are my target market.

Then I'd develop my marketing strategy around that.

For example, if I owned a computer store and all of research indicated exactly what I said above, then I'd market the business by:

Advertising/Point of Sale material/Brochures/Etc - all focused on the things that influence your market:

- huge range
- convenience - position and parking
- incentives for previous customers to return
- everything guaranteed 100%

Then I'd suggest some strategies to gain an edge over the competition:

- web site
- in-store advice (maybe even a searchable database of products, with heaps of product information)
- great service and friendly staff

That's a great start for any business. Survey people and find out why they choose the businesses they do. Survey your competitors customers and find out why they use that business.

It's no good marketing your business on the basis of great service if that doesn't influence your target market.

And then we move on to the influences of buying.....but that's a whole different ball game. And a completely different article!

Why, oh why, do people spend 4-5 years at University, but they can't get a job?

Here's how to increase your chances 1000%
for getting the job you want!

It's happened again today. It happens quite a lot. It happens about three- (3) times a week.

It usually comes in the form of an innocent looking letter. I reach into the Post Office box and quickly flick through the bundle of letters the postman has brought me. I see it! It's in a plain white envelope. It looks full of promise.

I'm excited.

I tear open that letter with great hope. I'm thinking, "Is this the one?! I so hope it is!! It could be the one!! Woooohooooo!"

As I read that letter my heart always sinks a little. I get disappointed. Then I usually get annoyed. And then back to disappointed.

Here's what the letter usually says.

=====

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to be considered for a position with your firm.

I have a marketing degree, I feel I would be well suited to a marketing position and I'm a team player. I am looking for a challenging marketing role.

I am a young, motivated person who has remained patient in finding a role that will fulfill my desire of establishing a long term career where I can enjoy learning.

Yours sincerely

Joe/Julie Bloggs

=====

I have a **decent little business** that does marketing, plenty of media work and lots of web development. We also own and manage one of Australia's most successful online shops.

Our work is varied, frequently fascinating and always Our [most recent team member](#) was employed just before she finished her degree. Within a couple of weeks she was working closely with **one of Australia's highest profile multi-millionaires, she was developing entire marketing campaigns** and she was having a ball!

These marketing jobs can be fun!

We receive plenty of letters from people applying for marketing positions. If we place an ad for a new team member we'll get anywhere between 120-150 replies.

Most weeks we get 2-3 applications even if we don't run an ad.

The people who approach us for jobs are **supposedly intelligent people**. They have marketing degrees. Law degrees. Business degrees. Formal qualifications galore. Some have experience, others don't.

Most have spent thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to get their qualifications. It's probably in the \$100,000's for many people.

Every single one of the people who have applied for jobs with us have wasted their money. And their time.

And you probably noticed that I wrote that they are "*supposedly intelligent people*". I wrote that on purpose.

**These people have to be the dumbest people ever!!
Degree or no degree.**

And here's why.....

- They spend years of study and thousands of dollars to get a qualification.
- They have absolutely no idea how to get a job.

A job can be a great thing. A job can set a person up for life. A job can be the start of a beautiful life.

And to spend four- (4) years at a University and then not even bother to develop the knowledge on how to get a job is.....well, it's just plain stupid. Really stupid!

And when these people are supposed to have marketing skills.....well, then it goes beyond *really stupid* to be.....

Absolutely, incredibly, without question STUPID!!!!!!!!!!!!

Marketing is simply about identifying your target market, finding out what they want and then giving it to them. That's it. Nothing more, nothing less. It's ain't rocket science.

Okay, I've been mouthing off about this for a while and I still haven't said what you need to do to get a job. But I'm about to. So read on.

If I wanted a marketing job with a marketing firm here's what I would do.

Step1: Identify my target market.

I would find out all the marketing firms in my area. I would start researching them. I would find out everything I could about them. Everything.

Most marketing firms brag about their clients and the work they do as a way to demonstrate their expertise to prospective clients. You can easily find out:

- What types of marketing they do
- Who their clients are
- How they market themselves
- Who the key personnel are

I'd even ring some of their clients and ask questions about the marketing firm.

With that research I have gold! Gold I say!

Step 2: Identify what my target market wants.

I'll use my own experience here. **What do I want?**

What I want in my business comes down to this:

I want to make more money!!

Everyone wants to make more money.

I have **never, ever, ever** met a businessperson who doesn't want more money! Never. And I doubt I ever will.

Step 3: Give your market what they want.

The last time I advertised a position that was vacant, I received 140 replies. Not one of those 140 replies identified what I wanted. So none of them offered me a solution.

The case of the GIGANTIC folder

I'm sitting with with a gigantic folder beside me of our previous job applicants.

I'll pick three- (3) at random:

- "My career objective is to continually build upon my I.T skills.....I wish to work in my fields of interest in Multimedia."
- "...I have a degree in marketing and am keen to gain employment in a fast paced and innovative environment that is both challenging and rewarding."
- "...I would be very pleased to obtain a position in an organisation that will enable me to learn new skills."

I couldn't care less about the applicant's objectives (unless they are to make me money!).

I couldn't care less about the applicant's qualifications (unless they can show me how those qualifications will make me money).

I couldn't care less that the applicant wants to learn new skills (unless those skills will make me money).

Keep that crap for the **University career counselor.**

Not quite as ineffective, but poor anyway, is listing skills and qualifications.

- Marketing degree
- Ability to use Macromedia
- Ability to write and present reports
- Highly developed verbal and written skills

Not interesting. And it's not relevant.

It's a hard and tough world out there

It's a hard and tough world out there. Things don't come easily. Everyday is a challenge for the person running a business. They are not there to make life as easy as possible for you. They are there to make a profit.

Because if they don't, they don't exist.

So now that we have identified our target market (the prospective employer) and identified his or her needs we now provide a solution. And I've just told you the main problem of every business.

To get the job, you say this:

Employ me because I will make you money.

Imagine you are an employer. You're struggling along trying to make a buck. You get the usual job applications. All about **me, me, me.**

And then someone rocks on in, grabs hold of you and says, "Employ me because I will make you money!"

If you want to list your qualifications, that's fine. But tell the employer **why your qualifications are relevant.**

Marketing degree - "I have the knowledge and training to give your clients the best across a range of marketing. What this means for you is better results, happier clients, more referrals and bigger profits."

Ability to use Macromedia - "I can edit and develop web sites giving this business extra skills in this fast growing area. That means you can offer your clients additional services which will, of course, result in greater profits."

Ability to write and present reports - "I write superb reports with minimal input. What this means for you is a well informed client and an informed client is a happy client. This will also reduce the non-profitable report writing the more experienced and profitable team members have to do and they can be out there making you more money!"

You gotta be smart about it.

With our last advertisement in the newspaper the copy included this:

"For more information about our exciting and fast-growing company, visit our web site at www.tailored.com.au."

Applicants were invited to submit their applications to the Executive Director.

Out of the 140 applicants, two- (2) addressed the application to "Brendon Sinclair, Executive Director." The rest were to "Whom it may concern" and "Sir/Madam."

Naturally those two- (2) applicants who addressed the letter personally got an interview. And it was **because they showed initiative**. Initiative enough to figure out who the Executive Director was. It was right there on the web site. It's pretty basic stuff.

In an interview everyone says almost exactly the same thing. It's almost impossible in interviews, in my experience, **to get a straight answer** to any question.

The applicant is not going to say, "I actually don't think I am the best person for this job. I quite lazy, frequently dishonest and usually insolent."

It's to be expected - after all they practice the 'best' answer to every possible question.

"Do you have initiative?" you might ask an applicant.

The answer is going to be "Yes!"

But of our 140 applicants, only two- (2) actually demonstrated any initiative. And ***the best indicator of future performance is past performance.***

But the other 138 applicants insisted to me that they show initiative.

I work hard!

I work hard. I'm out there in the trenches each and every day trying to make my clients a buck. I'm getting rejected here, getting rejected there, then going back and trying again. Every single day.

I fail at something every single day. **But I never quit.**

In my business, in any business, you have to be persistent. Persistence pays off.

That application letter I received today. It was from one of the previous job applicants of a year ago. She was the first person who has contacted us after being rejected the first time. 140 people trained in marketing. It's taken a year for any of them to follow up!

**Either their marketing training is hopeless
or they are just plain stupid!**

I've asked the person who followed up in for a chat. If she's half decent we'll give her a go.

If someone is persistent they are going to be more successful at whatever they do. ***The best indicator of future performance is past performance.***

The person I employed last year didn't work out. I went through the applications and tried again. The next person didn't work out either. Neither did the next. I tried again.

If someone says "No", they aren't saying "No" to you. What they are really saying is "No, what you are offering me doesn't meet my needs."

So come up with a better solution, a better offer, and try again.

Almost every employer I know puts an employee on for a trial period. And they do that for one-(1) very good reason. In many, many cases the first choice doesn't work out.

Here's what else you have to do to get that job!

Let's assume you have applied for the position, had an interview and didn't win the job. The firm tells you by phone or letter.

Step 1: Write a sincere "Thank You" letter.

=====

Dear Brendon

Thank you so much for the opportunity to have a chat regarding the role with your company.

Your description of the company and philosophy was unique and sounds highly motivating, positive and a certain recipe for great success - I certainly aspire to work with such a client focused organisation and really help grow such a business.

The importance of getting the right team member can't be understated and, whilst I am disappointed at not winning the position, I understand what a difficult decision it must be to select your new team member.

Thanks again Brendon. All the very best to the Tailored team.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

P.S: Saw your ad in the newspaper for your sporting goods store. Really stood out and grabbed me with the great photo. Looked great.

=====

Remember, chances are going to be good that the person they have employed won't be up to scratch. And in your letter, you have told the employer that ***"the importance of getting the right team member can't be understated"***.

You just very subtly mentioned that the new employer must be right for the role.

It also tells the employer you have empathy with his or her role. Very important. The employer is starting to identify with you.

The other thing you have done is been overwhelmingly positive. If you're not positive then your value to a business is greatly reduced.

Okay then. You've done something that 99% of job seekers don't do. If the employee doesn't work out, you will be light years ahead of your competition.

Is that it then? Yes, it is.

If you want to be like all the other losers!!

You're not a loser are you? Okay then. Let's keep going.

Step 2: Two- (2) weeks later.

=====

Dear Brendon

Hope all is well.

Just a quick note to let you know that I remembered what you said about the importance of making a great first impression during our chat when I came in about the marketing role.

I went out and bought a beautiful fountain pen last week - and WOW! What a difference it makes! Everyone who sees it comments on it.

Thanks for the suggestion.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

P.S: Proudly signed with my new fountain pen!

=====

Step 3: Three- (3) weeks after that.

=====

Dear Brendon

Hello again!

Hope business is rocking along.

As you know, you really made an impact in our interview talking about the passion your team has for the business and I learnt a lot in our short time together, especially regarding the huge impact the Internet is having on businesses these days.

Just thought I would let you know I've started a night course on this and it is amazing the things I have learnt already. Thanks for the information and the inspiration.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

=====

Step 4: Three- (3) weeks after that.

=====

Dear Brendon

Congratulations on winning the contract with QANTAS (I saw it on your web site and in the newspaper). Must be a very exciting job.

If you ever need any staff to help with all the work you have on at the moment, I know a guy who is talented, has tons of initiative and perseverance - just the sort of guy who would make you plenty of sales!

Congratulations again and all the best.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

=====

Step 5: Three- (3) weeks after that.

=====

Dear Brendon

Hope all is well.

I would like your advice on something if you would be so kind. As a guy who is always thinking marketing, I am trying to figure out the best way I can 'sell' my services to an employer so that I can get into a marketing role.

I have been for a couple more interviews, but I always seem to lose out at the last minute.

I know how hard (and expensive) it must be for you to employ someone and train them up so they generate income for your business. I was thinking of how much money that would waste most employers and what would be the best solution for them.

After quite a bit of research with the Department of Employment, I have found some very interesting information.

Did you know that if you employ someone like me (recent graduate/unemployed/under 21 years of age/whatever) you receive a rebate of 60% of my wage from the government? I had no idea.

With the starting wage for my sort of role, this means that an employer could employ me for next to nothing!

Because you seemed to have a terrific grasp of commercial reality, I would be indebted if you could advise me on the following:

As an employer, if I turned up at an interview with this sort of information would you think it showed initiative or was a bit stupid? What would you do in my situation?

Thanks in advance Brendon. I'll get a great marketing role sooner or later!

Your sincerely

David Jones

=====

Step 7: Three- (3) weeks later.

=====

Dear Brendon

Okay, I admit it!

You know and I know that there is a reason for these letters every couple of weeks. And although the information I've given you has been the absolute truth, there has been another reason.

I'm building a relationship. Yep, that's it. I'm being persistent. I'm demonstrating that I don't quit at the first sign of trouble. I stick at the job until it's done and done right.

I'm the sort of person who will make your business more profitable. I get the job done. No fuss or bother. Just results.

I'm smart enough to know that relationships are what marketing is all about (I hope I'm not being too immodest here!) and I've been trying to show you I'm a quick learner.

I'm committed to marketing and I love it!

- **I love the thought of having a client's business go through the roof because of something I've done.**
- **I love the thought of using my initiative, getting out there and making sales and making you money.**
- **I love the idea of working with your team and really getting the chance to stretch my wings.**

I love it so much I've purchased three- (3) books on copywriting (and devoured them in a couple of hours) so I could get my message across to you as well as possible!

And so I have another skill, maybe even an edge over the next marketing person who joins your team.

And I also have another thing to sell your clients. I can write terrific copy for ads, direct mail pieces, even letters like this one!

I'm ready to go!

Yours sincerely

David Jones

=====

Okay, so some of my examples might not be great. But I hope they get the message across. And the above doesn't just work for getting a job. It's also perfectly relevant for practically any professional services firm.

Just like marketing a product in an often over-crowded market, **you have to stand out.**

Be unique. Be different. Be noticed.

The regular contact has made you stand out. No question about that.

And if you think that the above approach is too strong, think of this:

You would **tailor your approach to the business.** You should know what would work with your prospective employer because of all the research you did earlier (the research can be done in about an hour).

This is real life. If you want that job, you have to go and get that job. Beat the competition. This could be the start of a big, big life.

So let's go over it again.

- **Find who you want to work with.** There are plenty of companies out there - find the exact one you want to work with. It's your life you are dealing with here. Don't waste a minute!
- **Tell the employer that you will make him money.**
- **Tell the employer how you will make him money.**
- **Build a relationship with potential employers.**
- **Keep in contact!**

Do those things and you will get a job. Simple.

Good luck.

Why I'm the best person in Australia to give this speech

On Thursday July 31, 2003 I gave a speech to the **Tweed Valley Home Based Business Group**. The topic of the speech was the importance of e-commerce to a home-based business. Here's the speech i wrote out beforehand.

If you were in the audience that day, because I work from just a few keywords to prompt me

Thank you Alison for your very kind introduction. I'm delighted to be here today and provide, hopefully, a positive contribution to those wishing to know a little more about e-commerce and the possibilities of web sites as a sales and distribution tool.

As Alison mentioned in the introduction, I do believe I am well qualified to talk about the possible impact that e-commerce could have on your business for a couple of very good reasons.

In fact, I very positively believe that I am the best person in Australia to give this talk. Better than anyone at all.

You see, **I'm not an academic** lecturing about the subject in some University.

And I'm **not some Internet 'guru'** selling products on "How to make money on the Internet" - very often that's the only things these guys sell.

No, I'm none of those.

I'm a guy who has developed hundreds of web sites. I'm a guy who has marketed hundreds of web sites. I've marketed sites selling products from pills to potions, houses to hotel nights, calendars to cars.

So I have a fairly good idea if you can make a buck on the Internet.

I've read all the stats. Seen all the reports. Heard all the critics say that:

- people won't give their credit cards over the Internet
- people don't feel secure buying over the Internet
- it will be a few more years before web sites can really sell product

And my opinion on that is this.

It's a load of absolute crap!

People who don't think you can build a profitable web site, those who don't believe that e-commerce is and will become an even bigger force in business **don't know what they are talking about.**

Or they are doing things wrong. Either way **they are wrong.**

How do I know this?

Well, besides developing and marketing web sites I also own and manage a couple of my own sites.

And here's the thing.....

=====p2

One of those sites once made an incredible \$200,000 in one night.

Yep. \$200,000 in one night.

Thousands and thousands of orders. Flooding in. And it didn't stop after one- (1) night. Orders from that site continue to this day and the site remains very profitable.

But it's not only my own sites that have made great sales using the Internet. Off the top of my head here's two- (2) more.

A few months back my business redeveloped a web site for a local resort. This resort had a web site for over a year and had made just one- (1) sales from it. That sale was worth about \$400.

We redeveloped the site. Within 30 days of launching, the site had generated in excess of \$68,000 worth of sales. From \$35 a month to \$68,000 a month. And that site still continues to generate great sales today.

With something like 16% of Australians booking a holiday online, the future looks bright for resorts and hotels that can harness the wonderful possibilities of web site sales.

Another client runs a major sporting event. Just over three- (3) years ago the event's web site attracted just 780 visitors a year. The site now attracts an average of 1,000 visitors **per day**.

Online registrations are up from 0% to 50% - saving thousands and thousands of dollars in data entry and other infrastructure costs.

The possibilities for that site in the future include advertising revenue, increased online entries, database marketing - the list goes on.

Market is so much bigger. US e-commerce stats.

I've worked with some pretty impressive and hugely successful companies. From major retail chains to public companies to household names.

E-commerce is the:

- best business model,
- best sales tool,
- best distribution model, I have ever seen.

So, what I've said so far is that web sites work.....and work well. I've based that on my own experience in developing and marketing web sites. And on my own experience of owning and managing a hugely successful web site.

But maybe you're thinking that my own incredible night, and subsequent ongoing success, with my web site was a fluke. A one-off that couldn't be repeated.

Wrong.

=====p3

I've done it again with the same site - about three- (3) months ago some marketing resulted in another huge influx of sales. And next week there will be a major magazine article on our product and directing interested buyers to our web site.

I hope I've shown there that, done right, a web site can be a consistent and very effective sales tool for your business.

But remember that a web site isn't' just a sales tool. It can also be used for:

- lead generation
- brand building
- customer support
- research

There are two- (2) aspects of internet marketing I would like to touch on today.

1. Getting people to your site

2. What your visitors do once they are there

Get people to your web site!

That's the gist of it. That's the thing you have to do.

But just how do you get people to your web site?

Here's what I do. I'm lazy and this is easy!

1. I find out how people usually find out about web site.
2. Then I do that!

This is how people usually find out about web sites:

- Search Engines
- Links from other sites
- Word of mouth
- Print media and advertisements

This is how I get people to my web site.

- Search Engines
- Links from other sites
- Word of mouth
- Print media and advertisements

I'm not very smart! But I'm just smart enough!

Now I could talk for days on what you need to do for people to find your web site in search engines.

Key word identification key word density linking strategies Page Rank Pay per click models the list goes on

Getting a high ranking within search engines can be a very, very important part of your web site marketing strategy. And search engine optimisation - that's developing your site to rank as high as possible within search engines - is an art and a science.

You have a two- (2) options here:

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1. learn how to optimise your web site for search engines yourself
2. employ an expert to optimise your site

Learning to optimise your web site yourself will take time. and it will take a lot of time. And once you know how search engines rank sites I bet they'll play a little trick on you.

They'll change how they rank web sites!

Which means you have to constantly keep up with how web sites are ranking sites, because they do change constantly.

In my business we spend approximately fifteen- (15) hours a week researching how search engines are ranking web sites. That's an experienced internet marketer doing the research. And we only just keep on top of what's happening.

By the way, if you want to get a good grip on search engine optimisation, the best resource I've come across is a book by Search Engine expert Sean Burns. "**Rankings Revealed**" is the name of the book and it is available from Sean's web site at www.webmastersreference.com. It retails for about \$49 US.

Now optimising web sites for top search engine rankings isn't within the resources of the vast majority of businesses with web sites, so many decide to out-source this.

Here you have the big decision to make. Just who do you get to optimise your site. And what should you pay.

I'll address who you should get to optimise your site first.

If we can get my web site (selling eczema cream) to number 1 in the major search engines that will result in almost **\$1,000,000 in sales!**

So, how much would you pay a search engine optimisation specialist?

Plenty!

Obviously you'll need to review your product, your conversion rates and your margins in **assessing what's a reasonable price to pay** for quality search engine optimisation.

So what you pay for search engine optimisation is a question impossible to answer.

If someone generates an extra 30,000 visitors to your web site and that results in \$1 million in sales, then the cost will be higher than if someone generates 100 extra visitors a year and one (1) sale.

Links from other sites

Links to your web site will generally give you more visitors. As an example, I once had one of my web sites featured on a major portal web site. That resulted in 10,000 visitors in one day.

Of course, not all links to your sites are going to be as great at that at sending visitors your way, but every little bit helps.

Getting others sites to link to your site can be as simple as asking! Get out there and find sites that attract the sort of visitors that might find your information useful and suggest a link to the web site owner.

Often you will be required to provide a link back to that site, but it's usually a good idea (we set up a "Resources" page on many of the sites we develop for just this purpose).

Again, there are many techniques that a professional internet marketer can implement to increase the number of links to your web sites, so this may be worth considering.

Word of mouth

I tell my mates about good web sites. My friends tell me about good web sites.

Do your web site visitors tell others about your web site? Let's hope they do.

There are a two- (2) main things you can do to encourage visitors to tell others about your site.

Number 1 is having great information that people want to make others aware of - I'll go more into that a little later.

Number 2 is making it as easy as possible for your visitors to tell their friends about you.

A good example here is a "Pass it on" link on web sites where you simply click a button and enter your friend's email address. In an instant a link to your web site is winging its way across the internet with a great personal endorsement - and that's almost guaranteed to mean a new visitor.

Print Media

This one always surprises me. Plenty of people find out about web sites from print media. Generally this takes the form of editorial, but also includes print advertising.

So there's not too much to tell you here. Develop a media campaign to promote your web site and also review your budget for possible print advertising.

Forums

Forums are web site based communities. It's where visitors can interact with others by posting messages for others to read and respond to.

Hugely popular on the internet, these sites can be enormously useful for web site marketers.

A simple message promoting your product can be seen by thousands of people within minutes of you writing it.

But beware! Web site forums have a protocol all their own. Boldly promoting your product is a definite no-no.

But supplying useful information (with a link to your web site with each message), especially over a long period of time, helps to build credibility with the group visiting the forums and generally results in well-targeted people visiting your site.

Advertising

Banner advertising - that's taking ad space for a graphic that is linked to your web site - on other web sites can prove beneficial. They have greatly diminished in effectiveness over the past few years but are worth considering.

And like any advertising, the quality of the creative and the copy greatly influences the response you receive.

We have found some success in the past couple of years with **advertising in e-zines**. These electronic newsletters are prolific on the internet and can be highly targeted.

For example, if you are selling soccer equipment you will find plenty of soccer newsletter that will be keen to sell you advertising space.

Google AdWords are an excellent source of visitors. Google, the world's biggest search engine, sells advertising space next to their search results.

For instance, if someone goes to Google and searches for 'ferrari', I can buy space beside the top search results. And that can mean plenty of visitors to my site.

The model that Google use for these ads is called "Pay per Click". Every time someone clicks on that advertisement costs the advertiser money.

The person who bids the most per click, is the person whose advertisement is placed higher.

For example, if I bid 80 cents for each person who clicks on my advertisement and you only bid 75 cents, then my advertisement is above yours. If someone else bids 85 cents then their advertisement is placed above the both of us!

It can get expensive but, like a lot of internet marketing, it is perfectly measurable.

Speaking of pay per click advertising, there are also some **pay per click search engines**.

These work much the same way as the Google AdWords - the more you are prepared to pay for each visitor, the higher your web site link will be placed.

Well worth considering.

I'll mention one last thing regarding internet marketing.

Affiliate programs - affiliate programs work by having a 'virtual' group of salespeople working for you.

And it works like this. Let's say I have a web site selling books. And you have a soccer web site. On your web site you might have 1, 2 or 100 links over to my web site.

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If you are an 'affiliate' salesperson for my site then you get a commission for every sale I make to people who originally visited my site from a link on your site.

And many affiliate programs are set up so that you can receive a commission for sales to people even if it has been years since they last visited your site!

As long as the buyer originally visited my web site from a link from your site, then you get the commission.

This is a **very popular business model** - used by such internet giants as Amazon.com - through which many people currently make a living using the internet.

The cost to set up the software for these kind of systems can be small. Managing an effective affiliate program - specifically keeping your affiliates motivated - can be quite time consuming.

That covers the basics of internet marketing. I haven't covered everything by any stretch of the imagination, and I haven't covered each aspect in a lot of detail. Time simply doesn't permit us to go any further with the detail.

But what I hope I have done is given you a basic understanding of what effective internet marketing can do for you and what you need to be aware of when assessing the various factors that make up your internet strategy.

I'll move on now to talk of what the visitors does once they are on your site.

And I'll start off by saying this. The number one thing your web site visitor wants is this: **information.**

Not pretty pictures, not 'Flash' movies, not groovy animations.

Content, content, content.

Information, information, information.

That's all they want. Nothing more. Nothing less.

And they want the information like this.

As quickly as possible. Get good quality to your visitor as quickly and as easily as possible and they will love you for it. You will quickly build credibility, you will quickly build a loyal following and you will quickly build visitor numbers.

Every second you can remove from your web site loading time - that's the amount of time it takes for your web page to come up on your visitor's computer screen - is a second that could mean the difference between success and failure.

We've researched this quite extensively and the research shows that visitors simply will not wait for a slow web site to load.

Once your web site load time reaches 10 seconds, something like 10% of your visitors leave every second after that. You must keep your web site's load time to an absolute minimum.

I cannot overstate the importance of reducing the load time. If you have two- (2) web sites selling the exact same thing and they get the exact same number of visitors, the site that loads the quickest will make more sales.

Reduce that load time!

Every web designer will tell you your site has to look fantastic. Not true. Your site has to look okay. That's about it.

A site that looks okay and delivers excellent information quickly to the visitor will be vastly more successful than a beautiful site with poor information.

There is no question about it. A beautiful site will generally have lots more graphics and take longer to load. people don't want to wait. They just want their information. **Give it to them!**

There are other considerations here. Your site should look good in a multitude of internet browsers and screen resolutions. A good designer should take care of this for you without you even asking - it's a gimme.

A site designed only for Internet Explorer might save you \$50 in the design, but it will cost you a whole lot more in sales and happy visitors. If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well. And that applies to web site browser compatibility.

Moving on from the look of the site, next we'll take a look at the functionality of your site.

Many, many people are not familiar with web sites. And they have probably not visited your site before. So what you need to do is make it as easy, as simple and as interesting as possible.

That's of course involves the all important content of your site, but it also includes such aspects as what the visitor can do once they are on your site.

Is your copywriting up to scratch? I have a site that, after some quality copywriting, increased the sales by 40%! That's a huge difference!

A 40% increase just because of some decent copywriting!

What about interactivity? Is there something for your visitors to do once they hit your site? Can they:

- **subscribe to your newsletter?**
- receive a **Free Expert Report?**
- read **Case Studies?**
- **tell a friend** easily about your site?
- **visit a forum** of like-minded people?
- **buy** your products?

And if they want to buy your products, is the shopping system fully secure? And does your possible customer know this?

But what if they don't want to use their credit card over the Internet? does your site have an Order Page to print out for faxing or mailing? (It's been our experience that 15% of people will use the manual order form rather than order online.)

Again, like internet marketing, like web design, like running an affiliate program.....like anything at all, there are many, many things to know and implement that only a true web professional will know about and be able to do successfully.

And moving on from that I'll mention a few bits of software here that can be very useful for your site.

Statistics program - a good stats program will tell you critical information regarding your visitors, from how many people visit your web site each day or even hour, to how they found your site, to what they typed into search engines to find you.

Newsletter subscription software - having visitors subscribe to your newsletter can be tremendously useful. One of my sites has 10,000+ subscribers. That's 10,000 people in an easy to use newsletter program - I can send out my newsletter at the touch of a button.

Autoresponders - by this I mean a program that automatically sends off an email when people email you at a certain address. It's very useful to automate your web site as much as possible to reduce your workload. An autoresponder program is a great tool for this.

To finish off I want to say this.....

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Make your site as useful, as informative, as easy, as simple and as good as you can make it. If it's all those things then you have the start of what could be your greatest business asset and an asset for years and years to come.

Make your site loads quickly. Make sure everyone, no matter what sort of browser they have, can use your site fully. And make sure people can get your information quickly.

And if all those things are in place then you could have the start of your greatest business asset and an asset for years and years to come.

And I lied. I have one more bit of information to finish off with.

The secret of successful web site sales is testing, testing and testing. And measuring, measuring and measuring.

The web offers a wonderful environment for doing something and measuring the impact. Make a few changes here and measure the impact. Fix up a few things there and measure again.

So that's it!

Develop a great web site with plenty of information. Make the site real quick to load onto your visitors computer screen. Then market it. Keep adding information. Keep marketing it.

That's a recipe for success on the internet.

The Essence of Marketing

The essence of marketing is to attract customers to a business. Good customers are okay, great customers are best. Every business wants customers just like their best ones.

All it takes is a simple three-step approach.

Firstly, **have a look at your 'best' customers.** Do a simple survey to find the common thread between them reviewing such things as age, sex, occupation, income, reading habits, number of children, how they first heard of you, why they chose your business, etc. Industry specific questions should also be included.

For example a Motor Mechanic should include car make and model, where a teen market-clothing retailer wants to know average sizes and magazines commonly purchased.

The **second step** is the analysis of the data. Sounds difficult but it's not. Simply count up each specific category and review.

An example here is a Donut Shop may find 70% of customers are women, aged between 30 – 40, with 2 children aged under 6, live locally, work part-time, who chose your store because they saw the colourful neon light you have as they walked past.

Now you know who constitutes your main customers.

The **third step is to find where your targets are**, and what are they doing, through research, demographic analysis and general digging. This information is freely available from your local library (or on the Internet) – information as precise as 30% of residents in postcode 1234 are females aged between 30 – 40.

Hopefully you asked what they read, how they spend their time and what their major interests are.

Target your customers with laser-like accuracy

Now you know what 'type' of people they are you can target them with laser-like accuracy. The results will amaze you. As for the Donut Shop: cancel the newspaper ads, make the neon sign bigger, take free samples up for morning tea at the local playgroup, have comfortable tables and chairs, scatter a few toys around the shop and run a special offer: Free coffee with every two donuts.

You've cut your marketing costs in half and doubled your sales! Now that's effective marketing research.

The Perfect Salesman

The perfect salesman isn't some fast-talking, glib American vigorously self promoting his way to his next billion. It's not the statesman diplomatically negotiating the way to world peace. And it isn't McDonald's.

It's a guy called Mike.

Mike has a shop that sells bikes. It's called Mike's Bikes. Mike's fronts onto a main road, in the middle of a small shopping strip.

I met Mike when I was cycling late one summer afternoon. About 10 kilometres from home I had my first puncture. Being a racing bike I had it fixed in a couple of minutes and continued on my way.

I was 10 metres past Mike's Bikes when I had my second puncture. Having only the one spare tube meant I had to stop and patch the hole.

So there I am sitting on a bench in the rapidly fading light gluing the tube when out walks the perfect salesman. Now I don't know if Mike knows he is the perfect salesman. But he is. This is what happened.

How Mike does it

Mike saw me when he walked out of his shop and came over.

"Howdy. Got a puncture? Do you live far away?"

When I told Mike I lived about 10 kilometres away he said,

"The glue will take ages and it's getting dark. You need it fixed straight away. I'll grab a tube."

He disappeared into his shop and quickly returned with a new inner tube. I told Mike I didn't have any money on me to pay.

"No worries, just pay when you next come past," he said.

Mike pumped the tube up a little, put it onto the wheel rim and offered some advice on how to get the tyre on the easiest. "The tube's \$9, no rush. Ask for me, I'm Mike."

Mike preaches the faith!

I was putting the wheel back a couple of minutes later when one of Mike's employees came out on his way home. When he saw me he stopped and said, "If you need a hand with that just take it into the boys – they'll help you," he said.

I said no thanks and continued fixing the bike.

What I have described here is the perfect sale. And it's a thing that doesn't happen very often. So what did Mike do so well? Let's take a look step by step.

Identify the target market

First Mike identified his target market. That was me sitting on the bench in my cycling gear with a bike.

Second, Mike initiated a rapport and completed a needs analysis ("Howdy. Got a puncture? Do you live far away?").

Thirdly, he restated the issues to highlight my problems ("That glue will take ages and it's getting dark. You need it fixed straight away.").

Then Mike offered a solution

He then **saw a need and offered a solution** ("I'll grab a tube.").

Mike then exceeded expectations (Pumping up tyre, offering advice, "...just pay me when you next come past."). The offer for assistance from his departing employee shows that Mike has instilled the same service culture to his young team. Again, this exceeds expectations of most customers.

Mike made a sale – I dropped the money off the next morning.

That's the anatomy of a perfect sale.

- Identify your target market.
- Approach the market.
- Initiate a rapport with your market.
- Analyse the needs of this market.
- Offer a solution to meet these needs.
- Ask the market to buy.
- Exceed the expectations of the market.

Now that is the perfect sale.

Good Things Come In Small Packages

Small business fights for survival as big operators continue to muscle in on the market. The conglomerates have the upper hand because of their buying and pricing power, management systems and marketing experience. Undoubtedly big operators have significant advantages, but small business has its benefits too.

To increase market share, boost productivity and widen profit margins small businesses need to work extremely hard. They would jump at the chance for an easier way - a system that was tried and true, and guaranteed to deliver outstanding results.

But just how can small business compete with the 'big boys'?

The two major factors that most businesses, including big business, ignore are the two most potent weapons against the competitors. These factors work very well to helping businesses attract and retain their customers.

Weapon # One.

All mums know about it – dads too. They use it regularly to motivate and keep in line any dangerously idle offspring.

Mums say, "If you tidy your room you can have some ice-cream".

Dads say, "I'll give you \$5 to mow the lawn".

Parents would be the first to tell that what gets rewarded gets done.

Reward your customers

Reward your customers for coming into the store, for buying something, for referring business and for coming back.

The most basic reward is good service. Say "Thank you", be prompt and polite, assess their needs, offer solutions, and make them feel good about being your customer.

It sounds easy enough but rarely happens. Most salespeople don't see past selling. Staff should be trained to consider the big picture – teach them to be 'Needs Analysts'. A far better way to sell a product is to tell of its merits according to the needs of the customer. Make them believe they need it, that it will solve their problems and make life easier.

Find out what your customers needs are

When a man walks into a clothing store to buy a suit the salesperson should find out how often he wears a suit, what colour shirts and ties he already has, what sort of industry he works in and how often he is in an air-conditioned office and car.

Once this 'analysis' of the customer's needs is complete, **the salesperson can offer solutions.** And these solutions carry enormous credibility because the customer knows his needs have been carefully considered.

When he decides on a suit, reinforce his decision immediately by saying, "Now that looks great, and the colour really suits you. You've made an excellent choice."

Deliver more than you promise

Every time a customer makes a purchase, deliver more than you've promised. This will put you head and shoulders above the competition. If you sell shoes, give the customer some polish. If you're a landscape gardener, give them a small pot plant. If you sell suits, why not throw in a tie?

Give your customer one last reward to ensure they come back. Good service is a reward for the customer because they enjoy their shopping experience. It also is a reward for the business because a sale has been made. What gets rewarded gets repeated.

If people are rewarded for buying from you they're going to keep on buying.

With referred business decide on an appropriate reward for the referee. Flowers, wine or tickets to a show are always appreciated. Thank you letters also have an enormous impact.

People appreciate being appreciated - they like to be liked. So send a person a letter saying, **"Thanks for your help. I really appreciate it."** You will be amazed with the results.

Weapon # Two

Contact, contact and contact. The follow-up is absolutely vital and opportunities for this are endless.

Make a follow-up call or send a thank you letter to your customers immediately after the purchase. This is not a sales pitch, but a courtesy call.

"Are the shoes as good as we said? How is the retaining wall? Were you happy with our service? How did you find the book? How's the suit going? How is it in the hot weather?"

Window of opportunity

There is a window of opportunity with all sorts of products. If a customer buys a new car there should be a bottle of champagne in the backseat with a bunch of flowers and a handwritten card, "Thank you for your custom".

Two weeks later the salesperson should call the customer, "How are you enjoying the new car?"

Ten weeks later the salesperson should send a note with a copy of a rave review of the car from a newspaper or magazine. The customer is not thinking of buying a new car.

Keep in contact - it's the key to success

Twelve weeks pass and the customer should find the dealership's newsletter in the mail - with the salesperson's compliments. Then ten weeks after that – a Christmas card and an invitation for a Christmas drink. A clever salesperson would even send a birthday card to his customer.

On the customer's first anniversary of car ownership there is a congratulations card in the mail from the salesperson offering a free detail for the car. The customer is still not thinking of buying a new car.

There are four more contacts made with the customer – urging them to visit the dealership's new web site, another newsletter, a survey, and an article on the excellent resale value of the two-year-old car. The thought of a new car still hasn't crossed their mind.

Then the customer's wife has their first child and the two-year-old coupe is too small for a baby seat. They decide to buy something bigger.

The customer will go straight to the same salesperson because they are top of mind. The salesperson kept the window of opportunity open and there's the smell of another sale drifting right through.

Relationships beat expensive advertising

The big budget companies spending \$5,000 per night to advertise their cars won't get the sale. The salesperson that has taken such good care of his customer, at a cost of about \$50 over 2 years, will.

Loving Complaining Customers

No business is perfect. Mistakes will be made, errors will occur. It will happen, and it sometimes happens a lot.

- 4% of dissatisfied customers complain.
- 91% of dissatisfied customers will not do business with you again.
- 80% of dissatisfied customers tell 10 people.
- 20% of dissatisfied customers tell 20 people.

Think about that. If your business receives 4 complaints per year you have probably had 100 dissatisfied customers!

Those dissatisfied customers have told hundreds of others.

So then why should you love complaining customers?

Because they are the ones telling you where you are going wrong so you can improve and become a better, more profitable business.

Because complaining customers give you a chance to win a 'new' customer (**95% of dissatisfied customers will do business with you again** if you resolve the complaint in their favour on the spot).

Seeking out and identifying customer complaints is one of the most profitable activities that a business can engage in. When a customer complains they are actually giving you an opportunity to keep their business – business you would otherwise have lost.

And that's the beauty of it. If you are dealing with your complaints properly, and actively seeking and welcoming complaints, then word soon gets around.

Complaining customers can become your best customers

Customers then feel more comfortable to complain and you then get the opportunity to:

- Reduce the number of dissatisfied customers,
- Keep their business,
- Strengthen the relationship, and
- Exceed their expectations.

Quickly fixed complaints can have the wonderful effect of **increasing customer loyalty** that would have been achieved if it had never occurred. And that's because the customer remembers that extra touch that (hopefully) you provided.

Remember, the more complaints you hear about equals the more complaints you can effectively deal with. That means more business you can generate from these customers that you wouldn't have otherwise received.

And the more complaints you are hearing about and dealing with means a lesser number of dissatisfied customers talking about their bad experiences with your business.

**Don't think of what it will cost to fix a complaint.
Think of what it will cost if you don't fix it.**

What to do when the customers complains

1. **Reward them for complaining**
2. **Listen to the complaint**
"Please tell me exactly how we are failing you."
3. **Find out how the customer wants it fixed**
"Now, how can we make things right?"
4. **Thank them**
"Thanks for bringing this problem to our attention. We appreciate this greatly because we are committed to providing the best widgets possible."
5. **Apologise**
"I'm sorry that the quality of the widgets has not been to our usual standard."
6. **Offer a solution**
"How about we deliver free replacement widgets immediately. We will of course refund the full purchase price of the widgets. Is that acceptable to you?"
7. **Get agreement**
"Good, I'll have them delivered to your business within the hour."
8. **Fix their problem**
Deliver the widgets (and refund) within the hour.
9. **Make a follow up call**
"I'm calling to make sure that the widgets arrived and that they are the correct size. Were you happy with the way we have handled this problem sir?"

Pretty easy stuff. Do it and your business will reap the rewards.

How to toss money away!

The easy one step guide!

Small business continues to provide a substantial part of the national economy.

Small business continues to fail at the same rate it has for the past 10 years.

60% of small businesses fail within 6 years of commencement. The reason for the failures remains basically unchanged. Poor management.

From my own observations of countless business, from small to large, **one of the main areas of poor management is the service the customer receives.** That's right, customer service.

Everyone has heard of customer service. Most businesses will say they have specific programs in place to ensure quality customer service. But do most businesses truly provide adequate customer service?

Most businesses do not provide good service

Businesses do not provide an adequate level of service to ensure the continual satisfaction of the customer, let alone maximising sales of their product or service. They do not have in place strategies to ensure the best of customer service. They do not practice what they preach.

The service standard of an enormous number of businesses is appalling. Don't believe me? Try this example.

The case of the disappearing pants!

I sent a suit to the local Dry Cleaners to be cleaned. I went to collect it 2 days later. The trousers were missing. The response? "Come back tomorrow."

I went back the next day. "Haven't had a chance to look – come back tomorrow."

I went back the next day. "The boss isn't here – come back tomorrow."

I went back 4 days later. "Can't find them. The boss isn't here."

At this point I stated that I wasn't coming back tomorrow and that I thought some compensation for my lost trousers was appropriate.

The response? "The boss will ring you tomorrow."

The boss didn't ring.

3 weeks later I rang the store.

I've heard of that name

"Sinclair? I've heard of that name. The boss isn't here. He will ring you."

The boss rang!

"We've found them – come in and pick them up."

I went in the next day. They weren't my trousers.

"We'll keep looking," he said.

Poor service is the norm

This isn't an isolated case of poor service. From the man who purchased a \$55,000 BMW and never heard from the distributor, salesperson or manufacturer in the two years after he stepped out of the sales office.

To the constant sales question of "You right there?"

The restaurant that simply took away the cockroach infested meal, didn't apologise, charged the customer (that was me!) full price for the meal and then never responded to a letter of complaint!

Poor service, poor sales techniques and poor customer care is the norm for most businesses. They don't have to be.

Excellent service is so rare that to provide it puts your business head and shoulders above the competition. Try it and see.

