

Independent Professionals Marketing Manual

Introduction

Let's be honest, when you first decided to pursue your chosen career as an independent professional sales and marketing was not high on your priority list. It would be so much easier if people would just que up to be customers of our service, but the reality is that this does not happen by chance.

Without doubt you set up on your own to make a difference and you have passion about your chosen career and you probably love helping your clients make change in their lives.

But are you attracting as many clients as you'd like? Do you know what to do to consistently attract and then keep new clients, but not just new clients, but ideal new clients? Can attracting new clients be fun once you know the simple but effective strategies for effective marketing as an independent professional?

What has been your impression of sales and marketing? What has been your experience? It's worthwhile reflecting on that for a few minutes because our past experiences can influence our current mind-set towards marketing. Has your experience been of someone trying to gain the sell v trying to connect with you? Pitching something at you v wanting to help you? Focusing on the end sales v focusing on the beginning and the early interaction with you? Pressure v pressure free? Chasing you v being helpful? Trying to make a sale v trying to build trust? Sales speak v natural language? Talking about themselves and their product v understanding your problems? Talk v listen?

Our past experiences can and do influence our current thinking. The question is, how passionate are you about what you do? I guess your answer is 'very' and you're probably thinking it's a silly question! Assuming this is your answer, then it should follow that 'I am very passionate about marketing what I do so I can make a difference in so many people's lives', but this is often not the case. What is the most empowering mind-set you could adopt regarding marketing your services? Can you adopt that mind-set? Can you say it to yourself repeatedly as a positive self-talk statement? So for example, it could be "I am passionate about professionally marketing what I do as I can make a difference in so many people's lives".

To create success in anything we do in life we need four things in place, firstly a clear vision of what success looks like for you, secondly, knowing what to do to create that success (knowledge) which is what that course is about, thirdly, knowing how to do it, this is the skill or transferring the knowledge into practice and fourthly, having the desire, motivation and commitment to make it happen. The fourth one evolves from having clarity of the first one, and if your vision is clear and commitment un-stoppable then you'll be a sponge for the knowledge of this course and you'll put it into practice.

The simple but powerful marketing strategies here have allowed me to build a business from me being an independent professional to employing 5 people, and has done the same for many other people. Some of what you learn here will be instantly applicable, some of it not so, but the key is to set yourself a marketing plan for the next 6 – 12 months.

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Introduction and Overview

Your aim is to sell the result. For your clients what is that? What are the results they can expect from working with you? How will their life be different and better? So it's not so much about what you do, but what you deliver.

To achieve this, you need to consider:

1. **How you identify with *them*** and build rapport. You share your own story, making sure it is one they can relate to. How can we build trust? Until we feel there is a relationship building - and this can be achieved in a short period of time - how can we set the tone for receptivity and interest? Everyone has problems and they like talking about their 'problems' so we need to be good at relating to those problems and through empathy understanding those problems that people have.
2. **Ask questions and listen to answers**, for example: what's the biggest challenge you face at the moment? This question can be an effective opener when you first meet a prospective client. When asked what you do, you might say: "I'll answer that in just a moment, but could I first ask - because it's relevant to what I do - what is the greatest challenge you face in your life at the moment?"
3. **Engage logic and reason** - refer to any facts, figures, factors that are right and accurate and they can agree with. For example, "it seems - and research bears this out - that we are living in more prosperous times than ever before, but for many they are unhappier times. There seems to be something missing from people's lives. We help people overcome their current challenges, see the 'wood from the trees', make major positive change in their life and achieve goals they never thought possible." If they did not open up to the previous questions, consider asking what's missing from their own life.
4. **Utilise verbal attack** - such as, "it seems we live in a society that has muddled its priorities, we seem to be working longer hours than ever before, but becoming less satisfied with our lives..."
5. **Present the solution** - I help people take charge of their own lives, achieve goals that are life-changing and a happier, healthier, more fulfilled life!
6. **Engage in win/win closing** - know how and when to ask for commitment.

We will look at all of the above in more detail throughout this manual. There are independent professionals out there who are fantastic at what they do, but have failed. They have failed because they have not developed either the skills, knowledge, confidence or persistence power to 'sell' or 'market' their business. If after going through this manual you are not propelled into action, ask for help.

Many independent professionals have conditioned aversions to sales, what are our:

Attitudes to sales & persuasion

Feelings about selling

Beliefs about selling

We are looking for a match between needs and what we have to offer.

Skills we need:

Curiosity

Caring

Commitment

Turning phone calls into sales

Need an:

Opening – to get attention

Qualification – Ask questions to get wants & needs

Listen – tune into them

Close – what to say to get commitment

Writing a proposal

Situation summary – define their situation

Define their objectives

Your proposal

Define what success will look like for them

Methodology - how

Accountability – joint

Fees & guarantee

How do you respond when asked “How are you”? Do you say something like “OK” or “Not too bad”. We are in the business of creating success through inspirations, so let’s start off by being inspirational! Next time you are asked how you are respond as follows:

**“I AM DOING BETTER THAN GOOD AND BETTER THAN MOST
AND SOMETIMES EVEN BETTER THAN THAT.**

IN FACT I’M GREAT AND GETTING BETTER”.

You can then ask them how they are!



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A PROFESSOR EXPLAINED MARKETING TO MBA STUDENTS

1. You see gorgeous girl in party, you go to her & say I am rich marry me "That's Direct Marketing."
2. You attend a party & your friend goes to a girl & points at you telling her. He is very rich, marry him -"That's Advertising."
3. Girl walks to you & says you are rich, can you marry me? "That's Brand Recognition"
4. You say I'm very rich marry me & she slaps you. "That's Customer Feedback"
5. You say I'm very rich marry me & she introduces you to her husband. "That's Demand & Supply Gap"
6. Before you say I m rich, marry me, your wife arrives That's Restriction from Entering New Market.

Sales Process- detailed

Target Market – Your 'ideal client' including values, interests etc.
What **problems/challenges** do they face that you could help with?
What's your **solution** – what results can they achieve?

Proof – references, testimonials, case studies etc.

Differentiation – what makes you different to the rest, what's unique, special, memorable? What is it you've got that offers a true advantage?

So, when someone asks you what you do rather than talking about your programme, you tell them who you work with and what their problems are and what they get from working with you, really answering 'What's in it for me' e.g.

Target market – I work with people who want to live a long healthy life to the full!

Problem – "Who are not benefitting from the health & wellbeing they deserve or want". Always Start With the Problem. - You get about five times the attention value with problems, so don't jump to the solution you provide too soon. Simply say who you work with and what their problem is: "I work with people who have perhaps lost some direction or are having difficulty seeing the 'wood from the trees" or "I work with people who want to find a new direction in life."

Don't say what you do or how you do it. This problem statement communicates volumes. If it gets someone's attention, they'll ask more. Such as "How do you do that?" And once they've shown interest the conversation has gained some momentum.

Go Deeper Into the Problem. - When you can talk about their problem in great depth it shows you understand their issues. And for some perverse reason, people love to talk about their problems! So, don't disappoint them; give them more details:

"Many people find it difficult to keep a clear mind and healthy body with the many demands of modern life" or "Many people are not sure what success would really look like for themselves"

This problem approach should then bring up more interest in what you do to solve this problem. What you need to avoid is getting side-tracked by talking about what you do or how good your services are, (that comes in a while). That's of minor importance at this stage. However, the results you produce are of major importance.

State Your Key Results. - Again, keep it simple and clearly beneficial: Stories – "Some people are not getting the success they deserve because they get bogged down with 'day-to-day' stuff and lose vision and find it difficult to see the 'wood from the trees' or "We've recently worked with someone who had lost all direction in their life through redundancy, they are now enjoying a life of total satisfaction, doing the one thing in life they have always wanted to do, but never until now had the courage to try, they are now happier and more successful than they could ever have imagined" or "We have a programme that will amongst other things provide a format for recreating a vision, identifying high impact goals and a logical process for seeing them through to completion". You'll need of course to choose and adapt words that suit your business and circumstances.

Notice you didn't say HOW you did it. Just the fact THAT you did it is what commands attention and interest. But don't stop there. You've essentially given a mini case study. Follow this up with...

More Success Stories. - You need to have several of these at the ready. They are the most persuasive part of the marketing conversation. You want to make them succinct and believable. And you want to keep the how-to to a minimum. Focus primarily on problems and results - the original client situation and what they gained in working with you.

But you don't want to dominate the marketing conversation either. You want to find out about them, especially if they are resonating with your problem/results stories. You want to...

Ask Them About Their Situation. - Funny that it's often hard to do this as we get carried away by our own eloquence. Better to take your attention off yourself and find out about them and really listen. "It sounds like you're familiar with that kind of problem. Can you relate to it?" or simply "Can you relate to what I've said?"

The conversation can go anywhere from this point, but you need to maintain some control. You don't want to end up giving away half an hour of free consulting the first time you meet someone.

You also don't want to keep your cards so close to your chest that you appear unapproachable. Learn a little, give a little. You'll soon know if this person is a potential client or can lead you to one.

The marketing conversation isn't over until you've set the stage for a follow-up. If you feel that there are opportunities in this connection you can't just leave things to chance. You must take the next step. And giving them your card is not enough.

After engaging them in conversation take to stage 2 and offer to Send Them Something. - This simple approach provides a comfortable transition: "I've written an article (or I've got an article) on this topic, "How to create the health and wellbeing you want and deserve", I would love to share this with you, I think you'll find it fascinating and interesting.

But you need to take one step more - open the door for a follow-up call: "Please give me your card/telephone number/e-mail address (always have pen and paper on you) and I'll make a note to send you a copy. Then I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. What's the best time to reach you?" If you feel uncomfortable asking that, just ask to send them the article and then when you send it say in the e-mail "I'll give you a call to answer and questions you may have and to see what you thought about what I sent"

Most Independent Professionals don't get that far. As one said, "When it comes to the time to say I'll follow-up I usually wimp out because I'm afraid they'll say no." But if you don't learn how to consummate the marketing conversation you'll always come up empty-handed.

Start thinking about the steps above and how they could work for you.

The Art of Asking

I have discovered that the most difficult part of verbal marketing conversations is when you ask a potential client for something. These are usually the "calls-to-action" that take your marketing conversations to the next level.

Making a statement or giving information is one thing - a DVD, a story, details about your services, etc., these are pretty straightforward. It's a matter of developing and practicing these verbal conversations. Over time and with practice you'll improve your ability to deliver them with fluency.

But it's quite another thing to ask or make a request of a potential client. Asking if you can send some material, asking for a moment to talk on the phone, asking for an appointment and even asking for the sale are a whole different animal.

Ask as if they were going to say YES, instead of NO.

When you ask a prospect to take action it's not uncommon to expect them to say "No." It just seems to be built into us. We expect rejection. We don't expect cooperation. So either we avoid asking altogether, and hope they make the next move or the way we structure our asking conversation actually sets us up for getting a "No."

But it's not so hard to ask in a completely different way. The actual sentence structure is different. The words are different and the expectation is different. This way of asking may

seem strange to us at first because we're so used to the old way that doesn't work. But after trying it a few times and noticing the positive response you get, it will become a habit very quickly.

Below you'll find several pairs of requests or asking conversations. Notice the difference between the two approaches. Which one is more likely to get a "Yes" answer?

Asking for a card:

"Can you give me your business card?"

or

"I'd love to get your business card. Do you have one with you?"

Asking to send an article:

"Can I send you an article about my services?"

or

"I have an article about improving our health & wellbeing that I think you'll find interesting. Let me send you a copy."

Asking to follow up:

"Can I call you to get your feedback on the article?"

or

"I'd like to get your feedback on the article. What's the best time to reach you?"

Asking to send more information after a talk:

"If you're interested in finding out more, please give me your business card as you leave today."

or

"I have an article that goes into depth on the information we covered today. (Hold up article) Who would like a copy? (Hands shoot up) Great, just give me your card as you're leaving and I'll get a copy to you."

Asking to add name to eZine list:

"Would you like to get my email newsletter?"

or

"I'd be happy to give you my report on "Ten Ways to a happier healthier life" and send you a complimentary subscription to my monthly "Success Tips" eZine. What's your email address?"

Asking for an appointment:

"Would you like to meet with me to learn about my services?"

or

"What I usually do next is set up a meeting to find out more about you and your circumstances and see if my services are a match. Let's look at a time that works for both or us."

Asking for the business:

"Would you like to start working with me?"

or

"I think our Program would fit your situation best. Why don't we look at a start date?"

Asking for a referral:

Do you know someone who could use my services?

or

"I'm looking for other people who want to get the same results I produced for you. When can we talk about the best people for me to contact?"

Notice that in most cases the first way of asking could easily result in a "No". But with the second way of asking it's almost impossible to get a "No." The first sentence is usually a statement of what you want or what you recommend. The second sentence asks or states what to do in order to fulfil the want or recommendation.

There's a lot more confidence in the second approach. You don't feel like you're begging. You feel like you are recommending a course of action as a professional would.

For instance, you'd never hear a doctor say, "Do you want to take off your clothes now?" or "Would you like to take this medication?" or "Do you think getting that operation is a good idea?" Wouldn't that undermine your confidence in the doctor?

Wouldn't you prefer that your doctor was more directive in his requests? "OK, I need to examine you now. Remove your clothes, put on that gown and I'll be back in a minute." "This is the best medication for your infection. Let me write up a prescription." and "Of all our options, I believe this operation gives you the best chance of recovery. Let's discuss the options and get you scheduled."

So to master the art of asking, think of how the doctor asks and follow his approach with confidence. You'll get a whole lot more "Yeses" and gain much business you would have lost otherwise.

How to structure your asking conversation:

- * Have a clear end in mind. Be very clear about what you want to happen when you ask a prospect or client to do something. Picture clearly how it will unfold. Actually see it in your mind's eye.
- * Write your want or recommendation first. Make it clear, unambiguous, certain. Say what you want to happen. "I'd love to get your business card."
- * Write the request or call-to-action next. Make it a sentence that is very easy for them to say yes to. It's often an agreement on a minor point. "Is Thursday a good time for you?"
- * Practice your asking conversation out loud. Do it in a mirror, record it, with a friend until it feels completely comfortable to ask for what you want.
- * Seek immediate opportunities to use your asking conversation. Stick to your script, make it conversational and low-key and always remember to wait for the answer before you say anything else.

Mastering the marketing conversation will build a solid foundation for all your marketing efforts. If you neglect this key skill you'll never reach the heights possible in your business.

If you're asked directly what you do, you could answer as follows:

I work with you to give you unstoppable health, vitality and zest for life. What would that look like for you?

Or, when asked what you do, you say, "Can I ask a couple of questions which will show you better than trying to explain?" ... (pause)

"Think about your life ..." (pause)

"Now... On a scale of 1 –10 how excited are you by your life?" For example

"10 = **you can't wait to get out of bed** because your life is waiting for you!"

"5 = **you can wait to get out of bed** but bed is not all that great either."

"1 = **you can't get out of bed** because you know your life is waiting for you!"

"Where does your life score?" wait for an answer and score.

"Do you want your score to be? 10 or even beyond?"

"I work with people like you, taking your life from wherever you are now to wherever you want it to be." If asked how, arrange a meeting to discuss your programme and how it can help them, if not maybe ask them "What would your perfect life look like?" then ask them to take it to the next stage i.e. ask them permission to send an article or to meet up again etc.

The Questions Behind the Questions

One of the greatest confusions in talking about, and marketing, professional services is that we tend to answer the questions about our services at face value. This is a big mistake because what people ask and what they really want to know are two quite different things. So, if you answer the question they ask, they don't get the answers they want.

Confusing? Definitely!

The first question everyone asks us is "What do you do?" That's THE question. But if we answer it at face value we don't communicate much of real value:

"I'm a fitness consultant." (OK, now I have your label, but I really don't know what that means to me.) **or...**

"I do classes on fitness." (Better, but still I'm not seeing a big benefit here.) **or..**

"I work with individuals who want better health & vitality." (Yeah, I could see that this would be valuable.) **or...**

"I work with people at a crossroads in their life who want to find their true direction." So what's the underlying question to "What do you do? " My observation is that it's, "Are you someone who can help me?"

Now the person you're talking to may not exactly fit the bill, but if they do (or know someone who does), you've hit a vital nerve with your answer. None of the other answers even get close.

Wouldn't it be great if it got easier from there? Well, it doesn't! Because people keep talking in code. And, you have to decipher the next one as well. Here it is:

"That's great, how do you do that?"

But don't go there. Translate the question as follows: "What kind of results do you produce for your clients?" Then answer like this:

"The clients who work with me get these kind of results: They find their true direction in life, start taking action to achieve worthwhile goals and stop struggling with their usual crisis'." This is music to the ears. The language of results. Just make sure you talk about what you can really deliver.

This kind of marketing language will get the attention and interest of prospects, and make them want to know more. But you're not done yet. You're going to get more coded questions:

"That's terrific. But how does your service work?"

Don't go down that path. Better men and women than you and I have gone there never to return. The vast majority tend to go in one of two directions:

They go into "tech-talk" that explains their approach or process in excruciating detail. But tech-talk can be confusing to the average layman: "The sub-optimal performance horizon undermines the maximization of variable input factors in the productivity matrix. So we co-harmonize these factors." Huh??

Or they go in the opposite direction explaining how their service works in terms so generic that they lose all impact. "Well, we're all about productivity, alignment and commitment. When we get those things going, results tend to improve pretty fast."

Both of these approaches are dead ends. Nobody really wants to know how your service works. The hidden question behind the question is: "Do your services actually work?" That would be a little rude, wouldn't it? But answer it, nevertheless, as follows:

Tell a story. Success stories that outline how you helped a specific client gets listeners hanging on your every word:

"We recently worked with an individual at a crossroads who didn't think they could get out of it. They were despondent. We helped them get their life working, got them some confidence and enthusiasm and then showed how they could exceed their own expectations of creating future success. Nine months later their life is transformed."

Not so hard right? You can do this quite successfully with a little practice. You should prepare several success stories in verbal and written form. They are a powerful persuasion tool.

Starting to get the idea? If you don't understand the real questions beneath the standard questions, you'll miss the opportunity to tell them what they really want to know.

The bottom line is that to learn to speak a prospect's language you need to understand that the fundamental question everyone is asking is "What's in it for me?" Answer that

and you'll do fine. This is such an important point we'll come back to it time and time again.

Practice your marketing conversations.

You don't want your debut of your marketing conversation to be at an important networking event. You should practice out loud. Using a recorder and a mirror will make this practice even more effective. Let's have a look at this practice and an example:

How to practice for a speaking engagement

Did you know that it's virtually impossible to perform past an intention you've set? For instance, if it's your intention to reach a certain level of success in any area, you will never exceed this unless you raise your intention.

What's somewhat surprising but extraordinarily common is that we create low intentions and then hope for bigger results. This is a brilliant set-up for disappointment.

In the marketing arena it might go something like this:

You consider that doing speaking engagements might be a good idea to market yourself. But the intention that you set is often nothing more than "I'll try and see if speaking works for me."

Invariably it won't work for you because "trying" is very, very low on the scale of intention. If it doesn't work out that well, you have a built-in excuse: "Well, I tried." And then you move on half-heartedly to something else.

Would it hurt you to up the ante and actually make a definite commitment such as: "I'll give six talks to professional groups in the next six months and attract a minimum of twelve new clients" Can you see the difference in intention?

When you create a definite intention like that, things tend to kick into gear. The game is underway and you start looking for ways to win that game. It's amazing how things fall into place when you take a stand to make something happen.

So let me ask you a question...

How are you doing on the scale of intention? What goals or intentions have you created for your business and your marketing? Are you someone who's "going for it" or are you waiting around for things to happen?

Once the intention is clear, it's really still much more than doing an outline of your talk and rehearsing it out loud. That barely scratches the surface and is really not going to get you the results you want.

Practice starts with the action plan. It starts with having the end in mind and a clear idea of every single action step along the way.

What is the Purpose of your talk? Is it to get visibility and exposure or is it to generate immediate prospects for your business? Most of us don't think big enough and we end up just going through the motions.

Create a Purpose that is both inspiring and challenging. It should be something that you can get excited about, lose sleep over, work yourself up about. So, 'Purpose is the beginning of practice'.

Next, go deeper and write out a comprehensive list of Intended Results. You might think of these as sub-goals that you want to achieve in addition to your main purpose.

These may include getting more exposure, adding to your email list, and building a reputation in your community that will help with word-of-mouth in the long term.

As your Purpose and Intended Results are fleshed out, your clarity and focus increases. This lays a solid groundwork for practice.

Next, you need to outline your many Action Steps on the way to your speaking engagement. You want to list literally everything you need to do, from researching places to speak to following up with participants after the talk.

These Action Steps define the actual activities you need to practice. Some of them will need only a little practice as they are rather simple, but some need serious work.

Let's just take three action steps you can practice.

1. Contacting an organisation to get booked.
2. Giving the actual talk
3. Getting participants to take action

Most of the people I've encountered who tried to use speaking as a marketing tool tended to "wing it" when it came to these three areas above.

They just picked up the phone to contact organisations. They did a few power point slides of the talk and used them as a guideline and then fumbled through the call-to-action.

And then they reported things like the following:

"It's sure hard to get booked for talks." and "I think I did an OK job, but what do you expect, it was the first time?" and "I wasn't able to get many cards at the end" and "Maybe speaking isn't the best marketing tool for me after all."

All of these statements came out of not practicing. No planning, purpose and/or preparation will get you poor results almost every single time. And you're likely to get discouraged and give up.

[So what would practicing these three areas look like?](#)

1. Contacting an organisation to get booked.

- Write out a contact script based on effective marketing syntax: problem, outcome, value, proof, process, action.
- Practice this script many times until you own it.
- Call the organisations using an outline of the script. Never read it.
- Review every call. What worked, what didn't?

2. Giving the actual talk

- Outline or write out the complete talk.
- Develop handouts and/or Power Point slides
- Practice the talk out loud several times. Tape or video yourself.
- Imagine you were going to be in Hamlet and you wanted it to be as good as that.
- Practice an hour here and there right up to the day of the talk until you feel totally confident.

3. Getting participants to take action

- Do the same as the above (this is really just a part of the presentation).
- Study various closes or calls-to-action from books on the topic.
- Prepare relevant articles, forms or other tools you will use in the call-to-action.

Does this sound like a lot of work? I have bad news and good news. It is a lot of work. It may take you ten or twenty hours to book, prepare and practice a talk. The good news is that if you practice a talk at this level you'll not only get vastly improved results, you'll have taken the implementation of using talks as a marketing tool to a whole new level.

Now you'll own a lifelong skill that will enable you to book talks easily in the organisations you want. You'll be both confident and effective with the talks you give and you'll get a large number of leads after every talk.

If you want to master marketing, practice is key. If you want to settle for what you've got, avoid practice like the plague.

* Schedule your practice. Once you've booked your talk, for instance, don't leave it until the last moment when you've run out of time. Your skills will not improve automatically.

* Practice in short bursts of an hour to 90 minutes. You can accomplish a lot in that time if you really focus. Then take a break or pick it up again in a few days.

* Don't over-practice. It's also called perfectionism. The problem with perfectionists is that what gets practiced is never really good enough to actually start implementing.

* Practice with someone or with a small group. Of course, this is adding the dimension of community. This can dramatically improve your practice if you are all on the same wavelength.

* Workshops, seminars and other training can be very valuable - especially if they include a practice component. Avoid programs that just dump a huge amount of information on you.

Role-play your marketing conversations. - Find a friend or associate and practice your marketing conversations with each other. Follow the basic model and simply go back and forth until you become comfortable and, ultimately, fluent.

The psychology of presuppositions

Imagine having a really difficult time trying to get a child dressed in the morning, because he/she would keep trying things on then saying they didn't want to wear them. Try something different. Choose two articles of clothing (e.g. two dresses), and ask "Do you want to wear this one or that one?" Almost invariably they will choose one of the offered items, and get dressed quickly. This was because what you said presupposed that he/she wanted to wear one of them.

What must be true. Presuppositions could be called "the influence depth-charge", because they are **what must be accepted as true** for the sentence to make sense, for example in the sentence "John listened to the music", the following things are presupposed:

- Someone called John exists
- Listening is possible
- Something called music exists, and it can be listened to

The best thing about presuppositions is how great they are for influencing people.

Everyone has heard someone say “Will you be paying by Visa or Mastercard?” What’s presupposed in the sentence is the fact that you will be paying, which is a useful presupposition when you’re selling something. The interesting thing is that, when they are artful enough, that which is presupposed goes into the person’s mind “under the radar”. For instance, if I wanted someone to buy our programme I could say

“This programme will help you create success in your life which you never thought possible.”

The problem with this statement is that it’s easy to argue with. So I could add a presupposition:

“You may be aware of how much more success this programme will help you create.”

The word “aware” makes this better – you may be aware of it, and you may not be, but what’s presupposed is **this programme will help you create success**.

1) Choose a statement you’d like someone to accept as true.

Whether it’s “Eat your vegetables”, “Buy this airplane” or “Feel good about yourself” it doesn’t matter which. What matters, is that you choose something you’d like to be able to influence someone to do.

2) Add words that will help you to presuppose that the person will do what you want them to do.

Examples:

“Are you going to eat your vegetables with your fork or your spoon?”

“Do you want to buy this airplane with regular seats or special ones?”

Now let’s take it one level deeper:

“You may already be aware of how much success this programme will help you create.”

“Already” – maybe you’re already aware, or maybe not, but either way, the thing that we’re talking about (i.e. **The fact that this programme will help you create success**) is taken as true. OK - further into the rabbit hole:

“You may already have started to become aware of just how much more success this programme will help you create.”

“You may”	-	maybe, maybe not
“already”	-	if not, you’re about to
“started”	-	and having started, you’ll continue
“to become”	-	a process of becoming – how lovely!
“aware”	-	etc

3) Go back to your sentence from exercise 2, & add more words that help you strengthen the presupposition.

“You may not have decided whether you’ll use your fork or your spoon to eat your vegetables.”

“You may already be aware of just how good you’re going to feel about yourself”

Etc.

When you have this many presuppositions, it starts to overload conscious awareness, and the conscious mind goes “Yeah, whatever”. This can be *incredibly* useful, whether you’re

- Helping someone to buy something
- Persuading a client to let go of their limiting beliefs
- Convincing work colleagues to accept your ideas
- Getting your children to choose your values over those of their peers or negative influences

Marketing With Passion

Imagine being surrounded with singing, dancing, beautiful, colourfully dressed, joyous people - all while shopping in an outdoor market in India.

The movie, "Bride and Prejudice" by Gurinder Chadha who also directed "Bend It Like Beckham," makes you believe that it's all somehow possible.

This film may not be the "best" film you'll see but it is without doubt entertaining, fun, and happy.

The lesson you can take from Bride and Prejudice is that your marketing can be interesting, entertaining, multi-faceted and fun. It doesn't have to be boring, plodding and one-dimensional.

So, what are you doing to market your business right now? Doing a little networking, perhaps a talk or two and sending out an e-mail on a monthly basis while you struggle to add names to your list?

Look, those activities are fine, but you need to put some passion into your marketing. Yes, passion! (The marketing equivalent of bright costumes, singing and dancing).

Here are some ideas to infuse passion into your marketing.

Networking Events - What most of us do is show up for events and hope we connect with a potential client or two. After a while it gets very routine. We talk to the same people. We exchange cards. We don't do much follow up. No wonder we don't see great results.

I suggest approaching every networking event as a game. Every time you go to an event you want to have specific goals that you can achieve every time. This adds a whole new level of energy because you're not just showing up, you're playing to win.

You might set goals for the number of conversations you have with other attendees, a goal for the number of cards you collect, a goal for the number of times you successfully use your marketing pitch, and a goal for the number of people you offer to send an article to. I promise you'll have more fun and get better results.

Speaking Engagements - Are you going to do yet another presentation with fifty Power Point slides that puts the whole room to sleep? Are you going to wrap up with a half-hearted pitch for your services and collect a few cards (which you then neglect to follow up on)?

In a talk, you need to get people's attention, deliver leading-edge information, give the participants something to really think about and sow the seeds of hope and change. And you're not going to accomplish this in another run-of-the mill presentation.

A speaking engagement is the opportunity for some real "business evangelism." Your aim is to convert the unbelievers to your point of view, to save their souls and to transform their lives forever. Yes, I know this might sound a little 'out there', but if you're giving a presentation, I assume you have some real value to share. Why hold back? Why not pull out all the stops?

'Free Stuff' - This simple strategy for promoting your business is time-tested and perfect for Independent Professionals. What are you giving away? I hope it's not just one article that you've had for the past two years. What do you have that's new and interesting? Give away relevant articles.

I promise that if you are passionate and work at creating marketing that is interesting, exciting, dynamic and involving that you'll start to magnetise more clients to your business.

You might even start having fun with marketing. I can't promise that it will be as fun as *Bride and Prejudice* but who knows? I'll be looking for news reports of you dancing in the streets!

Passion Requires Action!

The foundation of your passion in your business may start with the heart of your professional service. Why did you get into this field in the first place? What excites you about it? What still keeps you interested and involved?

* Passion often comes from helping your clients - in making a contribution, a difference. Think of some clients you've worked with who made major changes in their businesses and lives due to the assistance you provided.

* Passion is very connected to the creative act. Just thinking something up, developing a service or a program is intellectually stimulating and inherently satisfying - it's something that exists only because you dreamed it up.

* Passion comes from sharing straight from the heart. This is really the essence of marketing, not heartless promotion designed only to generate money. Do it from the heart and the clients will follow.

* Passion is something you generate from nothing - just because. Passion is a very natural state for human beings. Look at kids with their imaginative projects. If you're not passionate about your business and your marketing, dig a little deeper. It's there waiting to get out.

"Making it Happen"

All of what we have discussed so far can seem rather daunting, and procrastination is the easy way, but ask yourself this question.

Do you really want to get your marketing in gear?

If you do here are some strategies for making it happen.

- Stop making excuses. If we could actually hear all the excuses we made for not making something happen, we'd be embarrassed. Don't have enough time, money, knowledge or energy? It's all just excuses. It's not true. You're making it up.
- Create an action plan. Grab a note pad and simply sketch out a basic plan for just one marketing activity. Then list all the things you could do to make it work, perhaps a dozen or so. Commit to doing those things within the next month.

- Find a little time. You don't need a lot of time to learn about marketing and implement marketing activities. Don't put a huge project on your to do list. Just list one or two little things you can do today to move things forward.
- Make a promise. To your wife/husband/partner or to a friend or an associate. Tell them what your plan is. Solicit their ideas. Do some brainstorming and then make a promise for what you'll do by when. This gets it out of your head and makes it real. Make the consequences of 'not doing it' vast, bet your car to someone that you will do these things. You'll then get it done! When you make a promise with real consequences something changes inside you. Or if you don't take action you pay £25 to a political party you do not like. Another thing you must do to ensure you carry out the activity is write it down and schedule the action points in your diary/calendar. Once you commit to something, your resistance just may kick in. And, you'll find a way to talk yourself out of it. Thoughts that say, "I can't do it, I can't find the time, and I'll only be rejected anyway," are worth close examination. Don't believe everything you think! Be your commitments, not your thoughts. Maybe you need to create a 'Bigger Vision'. This may be the most effective of all. If you have a burning desire to create a successful business you won't get easily stopped by challenging marketing activities. You'll just find a way. Think big and your enthusiasm will carry the day.
- Get some support. There's nothing like the support of a group. Join an existing group or form your own. The key is consistency. Meet every week or every month without fail. Make it happen.

The Art of Friendly Persistence

Friendly Persistence - these are magic words in business. It's really what separates people who do just OK from people who do well. It's an attitude or mindset that embodies the following:

1. I have something of value to offer. I'm proud of that. I'm not ashamed to promote myself.
2. I will build the communication skills to convey this value to others. They may not see this value unless I show them.
3. If someone shows interest, I'll engage with them and find out about their needs and see if what I have fits for them.
4. If they are uncertain, I'll educate them, tell them stories, show them proof that the value is there.
5. If they are not ready now, I'll invite them to register for a free newsletter so they get something for nothing from you and follow up with them later.
6. I'll find a way to do business that is win-win. I'm willing to negotiate and find a solution that works for all.
7. If someone doesn't do business with me, I'll remember that you can't sell to everyone and I'll move on.

This mindset of friendly persistence may be the most important thing you can cultivate in your business. Not only will you be more successful, you'll be happier.

Marketing Strategies

Writing articles – Title, headlines that grab attention & interest. Register people for a newsletter.

Talks/speaking – Title/topic, headlines, practice it, getting bookings,

Keeping in touch – Tips/techniques, what we're doing, format (newsletters, letters, calls, e-zines etc)

Referrals – satisfied customers, reputation and our marketing, clear and concise information, asking, rewards, partnerships with non-competing businesses

Networking – where? Chamber of commerce, FSB, business clubs etc.

Direct outreach – approaching clients directly, how to target, research them before calling, letter, follow up.

An integrated strategy would have a core marketing message & the website at the centre of it.

Becoming solution based

Everything in our marketing must be solution based as it is solutions rather than features and processes that clients are interested in, they must know what they will get from working with us, they are interested in what they will get rather than what we happen to do.

They want a solution to a nagging problem, pain or predicament and they want it resolved for them. Our information is about the solutions we provide, so they can put themselves in the place of past clients and see themselves getting the same results.

By trying to 'get' clients we can actually push them away; any 'neediness of clients' or desperation is apparent to everyone. When we are needy the focus is on us and we tend to talk a lot about what we HAVE, what we can Do, and what we KNOW.

Everyone else, including prospective clients are preoccupied with themselves and don't really care what we HAVE, DO or KNOW. They'll be indifferent to this and this is why so many 'independent professionals' don't like marketing themselves and feel they are getting a lot of rejection. The prospective client will not ask questions about the service, return calls or reply to mailings and this is why we think marketing is a waste of time and the more of this unproductive 'us-centred' marketing we do the more discouraged we become, even to the degree of getting negative about life.

So we must think differently and take actions consistent with this new thinking, but it can be uncomfortable, hard work and at times frustrating. Many of our fixed stereotype ideas about sales and marketing are simply not true, for example:

- Its better to tell them the problems with our business and service up front – it will just start them off negatively
- Long copy in brochures works better than bullet points
- Speaking about our service in terms of problems is more powerful than solutions
- People may be interested in our service even if they don't return calls
- On the phone spend more time 'rejecting' them than convincing them

Focusing on what works

Focus on giving, not getting i.e. focus on the needs of the client not us. Spend literally no time on what we Do or KNOW instead spend time on their needs and where they want to go, this will, instead of pushing them away, attract them in droves because you have a solution that works.

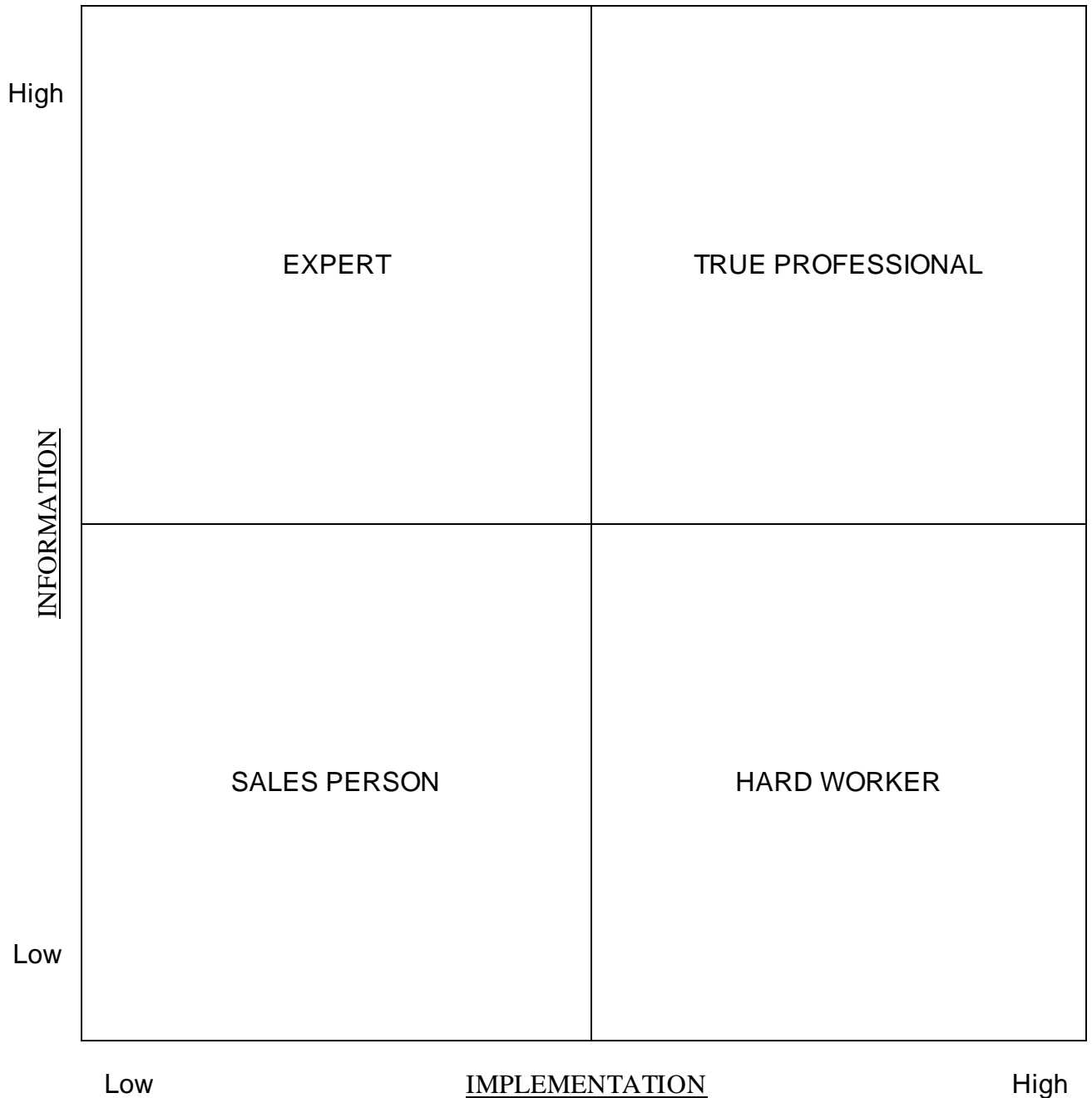
At networking events ask questions and listen, don't give out your card but ask for theirs and tell them you'll send them an article or piece of information. When contacting past clients it is to share an idea or resource or ask for a referral.

Before we move on answer the following questions:

1. Who are your ideal clients?
2. What problems do they face?
3. What is your solution or outcome?
4. What story can you tell about the above three?

The four quadrant grid to becoming a true professional

We have two main things to offer, what we know – information and our ability to implement. The problem is we often focus on one or the other not both. When we focus on both we are a true professional.



In the lower left is the **salesperson**. They sell a 'commodity' – something just about anyone could sell. If we say we sell personal training we market ourselves as a sales

person and we have nothing to differentiate us from the others. The focus is always on what we have to offer, not on solutions.

In the lower right is the **hard worker** and the vast majority of independent professionals fit in to this category. They put in time and effort to do excellent work but the focus is on selling a **process** or what they DO.

In the top left is the **Expert** these are often the academic types who know a lot and put a premium on their knowledge, but much of their knowledge is theoretical, not practical. Experts sell 'expertise'. If we sell the most advanced and innovative training concept available we market ourselves as an expert. Experts can write brilliant marketing and business plans but can't seem to attract new clients to their business.

In the top right is the true professional. They have an abundance of knowledge and are masters at applying it in practical ways with clients. They sell **solutions** and at the end of the day what clients want more than commodities, processes and expertise is solutions that make a bottom-line difference.

So how do these different categories market themselves?

Salespeople: The ideal marketing medium is **calling** and **mailings**. Because they have something to sell they want to tell everyone about it. They rarely find out about the other person or ask what solutions they may be looking for to problems they have.

Hard Workers: Their main approach to marketing is **making as many new contacts as possible**. This approach is OK if you are selling a service that everyone is familiar with but the problem is that it does not differentiate your service above all the others that are available. Here you could be seen as just another service provider, hustling and desperate for business.

Experts: Many of these rely on **writing articles and public speaking**. There is nothing wrong with that except that the articles and speeches are often conceptual rather than practical and come from a theory base rather than an experience base. For the client it is often hard to see what the information passed on has to do with them.

Real professionals: In some respects these people are evangelists because they are spreading the word as to how they can do things better, be more successful, create more balance in their lives, are committed to attaining results, passionate about solutions and practically want to make their programme really work for the client. They are so committed and have so much belief in their service/programme that they spread word far and wide using all available marketing tools – sounds idealistic, but it is realistic. They literally have people queuing up for their innovative, solution orientated approach.

So the key question is how are we going to market ourselves? As a salesperson, a hard worker, an expert or a true professional? We'll probably be more successful as a true professional!

Being a true professional will work because of the following underlying principles:

Selfishness – People are always wary of the 'What's in for me' message that is often portrayed, but when we give them useful ideas and share results with them that they can relate to and could apply to them, they will naturally be more interested.

Rapport – We all like to do business with people we know and trust. Being sincere and maybe even familiar with them and letting them know our thoughts will help make them feel comfortable with us and more likely to enrol on our programme.

Likeable – People want to do business with people they like and are generous, helpful and who can produce real results for people.

Give and take – We all like to do business with people who are reciprocal, people who have given us something, because we feel we perhaps ‘owe it to them’. By delivering real value for money this will happen. You have a grade 1 product that if delivered professionally and realistically priced will naturally result in people wanting to tell others.

Something to perhaps remember and be realistic about is that the majority of people *are* selfish, and if we’re all honest most of *us* are. Most people care little about us, our interests, what we do or how much profit we make. Most people are out for what they can get and are seeking things and services to benefit themselves. If we ignore this fact we can easily fall into the trap that many people do when trying to market or sell themselves or their service, which is to put out the message ‘let me have your money’. This will not appeal to people.

If we do not attract enough clients to our business and programme it is for good reason: we are not doing the right things, and the paradox is that we think we know the right things we should be doing! We probably think we should be doing more networking, better advertising or more public speaking events, in effect we think we need to get out there more.

But the thing is we’ve probably tried that before, and the reason we are not doing them consistently now is that they have not worked to the degree that we hoped. If they had we would have all the business we wanted right now.

Doing the right things means we need to understand how a simple marketing and sales process for our programme can actually work. Let’s look at it through a game of football. To win at football you simply need to score more goals than the other team. But what would happen if we put 11 people who have never played football before together on a pitch against some professionals and simply said ‘score more goals than them’. They would maybe get a bit of exercise, maybe even a few injuries, a fair bit of activity particularly early on in the game until the initial enthusiasm wears off, but would they win? Probably not.

But that is how most independent professionals approach marketing, by getting on the field of business with lots of enthusiasm and do lots of networking, phone calls, mailings etc but does the world become alight? Doing things this way is certainly not a professional marketing and sales approach. If it were we would have more clients than we could handle. We don’t play football to lose or come second best, so why would we do it in our profession?

The winning process – again!

So let's look at developing a 'winning process'. Firstly, the rules:

1. The aim is to attract as many clients as we you can handle for your service/programme whilst making a decent living and profit.
2. To do this you need a proven process, and be disciplined to follow each step of the process, because if you miss a stage of the process we are likely to lose that client.
3. You must complete each stage of the process well and solidly before moving on to the next stage.
4. The prospect or potential client are the only ones who determine whether you've professionally completed each stage of the process and are ready to move on.
5. You can engage as many people into the process as we can manage at any one time.

The process is:

- Identify potential prospects that you would like to share our programme with and identify ways of connecting with them.
- Identify the most effective way of getting in front of your prospects, it could be networking, asking friends, business associates, family members for referrals, public speaking, mailings etc.
- Next, we need to get the attention of the prospect through our/your 'core marketing message' to generate enough interest so they want to know more. This comes down to what we say when people ask us what we do, or what is the headline on the letter or what title you give to the talk you give. Words do matter.
- The key to generating this interest is to focus on results and solutions not on your process, benefits not the features of our programme, stories not concepts. It's about telling them what they will get, not what we do. If you find yourself talking about YOURSELF you are doing it wrong. We must start talking about them.
- The prospect then sees us you a possible source of help. They have identified, need or want your service. They are now ready to discuss their needs. Now is the time to give them your brochure or an article/report to help educate them as to the way we think and how your programme can help them achieve the results they need. We are here building a case for our solution. It is at this stage we warm them up to either meet with us to discuss their needs or gain agreement to enrol on our programme.
- It may need a drip feed of information at this stage to develop the prospect, it is not about having to do it all at once, it's about taking a long term prospective so we are visible over the long term and therefore will generate real value to our programme. Keeping in touch strategies such as a newsletter or invitations to presentations will keep the information flowing. Sooner or later we will be able to develop the prospect.
- When you gain agreement that working together with your programme is the right thing to do, the concept has been accepted, you can finalise the deal. This is where it could be considered the 'selling conversation' takes place, where we clarify their needs, explain more about how your programme is an ideal solution. Here agree how we can help them with your programme.

- Remember, you are not trying to convince them to enrol on your programme, but in effect you are saying that they understand the value of your programme, and are discussing if it is right for them. This is easy if we have built up trust through the information we have given them and support via your website/social media site. We all find it difficult doing business with a complete stranger, even if they have a great idea. This is why a tried and tested process is so important.
- In effect now we have a verbal or written win/win agreement in place knowing each of our obligations and are ready to implement and enrol them on our programme. We need some negotiation here before the agreement is wrapped up. We may also need to put together a proposal before getting their agreement to proceed. We need to ensure their expectations are met, but also they are aware of their responsibility to achieve the results they want.
- The more times we take people through this process the more success we will have and more people's lives we will help transform in a positive and fulfilling way.
- Once enrolled on your programme and you are implementing it professionally and effectively then ask them to refer a continuous stream of new clients to you.
- Once enrolled, we then care for them with over and above the big things like professional delivery of your programme, but also the little things such as returning their phone calls, staying in contact, handling any concerns promptly and maybe even sending greeting cards at their birthday, Christmas etc and phoning them on their anniversary.
- Meeting and exceeding their expectations is the sure fire way ensuring a continuous stream of word-of-mouth referrals.
- This process applies whether we are marketing ourselves to a one-person business owner, a multi-national company or individuals. The important thing is to know which stage we are at and do the activities that are appropriate for that stage.

Where can we go wrong?

- Skipping phases in the above process, leaving out for example the information stage. This is what happens with cold calls, or when we meet someone at a 'networking' event, because we are trying to get to an appointment or a selling conversation.
- We may have their attention but not yet their trust, by providing more information we are warming them up and proving our credibility and success of our programme. We may try to 'hurry' the process.
- By talking about what we do i.e. we train/coach people to achieve their true potential rather than the results they will get from working with us. If you went to an electrician to get your cooker repaired and he talked about how electricity, fuses and plugs work would this buy you in? Probably not, you just want to know if he can fix your cooker. Our potential clients are the same, they have a problem (we all have problems of some sort), it could be low energy, overweight, lack of goals, low self-esteem/confidence etc. What we do or what we sell is secondary to the results we can achieve for them. It is also much easier than trying to sell them a 'product' 'service' or 'process'. Ask yourself, "**what specific results will a client get with you?**"
- Once we have their attention & interest we can get excited and try and put a proposal to them or 'close the deal'. Can you remember a time when you were not warmed up to what is been offered; a close coming on too soon and getting turned off? Patience is a virtue here; we need to listen to their needs, life challenges, give them the appropriate information, then move them naturally to a suitable close.
- We can also forget the proposal stage because we want to enrol them. We need this stage to confirm understanding, work out any finer details and handle any queries or objections (which would hopefully have been addressed earlier).
- We can focus our marketing attention to a too general audience. We often don't want to think about narrowing down our market as we want to appeal to the maximum amount of people, and fear that by being specific we reduce our chances of clients. We only have so much time and money to spend on marketing, and it is spread very thinly by trying to market to everybody. People respond to marketing and sales that directly appeal to them and their situation and not some general washed down stuff. What's your background, what's your interest, could you decide on a specific market e.g. doctors, lawyers, housewives, people who have no goals etc. Ask yourself, "**what's my niche?**" You can always expand your niche later.
- We can have a subconscious dislike of marketing and selling. The idea of promoting our-self and blowing your own trumpet is often frowned upon. Many of us have never had to market our-selves in the past and regard marketing as a big unknown and therefore timidly try a few things like adverts and mailings by trial and error. We all want to spend less time marketing and more time delivering and making a difference in people's lives and the world at large. However, the fact is we need to 'market' to get these clients in the first place. We need to become more interested in marketing, and as we have seen, find ways to enjoy it and see it as an essential skill for building a successful practice and making a real difference. Ask yourself, "**what's my attitude to marketing and selling?**" Remember attitude is 85% of success!

- Procrastination, waiting to make a decision to do it, getting caught in indecision and making no progress. Does this ring a bell? Sometimes it comes down to the fear of making a mistake, but we all know it's better to make a decision learn from it rather than make no decision at all. Lack of decision = lack of performance = lack of income = frustration and disappointment. So decide, act on your decision, learn from it and change things if needed. Who do you really want to work with? What are their challenges and aspirations? How can you effectively communicate to them? What do you need to do differently? Ask yourself, "***What key decisions do I need to make now to make it happen?***"

People of Influence Marketing

If I told you that the essence of business is building long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships, you'd say that this was nothing new; you've heard it a hundred times before.

But if I asked you what your plan was to build these relationships, most of us would draw a blank. Sadly, most business relationships just happen, they are not built intentionally and systematically.

Your development and implementation of a relationship-building strategy is not only important, it is the key to ongoing success for true professionals.

And the best business relationships are with business people known as "People or Centres of Influence." These are business people who are well established, are good networkers and who can lead you to the kind of clients you are looking for. You want to be in the network of several People of Influence.

But how do you find and connect with these people? Here's an Action Plan that will help make things move faster.

1. Target your People of Influence

Who can help you grow your business - that is, lead you to good potential clients? Consultants, solicitors, estate agents, well-known local business people etc? Write down a list of your ideal contacts and a brief profile for each.

2. Define your value

What value can you offer these People of Influence? Sure, they could help you get access to your ideal clients, but what do you bring to the table? What skills, contacts, information or resources do you have? Make a comprehensive list. More in point 6 below.

3. Points of contact

Where do your People of Influence congregate? Do they belong to specific professional organisations or business groups? Can they be found in online communities? Do your existing networking contacts know these people?

4. Assemble your information

If you're going to approach People of Influence, what materials will you use to put your best foot forward? Do you have a few "Core Issue Articles" that outline your expertise? You need to be ready with this material when you make contact.

5. Put out the word

Let those in your current network know who you are looking for. Send a message out and follow up. Then ask, "Who do you know who...". Then get their advice on the best way to approach this Person of Influence.

6. What's in it for them?

If and when you gain access to a Person of Influence, what are you going to propose? You can't just say "Here I am, please send potential clients my way." You need to have a compelling reason (also called Value Proposition) for them to associate with you. What exactly are you offering and what do you want them to do?

7. Invite them to participate

A great way to build the foundation for a relationship with a Person of Influence is to hook them up with others in your network. Invite them to a workshop, seminar or networking function where they can make valuable new contacts themselves.

8. Stay in touch system

Once you've made contact and have established the foundation for a relationship with a Person of Influence, you need to keep your ideas and value in front of them. How will you do that? An e-mail, personal mailings, telephone calls, newsletter?

9. Reward your People of Influence

When a Person of Influence sends you a lead to a new potential client, make sure you show your appreciation. A phone call, a hand-written note and even an appropriate gift lets them know that you don't take their assistance for granted. Also, keep them in the loop with your progress with this lead.

Some people have developed relationships with just two or three good People of Influence who have brought them hundreds of thousands in new business. With a focused, intentional plan anyone could do the same.

The one part of the Action Plan that we could have omitted is point 6 "What's in it for them?" Here are a few ideas for approaching a Person of Influence by demonstrating you have value to offer. These are basic "value proposition scripts" that you can adapt to your situation.

* To a consultant from a friend: "John suggested I call you because we've helped dozens of clients in the telecommunications industry (who are also their clients). I have a report called 'Good to great in 10 steps.' Can I send you a copy? Then I'd like to follow up and learn more about your business. I think we may have some ways we could help each other."

* To an estate agent: "I've recently helped five estate agents sell homes about 35% faster at 10% above market value with no cost to them. Our mutual friend, James Green, thought you'd like to see how we'd done it (and so I could show you how we could also do it for your clients)."

* To an accountant from a business coach: "I was sharing some of my case studies with our mutual associate, Gail, and she said this was the kind of thing you'd want to see. They focus on increasing profitability for retailers (clients you share in common)."

* To bank from a management consultant: "I and an accountant you know, Richard White, are hosting a seminar on "Strategies for Increasing Cash Flow" and we'd like to talk to you about being a co-presenter (and inviting your customers to attend)."

What is your message?

The 5 P's of marketing

As a **real professional** we will use every marketing tool possible, we will use the 5 P's of marketing. Your solution is the first P of positioning. See how many of the other 4 P's you could use?

<u>Packaging</u>	<u>Promotion</u>	<u>Persuasion</u>	<u>Performance</u>
Brochure	Speaking	Listening	Keeping promises
Reports	Writing	Diagnosing	Guarantees
Questionnaires	Networking	Openness	Keeping in touch
Articles	Referrals	Curiosity	Thank-you's
Your website	Newsletter	Visioning	Going extra mile
Presentations	eZine	Education	Commitment
Youtube clips	Letters	Presentations	Walk the talk
Other websites	Postcards	Asking	Innovation
DVD's	Calling	Recommending	Creativity
Books	Media	Assuring	Persistence

Real professionals have the following qualities (amongst others)

- Commitment to their programme knowing it truly works
- Communicate clearly, listening more than talking
- Generously share what they know
- Help their prospects determine their current and future objectives
- Commitment to producing real results for the client.
- Always remain calm and collected.
- Accept that some people may just not be ready for what they have to offer
- Really value what they have to offer
- Total belief in the solution they provide
- Have a mindset that attracts clients they will possibly never need
- Say 'thank you' to clients for their business and referrals and do it personally – verbally or written

Since your focus is now on giving rather than getting something the whole process becomes fun and enjoyable, in the knowledge that you are making a positive contribution, and you'll attract all the business you'll ever need. Sometimes the more we give away, the more business we get, the less cold calls you'll have to make as people will call you.

As well as doing the above and adopting the process it's also about what we are. It is of course important to have an action plan, give talks, write articles perhaps, referring people to your website and sending out newsletters, but we also need to 'walk-our-talk' and be motivated ourselves, have a vision, be genuinely passionate about what you are doing or very little will happen.

You need to know what to do and then do it, going beyond any fears you may have about selling or marketing yourself and overcome any misconceptions or stereotypes you may have about selling.

Some values that can be useful to you could include:

- A commitment to lifelong learning
- Curiosity about other people & their lives
- Wanting to make a contribution and make a difference
- Wanting to make a positive impact
- To be independent
- To be innovative and creative
- A like of being challenged
- Seen as someone who is results orientated and a solver of problems
- Genuine humility

Must You Be Different?

Imagine two Independent Professionals marketing their services.

They are very much the same in many respects. They probably essentially do the same thing. The only difference is that they talk about it using different words.

Now what both of these professionals are trying to do is to stand out in a crowded marketplace and get noticed. They want to be seen as unique or special in some way. They feel they need to differentiate themselves in order to be remembered and to attract more business.

So, the key question is: what is the most effective way to stand out?

One way to think about this is to look at the many ways a professional service business communicates about itself:

1. **Your Target Market** - Simply by catering to a specific market segment you can stand out. You can become known as the service provider who is a real expert in such an industry. This is simple and hardly sexy, but very effective.
2. **The Problems You Solve** - When you can demonstrate that you know a lot about a certain kind of issue, challenge or problem that your clients face, it positions you as a real professional who knows their stuff. It's very attention-getting.
3. **The Results You Produce** - There's nothing quite like gaining a reputation for making things happen. If you can help people transform their lives, you're going to get noticed and get lots of word-of-mouth business.
4. **A Promise of Performance** - I'm not necessarily talking about a guarantee, but about a reputation for getting the job done. You keep your word. You under-promise and over-deliver. You clean things up when you make a mistake. You don't make excuses.

Your most powerful differentiation comes from using all four of the above to communicate about our business and services. It's not one thing, it's everything we say and do.

It is an Ultimate Outcome. Now put a statement together for yourself based on this:

You have to find and settle on a statement that works for you. But it's important to realise that nobody is going to do business with you just because of that statement. You have to communicate a whole lot more in much more depth as we have seen earlier in this manual.

Nevertheless, an Ultimate Outcome should be the centre of gravity for all your marketing. This is the essence of what you stand for, of what you are all about. It is the only way to differentiate yourself; if you are not sure about this go to some business networking meetings and ask some independent's what they do, most will give you a long 'sales pitch'

about themselves, their product and how they work with people. Very few if any will focus on: a target market (and you can have several), the problems they solve, the results they produce and a promise of performance.

Forget the Little Mistakes

In an issue of Sun Magazine was an interview with Studs Terkel. Terkel has written several books.

His famous book, "Working," chronicled the daily work lives of ordinary people. And his 1984 book, "The Good War," won the Pulitzer Prize. Terkel is an American icon who has put his heart and soul into his life's work.

And Studs Terkel also makes mistakes.

For me, the most refreshing part of the interview was him admitting the technical mistakes he's made in taping the interviews:

Sun: Have you ever lost an interview because of a technical problem?

Terkel: Sure. I'm known for my ineptitude. That's the irony of the whole thing; they call me the "master of the tape recorder," but I haven't the faintest idea of what I'm doing. I'm just learning the electric typewriter. And I don't know what a computer is. You've got neocons and neoliberals: I'm a neo-Neanderthal.

When I think of all the mistakes I've made in my businesses, not to mention several other small and not-so-small mistakes, it's nice to be reminded that you don't have to be perfect to be successful and to make a difference.

One of the biggest things stopping people from marketing themselves is obsessing about "doing it right." But I have the opposite advice: Do it wrong. Just try something and, like Studs Terkel, sooner or later you'll figure it out.

These imperfections or small mistakes will rarely sink a business. But getting so stuck in preparation that you never get started, kills businesses every single day.

A recent Time Magazine cover story asserted that we worry about the wrong things. For instance, only one or two people are killed in the US each year by sharks. But hundreds are killed by deer (when we hit them in our cars). But did you ever see a TV show about "Beware the Killer Deer?"

I emphasize seven big things you need to focus on in order to market effectively. Miss doing these and you're in deep trouble. And miss them we do, because we're too focused on the sharks.

Do you fall into any of the following mistake traps:

1. Not Having the Right Marketing Mindset

In our marketing we worry about trivial things when we need to focus on the bigger picture. We need to develop a marketing mindset that is focused on making a difference instead of worrying about rejection.

Instead of complaining about how we can't find time to market or how our services are hard to explain, we need to adopt the mindset of the master marketers.

Their mindset is: My services are valuable. I will do what it takes to get the attention and interest of my prospects until they see the value as well.

2. Not Making Marketing a Game

Whenever you play a game you make mistakes. That's just part of the game. You drop the ball. You miss the goal. It's not a big deal, you just keep playing the best you can.

The big mistake we make in marketing is either not playing the game at all or not realising that there even is a game. There are a lot of Independent Professionals running around the field with no idea who has the ball or where the goal is.

You need to understand the rules of the game and then commit to playing it to win. It becomes a lot more fun when you do.

3. Not Speaking the Language of Marketing

The bottom line of marketing is communication. It's saying the right things at the right time to the right people. But obsessing about the perfect word is not very productive.

Like the game of marketing, many of us don't even realise that there's a language or syntax you need to employ to get attention and interest from prospects.

Talk about who you work with, the problems they have and the solutions you offer and the words will take care of themselves.

4. Not Having a Powerful Marketing Message

One thing that still amazes me is how people obsess about their marketing message or "Audio Logo" but never try it out on real, live prospects.

A marketing message only makes sense in the context of an interaction or written communication with a prospect. Did they show interest? Did they respond?

Try out your marketing message on 50 people and you'll know if your message is working or not. Then fine tune.

5. Not Using Persuasive "Marketing Currency"

If people obsess about marketing messages, they agonise over written marketing communications. Is that the perfect word? What if there's a typo? What if I say it wrong?

But what we miss is the big picture of marketing communications - getting something out on a regular basis to prospects on your list. That builds credibility through visibility, even if you make a typo here and there.

Just ask yourself: What information would help my prospects? And then make it a priority to get it to them.

6. Not Implementing Effective Marketing Tactics

There are probably hundreds of different marketing tactics you could use to market yourself. From networking to television ads or regular newsletters. What's the perfect tactic for your business? How can you know?

Guess what? There is no perfect tactic. So, don't get caught in paralysis by analysis. Pick a tactic that you would actually enjoy doing and jump in with both feet.

My favorite tactics involve very direct communication with my prospects. I get them interested; I offer something of value; I ask for a response; I follow up and ask for the business.

7. Not Following a Marketing Action Plan

Ever notice how the same ideas tend to re-circulate in your brain over and over again? We don't take action because our plan never becomes real. Again, worried about making a mistake, we do nothing.

You don't figure out your whole plan and then write it down. In the process of writing it down, the plan becomes clearer and clearer. What's your goal, what are you going to do, when are you going to do it and what resources do you need? Then start.

Remember Goethe's famous couplet:

Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.

Don't let yourself be stopped by worrying about little mistakes. They'll happen despite our best efforts. Put your focus on avoiding the big mistakes and your marketing effectiveness will expand dramatically.

These are some of the things that can motivate us to learn what we need to, to be successful and help make our clients successful as well. Being clear on your vision and values can transform us and propel us in a positive direction like a shot, it can energise us to find new and creative ways of using this information and making a huge success for ourselves.

So, in the space below write down your vision and values for your business. Take some time to think about this and how to make it real, discuss it with friends so it becomes part of you.

My vision and values for my business are:

VISION

VALUES

As we know our vision can act as a guide, a source of inspiration, can be uplifting in times when we are feeling down. It can keep us on track and setbacks will seem minor inconveniences in the face of a larger vision.

Now write down your plan and then transfer the commitments to your diary or other planning tool. An action planning sheet is located at the end of this document.

Appendix 1 Advertising – word of mouth – its joy, benefits and some useful ideas

By Using Word Of Mouth, We're Sitting On A Goldmine!

We are going to explore the **easiest, quickest, and most effective ways to grow your business**, using word of mouth.

We are going to look at some of the incredible word of mouth secrets that helped one person grow the customer base of their businesses by 237% in just 23 short weeks solely using word of mouth marketing!

You'll get a major insight into the success as it is explained how you can use what has been done before as a step-by-step road-map to your "word of mouth" mega-success.

There will be totally actionable, useable, and profitable strategies you can use immediately. Strategies that will increase your business now -- as long as you implement them.

The Most Under Utilised And Powerful Marketing Method...

To many people and business owners, word of mouth isn't as glamorous as advertising.

But, ask the very best marketers and entrepreneurs in the world and you'll find a very different story.

Why?

Simple: they realise that referrals generate over 70% of the new customers for most business. And yet business owners spend the least amount of time, money and energy on it.

That's how powerful word of mouth is!

But if you have a way of growing your business that works even when used very unsystematically, doesn't it make sense to put your focus, attention, and resources into it... so you get the biggest return on your marketing time and investment.

You see, what it all boils down to is that if you aren't using word of mouth **systematically in everything** you do, then you're leaving hundreds and maybe thousands of £'s on the marketing table.

And when you start using word of mouth systematically - and I mean systematically - you'll skyrocket your profits, bottom line, and business success! What's more, you can use word of mouth on demand to create instant cash flow, just like advertising.

Firstly let's look at what four great marketers think about word of mouth. I think their insights are exciting and I hope will get you excited about implementing what follows:

Let's start with...

Master Marketer View Point 1: The Master Book Marketer

"Word of mouth marketing is money in the bank. It's really as simple as that. If you're not making money from word of mouth marketing in your business, then you're missing the boat. It's one of the keys to ongoing success. I've seen WoM marketing put more businesses on the map than any other form of promotion there is." **Jason Oman**, co-author of the #1 International Best-Seller "*Conversations with Millionaires - What Millionaires Do To Get Rich That You Never Learned About In School!*"

So why is word of mouth so powerful? It's all because it allows you to...

Tap Into Multiple Networks Of 250 People ...

According to population statistics, the average person has a relationship with 250 people!

In other words, if you wrote down a list of everyone you personally knew, it would likely add up to around 250 people.

This is exciting! Very exciting! Here's why ...

What this means is that every customer you currently have in your business is a doorway to 250 more! What's more, when you gain an extra customer, you've also gained indirect access to 250 other people!

So, if you know how to get your customers talking about your business, then you have a massive network that you can easily tap into! What could be better?

Master Marketer View Point 2: The Dean Of American Advertising.

"You cannot sell a man who isn't listening; word of mouth is the best medium of all; and dullness won't sell your product, but neither will irrelevant brilliance." **Bill Bernbach**, who before his death some 20 years ago, was the dean of American Advertising and co-founder of famous DDB Advertising.

The Holy-Grail Of Marketing ...

You see, the aim of most lead marketing processes is to create a relationship with a new customer.

Smart business owners often use loss-leaders, or amazing break-even introductory deals just so that they can create a buying relationship with a new customer.

Why?

Simple, they understand that once you have a relationship with a customer, selling to

them becomes much, much easier. So it makes sense to do whatever you can to create new relationships.

This is why word of mouth is so powerful! When you harness the power of word of mouth, then you can have relationships with hundreds of extra people, through the network that your customers have.

And it gets better ...

You see, since each of us trusts our family, friends and closest colleagues and associates more than we do salespeople or self-proclaiming business owners, gaining a customer by word of mouth is usually a lot easier than gaining a new customer by advertising or other forms of self-promotion.

All this means is that word of mouth gives you ...

Instant Credibility!

Whenever a customer tells someone about the great benefit your business has given them, they are essentially giving you a "personal endorsement".

And here's a clincher: whatever bond you have with your customers can, and often does, get indirectly transferred to your customers' friends when they're enthusiastically told about you. (Even a bond that has been built over many years!)

In other words, with word of mouth, if you have credibility and trustworthiness in your customer's eyes, then they will give you instant credibility and trustworthiness in their friend's eyes!

This is why a referred customer is, on average, more trusting of a business than any other customer - you've been endorsed to them by someone who's opinion they trust!

The Most Profitable Customers In the World

In fact, according to marketing legend, Jay Abraham, word of mouth customers:

- **Spend more each purchase**
- Buy more often.
- **Are more loyal.**
- Refer more customers.
- **Trust your recommendations more.**

All of this adds up to increased business and a better life-style for you.

Master Marketer View Point 3: The Master Direct Marketer

"Referrals are your first line of business-growth 'offence'. They are easy to generate no matter what business you're in. They are a much more enjoyable category of people to talk to, work with, or sell to. Setting up a formalized referral system is also about the easiest business-building lever you'll ever construct for your company or career" **Jay Abraham.**

The Ultimate Marketing Multiplier.

When you understand how to get referrals, you'll be able to **double, triple or quadruple the profitability** of almost any marketing campaign.

How?

Imagine if you could compel every new customer from your marketing activity to refer (on average) 1, 2, 3, 4 or more friends! **What would that be worth to you?**

Without doubt it would be a lot!

This is how some people have turned losing marketing campaigns into winners, and winners into increased business, in an ethical and cost-effective way.

We can all do the same, simply by harnessing the power of word of mouth!

(The only time when it's hard to do this is when your target customers don't associate with each other or when they are embarrassed to talk about your type of product or service with these people. In fact however, this is rarely the case, and certainly not the case with most ethical businesses)

And it's a lot simpler to get referrals than you may think.

All you need to do is just follow simple, tested and proven principles

Master Marketer View Point 4: The Master Sports Marketer

"I'm a big fan of word-of-mouth advertising. It's the best" **Jon Spoelstra**, *author of the Wall Street Journal Best Seller "Marketing Outrageously"*. (Jon also grew the lowly New Jersey Nets' revenue almost 500% in three years!)

Zero-Risk Marketing!

Most of the time, word of mouth is free!

Sometimes, in order to get the word out to more people, it's better to invest a little money. But even if you invest a little money into your word of mouth campaigns, it's probably one of the safest ways to market.

Later we will run you through a whole word of mouth strategy so you can see exactly what it's all about.

What To Do Next

Start to notice that many, if not all of your customers (if you are currently in business and have customers), have access to the kind of people that are perfectly suited to our business, through their personal network.

And start to become aware of how much easier business is going to become as you learn how to **ethically** tap into these networks, using word of mouth.

An amazingly successful entrepreneur who owns 12 companies in 9 countries (and who, at the time, was only 30 years old) once said “there are only two things I always do in every company. One is I make sure I get the business running by itself. And the second is I always have a word of mouth system in place”

One thing we could ask ourselves: Is Your Attitude Taking You Towards Or Away From Referrals?

The 'Word Of Mouth Magic' Attitude

Most people are a little scared or nervous about asking for referrals.

Fortunately, you don't need to ask for referrals face to face, you can use letter/e-mail/social media instead. This makes it very easy and comfortable to ask for, and get, referrals. It is not as effective as doing it face to face or via the telephone, but nonetheless it is an option.

But there is an attitude that underlies the fear many people have about asking for referrals. This attitude is that asking for referrals is about being pushy or that it means you're begging or pleading for customers.

I don't look at asking for referrals that way. In fact I look at it very differently!

Let's look at another way to look at referrals. It could be called the 'Word Of Mouth attitude'

If you believe that your product or service is the best available, then you are doing the highest and most noble service for your customers when you ask them for referrals. Let me illustrate this by asking you a question ...

Do you care about the people who are closest to your best friends?

I presume your answer is yes! So...

Would you want these people to settle for less than they could get out of life?

And would you sit by and let them make a poor decision - a decision that would reduce the quality of their life - if you could easily point them in a better direction?

My guess is that there's no way you would sit by and do nothing!

Our customers are dear and valued friends. And we should care for them very much. After all, they are people just like us. They have hopes, dreams, fears and aspirations. And each one of them is uniquely special.

You see, if you don't encourage your customers to refer their family and friends to you, then your customers may unintentionally let them choose another business - a business that offers less benefit, protection, and advantage than we do.

In other words, as long as you care for your customers to a higher level than any of your competitors, then you are doing them a disservice when you don't ask them for referrals.

Your job is to make sure that everyone in your customers' network, who needs your services, is looked after by the best. So make sure that's you!

Realise that your customers are probably too busy to continually think about helping people in their network to the highest level. By asking your customers for referrals, you are giving them a very easy way to look after the most important people in their lives! What could be more noble?

So, look at your customers as dear and valued friends. And remember to realise that asking for referrals is nothing more than making sure that the people who are most important to your customers are given the best solutions too!

We've Got To Over-Deliver ...

If you only deliver what you promise and nothing more, you can't expect to get massive numbers of referrals. You may still get quite a few referrals, but the floodgates will only open when you **over-deliver on a consistent basis**. This is the key.

Think about this: would you refer your friends, family members, or business associates to just any business? Probably not.

But imagine this - how much more inclined would you be to refer your family, friends and business associates to a business who...

- Looks after you better than you ever expected
- Delivers more than they promise
- Makes you feel special every time you see/communicate with them
- Delivers amazing results for you.

Wouldn't you refer people to a business which does all of these things for you? Make sure everyone you speak to registers for your free newsletter/e-zine.

An Extra: The Law Of Reciprocity

The law of reciprocity states that people feel the need to give back something to you when they perceive you've given them something.

So, when you go the extra mile (or two, or three!) most people feel obligated to give back. It's human nature!

This means that one of the easiest ways to get referrals is to continually over-deliver. If you give so much more than you promised, people will want to help you in anyway they can.

Over-delivering should be the way you do business ... and the referrals, thank-you notes, and new friends you make are the wonderful by-products.

And don't give just to get back. Make a genuine difference to people's lives and you'll always get lots of referrals. If you haven't read Robert Cialdini's amazing book, 'Influence: The Psychology Of Persuasion', then please do so.

So, make sure you go the extra mile in everything you do. And a great way to learn how to do this is to study other people and businesses that go the extra mile. What do they do to make you feel special, important and incredibly well looked after? Do they phone you up after you've bought something just to make sure you're happy with it? Do they take a genuine interest in your life?

Start to model great people and businesses. Make every place you shop, dine out, and visit a learning laboratory. And while you're there, ask yourself ...

- "What are they outstanding at?"
- "How could they improve?"
- "What mistakes are they making?"
- "How could they make me feel more important/special?"
- "How could I adapt what they're doing well for my business?"

Let the businesses of the world be your teachers! Become a great student and you'll start to massively separate yourself from your competitors.

The Most Complicated,
Hard To Implement, But
Essential Step To Word Of
Mouth Success ...

Wait! Before you skip this section ... there's a reason we've included it!

Want Referrals? Easy Does It!

Did this title get you excited, thrilled, and jumping to start reading?

Or did it perhaps induce a bad feeling in you?

You see, people do not like doing hard things unless there is an incredibly rewarding benefit in doing so. Even then, a lot of people still won't do something that is perceived as "too difficult".

So why would anyone want to tell their friends, business associates, or family about you if they have to work very hard to do so?

Make it as easy, fun, and enjoyable for your customers to refer people to you and you'll do well.

In particular, I've found that a lot of independent professionals assume that their customers know exactly what type of people are suited as new customers.

They simply ask "do you know anyone you could refer to us?" Or they just say "if you know anyone who could use our services, please tell them about us".

In some businesses, the customers are unsure about who to refer. This means that the customer has to do all the work by figuring out who to refer!

Your goal is to make sure your customers know exactly who to refer. Otherwise you're not going to get a high quantity or quality of referrals.

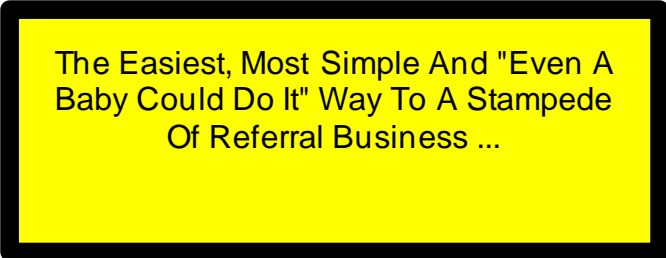
So, give each customer a very good idea of who they could refer.

For example, a masseuse you regularly go to could say to you ...

"Do you know anyone who works long hours, or who has lots of children, or anyone who is often stressed and would perhaps benefit from a relaxing back massage?"

If you do, I'm sure they would really benefit from a back massage with us. After all, you know how good our massages are! So, please introduce them to us. And if you do, we'll be sure to do something wonderful for you to thank you.... "

Do you see how this helps you, the customer, know **exactly** who the masseuse is looking for?



The Easiest, Most Simple And "Even A Baby Could Do It" Way To A Stampede Of Referral Business ...

Don't you find more appealing in the last yellow

If you skipped the because it had such a 'yuk' title, then please read it now.

this title a lot than the one box???

last yellow box

What To Do Next

So, start modelling other businesses to learn how you can over-deliver even more, make your customers feel that little bit more special, and make it easier for them to give you referrals.

And start to notice what a difference it makes now that **you have the 'Word of Mouth attitude'**. That little change of attitude is a powerful thing. Successful people think differently. Live the 'Word Of Mouth attitude' and I promise you'll see massive success in your results.

Now we will look at how to powerfully enhance your #1 business asset – your relationships.

Relationships are like the glue that hold customers to your business. Provided you offer great benefits to your customers, the stronger the relationships you have with them, the more they'll stick with you.

HOW TO Develop Amazing Relationships With Your Customers!

The first step to developing amazing relationships with your customers - and this is critical - is to make sure that you collect the names and contact details of each and every new customer who you do business with. Having their contact details allows you to keep in touch with them easily.

Once you have their contact details, you want to follow-up, follow-up and follow-up!

Relationships sometimes take a little while to develop. So the more you contact your customers and prospects, with their needs in mind, the quicker you'll be building **your #1 business asset ... your customer relationships**.

And, getting referrals is almost all about relationships. The better the relationships you have with people (your potential customers), the more comfortable they'll feel about referring people to you.

To illustrate to you what I mean, I am going to introduce you to...

The World's Greatest Salesman

There's an awesome story about a man named Joe Girard. Joe has been touted as the world's greatest salesman by the Guinness Book Of Records. He's literally sold more cars individually than most dealers sell in total! (In fact during his selling career, he sold more than 13,000 cars, all at retail! That's a lot of cars!)

So, what was Joe's secret?

Well, I'm sure he did a lot of things right, but one thing in particular was that he kept in contact with his customers very regularly.

How regularly?

Let's see what Joe did...

Joe sent every customer and prospect 13 greeting cards a year! That's one every month plus an additional one for Christmas!

For example, at Easter, Joe would send a greeting card that said "Happy Easter, I like you, Joe Girard". In January, he'd send a greeting card that said "Happy New Year, I like you, Joe Girard". He would send greeting cards for Halloween and greeting cards for their birthday!

Joe sent nearly 13,000 cards to his customers every month!

His customers loved him so much that there would literally be a queue at his dealership every Saturday morning! People actually lined up to buy a car from him!!!

Plus, wouldn't you tell your friends about a car dealer who cared about you more than anyone else you dealt with -- and demonstrated this by sending you 13 greeting cards a year? Many people did. So Joe sold more cars, by retail, than anyone else on the planet!

And when you think of the cost of sending each customer 13 cards a year, and compare it with the lifetime value Joe got from each customer's future car purchases, the numbers really add up in his favour!

So, the lesson here is keep in touch with your customers or potential customers on a regular basis, care about them deeply, and go the extra mile. I am not suggesting sending 13 cards a year, but let's learn from this experience.

Show your customers that you care about them to a higher level than anyone else and magical things will start to happen!

Make Dealing With You An Amazing Experience!

The second aspect to amazing customer relationships is to create a "WOW Factor"!

You've got to understand that ...

If you can make doing business with you an amazing experience, your customers will tell a lot of people!

People want amazing experiences! After all, this is what the whole film industry is built around!

So, if you can make dealing with you an exciting and great experience, then you'll be head and shoulders above others that are bland and boring.

Let's look at a great, but maybe extreme example of a business that gives it's customers an amazing experience ...

I heard of an Australian accountant who placed his desk on his balcony, which happened to back off onto a golf course. He then set up a golf tee-off area on it so that his customers could practice their golf swing while he consulted with them about their finances! In between golf swings, he'd get them to sign the appropriate forms, or ask them questions!

His clients appreciated him as a great accountant. But what gets them talking is the unusual, but amazing experience he gave them!

This is the power of an amazing experience to get people talking!

Obviously, you don't have to go to such extremes. **Just a little extra touch** can make dealing with you that much more of an amazing experience!

So what can you do to make dealing with you a more amazing experience?

What To Do Next

Implement at least one or two ideas to make you more amazing to deal with!

Then work out a system for following-up and nurturing the relationships you have with all your prospects and customers. **Find out how caring you can be to your customers?**

This doesn't mean that you let them push you around. It means that you look after their needs to such a high-level that they would be crazy not to deal with you!

And continue modelling other businesses. This time, study how businesses build and nurture relationships with you. Find out what impacts you the most powerfully and favourably.

The world is your play-ground! Go and have fun and learn everything you can!

We need to give our customers self-serving reasons to give us referrals.

"This means that when you ask your clients to give you referrals, they (clients) are silently asking "What's In It For Me?" We need to start habitually communicating to our clients in a way that makes it plainly obvious, to them, exactly how they will benefit by giving you referrals.

So, you must, before you ask your current clients to give you referrals, first work out what you can give them in return.

Once we realise how important it is to give our customers self-serving reasons for them to give us referrals, we can then set out to find the best ways to make customers want to give us referrals.

Ask yourself *"How can I make it so much in my customer's best interests to send us referrals that they feel compelled to give us referrals?"*

From this question we can learn strategies that literally can make customers get excited about giving us referrals... strategies that cost us very little or absolutely nothing to implement.

As people in the past have implemented these strategies, their business took off like they never believed possible. In fact, one person claimed they doubled their customer-base twice in just 23 weeks!

Some Phenomenal Word Of Mouth Strategies ...

"Zero-Risk Marketing"!

Remember that when using these strategies, all that we have learnt so far is still applicable. They'll maximize the results you get from each strategy.

Word Of Mouth Strategy 1: Reward each customer who refers someone to you, with a free gift.

With this word of mouth strategy, you offer customers a gift as an incentive for giving you a referral. This immediately gives your customers a self-serving reason to refer their friends.

Some examples of how businesses are using this strategy ...

Hotel: For every 6 people you refer, we'll give you a free night for two in our presidential suite with a free dinner.

Hairdresser: For everyone you refer to us, we'll give you a free massage gift voucher which entitles you to enjoy a 1-hour back massage totally with our compliments!

Chiropractor: Give us a referral and we'll give you two sessions absolutely free.

Dog Grooming Business: Refer us a client who signs up for our yearly program and we'll give you a free month's supply of dog food.

Beauty Salon: Refer a friend and you'll be off to the movies with 2 free tickets, with our compliments.

Carpet Cleaning Company: Refer 3 friends to us who have all the carpets in their house cleaned, and we'll come in and clean all the carpets in your house for free.

Lawn-Mowing company: We will mow your lawn for a full month absolutely free when you refer us a new client who signs up for a year's lawn mowing service.

Internet Site: Refer a friend to us, who buys our product, we'll give you this free special report as a thank you gift. [explain report and benefits to referrer].

You can also bundle gifts into a packages ...

For example, a Chiropractor could give away a free nutrition pack, dietetics consultation, and massage voucher, to every client who refers someone to him.

Here's another example ...

You could give away "The Ultimate Beauty Package" to each client who refers two friends. The beauty package might contain an hour's massage, a manicure and a pedicure.

To start with though, keep it simple and test each gift you offer to see how attractive it is to your clients. Testing has been the difference between failure and thousands of extra clients (and £'s). So, make sure you test, test, test!

So, what could you give away? Create a list of ideas now ...

How this Strategy was used Very Profitably With £0

A while back the person in question saw an opportunity to profit by buying a hairdressing salon. Now, he's not a hairdresser. But it didn't matter - marketing principles are just that - principles. They can be applied almost **universally** - irrespective of what business you go into.

So he bought the salon (for almost nothing) and then got down to marketing it.

Here's an example of how he used the strategy above to attract **58 new customers in 6 weeks ... for FREE** .

He offered his customers a free 30-minute back massage gift voucher if they gave him a referral.

So, how did he get 58 thirty-minute back massages for free? You'll love this especially when you realise that he saved himself over £1,000!

He got these vouchers for free from a local masseuse because he was introducing her to new, and potentially lifelong customers!

Think about it: he was sending her 58 new potential new customers. If they liked her services, they'd become regular customers. And that could be worth a lot to her. She was actually excited about giving the gift vouchers!

What To Do Next

- Step into your customers shoes and give them a self-serving reason to send you referrals straight away!
- **Start thinking about how you can apply the Strategy #1 in your business**

You absolutely **MUST** be systematic about getting new customers by word of mouth.

If you don't have a systematic strategy for getting referrals in your business then **you're sitting on a gold-mine**

Think about this: In life, doesn't a tried and proven systematic strategy always have better chance of working than a haphazard strategy? The answer is of course, a resounding YES!

So, what exactly do we mean by a 'systematic' strategy for getting referrals?

Here's an example ..

Let's say that you already have a steady stream of new customers coming into your business. A systematic way of gaining referrals from these customers might be to send every customer who has been with you for 4 weeks, a letter that asks (and entices) them to give you a referral.

What this means is that every new customer who comes into your business is informed that you want referrals (which may seem obvious to you, but it's often not thought about by your customer) and is **enticed** to refer their friends, family or associates to you.

This is what is meant by being 'systematic'.

By the way, asking for referrals can be done in a very gentle and caring way that actually builds goodwill. This leads to customers wanting to refer you new customers because they enjoy being asked and enjoy telling their friends about you.

For example, you could tell your customers that because they are great customers, they are "entitled" to join your referral program.

And in fact, some people never ask customers who aren't "great" to refer me people.

You also want to make sure that you systematically remind current customers about your referral program. For example, you could include a section in a monthly newsletter on your referral program and the new and exciting rewards your customers get when they refer friends. So, get very systematic about referrals. Make a plan today to never again let a referral slip through your "net"

And remember, it's the business that cares the most about a customer as a person, not just an income stream that will win in the end!

How To Become Great In Business And In Life ...

Are you a person who really takes action?

An insight that is absolutely central to all business success ...

You know, there are amongst others four things that separate average business people from truly successful entrepreneurs. Here they are...

1. Great entrepreneurs **develop their skill-set consistently** so they become massively skilled.
2. They realise that a great skill-set can be learned by **anyone** who is committed.
3. They consistently **take action** by applying what they know.
4. They always insist on learning more and refining their abilities. They realise that even a 1% increase in skill can lead to substantial rewards. **'Average' people settle for where they are and with what they've got. Extraordinary people always strive for that little bit more.**

***Did Anyone Tell
You Today
You're Terrific!!***

The universal reaction to these words is ... a smile (or a smirk.)

How do you react to them?

Sure, you may acknowledge a referral with a gift voucher, or a bunch of flowers, or even some cash, but what about the note that goes with it?

These words immediately connect you with fun and enjoyment.

The first time I saw these words they were on cards, and printed in a slightly more ornate font to emphasize the humour.

The woman was a professional networker and she kept a bunch of these cards handy for whenever she got a referral. She would write a note of appreciation on the back of the card, pop it in an envelope and post it off. Simple.

But these words are not just a way to acknowledge referrals.

Other uses include

- a) Printing them as a backside of "scrap" note paper so your customers get the surprise later when they turn over your note
- b) You can use them as a headline on your marketing communication (I'm not saying it's a great headline, but is your current one as eye-catching?)
- c) As memorable compliment slips...

And finally, don't think these words are "too corny for my customers/clients".

Every business or service could use these words with vastly greater success than "Thanks for your referral", but so few actually will, that you're at a great advantage.

Ask yourself: "How often do I deal with a business or service that's let me know, I'm Terrific!!"

The Power of a Thank You

In recent years I have observed an increasing reliance on autoresponders, aweber tools and other means for small business owners and marketers to try to leverage their time. This is all well and fine, but this "insert peg in hole" culture has fostered an impersonal and homogenous experience for both clients and prospective clients.

And then we wonder why our professional service businesses are treated like price driven commodities? Hmm.

Even with suppliers we work with only occasionally, I can smell a template email response a mile away, and it makes me think: What, I'm not important enough that you couldn't find 20 seconds to send me a personal email reply?

How many people do hand-written thank-you notes now? Hardly anyone, of course. I can count on one hand the number of times I've received a short, thoughtful, hand-written note from someone--but I can also remember who they were and what their business is, to this day.

And people forget about the life-time value of a client's business, not just their first year or two's worth of invoices, so what does this say about that?

Start sending daily 2-3 short notes to suppliers, clients, colleagues, anyone you come into contact with, however minor the occasion. It's important to "smile as you write", otherwise it will seem like some contrived, dashed off attempt at connecting while trying to do 20 other things at the same time.

Other people have reported the following:

1) "In a very unexpected way, it has made me feel better about myself and my business as a service provider, which bleeds through into the energy I exude all day long".

"To anyone who doesn't think it makes a difference in how you walk, talk, and carry yourself and your expressions, I would say try this for yourself and see. I also find myself following through with clients more thoroughly and attentively, and having better focus and productivity".

"I think it has something to do with taking a few minutes to 'slow down' and give someone your undivided attention. We all crave feeling listened to and being acknowledged".

2) "On a more tangible level, I have had two important corporate referrals and increased amounts of business from regular clients to whom I've dropped notes in the mail (one of them nearly double)".

"I have also received expressions of true, bona fide human appreciation from both clients and vendors we work with, whom really will go the extra mile now. Little human touches in the impersonal 'we care, but not that much' ocean has an exponential effect on people's desire to know, like, trust, and do business with you".

It simply cements your relationships and builds trust and goodwill.

The object is NOT to simply garner new business or manipulate clients into putting forth additional efforts; if that's someone's thinking, it will be very apparent and backfire.

The object should be just in doing it itself without expectation of reward or recognition, and let things take care of themselves.

Write a note today to express your gratitude.

Appendix 2: The 8 most important principles for attracting more clients and growing your business.

Cracking the Marketing Code

Have you ever felt like marketing was a code that you hadn't yet cracked? And yet if you could crack this code you know marketing could really start working for you.

Well, there is a code and you can crack it.

To effectively market your professional services there are seven important things you must recognise, understand and practice. It will take some time and focus, but it won't cost you a fortune.

"The 8 Most Important Principles for Attracting More Clients and Growing Your Business."

The topics are as follows:

1. The Most Important Marketing Spirit
2. The Most Important Marketing Strategy
3. The Most Important Marketing Technique
4. The Most Important Marketing Activity
5. The Most Important Marketing Asset
6. The Most Important Marketing Tool
7. The Most Important Marketing Leverage
8. The most important Marketing Investment

You may be familiar with some of these ideas, but as they are divulged to you, you do need to do a little more than read them over quickly.

Think about them. And do the brief assignments at the end of every session. If you do, I believe you'll be a lot closer to cracking the marketing code for your business.

Each session of this series will be in the form of a dialog between an Independent Professional (IP) and a marketing coach (MC). Hopefully this will make the material a little more palatable and fun to read!

1. The Most Important Marketing Spirit

IP - I really don't enjoy doing marketing that much. I actually get overwhelmed by it. There seems to be so many things I could do and when I finally get around to doing them, I never really get the kind of results I'd hope for. Is there some kind of code or system to make marketing both more effective and easier?

MC - Yes, you might say there's a code you need to crack to make marketing work for you. There are seven important principles that you need to master, but the first one may be the most important of all. Without it, marketing your business or accomplishing anything else, for that matter, is very difficult.

It is the **Marketing Spirit** (or the proactive approach!).

IP - Sounds kind of 'head in the clouds to me'. Is this really practical?

MC - It's the most practical thing in the world. Tell me, what do you really enjoy doing the most in your business? What gets you excited? What is something you can do for hours and it never gets boring? What is it that gets you up early in the morning and keeps you up late at night?

IP - That's easy; it's when I'm working with my clients. When I'm consulting, training or coaching. I love it because when I work with my clients I can see their understanding growing and their business and lives changing before my eyes. I can't get enough of it.

MC - Perfect! And what's the spirit you bring to that work?

IP - Well, I guess you might call it the spirit of discovery and contribution, of making a difference.

MC - That's all I'm talking about. You bring a certain spirit to your work. And when you do, it's as if time stands still and you feel happy and fulfilled.

IP - Exactly.

MC - Well, I've discovered that you need to bring a certain spirit to marketing yourself as well. If you don't, it becomes a chore, something you avoid doing.

IP - But that's understandable. Marketing is very different from the work I do with my clients. When I'm working with them I'm always winning. Things are moving ahead. I can see progress. So, I bring that energy, or as you call it spirit, to what I do and then I get positive reinforcement that increases my energy.

With marketing, I try something, it doesn't work that well and then my poor results make me feel worse. So, what kind of spirit could I possibly bring to marketing?

MC - First of all, tell me, did it always go well with your clients? Did you always feel that energy that kept you going?

IP - I guess not. It took some time to really learn my craft. I kept at it and I was working at a larger firm for the first several years of my career. So, it wasn't all on me. I got support, input, ideas until things began to click and I mastered my profession.

MC - And were you taught how to market and sell yourself when you were with your firm?

IP - No, other people brought in clients. I just got the assignments. But after several years I felt I wanted a bigger challenge and went out on my own. I started my own practice a few years ago.

At first I didn't have to market much because I had a network I'd developed and business came to me by word-of-mouth. But despite the good work I've done for my clients, things

have slowed down somewhat because many of the contacts in the companies that referred me have retired or moved on.

MC - So now you're left with a practice that needs more business and you've never really had to market yourself. You're trying to produce results in an area where you have very little experience. Is it any wonder that you're not very good at it?

IP - I guess not. So, what I hear you saying is that with time, patience and practice I can get better at it and will then be able to bring some spirit to my marketing. Right?

MC - Almost right, but you really need to put the cart before the horse. You need to generate the spirit first. Then the whole process will be a lot easier.

IP - And that spirit is?

MC - You've got to approach marketing and learning about marketing in the "spirit of play." And play is about wonder, discovery, risk and being in the moment.

You need to let go of all your preconceived notions about what marketing is and set out to discover it newly. You're carrying around so much baggage about selling or marketing that it's impossible for you to see it for what it actually is.

IP - And that is?

MC - Marketing and selling is about sharing value. It's about helping people understand what you can do for them. It's about communicating elegantly about the difference that you make. And it's about finding and expressing your authentic self.

IP - That doesn't sound much like the marketing I know about which is about stretching the truth, boasting about what you can do, manipulating people into meeting with you and overcoming a boatload of objections.

MC - Well that may be marketing for some people, but wouldn't you prefer to learn an approach to marketing that was fun, interesting, engaging and actually added value to your potential clients before you even started working with them?

IP - Yeah, I'd take that any day!

MC - Great. So, let me give you something to play with until we next meet. I want you to think about and then write down the answer to this question to yourself: "What do I have to give to my clients?"

IP- That's it?

MC - Yes, and I don't want a feeble answer like, "My ten years of expertise as a consultant, trainer and coach." I really want you to look at your true value from all sides. And I want an in-depth list that expresses that value. And I want you to approach this exercise in the spirit of play. Have fun with it.

IP - OK, I'll do it. I look forward to our next meeting! (it would be a great exercise for you to actually do this!)

2. The most important marketing strategy – making marketing a game

MC – When we last met I left you with the question, "What do I have to give to my clients?" What did you come up with?

IP - At first I couldn't come up with much. I made a list of the many skills that I use in my practice. But none of these was very unique. I consult, I coach, I train. But so do a lot of other people.

So, I decided to ask a few of my clients, and what I heard surprised me. None of them even mentioned my basic skills. Instead they talked about my energy and enthusiasm, my commitment and my passion to make a difference with them.

MC - Yes, that's what I was looking for. What did you realise?

IP - Well, I saw that I brought all this positive energy to what I did but hardly any of it to marketing myself and my services. You were right, the first marketing principle is missing - the spirit of play. I do my marketing with zero energy or enthusiasm.

MC - A good thing to realise, because this week we're going to talk about the Most Important Marketing Strategy - making marketing a game. One of the big reasons you and many others struggle with marketing is that you don't see it as a game. You don't know the rules, how to play and how to win. It's no wonder you get lousy results.

I know you're familiar with baseball and cricket. Can you tell me the four main things a baseball and cricket player do when they play the game?

IP - Let's see, they throw the ball, catch the ball, hit the ball and run. That's about it.

MC - Great, and if you take 18 players (for baseball) or 22 players (for cricket) and put them out on a field and have them throw, catch, hit and run, do you have a game of baseball or cricket?

IP - No, it would be chaos. People would be doing all of those things randomly - but there wouldn't be a game.

MC – Exactly! No rules, no structure, no strategy and you don't have a game. But if you think, isn't that the way a lot of businesses market themselves? They do a bunch of marketing activities without any rules, structure or strategy.

Is it any wonder that you don't get consistent results from your marketing? But can you imagine what might happen if you realised marketing was a game that had specific rules, structure and strategy that you could follow to win?

IP - Yeah, I'd probably have a better chance of winning and attracting more clients. So how exactly does this game work?

MC - Well, my name for this game is Marketing Ball. Just like baseball you go around the bases until you score a run - or win a new client, or cricket where the team with the most

runs win, or the marketing person who is most consistent and persistent wins. Let me give you the basic rules.

You start at home-plate. To stand there you'd first better have a good idea of the target market you're selling to, the service you're selling, and the difference this service makes.

The game starts anytime you communicate to your prospects about you and your business. This could be done verbally, in writing, on the web, through a presentation, etc.

Your first job is to get to first base. You know you're on first base if you simply have the attention and interest of your prospect - they want to know more.

Your next job is to get to second base. You know you're on second base when your prospect is ready to explore working with you. They are beyond interest. They really want to know how you can help them.

Next you need to get to third base. You know you're on third base when your prospect is ready to buy. They are convinced your services will help them solve their problem and give them the results they're looking for.

Finally, you need to score a run by getting to home base. You know you're on home base when the prospect not only wants to work with you, but you've got a signed proposal and a cheque in hand. You're ready to start working with your new client.

IP - I love the baseball and cricket metaphor. It makes a lot of sense to me. But there's one thing you haven't told me...

MC - What you need to do to get onto the bases?

IP – Exactly! In baseball and cricket you hit the ball and run. How do you move around the bases? If I knew that I really think I could make this a game I could win.

MC - Yes, you could! So, let me give you a snapshot of what you need to get around the bases. And as we continue to meet, I'll explain in much more detail exactly what you need to do to win the game of Marketing Ball.

To get onto first base you need to generate attention and interest from your prospect.

To get onto second base you need to satisfy the prospect's need for information and build trust and credibility.

To get onto third base you must understand the real needs of the prospect and present a solution that will meet those needs.

To get to home you simply need to come to agreement on the terms of your service, including pricing.

IP - You make it sound so easy! But by breaking it down into these four steps it sounds approachable, something I could do and, as you say, make a game out of it. So where do I start?

MC - You first need to understand how to get prospects onto first base. That's the foundation of everything that follows. And since gaining attention and interest is the key to getting prospects onto first base, the question is, what are you currently saying to get that attention and interest?

IP - Well up to this point when people ask me what I do, I tell them I provide consulting, coaching and training and that I use many different, innovative approaches that are proven to work to improve health and wellbeing.

MC - And people jump up and down with excitement when you tell them this?

IP - Hardly! It just doesn't go anywhere. I'm excited about what I do and the tools I use to get great results, but if someone hasn't heard about me first or I haven't been referred by a satisfied client, I can talk and talk but nothing happens.

MC - So first we need to determine what does get attention and interest. Let me give you the formula first and then I have an assignment for you to test it in the real world.

What best gets a prospect's attention and interest is when they hear you have a solution to a problem that they can directly relate to. It needs to be very immediate and real.

What you're doing instead is talking about your service and your process. It's just too indirect. It's too hard to translate what this means for their specific situation. There's no answer to the question every prospect has, "What's in it for me?"

Tell me, who are your ideal clients?

IP - My ideal clients? *(this is an important question for you to answer – who are your ideal clients?)*

MC - And what's the biggest problem they're experiencing that you can help them with?

IP - They feel unfulfilled and that something is missing in their life because they lack energy.

MC - OK that will work. It's a good start.

Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you what's called an Audio Logo. It's an attention-getting statement that you use when someone asks you what you do. And then I want you to get out and talk to people in your target market and use your Audio Logo and see what happens.

Here's the formula that I want you to work with and fine-tune as you use it with people. When asked what you do, you say the kind of people you work with followed by the main problem they are experiencing. So, it might go something like this:

"I work with people who feel unfulfilled and that something is missing in their life because they lack energy."

IP - Not bad, I think that does zero in on the typical client I work with. They know they could do better but they don't know how. But what do I say after this? Should I then say more about what I do, how I do it, and the results they get?

MC - We'll get into the details of the next part of this conversation later, but one of the keys to success with an Audio Logo is knowing when to shut up! Don't say anything. Wait for a response. And then if they ask you something, steer the person around to talking more about their situation, their problem. Don't focus on what you do. Focus on them. Focus on their issues.

And when we talk next we'll discuss what could be called "The Most Important Marketing Technique." It will help you understand better how to play Marketing Ball and get around the bases using effective marketing conversations.

3. The most important marketing technique - speaking the language of results

Our story so far...

MC - How did it go with your assignment to test your Audio Logo with several people?

IP - It went better than I'd expected. I realised that it just wasn't what I said that made a difference, it's what I didn't say. I did what you recommended - used the Audio Logo and then shut up and noticed how people responded.

Several people didn't respond much at all and I was disappointed until I realised they weren't really prospects anyway. I used to waste my time talking to people who would never buy my services. But some people actually were qualified prospects and I did get their attention.

MC - Tell me how it went.

IP - Well, the hardest thing was resisting the impulse to jump in and tell them all the things I could do for them. Instead, when they asked me more about what I did, I turned it around. I was pretty proud of myself. I got them talking about the problems they experience in life and how their lives could be better.

MC - Sounds like you did well. How did those conversations end?

IP - Well, a few gave me their business cards. But I'm a little stuck. I'm not sure what to do next. It looks like I got them onto first base but I have no idea how to get them onto second.

MC - What we're going to talk about today is how to do that - what I call the Most Important Marketing Technique. In the context of the Marketing Ball model you might say I'm going to show you how to hit the ball and run the bases the most efficient way by using the language of results.

But your running is off to a pretty good start. Can you tell me a little more about what happened in your initial conversations? And can you tell me what didn't go so well?

IP - Although I did a pretty good job of letting them talk, I had a very hard time telling them about what I did for clients without getting into my process. A couple times I got very conceptual and I could see their eyes glazing over!

MC - I know that look well. Tell me more.

IP - And I was terrible at wrapping up the conversation and knowing how to move things forward. So even though I was making progress, I didn't feel I was "knocking the ball out of the park."

MC - I'm glad you brought that up. It's easy to put our expectations way too high when we talk about our services. The goal is to get on first base - to get some attention and interest and then to establish a little trust and credibility. Finally, we want to open the door for a possible follow-up.

However, we're impatient to do more than that - to knock the ball out of the park. We want to utter our Audio Logo and have someone say, "Oh, my God, you do that!!?? I've been looking for someone who could do that for years!!! I have a half million-pound budget. Can you come over today and help us out???"

IP - Yeah, I get it. That's never going to happen. What I hear you saying is that base hits and going around the bases one at a time is what it takes to get a new client.

MC - Exactly. But you can still learn how to more quickly and efficiently get a prospect on one base after another until they become a client. That's by using the language of results.

Are you familiar with the word syntax?

IP - Isn't that the way words are arranged to form phrases and sentences?

MC - Yes, and syntax is what makes sense out of things. If I said, "I'm going outside to play cricket" it would mean something very different than saying "Outside play I'm going to cricket." The words are the same but the syntax is different and the meaning changes.

IP - And this has what to do with marketing?

MC - Well, in your assignment I showed you the first steps of Marketing Syntax. I told you to say two things - the clients you worked with and the problems they were experiencing. This is what got you some attention and interest.

Marketing Syntax is the way marketing messages are arranged to generate attention, interest, desire and action. If you use the right order you get better results than if you use the wrong order.

And what I've found to be the most effective overall Marketing Syntax are messages arranged in this order: Target Market - Problem - Outcome - Value - Proof - Offer.

IP - And you're saying that when I talk to people about my business and I use the language of results or Marketing Syntax I'll ultimately attract more clients?

MC - I've proven it over and over. Let me give you a brief summary of how it works. In this case we'll use the scenario where you're networking and meeting with prospective clients and the topic of your business comes up. You want to try your best to talk about your business in this order:

Target Market - You always want to say this first. People want to know that you recognise and understand them. You let them know immediately that your message is for them. "I work with..."

Problem - Next you want to talk about the problems, challenges, issues and predicaments they are facing. This shows you understand them and can relate to them. They automatically want to know how you can help. "...who have XYZ challenges..."

Outcome - This is the mirror image of the Problem. The next thing people want to know is what ultimate Outcome or solution they'll get from you. They want to be assured you can actually help. "Our clients say the main thing they get from us is..."

Value - Next people want to know more about that Outcome. They want to know the various benefits they can expect to receive. So, all the benefits you provide are very welcome news. "And some of the key benefits they receive are..."

Proof - After people have heard your Outcomes and Value they want some Proof. "Have you done this before with people like me?" And the best way to give Proof is by telling success stories. "A client we worked with recently had a similar issue..."

Offer - Finally, after you've got this far, you need to make an Offer of something. People at this point want even more information about your ideas. "I have an article that explains this in more detail. Can I send it to you?"

IP - Wow, you make it sound so simple, but I'll bet it's harder than that. It seems to me that persuasion is more of an art and you've reduced it to a six-step process!

MC - Well, it is harder than that - after all, the basic rules of sentence structure are pretty simple too, but it takes some time to learn a language. Nevertheless, having a formula to follow is a great way to get the hang of basic persuasion.

I call Marketing Syntax the most important marketing technique because you can use it every single time you communicate about your business - in a one-on-one conversation, in a letter or email, in the content of your web site or even in an article.

So, the next time you talk or write about your business, use Marketing Syntax and you're guaranteed to get more attention, interest, desire and action than if you didn't use it.

My assignment for you is to talk to more people about your business and to continue the conversation using Marketing Syntax. After you've got attention with the Target Market and Problem, generate more interest and desire with your Outcome and some Value. Then move people to action by making an Offer to send them more information.

And when we talk next we'll discuss what I call "The Most Important Marketing Activity". This is how to get your name and message out there to a wider audience and gain trust and credibility without spending a lot of money.

4. The Most Important Marketing Activity

Giving It Away

MC - Last week I gave you the assignment to pay attention to Marketing Syntax when you spoke about your business. How did it go?

IP - I had the chance to use it several times and all of this is starting to make more sense. During my conversations I tried to pay attention to where I was in the process and I realised that what I usually did was talk about my business without regard to where that talk was leading. When I paid attention to marketing syntax I actually knew where I was, where I was going and what I needed to do next.

MC - That's great. Did you get anyone to the offer? And if so, what did you offer.

IP - Two actually. What I also found interesting was that if I inserted the various parts of the marketing syntax strategically I didn't have to do a lot of talking. They served as guideposts in the conversation. In one meeting, I shared a couple value points and a brief story and he started to tell me all about his business. Then he asked me if I could help him! So, I said that I had some additional information I could send to him about my services and that I'd be happy to get back to him to discuss his needs.

MC - Sounds good. And when you get that meeting it sounds like you'll be soundly on second base, ready to start the selling process.

IP - Exactly! So, I'm feeling more comfortable about these marketing conversations and using marketing syntax. I think with practice I'll get better and better. But what I wanted to ask you today was what are all the other ways I can get the word out about my services? I think meeting people in social and business situations can definitely work but I know there are other strategies I could use.

MC - Today I'm going to talk to you about the most important marketing activity. It's the most powerful activity utilised by Independent Professionals to attract more clients. And it can be used in many different ways. The most important marketing activity is giving stuff away.

IP - What kind of stuff?

MC - Usually valuable information. You see, as an Independent Professional you sell your expertise, your know-how. So, the best way to build credibility and prove that you can help them is to give them samples of that expertise and know-how. You can give away valuable information in the form of articles and reports, talks and presentations, newsletters and eZines, recordings/itunes and video/you tube clips and content on a web site.

IP - So, this is why you suggested giving away an article when someone showed interested in my services.

MC - Yes, that's a great multi-purpose information tool. What I call a "Core Issue Article" that gives prospects a big picture of your field of expertise which can be given away in many different ways. You can offer it to someone after speaking with them, you can post it on your web site, you can publish it in a magazine or on the web, you can hand it out after a talk. One article can be used for years to give prospects a sample of what you do.

IP - But certainly you need more than one article?

MC - My favourite giveaway is a free talk or teleclass. Any opportunity I have to get in front of prospects with my ideas is very powerful. They don't just read my ideas, they get to see me in action. It's like the difference between reading a car brochure and taking a test drive. All this information that you give away tends to have a cumulative effect. For instance, you meet someone and give them an article, but they're really not ready to work with you yet. So, you add them to your eZine list. A few months later you announce a teleclass to those on your list. This prospect attends the teleclass and then takes advantage of an offer after the teleclass for an assessment of his/her personal wellbeing.

IP - So you're talking about giving away information as an ongoing marketing activity?

MC - Yes, it never stops! The great thing is that it's easy to do. Everyone appreciates free information. People search the Internet for free information. Some of those who get the free information will never give you a second thought. But many will appreciate it and study it and eventually will take advantage of your paid services.

IP - Well there's one thing that's not so easy. And that's what to put into all this free information. What do people want and how can I keep generating ideas for articles, presentations and the like?

MC - There's a saying that a teacher is someone who knows one thing more than the student. You don't have to be the world's pre-eminent expert in a particular field to share what you know. A good place to start is with your clients' problems. What are some of the issues that your clients come to you with?

IP - I see what you're getting at. Here's a few: Haven't got a much energy as I used to? Put on 3 kg in weight? Lack motivation to do things?

MC - Exactly. And each and every one of those could become an article or a presentation. You've solved problems like those dozens of times with your clients. What might seem obvious to you is not so obvious to your clients. So, you provide information on those areas where your clients are experiencing problems, issues and challenges. You give them a taste of what you know and how to solve those problems.

IP - But I'm a little worried about giving everything I know away. Why would they need my services then?

MC - There are some who will take your free information and use it to the best of their ability and never use your paid services. But they'd never use your services anyway. And there are others who will take your information and never apply any of it. Again, they would likely never use your services anyway. And then there are those who will get your free information, realise that the ideas are valuable but also realise that realistically they

would never apply it unless they got some help. Those are the people who will become your clients. And some of the people in the first and second category will pass the information on to people in the third category. The bottom line is simple. Giving away free information works. The more I give away, the more money I make!

5. The most important marketing asset - It's In the List

MC - Last time we discussed the most important marketing activity - giving information away. And your assignment was to start the process of developing some ideas for articles and presentations. What did you come up with?

IP - I came up with a lot of topics. In fact, once I started, it was hard to stop! I realised, that each of these topics could address a need or concern of my clients and I could include a story of how I helped an actual client with that issue. I started one article and I'm thinking about some tele-classes I could do as well.

MC - This is a good start. Now you need to turn this into a system that you can use consistently. You need to get your ideas in front of as many people as possible.

IP - Which brings me to the next question. How do I get my ideas out there? I think I can create a lot of valuable material but I don't have much of an audience. Where can I send my articles? Who will attend my tele-classes?

MC - This brings us to one of the most important topics of all - your Most Important Marketing Asset. This asset is a list of qualified prospects. It's so important because once you've developed a list you can market to that list repeatedly. It can become the major source of new business.

IP - How do I use a list like this and more importantly, how do I develop this list in the first place?

MC - Let me paint a picture for you, incorporating all the principles we've talked about so far. You're doing marketing with the right spirit, playing it as a game; your strategy is to get prospects into the game by using marketing ball; your technique is to communicate using marketing syntax so that you are able to move people along in the marketing game; and you now have the marketing activity of giving information away to get the whole process started.

But without prospects to play the game with you, nothing's going to happen. Now you can gain prospects one by one, through networking and referrals. Nothing wrong with that. But you'll get momentum in your marketing if you can get a lot of people into your game. You do this by getting a lot of people on your list and sending them free information regularly, and also making offers for various services to them. Let me outline the steps. First you make an offer for your free "Core Issue Article." The offer for the article is on your web site, you make it through talks and you make this offer to people you meet through networking. When someone accepts the offer to get your article you also add their name to your email newsletter list. If people do this from our web site they sign up themselves. If you get cards from a talk, you go to your web site and add the name and email yourself. Of course, you only do this with people's permission.

IP - So the Core Issue Article becomes the "bait" you use to get people onto your list?

MC - Exactly. It's not much use to just have a list of a lot of names and emails. You need to send free information to them regularly.

IP - And what I send are articles based on all those topics I've been developing?

MC - You're catching on fast! I recommend you send something to your list at least twice a month. Weekly, if you think you can handle it. The more often you send stuff the faster your list grows.

IP - How big does my list have to be to get started?

MC - Not big at all. I started my list with about 50 people. These were people I mostly met through talks and networking. I'd do anything and everything to get people onto my list and then send an article via my eZine once a week.

IP - Can you be more specific about how you got the list to grow?

MC - Well, I've already mentioned talks and networking. Early on I went to a big conference, compiled all the names and sent them an email with a sample article and invited them to join the list. A percentage of them signed up. One promotion I did was to write a special report and offer it to current subscribers if they told their friends. And I put a link to my sign-up page in the signature of my emails. But the best overall promotion I didn't even realise I was doing. People were passing the eZine along to their friends who were then signing up because of word-of-mouth. But the reason this happened was because of the quality of the material I was sending out.

IP - So like any word-of-mouth, quality was the key factor? Makes sense. But what was the result of all of this?

MC - The eZine grew slowly but surely. It took me over 3 years to get to 2,000 names. By that time, I was starting to get a lot of business because of the eZine. They would read the eZine, visit my web site, learn about my services and give me a call. The best thing was that when they called me they were ready to work with me. They were familiar and comfortable with me by then.

IP - So this wouldn't have worked so well if you'd just sent out something to your list once in awhile and hadn't paid much attention to growing the list. I'm starting to see how all your principles started to come together.

MC - And the good news is you can start immediately. Get a few initial subscribers to your list and they will get your first article as soon as possible (certainly within 2 weeks). It doesn't need to be perfect, it just needs to be useful information your clients can use. And if you keep on doing that, your list will grow. Every time someone joins the list they enter into your game of marketing ball.

IP - Right, I have their attention if they sign up. And then by giving them more information and telling about my services, some of these will get up to second base and want to explore working with me. But isn't there another step? You talked about a sign-up form on my web site and more information about my services on the web site as well. The question is, how important is the web site in this whole process? I have one but it's not

doing much. It's just sitting there. Hardly anyone finds me on the web. I send potential clients there sometimes. How does the web site fit in?

MC - The web site is extraordinarily important. In fact I call the web site your Most Important Marketing Tool. We'll talk about it in detail next time. But first let's give you the assignment for this week. Your assignment for you this week is to: 1. Get your eZine set up. 2. Contact as many people as you know and send them a sample article and invite them to join your list. 3. Decide perhaps on a secondary article, format it and send it out. Follow up and enrol them to the free two weekly newsletter. Next time we'll talk about how to integrate all of this into your web site.

6. The most important marketing tool - creating the Hub for Your Marketing

MC - In the last session we explored the most important marketing asset - building a list of prospective clients and then staying in touch with those prospects over time. I gave you the essentials of starting an eZine. How did it go?

IP - Since I had already developed some ideas for articles, it went quite well. I've signed some people up to a newsletter and I've got some ideas for specific newsletters for specific groups. Then I sent an email to all the people on my list and sent them an invitation to join the list along with a sample article. Several responded. I now have 50 people on my list. The eZine will be sent out twice a month, so in two weeks I'll have my first free marketing information in the hands of these people.

MC - That's a great start. Now you really only need to do a few things to make this a success. The first is to write good material every single time. If you do, your subscribers will pass it along and in many cases will ask if they can publish your articles on their sites and in their eZines.

IP - OK, I can do that. But let's talk about the next step. I don't have much of a web site. How can I improve it to help increase my subscriber base?

MC - First, let's talk about the purpose of a web site. The number one purpose of a web site is to capture the names and contact information of your prospects. The way you do that is to offer free information on your site as we talked about earlier. The second purpose of a web site is to establish trust and credibility with your prospective clients. The third purpose is to actually market and sell your services.

IP - I always thought the first purpose was to market and sell your services. Why do you say this is number three?

MC - Simply because it's very hard to accomplish number three until you've done number one and two first. Take a minute and think about how you visit and interact with web sites. What are some of the things that happen when you first go to a site? - And I'm talking about whether you just find the site on a search engine or a trusted friend sends you there.

IP - Well, I take a quick look to see if I understand what the site is about and then click on various pages and read a few things here and there. Once in a while I'll print something out. Then I click off and go somewhere else.

MC - And how often do you bookmark that page and come back again?

IP - Not too often.

MC - That's right, and if the site was not geared to capturing your name and contact information by giving away some free information, the chances are great that you simply won't go back. So, the number one purpose is to capture that information.

IP - And this is the purpose of an eZine sign-up form on the site? Is that all I need?

MC - That's the purpose but you need more. It used to work to just ask people to sign up for your eZine. These days you need to give away some valuable information first. You need to think: What piece of information would someone visiting my site really find useful? It could be an article a report or a workbook. Then you feature that free information prominently on the home page of your web site. In fact, on my web site, there are three places people can link to from the home page to get my free workbook. The way it works is really quite simple. Here are the steps.

1. Turn your information into a pdf or word file and load it on your web server.
2. Create a page that promotes the free information and that also includes a sign-up form. Of course, let people know that to get the free information they will also be added to your eZine list.
3. When people fill out and submit the form they get a confirmation email. In this confirmation letter you include the link to your free information in pdf format. They click on the link in the confirmation email and, viola, they have your free information.

IP - But the whole point is that now they are a subscriber to my eZine and I can send them more valuable information until they finally decide to seriously check out my services on my web site.

MC - Exactly. And this brings us to the second purpose of the web site. It needs to create trust and credibility in you and your services. Because with the eZine continually pointing people back to your web site, sooner or later more of your subscribers will check out your site in more depth. And when they do, the information on your site had better build a very solid, credible case for you and your business. They may not contact you yet. They might think about contacting you. They may read more information on your site first. They might email you with a question. They may contact you after months have passed. But your web site and the information it contains continues to build that trust and credibility every time they visit.

IP - OK, that makes sense. I know I've visited a lot of web sites that didn't build that trust and credibility. And I never went back. But can you tell me specifically the things that build that trust and credibility. Is it primarily your background?

MC - No, that's just one aspect. You need a lot of things. First, the site needs to be professionally designed. If it's not, it won't be attractive, easy to read and effortless to navigate. If you don't have those basics, it's all over. You'll look like an amateur and your visitors will go elsewhere. Next you want a lot of solid content. You want free information that gives people a sample of how you think and work. You want information on the kind of clients you work with and how you work with those clients. You want several good case studies of successful projects, and of course you want detailed information on your

services. Finally, you want some background information on who you are and why you're qualified to offer the services you do.

IP - It sounds like another way of saying that the web site should answer all the questions of someone visiting the site and make them recognise your professionalism, your expertise, your experience. I can see how all of this would build trust and credibility. Now you said the third purpose of the web site is to market and sell your services. How is this different from number two?

MC - You want to have pages on your web site that are actually "sales letters" that take people from a discussion of an issue or problem to picking up the phone to call you. In some cases this letter will lead people to a form that they fill out. And in other cases it might lead to a "buy link" where they actually order services or products from your site. The thing to realise is that not many people will go through step three until you've taken them through one and two first. Someone might have read your eZine for months and visited your site several times before they even read a sales letter, let alone contact you or order something on the site. Using this basic strategy people have sold coaching and consulting services, filled workshops, sold manuals, teleclasses and filled 6-month group programs. To accomplish this you must have sales pages that take visitors from A to Z - from the headline that talks about the problem, to benefits of the service, to the order form at the end.

IP - I'm starting to see why you call the web site the most important marketing tool. If I just sent out the eZine I wouldn't be able to do all of this would I?

MC - No you wouldn't. The web sites becomes the hub of everything in your marketing. It's your store front, it's your brochure, it's your sales letter. It's always up there day and night for people to check it out. So, you'd better make it good! You want good, competent design and you want good, solid information. And you also need to make it persuasive by communicating value at every step. If you don't, people may visit but they certainly won't come back and they definitely won't become clients.

Here's your assignment for this week: Take a very close look at your (our) web site and ask yourself if it's really doing the three things we talked about today. Is it set up to capture the contact information of prospective clients, is it designed and written so as to build trust and credibility and is it organised to lead people through the marketing and sales process so that they either respond to you directly or buy something on your site?

7. The Most Important Marketing Leverage

Creating Packages and Programs

MC - I gave you a lot to work on last week. How was your progress?

IP - I'm making good progress. What do you mean by marketing leverage?

MC - I mean getting more out of less. Or in the case of services, packaging what you offer in a way that increases the value of the services, increases the number of responses and increases the number of sales or orders.

If you've done everything right to this point, people will be looking at your services with an open mind. They like your basic message. They feel comfortable about you. Perhaps they've been subscribing to your eZine for a while before they land on the services page

(the other pages on our website). And now they are reading about an actual service you're offering. Really only two things can happen:

One, they can click off and go somewhere else. Two, they can respond in some way, either by calling you or filling out a form on the site. So, you want to do everything possible to increase the chances of number two happening.

IP - And what are some of the ways I can do that?

MC - Lots: Headline, body copy, benefits, stories, formatting. You need to put in everything possible to build your case about each of your services. But the most important thing is to find the most powerful appeal for this particular service. What is it that makes this service stand out amongst similar services? What are you offering that others aren't?

IP - Can you give me a "for instance?"

MC - Yes, my marketing action groups. These are a series of teleclasses held with a group over 6 months. They teach all the things about marketing we've been talking about for the past few weeks. But what I realised was that it wasn't the content that made the difference. The key was the support aspect. I said that most people already knew what to do - they just weren't doing it. So, I called the groups the "Holding Your Feet to the Fire Marketing Action Groups."

The support aspect wasn't just a feature or benefit, it was the central marketing theme. And it worked amazingly well. All my groups have filled very quickly at a good price.

IP - So I just can't sell a service that's generic, it has to have a key element that is highly desired by my target market. How do I figure that out?

MC - Sometimes you just know it through working with clients. They tell you, you intuit it. Or you ask your clients questions to get to the heart of the matter. What's their most pressing problem? What would they happily pay for if you solved it for them?

You can see this in advertising for products. In laundry detergent you can use many appeals: fresh smell, soft to the touch, whiter and brighter. But you also have to include that element that actually proves you can deliver on that promise such as "sparkling green crystals."

So, I didn't just tell people I'd hold their feet to the fire. That's a metaphor. I actually explained exactly what this support would consist of. There was a lot of specific detail. I built a solid case. Without hype and hyperbole you can build a case like this that's very compelling to people. It draws them in making them want to know more and ultimately gets them to respond to your offer.

IP - What else is necessary in outlining the services I offer?

MC - This concept of packaging a service is very important. I didn't just offer to support people in putting their marketing into action. I created a very specific program to do so. And the program had parameters. It happened at a certain time in a certain way with a certain approach. It was an actual program. And these parameters of a program make what you're offering so much more tangible.

And what is tangible is simply more attractive to people. It's real, it's solid, it's credible. And people will gladly pay for something that's tangible over something that's intangible. People tend to be uncomfortable about buying intangibles.

IP - Can you give me an outline, if you will, for creating a tangible service like this and then marketing it?

MC - Sure, let me see what I can do...

1. Start with that problem or issue first. What are you solving for people? And what is the biggest thing you do to solve that problem? Also, what will the outcome be once they've used your service?

2. Next work on the actual tangible structure of the service. What happens, what do they get, what are the details, what are the deliverables. Just write all of them down. Don't worry about the order at first.

3. Now consider the price and the time you need to invest in delivering this service. What will it take to deliver the level of service necessary and to produce the results the clients are looking for? And what do you have to charge for that to both make it accessible to the client and profitable for you? You really can't proceed until you answer this one.

4. Writing the marketing copy of a sales letter comes next. And you need to remember that this takes time. It often takes several hours. So, don't try to write it all the morning before you launch it. And you'll usually be editing more than writing.

5. Here's my basic writing formula. And of course this can vary tremendously depending on any number of factors.

a) The headline that addresses the key issue as we discussed.

b) The opening paragraphs that outline the problem in more detail - making sure you convey the fact that you really understand their situation.

c) The next paragraph and some bullet points talk about the actual potential outcomes of this service.

d) The bulk of the letter is detailed information on what they actually get in this program - the various benefits they receive.

e) Near the end of the letter you explain the basic structure and logistics of this service.

f) Finally, you make the offer. Here's a summary of what you get and here's the price. And this is what you need to do to find out more or to sign up.

If you are selling this service to individuals it will be different than selling to companies. In the first, you may give a price and an order form. In the second you may decide not to include the price and simply ask them to respond via phone or email. It often takes many tests before your marketing letter gets the results you want. So, don't be discouraged on the first try. It took me a few years to formulate my Action Groups.

IP - And once you have this together, how do you go about marketing it?

MC - You ought to have a promotion plan that is focused on this particular service if possible. This is true especially if you are offering a service to a broad audience that is held on a specific date. You want to get the word out to as many people as possible and get them to read your sales letter. If this is done online, you need an email list or access to someone else's list.

However, if you are offering a high-end service to companies, you can market this service to one company at a time. And the sales letter may be only one part of the promotion. After they've read the sales letter, the verbal sales process and proposal process starts.

IP - OK, so where do I start?

MC - Start by not being too ambitious. Don't start with the biggest, most complex, most expensive service. Start with something you can get your hands around and that you can promote easily. For instance, a TeleClass or Workshop with a target of a dozen participants will be easier to promote than a 6-month program.

Here's your assignment for this week: Use the 5-point outline above to start creating and writing about your service. Do as much as you can.

Next week we'll talk about "The Most Important Marketing investment" which is where you need to put most of your marketing time, money and energy.

8. The most important marketing investment

MC - The investment you need to make here comes in two words and we will make this short because I know you want to get out there and grow your business. The words are: **COMMITMENT** and **PERSISTENCE**.

IP – Is this the commitment and persistence to follow through on everything we have talked about?

MC – Exactly, good luck!

"By Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Please visit Robert's web site at www.actionplan.com for additional marketing articles and resources on marketing for professional service businesses."

Appendix 3: Marketing messages that work

How to create an effective marketing message based on the following four steps:

1. Your target market or ideal client.

You need to identify who you work with so that your prospect will know immediately if your message is for them or not.

2. The problem this client is dealing with.

This gets the prospect's attention by hitting a nerve and letting them know you understand their situation.

3. The outcome that resolves this problem.

Declaring the kind of outcome they can expect makes them want to know more about your services.

4. Story or example that proves you can do it.

Telling a story makes your services real to the prospect. If you helped someone else, you can help them as well.

I'd like to share some of the better messages with you. Use them as a template to help you create your own messages. Stick to the four steps and you'll have a much more powerful and attention-getting message.

Example 1 - Healthcare Consultant

We work with healthcare organisations, who struggle with hiring and keeping really good people.

We help them reduce turnover by up to 70% and hire employees that are more productive.

A good example is one client that was really disappointed by the work ethic of new employees and struggled with 65% turnover.

We were able to significantly raise the bar on employee work ethic and reduce turnover by 70%.

Example 2 - Financial Planner

I help people with six figure incomes who are getting clobbered by taxes, staring at college and retirement costs and wondering how in the world they're going to pay for it all.

I show them how to send their kids to private college for about the same cost as public colleges, maintain their lifestyles at the same time and fund retirement.

A typical example is a couple that came to me who have two children that will attend college. They didn't know how much college would cost, how much they should save and how much they were going to need to retire. I showed them how to save over £18,000 in taxes oriented around college funding by finding new ways to save on income taxes. I call these savings a "Tax Scholarship." That might mean an additional £200,000 for retirement or a more expensive college for their kids.

Example 3 - Management Consultant

I work with CEO's of small to medium sized businesses who are experiencing a steady decline in productivity with their management teams and employees and are finding training programs ineffective. Lack of personal accountability and self-management skills has led to something that looks like procrastination and productivity loss.

We increase self-management and personal accountability through practical, easy-to-administer tools that develop leadership growth not only in a local setting, but with remote team members.

One of my clients was a commercial construction firm that had tried several times (and over several years) to implement a strategic planning process. However, the MD had difficulty following up with the many goals that were set and holding the executive team accountable for all the steps and due dates. We implemented an online solution that gave the MD a bigger picture of what was happening with the strategic plan and gave him the means to follow up quickly with team players that were falling behind. I advised him to move more into a coaching role with the team through this process. It resulted in the company implementing for the first time in 10 years all the goals they had set in their strategic plan. This had a very important impact on the bottom line in a depressed commercial construction market. While their competitors were struggling, they were doing well and did not have to lay off any employees.

Example 4 - Life and Relationship Coach

I work with individuals who have been unsuccessful in finding their ideal partner and with couples who struggle to keep their marriage intact.

I help them to understand themselves more fully as individuals and I introduce them to concepts, exercises and skills that will increase their chances for a meaningful and lasting partnership.

I worked with a couple who were planning to get married but they argued incessantly. One of the partners had serious doubts about moving forward. I helped them identify the real underlying problems and taught them to see "the relationship" as a priority. They learned many things such as how to create a mutually satisfying partnership through respect, responsibility, and good communication. Their fighting stopped and they were able to resolve their stuck areas. They ended up getting married and three years later they are happy and expecting their first child.

Example 5 - Retail Consultant

I work with independent retailers who are frustrated with trying to get shoppers to buy.

I help them create the kind of shopping experience that gets people to come inside AND buy.

A used music store that I worked with was struggling to get people to stop and come in the store instead of just walking by. I helped them transform their dark, unappealing window, into a dynamic storefront that would get their customers' attention.

Example 6 - Management Consultant

We work with busy entrepreneurs and business owners of successful small and medium companies who are frustrated because they are leaving money on the table as a result of not getting important back-burner projects completed.

We help them get a laser beam focus on what will move their business off the plateau and get those key projects completed and producing results for them, not gathering dust on the shelf.

We recently worked with a 150-year old manufacturing company. In order to bid for bigger projects, they needed a higher level of certification in their industry. They had a history of knowing what they needed to do but failing to execute it because they were so busy manufacturing their product. We helped them develop an easy, step-by-step plan so they could see how it was possible. Now they are certified and able to track their inventory, bid for more profitable projects and keep their customers happy. Just as important for them was the pride and accomplishment of working together as a team and achieving the goal.

You'll note that all of these marketing messages have adhered to the four steps. It's clear who the service is for, why the service is needed in the first place, what the service actually delivers and proof that they have achieved tangible results with clients.

It doesn't get much more complicated than that. If your marketing message is not getting results for you, use this formula to increase its impact.

Your marketing message is the foundation of your business. Create a good one and reap the rewards for years to come!

"By Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Please visit Robert's web site at www.actionplan.com for additional marketing articles and resources on marketing for professional service businesses."

Appendix 4: The 3 rules of successful selling

After fifty years of studying businesses of all kinds Dun & Bradstreet (the world's leading provider of financial information on companies – their database holds information on 100 million companies!) concluded that the entirety of business wisdom can be summarised in one statement: “Businesses succeed because of high sales; businesses fail because of low sales. All else is commentary.”

Therefore, the most important thing you can do if you want your business to survive and thrive is to learn to sell. Selling is a skill that can be learned by anyone. You just have to follow some simple procedures and obey three simple rules. Here are those three simple rules. If you follow them then your success in selling is guaranteed.

Rule 1: Your customers (and customers to be) are not stupid.

In today's world people are more educated and informed than ever before. People are more sophisticated and discerning. People just don't fall for blatant and manipulative tactics. I get a little frustrated when I am told that “the sale ends on Friday”. I know, and you know, that it is immediately replaced with a new sale that starts on Saturday!

People know that there is no such thing as a free lunch. No-one is very surprised when they get selected to enter the Reader's Digest free prize draw. The successful salesperson treats their customers and customers to be with respect.

Rule 2: Sell how you like to be sold to.

When I ask people how they like to be sold to, I always get some very similar responses. People like to be treated with respect and courtesy. People like to be listened to. People like the salesperson to be interested in finding out what they want. People want the salesperson to put their interests first. People want to be helped to make a decision that is right for them. Why then would anyone attempt to sell any differently? To a certain extent you already know what good selling is!

Rule 3: People are convinced that salespeople want to sell them something. They are right, so tell them!

Perhaps because of previous encounters, people can be rather suspicious of salespeople. In the back of their mind they are worried that the salesperson will try to push them into buying something. To overcome this fear, just tell people what you are doing.

Tell them that your business exists by engaging in commercial transactions or relationships with customers. You provide products and / or services to customers and they pay money for them. However, what you do first is to understand what is important to the prospective customer. When you understand this, you will see if your products and/or services can help them. If they can, then you will recommend an appropriate solution. The customer can then decide to say “yes” or “no” to the proposal. By being up front with the customer you remove any fears they may have and establish trust with them.

Mastering the art and science of selling is one of the best investments you can ever make to ensure your business succeeds in today's competitive modern marketplace. Secure your future prosperity and become a master of selling.

Appendix 5: The mailing challenge

Someone asked for some feedback on a postcard mailing he had done to drive people to his web site. They got virtually no results.

Without even seeing the postcard, it's easy to understand why it didn't work. Postcards and other mailings are amongst the trickier marketing tactics. You can lose a lot of money fast, if you don't know what you're doing.

Too many times people mail thousands of letters or postcards hoping for a deluge of responses, only to receive not one single response. It can be enough to put you off of marketing forever.

Mailings of all kinds can work. People have used them to get great results and create lots of leads and get new business. But there are certain things you need to understand before you jump in. First, a few don'ts:

Don't Mail to Strangers

If you're going to mail, the best people are the ones on your prospect list. Which is why it's so important to build a list in the first place. These people know you and are much more likely to read and respond to what you've sent.

Don't Try to Close

A mailing is, for the most part, a marketing vehicle, not a selling tool. That is, it's designed to stimulate qualified responses from prospects. Those who respond are the ones you set up sales appointments with (by phone or in person).

Don't Mail Too Much

Mass mailings can be dangerous. First, if the mailing is ineffective, you've thrown a lot of money down the drain. Second, if you get a lot of responses, it may be too hard to follow up with them all, and your leads will be lost. Start small.

Don't Always Expect a Response

Some of the best mailings are personalised letters, sent to qualified prospects, and then followed up by telephone to make an appointment. They may never call you from the letter, but they will often take a call from you.

And a few dos:

Do Follow Marketing Syntax

Be clear about exactly who this letter is for. Start your letter or postcard with a problem your prospects are experiencing. Follow that with a desired outcome. Then use a brief story for proof and credibility. Follow this with several benefits of learning more. Then end with a call to action.

Do Personalise Your Letter

What mail do you open up and read first? A personalised letter. Hand-write the address on the envelope. Use the return address in the heading and their name in the salutation. Make it look like it was sent from one person to another and you'll get a better response.

Do Use Postcards for Events

The best results often from postcard mailings come from inviting people on your list to introductory events. Both sides should contain detailed information on what the event is about, the benefits of attending, plus date, time, price and how to respond.

Do the figures

Mailings of any kind are expensive. It's not unusual that, hoping for a great response, people will send out hundreds or thousands of pieces, and never really think through how the finances of the marketing and sales process is going to work.

Let's look at more details on this one:

Let's say you decide to mail 1000 postcards to a list you've purchased or compiled. The purpose is to get them to visit your web site.

Postcards plus postage will cost you at least 25p each. So your total investment is £250.

If you get a great response, just 5% will visit your site. Yes, 95% will go in the bin in about 3 seconds. So that's 50 visitors at a visitor cost of £5 each.

Next, they land on our web page. What exactly do we want them to do there? We had better make sure they see an in-depth sales information that motivates them to take some action and also register for our newsletter.

Of those 50 visitors, how many will read the online letter and register for our newsletter? You'll be doing exceedingly well if you get 20%. So now you have 10 people who have responded at a cost of £50 each.

Now you need to follow up with these people by email and phone to set up an appointment and convert them into clients. Your appointment rate will usually be less than 30%, so that's three appointments.

And your close rate? Perhaps only one out of three. So there you have it. One thousand postcards that cost you £250 netted you one client. If this client is worth many new referrals to you, it just might be a good campaign.

But the figures here are actually very good. Yours are likely to be much lower. In my experience, campaigns like this fizzle out fast. The response is poor, the prospects are marginal, and the close rate is abysmal.

It usually takes just one mailing of this kind to put you off mailings forever.

If you're considering a mailing campaign, be careful. You could not only get poor results and lose your money, but you'll become cynical about the effectiveness of any kind of marketing.

Now let's have a look at some of the other key elements of mailings (or e-mailings):

1. Mail to those you have an affiliation with

Mailing to a list of strangers can be a recipe for disaster. Sure, you get a lot of mailings from all kinds of companies, but if you think about it, you were familiar with most of them before you received the mailing. You need to build some affiliation or familiarity first.

Action Step: Start to increase your affiliations.

2. Make an offer that's hard to say "No" to

Your mailings try to accomplish too much: "Here's all the details about my business; call me if you'd like to work with me." These kind of mailings tend to flop dismally. Why? Because they don't need you now; they need you later. The letter gets discarded and they forget about you. So how do you get more response?

Your offer needs to be relevant, immediate, and easy to say "Yes" to. Make it relevant by showing that you know your audience and their issues, concerns and desires. Offer something that they can get now, something of real value.

In the early 90's when the Internet was getting hot, a new ISP (Internet service provider) was getting terrible results from his mailings. So, they used this approach.

They designed a one-page letter that was an invitation to receive a free 40-page booklet - "Untangling the Internet." In addition, there was an invitation to an introductory seminar. They were flooded with orders for the booklet and hundreds more showed up for the seminars.

What value do you have to share with your prospects? Now find a way to turn that value into a compelling offer that would be hard to say "No" to. It could be a report, tele-class, introductory workshop or sample service.

Action point; Create a compelling offer.

3. Personalise the mailing if you can

You don't need to do a mass mailing to be successful. In fact, a very small, very targeted mailing may be more appropriate for your business. After all, you may need just a few clients to fill your workshop. You don't need to mail hundreds of pieces to accomplish this.

Robert Middleton from the US, whose weekly free newsletter about attracting more clients via 'word-of-mouth' and marketing for small businesses I have learned so much from, tells the story of Geoffrey Bellman who carefully selected a list of 20 HR directors and sent them a series of 4 articles; each mailing was personalised with a handwritten note. His final mailing was a letter asking for an appointment.

In his follow-up calls he was able to get 18 appointments. That's a 90% success rate! Bellman pointed out that he wasn't trying to sell, but establish credibility and develop relationships. Several of these connections ultimately turned into clients.

Some of the keys to his success were: a) personalisation - he really knew who he was making contact with; b) value - the articles were not sales pitches, but contained information useful to those who received them; c) a focus on relationship, not an immediate transaction; and d) great execution and follow-up.

Robert Middleton's website is at: "<http://www.actionplan.com>"

Action Step: Find the personal angle.

4. Execution and follow-up are everything

A mailing isn't one thing, it's several things. It's a concept, it's the mailing itself, it's responding to the responses, it's written materials (such as the booklet or articles), and it's the sales follow-up. These all need to be executed flawlessly.

Imagine having a great product but a lousy marketing and sales process. Someone would inquire about the product, and then you took several weeks to respond, if at all!

Just by tweaking the follow-up process you can increase sales dramatically. You have to be a bit of a nut about the process. You need to turn it into a well-oiled machine, where you've carefully mapped out every single step.

Do this right and you can end up with literally dozens of appointments with qualified prospects in a very short time. Do it wrong (miss a step, for instance) and all your work will be wasted.

You can do this by constructing a simple flow chart with each of the elements of the plan, how they connect to each other, and a timeline for implementation. Then write each of the pieces (such as the letter or email, website copy and follow-up email) and roll it out methodically one step at a time.

Action Step: Execute your plan flawlessly.

Take these four principles to heart and put them into action, and you may be amazed at the results. These four principles of successful mailings are more important than clever headlines, fancy graphics, and over-the-top promises. Mailings are all about communicating value and doing it in a way that makes it natural and easy to respond. Note that you can also apply all of these principles to email campaigns.

Next -"Keep-in-Touch" regularly and become passionate about it – in fact you need to become evangelical about marketing your practice, so lets discuss this for a moment.

For this you need to think outside of the box. An example was in an article from the 'New Yorker', whose subject was Amory Lovins, perhaps the pre-eminent green business consultant in the world and C.E.O. of the Rocky Mountain Institute (R.M.I.).

Lovins doesn't just think outside of the box, he declares, "There is no box." And this goes for generating business as well. One thing is for sure: Amory Lovins is a great net-worker.

It doesn't hurt that he's a genius. He has worked for twenty five years with clients in a wide range of industries, where his primary focus is on sustainable businesses and energy conservation.

Companies hire him because he produces bottom-line results, such as dramatically cutting energy costs, but he's not one to hide out in a laboratory waiting for clients to call. He gets himself out there - in a big way.

Let me quote from the New Yorker, where Elizabeth Kolbert describes Lovins at an international conference:

After lunch everyone switched tables. This time, Lovins ended up sitting with several executives from Ford; Pernendu Chatterjee, the head of a private equity firm; and William McDonough, one of the pre-eminent "green" architects in the United States.

In the front of the room, executives from two international companies were holding a panel discussion on energy saving companies with the former NATO commander, General Wesley Clark.

Lovins spent most of the discussion sending emails. One was to the Norwegian philanthropist he has just met. The philanthropist owned a cheese farm; Lovins attached a paper on energy-efficient dairy farming.

When General Clark said something he disagreed with, Lovins sent him a long email outlining why. During a brief break in the program, Lovins sought out Thomas Friedman, the Times columnist, and Rick Fedrizzi, the president of the U.S. Green Building Council, to give them a PowerPoint on a school R.M.I. had designed in Brazil.

'During another break, he presented the mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, with an inch-thick pile of articles. As Newsom took the articles, he laughingly alluded to an equally thick pile of reading material Lovins had handed him several weeks earlier.'

Lovins certainly networks with people in high places but he is only doing what any good net-worker does - getting attention by communicating value and then providing more information. You can bet he follows up diligently with every contact by email and phone. It obviously works.

He has built R.M.I. into a fifty plus person consulting firm that not only does well but does very well. His organization's stated goal is "the efficient and restorative use of resources to make the world secure, just, prosperous, and life-sustaining."

You may or may not agree with Lovins's aim, but you have to hand it to him. He's a networking and personal marketing powerhouse that would put most of us to shame. He is someone who networks and markets himself and his business through information and "evangelism." When you become an evangelist, it's hard to stop you!

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Appendix 6: The most important marketing idea

Several times people have asked me what the most important marketing principle was. What is the one thing you absolutely have to know in order to attract more clients?

Is it your marketing message or powerful marketing materials? Is it the ability to persuasively speak about your services? Perhaps it's a killer marketing tactic that I keep under wraps. Or is it more a matter of persistence and commitment?

Well, all of those are very important. But there is one marketing idea that *is* the most important of all.

It might be exemplified best in this story I heard years ago.

Two friends were talking about another friend who was a great fisherman. They related stories about how he always caught more fish than everyone else, yet he didn't really do anything different than other fishermen did.

He used a similar boat, the same fishing rods and lures. He fished in the same places and at the same times of day. So why in the heck did he always catch more fish? What was his secret?

Well, his secret was pretty simple: He loved fishing.

If you love what you do, you'll always be better at it. You'll find subtle ways to do things that others wouldn't even think of. You'll read more about it. You'll put your heart and soul into it.

So, when it comes to marketing your services, I promise that you'll get better results if you love marketing yourself. But how do you do that? What if you don't like marketing at all?

Let me tell you another story.

I once worked with a writer who needed to market herself. But the first time we met, she told me she hated networking and wouldn't call people she didn't know.

So, I asked her what she did love.

She told me that she loved her Siberian Husky, Mutombo. She was nuts about that dog and talked my ear off for about half an hour. Then she said, rather sheepishly, "I've been thinking of sending out mailings to prospects with pictures of Mutombo on them. What do you think?"

Well, on the surface, it didn't seem like a great idea. But what was clear was the love she had for that dog and the enthusiasm she had for the idea. So, I said, "Why not?"

She worked with her husband, who was a photographer, to create a series of very innovative mailing pieces that featured Mutombo. She then tied the pictures into themes about corporate writing.

Yes, it sounds like a stretch, but the mailings were an amazing success. They were fun, attention-getting and different. People started calling her. And she generated some very big clients with this wacky idea of putting her dog on her mailings.

She was doing what she loved. She found a marketing approach that she could really get into. And it was a huge success.

So, what do you love? What would you enjoy doing? What could you put your heart and soul into?

There are essentially three effective marketing tactics or vehicles for Independent Professionals: Networking, Publishing and Speaking. But there are infinite variations on these three. My client used a form of publishing through direct mail.

Don't worry about three tactics to start. Find one. And don't fall for some hyped-up marketing strategy that you read about on the Internet that promises to make you a millionaire. Trust me. It won't. Unless you love it!

Find some aspect of networking, publishing or speaking that you can make your own, where you can express your authentic self, something that you can have fun at, and you'll get better results than you could possibly imagine.

Work at finding marketing tactics and activities that you can really enjoy; something that you can put your whole self into. I promise you'll catch more fish.

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Appendix 7: Transforming the selling experience

Most of us look at selling as an activity. There are certain things you need to do and ask and say to get the sale. Right? Well, only partially right; when you mostly focus on what you have to do, you usually won't do a great job.

The majority of Independent Professionals look at selling as a necessary evil. All kinds of thoughts and emotions come up regarding selling - and most of them are not so positive.

Are any of the following familiar to you?

Selling is manipulative and dishonest.

Selling only results in rejection.

I don't want to be seen as pushy.

If they really want this service, they'll ask me.

It takes forever for a prospect to say "Yes."

I've never been a salesperson

Take a moment and make a note of your dominant belief about selling. It may be a variation on one of the above. But now let's look a little more deeply. It's not just the thought, but everything that goes along with the thought.

Your thought also triggers the following:

Feelings - Inferior, confused, afraid, uncertain, reluctant

Images - Being rejected, being ridiculed, being a failure

Body sensations - Sweating, pounding heart, shallow breathing

Behaviours - Avoidance, nervousness, talking too much

I think it's pretty obvious that if your experience of selling matches some of the above, selling is going to be a struggle for you. Your focus will be on what doesn't work, what you don't like. And you will attract what you put your attention on.

Here's an exercise to shift your experience of selling.

Imagine an activity that you really love doing. You approach it with enthusiasm and excitement. You know you'll do it well. You're eager to engage in this activity and it's very fulfilling.

So, pick an activity for you.

It might be a sports activity, spending time with good friends, cooking a meal, or working with your best clients. It doesn't matter, as long as you have very positive associations with that activity.

Now take a look at the experiential elements of this activity:

Thinking - What thoughts do you think about this activity?

Feelings - How do you feel when you do this activity?

Images - What do you see when you anticipate this activity?

Body sensations - What do you feel in your body during this activity?

Behaviours - What exactly are you doing in the course of this activity?

To really get the experience of this, you might want to close your eyes and imagine fully participating in this activity when you enjoyed it the most.

Observe how you are thinking, feeling, picturing, sensing and behaving. Be aware of how much you enjoy this experience. Notice how great it feels. Experience it as deeply as you can.

In the next part you'll transfer the experience of your favourite activity onto the activity of selling. Imagine a selling situation and then map the experience of the favourite activity onto that situation.

Remember - you're creating this; you're making it up. So, create it as great as you possibly can. Imagine sitting in front of a prospect, for instance, thinking, feeling, picturing, sensing and acting very much like you do when you're involved in your favourite activity. Really recreate that experience. Make it fun, exciting, engaging and fulfilling.

Did you get into it?

Did you actually start having positive anticipation of enjoying the selling activity? Ultimately you create what you experience. So why not create an experience that is uplifting instead of dispiriting? This is something you can do - a skill you can learn.

Now I'd like you to create a metaphor for selling that links into your favourite activity. Here are some to get you thinking:

Selling is like a party where I've invited all my friends and I get to interact with them in a very personal, authentic way.

Selling is like boating where I'm easily gliding through the water and steering where I want to go with virtually no effort.

Selling is like making a beautiful handmade quilt and then offering it to a good friend.

Selling is like tennis where we play hard but the feeling is one of friendly competition.

Selling is like climbing a mountain. We go up steadily, step-by-step, ultimately reaching the peak.

Selling is like playing jazz. It's a lively interaction that consists of both planned passages and free improvisation.

These images and metaphors will be effective only to the degree that you are able to embody them mentally and emotionally before you engage in a selling activity. Do this exercise (thought, feelings, imagery and metaphor) right before your next sales call.

If you want to feel good about selling, you first need to create the experience of feeling good by adopting a powerful image and metaphor that literally transforms your experience of selling.

The very first thing someone wants to know about your business is "What's in it for me?" How you answer that question often determines if they buy your service or not. The answer you want to give is your "Ultimate Outcome."

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Appendix 8: The Art of effortless 'selling'

Can selling really be effortless? Is it what you do, what you say, what you ask, or what your service is? Partly but in effortless selling you don't need to convince anyone. People convince themselves.

But how?

We can't really convince anyone to do business with us. We have probably all certainly tried. We even probably used great arguments. Lots of features and benefits. But it never worked. This approach will always meet with resistance and rejection.

We need to learn to ask questions. The idea is that if you ask enough questions you can know enough about the prospect's situation to jump in with the solution to their problem (our service).

That will work a little better.

But not good enough perhaps. What is selling all about? Why can it seem such a struggle? How could we make it easier?

Selling rarely happens in a vacuum. As you know, it's almost impossible to just call someone and sell them your service or programme. They have to be warmed up first. They need to know something about what you offer.

They need to be exposed to MARKETING.

Selling can't happen until a prospect has responded to your marketing messages, learned something about our services and has a sense that you might be able to help them. It is about progressing them through a process.

When you start selling before you expose them to some key marketing messages you nearly always 'blow them out'. Many people are frustrated with selling because they're trying to sell to someone who isn't even at the first stage in the process.

Is it about networking, giving talks, hosting events, giving out your brochures/material, signing up people to your newsletters, giving stuff away, such as our newsletters and promotional DVDs/youtube clips? The short answer is yes. It is about warming up your prospective clients through marketing.

When someone shows interest set up a time to talk and the sales process can begin. And almost everyone you will speak with will become a client or client in waiting. You see, if they have already pre-sold themselves before you even talk to them, then there is no selling really involved.

All you'll have to do is get out of the way and see if you can really help them or not. And now your questions have a different purpose. You just need to determine if the prospect is sufficiently motivated and if our service is right for them.

In a nutshell, here's the selling process. Ask questions that get at these four issues:

1. Is there a real problem begging for a solution? Is something missing and are they unable to find a solution by themselves?
2. Is there a commitment to change things and move forward? Are they in a place where they are finally ready to take action?
3. Are they willing to invest in a solution? Can they put in the time, energy and money to do what it takes to make the change?
4. Can they envision the future? Can they imagine more positive outcomes than they are experiencing now?

If you get positive signs on all of the above and have a good sense that you can help them, then go into the presentation of your services. You need to assure them that you can help them solve their problem and produce the results they want.

This part takes about two minutes.

Sounds ridiculous, but they already know about your services or they wouldn't be meeting with you in the first place. Marketing got the job done.

The presentation goes something like: "This is what I do. This is how it works and what happens. This is the kind of result you can expect. Any questions?"

No pressure, manipulation or convincing are necessary. By this time the prospect sees you as someone who can help them get what they want. They certainly don't see you as a salesperson.

And then closing is a simple formality: "Here's what the service costs. Does that work with your budget right now?" or "So that's how the service works. Do you have any questions?" A great answer to that one is, "When can we get started?"

If you follow this path of effortless selling, you'll hear that a lot. The key to effortless selling is good marketing. Then you can take your attention off trying to convince someone to do business with you. You can relax and get interested in them and see if they're ready to change and take action.

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Appendix 9: To close or not to close?

Shakespeare might have put it this way:

To close or not to close, that is the question!
Whether 'tis nobler to suffer possible rejection
or to invite the prospect to take action.

Independent Professionals have suffered the slings and arrows of closing ten thousand times more than Hamlet has recited his famous soliloquy on stage.

Two reasons:

- 1) Fear of rejection and
- 2) Not knowing exactly what to say when closing.

The good news is that, if you understand number two, number one lessens considerably. We are going to look at several closes for various selling situations.

First, imagine that you've had a good sales interview with the prospect. You've listened to their situation, know where they want to go, and you feel confident that your service is a good fit for them. You've explained how your service works, and now it's time to pop the question. But first...

What not to do:

I had a client who did the following every time: "OK, that's how my services work. Why don't you think about it and get back to me and let me know what you'd like to do."

No, no, a thousand times no!!

They'll think about it alright. They'll think themselves out of it. And when you get back to them, they'll tell you to call in three weeks or three months.

You need to ask. But you don't need to blurt out: "Well, would you like to work with me?" No, you can be more subtle than that and still close the sale comfortably. Here are a few ways to do that:

Assumptive Close

This is where it looks quite certain the prospect wants to move forward. So just assume they are ready and close like this:

"That's how our services work and I'm confident we can help you achieve the objectives you've outlined. Why don't we look at a time we can get started?"

Most often, they'll open their calendar and look for a time. If they have questions, they'll let you know: "Before we book something I have a few more questions."

Once you answer the questions satisfactorily, go back to the assumptive close. "So why don't we book a starting date and I'll send you some preparation materials before our start date."

Budget Close

You've discussed everything but price. You have a fixed price for your service or have figured out your price beforehand.

"OK, that gives you an overview of what this programme would consist of and the results you can expect. The fee is £100 per month. Does that work for your budget right now?"

If it doesn't work for their budget, they'll let you know and you can work with that. It's not unusual that people will say, "Well, no, but I need to do this anyway."

The Proposal Close

Use this when you cannot get the final agreement until you have submitted a proposal with a price. However, you must have conceptually agreed on everything else - problems, needs, objectives, value and your approach.

"Well that sums it up. Your objectives are XYZ and we can definitely help you achieve them. I know I need to give you a final price, which I'll send in a proposal. If that's acceptable to you, I can start the project in about two weeks. Will that work for your schedule?"

If they say "Yes, looks good, I hope we can work together," then you simply need to deliver a proposal with an acceptable price tag. If they have other issues, they will bring them up: "Can you tell me a little more about how ABC will work?"

Trial Close

This is not a final close, but a test to see if you are on track in the sales process.

Prospect: "Does the training come with any follow up?"

You: "We can certainly do that if you want to measure before and after performance. Is that important to you?"

If they say "Yes," your trial close has confirmed what they want and what they are likely to buy. A trial close is often used to follow up the answer to a question. Use trial closes throughout the sales interview. Here's another:

Prospect: "I'm not sure our people will be willing to do that."

You: "Many people are concerned about that, but we structure things so that we get very high participation. If we can do that, it will really improve results, won't it?"

The answer might go something like, "Well, if you can do that, it would definitely make a difference." You are building agreement and buy-in with every trial close.

You don't need a lot of closes. Once you've settled on a couple that work for you, continue to use them, with minor adjustments, at the end of every sales interview. Soon you'll be confident that you can close in a natural, confident way every time. I promise your sales will go up!

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Appendix 10: Turning leads into appointments

One of the most frequent questions asked is, "How do I turn leads into appointments... how do I connect with or follow up with prospective clients and get a meeting with them?"

Knowing the answer to this, marketing would be a whole lot easier. When you're actually meeting with a prospective client, your marketing has been successful and the sales process starts.

For some strange reason, everyone thinks of getting appointments in two ways that are polar opposites: One is having a prospect call you because you were referred to them. The other is making a cold call and setting up an appointment.

The truth is, the first one is rather rare and the second one is very hard. The good news is that there's an approach in-between that you can do much more frequently and easily with better results.

The first thing you need to do is sort out your potential leads. Not all leads are created equally. Some are warm and some are cold. You want to sort your leads into four categories and then take actions to turn the cold leads into warm ones.

The four categories going, from cold to warm are: Association - Familiarity - Informed and Experience.

Association - These leads are prospects you don't know yet, but have some connection with. They know someone you know. Or they belong to an organisation you belong to.

Familiarity - These are leads you already have some familiarity with. They don't know you well but you've had some prior association. Maybe they've met you through networking or you've talked on the phone once or twice.

Informed - These prospects know you better. They've received and read information about you and your business. They've visited our web page, read an article by you (or one of ours), or are subscribers to our newsletter or eZine.

Experience - These prospects have actually experienced you. You've had a more in-depth conversation, they've been long-time subscribers and read more of your information, or have attended a presentation or teleclass. They could be current or ex colleagues, family members, friends etc. They know and like you.

Now who are you most likely to get an appointment with? Someone who you just have an association with or someone who has experienced you and feels they know you? The answer is obvious.

But what if the best connections you have are only associations? And maybe you don't even have a lot of those! Where do you start with getting appointments?

Simple. Your marketing should be focused on moving prospects from Association to Familiarity to Informed to Experience as fast and as smoothly as possible.

Let's create a scenario...

If you have few associations to begin with, you create them. You join organisations that your prospects belong to. And you contact friends and associates who know people who may be good prospects.

Now you want to leverage those associations into familiarity. You don't want to just call them and try to set up appointments. Most aren't willing to do so, because you're a stranger to them. This is why cold calls are, for the most part, frustratingly futile.

Instead, send an introductory message followed by an introductory call. Mention your association (organisation or friend) and your Value Proposition (The Ultimate Outcome you deliver to your clients):

"This is John Smith of Personal Success Strategies. I'm a new member of the local Chamber of Commerce. I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm a consultant who works with professional individuals and organisations who don't have as much success as they'd like (your Value Proposition). I visited your web site and was impressed by some of the projects you've done. Is this a good time to speak for a few minutes?"

OK, you've broken the ice. That wasn't so hard was it?

Of course, there are other things you can do. Go to meetings of the chamber and meet a lot of people. Introduce yourself. Find out who's who. Get involved. Volunteer for committees. Now you have more than an association - you're building familiarity.

Next you want to leverage this familiarity and provide information to those who are qualified prospects. Find a good article you can circulate - a few pages of solid information with case studies that demonstrate how you've applied these strategies to client projects. Personalise the article if you can.

Then make it a game to get this article to as many prospects as possible. After making an introductory call, ask if you can send the article. When you meet someone through networking, offer to send a copy. Ask them if they would like to receive your e-zine/newsletter.

Ask! Don't wait for them to ask you.

With all this information in circulation you're not a stranger anymore. And if you can focus on increasing your familiarity and information quotient with prospective clients, you are warming them up for the next step - experiencing you.

For those who have information about you, give them an experience of you by inviting them to an introductory workshop, a presentation at the chamber, or a talk/presentation you'll do. You now have a list of real prospects, and you can send an invitation by mail or email (and it won't be regarded as junk or spam).

And once they attend, they'll be relatively easy to follow up with:

"Hi, this is John Smith from Personal Success Strategies. Thanks so much for attending the presentation on "Strategies for Growing your Personal Success." Is this a good time

to talk? Great. I'd be interested in knowing which ideas in the presentation you thought would apply best to you..."

And before you know it, you have an appointment with a qualified prospect who was a stranger only a short time ago. And how do you think this sales meeting will go? I promise it will go a whole lot better than meeting with someone who doesn't know you from Adam.

You can either sit by your phone and wait for referrals to call you; call strangers who don't want to hear from you; or you can methodically cultivate your prospects, moving them from Association to Familiarity to Informed to Experience to Appointment. It's your move.

The Relationship Pipeline

Almost everyone has heard of the concepts "The Sales Pipeline" and "Relationship Marketing." But few Independent Professionals realise how closely they're connected and what it means to your marketing.

The sales pipeline (sometimes called the sales funnel) is the process of moving unknown prospects - those who might do business with you someday - into paying clients.

Relationship marketing is the means of making this happen. Prospects don't travel through this pipeline without your focused efforts to cultivate, inform, and follow up until they are ready to do business with you.

It's important to understand that every single prospect who becomes a client goes through this process, whether you realise it or not. The sad thing is that many prospects get stuck in the pipeline (imagine appropriate visual image) because you made very little effort to move them along.

Here's a scenario typical for Independent Professionals:

You meet someone at a networking meeting and have a productive conversation. You exchange cards. You don't follow up in any way but they do visit your web site.

They like what they see, and in a couple of weeks they send you an email to ask a question about your services. You answer this question by email but don't follow-up. And then... you never hear from them again.

One more lost opportunity. What happened?

When you made that initial connection and exchanged cards, the prospect entered the pipeline. They moved through as they visited your web site and sent you an email. But your response was very passive. You did little to engage the prospect and help them keep moving. And they ultimately gave up.

Want to dramatically increase your business this year?

You really don't need to add any fancy marketing techniques and strategies. You simply have to be better at using relationship marketing to move prospects through the pipeline.

Coming back to the stages of the pipeline (Stranger - Association - Familiarity - Informed - Experience), let's look at what you could do to move a prospect along the pipeline from one stage to the next.

Stranger to Association - You join an organization which is likely to include both prospects and people who can lead you to prospects. You get involved and go to meetings and meet new people you wouldn't have otherwise.

Association to Familiarity - You meet someone through this organisation and exchange cards (it is more important to collect cards than give yours out, as you are in control of what happens). You recognise this person as a prospect and make a mental note to enter them into your relationship pipeline.

Familiarity to Information - After the event you send this person a card and also a copy of an article about some aspect of your business. You include a link to your web site. You follow up and continue your conversation and answer questions.

Information to Experience - When talking, you mention your email newsletter (eZine) and they express an interest in receiving it. A few weeks later you're speaking at a professional group, and you invite them to attend.

Experience to Appointment - The prospect attends your talk and seems to enjoy it. You speak with them briefly afterwards and they ask some more questions about your business. You suggest getting together to explore how you might work together, and they agree.

There are as many relationship pipeline scenarios as there are prospects. Let's look at some of the things that are common to every single one of them:

1. Get out there. Most prospects don't get into the pipeline by accident. You need to put yourself in situations where you'll connect with new prospects on a regular basis.
2. Extend yourself. Prospects aren't going to get to know you unless you make the effort. You need to introduce yourself and make a positive first impression.
3. Provide information. Your prospects aren't going to know what you do, and what you can do for them, unless you educate them in some way. Articles, your web site, itunes/youtube clips you've created and your newsletter will do the trick.
4. Make invitations. Some prospects may need to know more and feel more comfortable about you before they are ready to meet and explore doing business with you. So, give them opportunities to do so.
5. Ask. Ultimately you need to ask. If you wait for the prospect to make the next move, you may go broke in the process. However, if you've warmed up a prospect as outlined above, it will be easier than you think.

Your ability to master the relationship pipeline can be the biggest factor determining your overall business success. Knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it will determine the level of that success.

What else can we do to get contacts?

It can sometimes take a lot of time and effort to move people from prospects to clients. However, there's a neat short cut that will speed up the process a little. Remember a fundamental and very basic business principle is that people do business with people they know, like and trust. The challenge is that it can take a lot of time to develop the essential knowing, liking and trusting factors. This is how you could shorten the process without diminishing the effectiveness:

Find *Deliberate Association Partners*

Who?

Find people who are already in contact with prospective clients in your target market and are already well known, liked and trusted by them. Then look for ways that you can share something that benefits all parties - your prospective client, your 'strategic alliance partner' and of course you.

If you find '*deliberate association partners*' you can then leverage the relationship they have already taken the time to develop and nurture. You can tap into this resource almost right away. However, the key is to find something that benefits all parties and is not just one way traffic in your favour.

The 3 Timeframes

Here are 3 things to consider about your target clients and potential '*deliberate association partners*' who are already in contact with them. Who else is in contact with your potential clients...

1. Before they work with you - Where do potential clients in your target market go before they come to work with you? For example, the trade association they are members of, the social organisation they are part of, the organisation who trained them? Who do your clients go to before they come to you?

2. When they work with you - Who else serves your prospective client during the time that they work with you? For example, a successful person will know other successful people and may go where successful people go (such as sports clubs or societies), younger people will maybe attend further education institutions; whatever they do they could become a valuable '*deliberate association partner*' for you; they could provide you with quality future referrals.

3. After they work with you - Where do your clients go after they have worked with you? They maybe able to help get you a referral into a local business or become a valuable '*deliberate association partner*' for you.

Present a Win-Win-Win Solution

So, your task is simple. Find people who are already known, liked and trusted by prospective clients you want to work with and then find ways that you can present a win-win-win deal to them. What can you create that benefits your '*deliberate association partner*', their clients and you too?

Appendix 11: Will your marketing plan float or sink?

The plan looks good on paper; it seems to make sense overall and you think you could make it work. But then you give it a shot and it sinks faster than a rock.

And you have no idea why.

Here are a few reasons why your marketing plans are sinking:

You don't have a game plan, you have a tactic.

For instance, I've seen mailing plans that looked like this: "Mail letters to list of prospects who will respond by phone ready to do business with me." This ignores the fact that most strangers are not ready to do business with you.

You're thinking "transaction" not "relationship"

Just because someone leaves their card at your trade show booth, doesn't mean they are ready to become a client (or even ready to meet with you). Credibility and trust take some time to build and a one-minute card exchange is not usually enough.

You're focused on your timeline, not the prospects

Of course, you'd rather get clients sooner than later. But your priority is not necessarily the prospects. They want more information; they need to feel comfortable; they have other things on their plate right now.

So, what do you do?

The reality is that it takes a certain amount of time to cultivate a prospect. They have to go through a number of steps or stages before they are comfortable doing business with you. And if you try to rush things, you may lose the opportunity to ever get that prospect as a client.

And that's a marketing plan that sinks.

With focus, attention to relationships, excellent materials, authenticity, value, patience, and a process that ends with persistent and friendly follow-up, your prospects will feel more comfortable with you, and ultimately, many will become clients.

That's how you make your marketing plan float.

If you really want your marketing plan to float, ask yourself these important questions. How you answer may determine your future.

1. Do I want to grow a successful, sustainable business where I not only make good money but I can sleep at night because I consistently deliver what I promise?

2. Am I willing to build a solid marketing foundation for my business which includes developing quality services and effective marketing processes that introduce them to my prospects?

3. Can I put my main focus on building long-term relationships rather than one-time transactions? Am I willing to build a business that has raving fans as clients who continually send me more clients?

4. Will I put more attention on communicating the actual outcomes I deliver for my clients than the processes and methodologies I use to get there?

5. Is my business something I'm committed to for the long haul? Will I hang in there through thick and thin until I achieve the goals I've set for myself?

If you can answer yes to all of these questions, you won't have a problem making your marketing plans float. They will be impossible to sink because they'll be water-tight and sea-worthy.

The key to creating marketing plans that float is building them without holes in them! This means a solid business foundation and a communication approach that is based on relationships, authenticity and value, not flash-in-the-pan promotions.

"By Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Please visit Robert's web site at www.actionplan.com for additional marketing articles and resources on marketing for professional service businesses."

Appendix 12: Ten silly marketing mistakes ~ and how to avoid them

We all make mistakes.

And in marketing, most of us make some really silly mistakes. They wouldn't be so silly, if we didn't make them over and over and over!

Even though they defy common sense and don't get us the results we want, we keep making them.

Why? Because doing silly things is comfortable. And doing smart things is often uncomfortable. After all, we're also very good at justifying the silly things we do. There's always some excuse, some plausible reason.

1. **Not preparing.** Professionals prepare. They know their stuff. They study long hours. They have a stake in the outcome. A big reason Independent Professionals don't attract clients consistently is that they fumble around with marketing.
2. **Not investing in your marketing.** You spent hundreds if not thousands of hours and quite a few pounds to master your profession, didn't you? To become a competent marketer of your service also demands an investment of time, energy and money. You won't become a smart marketer overnight or by accident. Stop complaining; you need to commit.
3. **Undervaluing yourself.** The value you can provide to your clients is literally unlimited. The difference you can make is unbounded. But you'd never know it. A common mantra of Independent Professionals is, "I can't charge what I'm really worth." And it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. True self-value = long term wealth.
4. **Not mastering networking.** The most powerful marketing strategy for Independent Professionals is, and will always be, building networks of relationships. If you don't master this, you have no real chance of reaching your true potential. Get out there!
5. **Avoiding writing.** Successful Independent Professionals write. It's the foundation skill of marketing. If you can't organise your ideas on paper, clearly and persuasively, how can you expect prospects to understand how you can help them? **'10 Actions'** has lots of vehicles, use them.
6. **Avoiding speaking.** Successful independent Professionals speak. It's the master skill of marketing. If you can speak in front of a group confidently and persuasively, then selling will not be a big hurdle for you. Don't master it and selling will always seem hard.
7. **Not leveraging the Internet.** You don't need to be an "online business" to take advantage of the Internet. A high quality web site, a regular e-Zine and

posting articles online, are all relatively simple and inexpensive marketing tools that give you amazing leverage. **'10 Actions'** web will do this for you.

8. **Not asking.** People have so much concern about offending someone or being rejected that they simply avoid asking. That's silly. You need to ask. For time, for attention, for interaction, for meetings, for the business. Want it? Ask for it!
9. **Not implementing.** If we implemented just a fraction of what we really knew, we'd be more successful than we could imagine. You need to create intentions, action plans and timelines and then set up systems of accountability to make things happen.
10. **Not risking.** Playing it safe all the time may be the silliest thing you can do. It makes you weak, fearful and complacent. What's outside of your comfortable zone? Success, joy, aliveness. Get out there and risk failing for a change.

How do you score yourself on the smart to silly marketing scale?

Assign a number from one to ten for each of the above ten silly mistakes. A zero means you virtually never make that mistake. A ten means you make it all the time. Like in golf, a low score is good.

0 – 20	You are a pretty smart marketer. Keep up the good work.
21 – 40	Not bad, but you still have some marketing issues.
41 – 60	You are losing marketing opportunities left and right.
61 – 80	Pretty silly marketer. Sure you are cut out for this?
81 – 100	Hopelessly silly marketer. Time for a new line of work.

1. The preparation Factor

The first mistake is "Being Unprepared."

This can be seen as a boring topic. But we all know that to be a professional we need to do our homework and make our marketing action plans, and everything will be ok.

I'm sure you know all the rules. But do you live by them most of the time? Probably not. We all know why: it's inertia. You're very busy (in fact, often overwhelmed), you have other priorities, and you are smart enough to "wing it" most of the time. So, what is the big deal?

The big deal is that lack of preparation has a huge impact on your bottom line. It costs you every single time you are not prepared. I'm willing to bet you could double or even triple the number of clients in the next year if you made preparation a priority. It's that important.

Let's get specific.

You already know that you need to talk about your business in a certain way to get attention and interest. Someone asks you what you do and the response to the words you utter can be, “Hmmm, that’s interesting, tell me more,” or that blank, eyes-glazed-over look, depending on how well you prepared.

I’ve met hundreds of people through networking and I’ll let you in on a dirty little secret. Most business people are just not prepared with that special introduction. Not even close. It’s sad. What they say has little impact; the conversation tends to ramble aimlessly. Nothing stimulates interest, let alone a response.

Imagine you were cast as Hamlet, you were told to go home and memorise your lines and do some preparation for your role. But, it was more important to go out with your friends for dinner that night. You show up for the rehearsal the next day and when they call on you, your lack of preparation is obvious. They give you another day to prepare. You memorise a few lines, but don’t make a serious effort to get into the part. How long will you have that role before they fire you? Not long.

But why is it that you can run your own business and profess to be an expert that can help your clients, and you can’t even get your lines right? “No big deal,” you think. You are your own boss after all, and this stuff isn’t that important, is it? The truth is the business world is equally unforgiving. What happens is that prospective clients fire you all the time, before you even get a chance to work for them! You open your mouth, and mumble words that have exactly zero persuasive power and the prospect writes you off in a nano-second.

When you are prepared in your marketing, you know what to say because you have practiced it. You get it so well known that you command attention and respect.

When you meet someone, you are no longer wondering if you will get their attention. You are wondering how you will fit in a new client. Every single time you open your mouth, people will fall under your spell, Just like a great (and very prepared) Hamlet.

When you give a presentation, do a proposal, or perform a project, you will always make a greater impact when you are fully prepared. And, like Hamlet, who masters his lines and his character, your performance is fresh and authentic every single time.

So, yes, preparation is the key. And if you are not doing it in your marketing, you will be presenting yourself as an amateur. Professionals do not like buying from amateurs!

The bottom line: *is prepare and plan for your success. Prepare as if your life depended on it. It could do. What is lack of preparation costing you in your business? Are you even aware of it?*

2. **Smart Marketing Investment**

Not investing in your marketing is silly mistake number two.

Even if what you want to do is market your service competently, with less struggle and better results, you are going to have to invest in yourself. It will take some time, money and effort. “But how much?” everybody asks “before I start seeing results and start

attracting clients consistently? How much time, money and effort do I actually need to invest?"

I think the big key here is "Smart Investing."

You need to invest in developing skills, not just in accumulating more information. The information is important, but only if it's applied. It is the difference between knowledge and skill; knowing is one thing doing is another. We of course need the 'can do' attitude as well.

What seems to be the case however, is, that the majority of people consume information as if only the information mattered. They skim through it, looking for pearls of wisdom and silver bullets. You won't find them that way. But, if you invest a little more time in doing the exercises and action plans they all contain, the riches reveal themselves. You will start to have "ah-ha's" and a deeper understanding of how marketing works its magic.

For instance, if you take one marketing concept (such as 'the perfect proposal') and make the effort to write it out then use it in a structured format. For several people this has resulted in contracts worth thousands of pounds. Now that's a smarter investment!

The big investment wasn't really in money or time but in the effort to implement. And as simple as this sounds, there are some real obstacles to implementation. After all, if implementation was easy, we'd all be outrageously successful.

Successful implementation involves these steps:

- ❖ An openness to try something new and a willingness to follow direction. This alone stops many people cold, before they have even started.
- ❖ Diligence and discipline in learning the basics. Notice that doctors don't start with brain surgery? They practice the fundamentals first.
- ❖ A tolerance for trial and error. Testing, measuring and fine tuning are all necessary in order to get consistent results.
- ❖ Resilience in the face of failure. Sometimes you will be lucky enough to quickly hit on the right formula. But more often than not your first attempts will be flops.
- ❖ A sense of play and adventure. If you play at your marketing, instead of grimly working at it, you will tend to get better results.

So no, you are not going to become a marketing genius overnight.

There is a lot to learn. What I recommend is focusing on one thing at a time (your face-to-face-conversation, making appointments etc); and these small, but potent, investments in your marketing will start to pay big returns before you know it.

The bottom line: Put just two or three hours a week into learning a new marketing skill. Set a goal; study the appropriate information, and work at implementing it step-by-step. Measure your results and watch your fortunes grow.

3. Knowing your value

The third silly marketing mistake is one that is so insidious that it's invisible to most of us. It is answering the question: "Do you think you are getting paid what you are worth?"

Most independent professionals seem to say they are not getting paid what they are worth, and yet almost nobody does anything about it. Even if you were given a dozen strategies to raise your rates or to repackage their services for higher value, you would likely have a problem doing it because your 'value thermostat' is set at a fixed position that always springs back to where it was. Your value thermostat is set for the amount of income you feel comfortable earning in a year. Perhaps it's £20k or £50k or £100k per year. And anything much beyond that level is not only uncomfortable to you, it's downright scary. Do any of the following statements seem true to you?

- You see money as a scarce commodity that is hard to get more of (no matter what you earn).
- You think people that make more money than you do are morally inferior to you (even while you envy them).
- You find it hard to invest in yourself (workshops, books, programmes). Investments always look like expenses to you.
- When you make good money you tell yourself that it won't last or that it's not enough.
- You feel virtuous when you work hard and do a good job, but feel a little (or a lot) guilty when you charge a high fee.

All of these are symptoms of a scarcity mindset. And for some reason, most of us seem to be afflicted with it to one degree or another.

Starting to value yourself.

What do you do to start moving from a scarcity to a sufficiency or abundance mindset? There are a lot of ways, and I won't pretend that you can change your whole value mindset overnight, so I want to focus on one simple thing – what you actually charge your clients.

What you are going to do is change the settings on your value thermostat. It is a simple, 5 step process that won't take long and will help you shift your perception of the value of our services.

- a) Make a list of the things you have helped your clients with. This should be a long list that includes everything you can think of.
- b) Narrow this list down to just five clients that you had the most success with and try to estimate the actual value each client received from you. Make it as tangible as possible.
- c) Next, ask yourself, given the actual value that each client received, what would be a fair price for your services? How does this compare to the price you actually charged?

- d) Now take this new, fairer price that is based on real value provided and double it. So, if you originally charged £1,000 and a fair price would be £2,000, then write down £4,000.
- e) Then do this exercise out loud (with yourself or a friend): What is your price for this project? You: The price for this project is £4,000. Repeat several times over a period of time until it feels natural and easy to say it.

The next time you quote at the real value of £2,000, it will seem very reasonable, if not downright cheap. You will have shifted your value thermostat and it will feel much more comfortable charging realistic fees based on your true value. Not only that, the prospect will show less resistance in paying those realistic fees. As this new value setting becomes a reality for you it becomes a reality to others.

Try it, it works!

The Bottom Line: *You are as successful and as valuable as you think you are. Before you enrol more clients (and earn more money), you need to believe you are worth more. Change your value thermostat and clients (and money) will start to come more easily, with less struggle. As we know our business is not all about making money, but you need to be rewarded fairly for the work you do. Your service is something of immense value and needs to be seen as such. It is also fantastic value for money – if you see yourself in the same vein, what a potent mixture.*

4. **The Networking Challenge**

The opposite of networking is 'not working'. Another way to put it is that if you are not networking, you are not marketing. For Independent Professionals such as ourselves, networking IS marketing. And that brings us to the fourth biggest marketing mistake: failing to master networking.

To network essentially we need two things; have something great to sell (you do), and really being passionate about what we are selling (see belief and value above).

You might look at networking as simply the opportunity to tell your story to as many people as possible until you finally get it right. It is, but it is also saying the right things and avoiding saying the wrong things- have you ever heard a salesperson try and talk someone OUT of buying something – it happens!

How many times have you done the same thing?

Sounds ridiculous, but I've often asked coaches and trainers to tell me exactly what they said when explaining their service to someone. And a good part of the time they talked me out of it as well.

Why? Because they simply hadn't had enough practice. They hadn't been out there networking like mad, testing their networking skills on every warm body they could find until it came naturally, effortlessly – and it will! Instead, they were sitting at home worrying about marketing their services. Sound familiar?

So here is the ultimate, but very simple, 'challenge':

Get out there and talk to 50 people about their challenges and your solution this month. Not ten, not 20 or 30 but 50. Make a plan and just do it. Or at least give it a very honest try, and I'll tell you what will happen:

- Before long (after the 5th or 6th person), you will actually start saying something that gets people's attention.
- By the 10th or 15th person you will start to develop some serious inquiries and you will realise that you need to give them more information and actually follow up.
- By the 20th or 30th person you will have set up a few appointments, either with prospects or associates who could lead you to prospects.
- By the 40th or 50th person you will either be very close to getting a client or two or will have closed some business. You will be well on your way.

Now you can be like most people: Talk to two or three people a week and stretch this process over twenty weeks or more. But why not accelerate the process and connect with 50?

Really successful people do it. And, because they have done it so much, they are masters of saying the right thing at the right time. And, not only does the passion come through naturally, they have more business than they can handle. Collect business cards and follow up.

The Bottom Line: *You have a great service. It makes a difference. You have a basic plan. Now stop thinking and get out there and get your message to as many people as humanly possible as quickly as you can. (You do not have to do this forever, but it sure gets the ball rolling!)*

Many of us have been on an exercise program. First thing in the morning we can go for a run, do some aerobics exercise at home or have a work-out in the local gym. It is not easy and it is not always fun. But it certainly gets results. With consistency, it can give you the best shape of your life.

In marketing, there is an equivalent to exercising and pumping iron and that is the topic of this fifth instalment of the 'Ten Silliest Marketing Mistakes'.

5. Avoiding Writing

Yes, writing is pumping marketing iron. Writing builds your marketing muscles unlike any other marketing activity. If you want to be a better marketer, it is inescapable; you have got to write. And you have to do it regularly.

You may not be articulating your marketing ideas as clearly and as concisely as possible. And, as a result you are not getting the kind of marketing results you want.

Consider the following role play of me asking a consultant the following:

Me: “Answer this question, what do you do? By saying who you work with and the problem they are experiencing”.

Independent Professional: “I work with high tech companies to increase productivity and profits”.

Me: That’s a solution, not a problem”.

Independent Professional: “Hmm, OK. Well, I work with high tech companies who want to be more productive and profitable”.

Me: “That’s not a problem, it’s an inspiration”.

Flabby marketing thinking.

Some of the symptoms of ‘flabby marketing thinking’: Ideas not clear or well organised. Ideas that don’t follow logically from one to another. Too many ideas jumbled together. Failure to use the basics of Marketing Syntax (problem – solution – story – credibility – process –action). Inability to get to the point.

To combat a flabby body you need to exercise. There is no alternative. To combat flabby marketing thinking you need to write. There is really no other way.

So, what do you do? Where do you start?

Here is the most powerful marketing exercise I know of. Write the answers to the questions below. Keep fine tuning them until your answers have strength, flexibility and power.

- What exactly is our service and why should they be interested?
- Who is this Service for? Will it work for individuals and /or their business?
- What kind of results can they expect with this service?
- Who else has used this service and what were their results?
- How do our services work? What’s the process and structure?
- Are you credible? Do you have the experience to help them?
- What do they have to do next to get and use your services?

It may or may not surprise you that the average Independent Professional (maybe you) doesn’t do a very good job of answering those questions. But, spend some serious time answering them in writing, and your clarity, certainly and confidence will build slowly but surely. Your flabby marketing thinking will start developing some muscles.

The Bottom Line: *Time to fight flabby marketing thinking and start pumping marketing iron. Start answering the key questions about our business in writing and you will discover a whole new level of persuasive power.*

You could look at writing as a chore or you could just put it on your schedule and make it happen. But you want to be writing something that will help your business, not just go through the motions.

6. The Master Skill of Marketing

What are the thoughts that rush through your mind when you think of getting up in front of a group and giving a presentation?

Are they fearful thoughts, worried that you will make a mistake and look foolish? Or are they confident thoughts about the difference you will make by giving this talk

How you answer this question is kind of a 'litmus test' on how successful you will be at marketing and selling your services.

If your immediate focus was fearful thoughts, you are going to struggle a little more. You will tend to avoid marketing and selling activities. However, if your initial reaction was enthusiasm at the thought of giving a presentation, you are likely to approach marketing and selling with a can-do attitude.

In this sixth, in the topic of 'Ten Silliest Marketing Mistakes', let's look at why 'Avoiding Speaking' can be very detrimental to your marketing success and your success.

First of all, I don't want you to think of giving presentations and talks as just one of many marketing strategies. It is much more than that. The ability to confidently give a presentation builds all your other marketing skills. You might call it the 'master marketing skill'.

When you give a great presentation, you will have demonstrated all of the following:

- Logically organising your thoughts
- Knowledge of your product
- Thinking on your feet
- Overall persuasiveness
- Courage of your convictions
- Ability to inspire and motivate

Aren't you more likely to buy from someone who demonstrates these qualities? And, wouldn't you tend to avoid buying professional services from someone who didn't have many of these abilities?

Isn't it obvious?

I admit that some people may be more gifted in this area than others; but it a skill that can be learned, developed and refined over the years. I'm a pretty confident speaker now, but I wasn't so hot when I began my business. So, I learned the basics of giving a good presentation. I knew I had value to share; I took the time and the effort to give a talk that would have some real impact. Here are a few things that worked for me that I recommend you try:

- I. Get yourself booked for a talk. When you are on the agenda, you are motivated into action!
- II. Write a complete outline for your talk. Spend quite a bit of time on this. It will likely be a talk you can give over and over, so it's a good investment of your time and effort. Really think it through.
- III. Practice your talk out loud. This is where the rubber meets the road. Do it in a mirror, video yourself or record and watch it. Might as well make a fool of yourself, while alone than in front of a group of people!

- IV. Learn to put all your attention on getting your ideas across to your audience. One of the best ways is to use stories and examples for every major point you make. Stories are the most persuasive marketing tool you have.
- V. Do your best to take your attention off yourself. This will be a lot easier if you do the above. If you are well prepared, excited about your message, and aim to make a difference, you won't be so worried about how you come across.
- VI. Do not use PowerPoint slides as a crutch. A few slides for major points are ok, but presentations that include every word used in a presentation are a disaster. This will never substitute for developing yourself as a speaker.
- VII. Get some support or professional assistance. This might be joining a kind of Speakers Association. Or you might work with a coach who can help you both prepare and deliver your talk. All are good investments of time and money.

You can go through your business avoiding speaking for years. The payoff is that you won't feel uncomfortable or face being ridiculed. But what is the cost? Simple: A business that isn't as successful as it could be. Your choice.

The Bottom Line: *Make learning how to give presentations and talks a priority in your development as a professional. It's a skill that will pay for itself thousands of times over in the course of your career.*

7. **Not Leveraging the Internet**

Ever go on a web site and find that after poking around a few pages you just click off and go to another site? Of course. It happens millions of times a day on the web. Why? Good question?

This is number seven in the series of 'Silly Marketing Mistakes' where the mistake we'll explore is 'Not Leveraging Our Web Site'. This is an important area because if you cannot get people to stick around our site and eventually contact you, your web site is just taking up cyberspace. If you do not have a website, consider it.

What does a results producing web site need? Let's start with quality design, clear formatting and substantial content on every page. You need to answer the "What's in it for me?" question every step of the way, but that's just the beginning.

Even sites that have all the bases covered often miss the key to turning visitors into clients. It's the difference between a web site that 'just sits there' and one that gets a prospect to give you a call or send an email saying, "can you help me?"

The big key is called the 'Call-to-Action' and you don't just use it once, but over and over throughout your site. Here are some important calls-to-action that you can easily add to your site:

- **At the bottom of every page tell people where to go next.**
Then include a link that points there. If you don't your visitors will scratch their heads thinking, "Where do I go next?" and then scroll up to the navigation bar to figure it out. Don't make them think. Make it obvious where they should go next.
Your directions might say something like: "Now that you have a better idea of the kind of clients we work with, click here to learn about the results you can expect to receive from our services."

- **A “Contact Us” link, also at the bottom of every page**
Who knows when the inspiration will strike to contact you? Have you ever been on a web site and wanted to contact the company but couldn't find an email address or a phone number? Bye, bye business. Also make that Contact Us page more than a phone number, email and address. Tell them what will happen when they contact you. Make it easy to do business with you.
- **A response form at the bottom of every services page**
Take an extra step here. Insert a small form that they can fill out to request even more information about that service. Get their name, email, company name and the answers to a few questions about their needs. Yes, people do fill out these forms. But keep them simple.
- **Have them do something that will get them involved**
This is the psychology behind the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes. It would be easier to just have people mail back the form. But they found that the more involvement, the better the response. You might try a survey of some kind.
- **Have prospects apply to be your client**
Get them to apply for anything, even the 'freebies' such as newsletters. This way applicants can be screened and an acceptance e-mail sent. The conversion rate will be high.
- **Capture their name and email address**
This is really the number one purpose of a web site. Offer an article or report, plus an email newsletter (in that order) in exchange for their contact information. Once you have them on your eZine list, the marketing really starts. It's called 'keep-in-touch-marketing'.
- **Offer ongoing calls to action in your eZine**
Much more business can be generated from the eZine than from new visitors to the web site. Think of the web as the place where you introduce yourself to your prospects, and think of the eZine as the place they get to know you. Then, invite them to explore your services in more depth (by sending them back to the web site).

The Bottom Line: Every single marketing activity needs to include a call-to-action. But, the web site is a 'call-to-action-machine' that moves people step-by-step through the marketing process. This is true marketing leverage, because you don't even have to be there to do it.

8. **Not Asking ~ The Question is the Answer**

Now we are going in another direction with the topic of asking. 'Not asking' is 8th in this series of Silliest Marketing Mistakes.

In Tony Robbins' book, 'Awaken the Giant Within' you can learn the amazing power of asking. When you ask a question, your subconscious automatically goes to work to find the answer. If you ask great questions you will get great answers, but, if you ask bad questions you will get bad answers.

Bad questions include things like, “Why is marketing so hard?” or “Why isn’t anyone interested in my services?” Your subconscious will go to work giving you answers such as “because you are such a loser”, and “nobody cares about you or your business!”

No wonder people get stuck with their marketing!

‘Why’ questions aren’t very useful. But HOW, WHAT and WHO questions can lead you in the right direction: “How do I get attention for my services?” and “What do I need to say to make a prospect feel confident I can help them?” and “Who do I need to talk to in order to get a decision about this project?”

What if asking good questions was the great hidden secret to marketing your services? Could that really be it? I want to suggest that it is. And, conversely, asking bad questions (or not asking questions at all) may be the sure path to marketing failure.

What are the key questions you need to ask in order to be a successful marketer of your services? The answers you so desperately need will only come through asking – such as

Who are my ideal clients?

What are my clients’ most pressing problems?

How can I effectively package solutions to those problems?

How can I become better at delivering my service?

How can I make it more attractive?

How can I get the attention of my prospective clients?

How can I educate my prospects about how I can help them?

Those are just a few of the questions you need to ask yourself. Can you answer all them clearly and concisely? If you can, great: you have laid the foundation for marketing our services. If not, your marketing will grind to a standstill.

Now the answers may not come instantly. But the subconscious will go to work to find the answers. Sometimes they will come intuitively, in a flash. Or you may tap into the myriad information resources so readily available: Books, e-books, online articles, courses, tele-classes, seminars, workshops and conferences are coming at us from every direction.

But, in my experience, these don’t hold a candle to one of the most powerful resources ever invented and that is asking others. Other coaches, trainers and even people not in your field of personal development. Why not get together with a group of people and do a ‘brainstorm’?

The Bottom Line: *Asking questions is the key to success in any endeavour, including marketing your professional services. And you can get these questions answered more quickly and easily than you ever thought possible.*

9. **Not implementing ~ Fire, Ready, Aim Marketing**

We are all or have been guilty of ‘Silly Marketing Mistake’ number 9. And that is not implementing what we already know. We can read a lot, buy online programmes, attend seminars and yet implement a fraction of what we have learned.

That’s the bad news.

The good news is that you don't have to implement a lot to be outrageously successful. You just have to implement a few things consistently. And many independent Professionals focus on one area of marketing and grow their businesses brilliantly.

One good example is John. John retired from being very successful in business to grow a business as a professional coach. He was prepared to learn about how to 'market himself' as well as how to be a 'coach', which helped him through the transition. John spent a lot of time making contact with his hot and warm circles of influence – sending information, following up and talking to them about his business. But after talking with over 80 people, he still had no clients. So, John decided to 'burn the book on marketing' and within a few weeks had generated a relatively predictable substantial annual revenue stream and in just over a year after that he had doubled it. In his own words, this is what John did:

“Here is what I did have, and some of the rules I broke:

- I did not have classy, 'real' business cards; I printed a bunch on my inkjet printer. Yikes!
- I did not have a web site as a central portal of information, education, and promotion (Hmmm). (I admit, I did at least have a one sheet marketing message summary).
- I did not have a Core Issue Article (Ugh!)
- I did not pay for any advertising (Good!)
- I did not have case studies of success stories (Oooo!)
- I did not have what I'd call an extensive circle of influence of small business owners and entrepreneurs (my target audience) (Uh oh!)
- I did not have easy access to free media for publicity (Aww!)
- I had no information products to offer. I had no 'funnel' of products and services (weeping violins, please).

After a couple of months of striking out (and I went to bat every day, I mean EVERY day), I figured out that I need to get past whatever limiting beliefs that I had that were keeping me from producing results. So, I decided to abandon calling my circle of influence and I resolved to set up a 3-hour seminar to showcase what I had to offer.

Here is what I did and more rules that I broke:

- I spent two weeks planning and making the necessary arrangements for the seminar and designing it. I set up a one page web site that was the 'flyer' for the seminar and gave people a way to register.
- By the time I was done getting the 'infrastructure' for the seminar in place, I only had two weeks to promote the event.
- Conventional wisdom: promote a paid event at least six weeks in advance. Promote a free event any time up to the event.

Rules I broke:

- I charged £10.00 for my event, as a way of pre-qualifying the participants, even though I had limited time to promote
- I started promoting only 14 days before the event
- I promoted by calling my circle of influence and asking them who they knew who would be interested in my event
- I visited several networking groups, even the day before my event
- I presented my seminar with little rehearsal. Now, I think I'm a pretty good trainer and speaker, but one of my friends, who has trained with me extensively on

training, presenting, and selling from the front of the room, thought I was absolutely, certifiably lousy.

- I had and still have my own business coach, who helps me see my blind spots and do something about it.

Results:

- 19 people pre-registered. 19 people turned up.
- Three people became business coaching clients
- Within two weeks of that now historic seminar, I had seven coaching clients
- Within a year, 2 additional participants from that seminar became coaching clients. By this time, I had raised my rates with a 12-month commitment
- Last week I started coaching a client at double the rate, again on a 12-month commitment
- This week one of my clients added on a 6-week-long project worth substantially more to me than I could ever have imagined!

John called this approach the ‘Fire, Ready, Aim’ marketing approach. That’s one way of saying it. You see, John simply took the next logical step in implementing a marketing action plan. He had tried a lot of things that hadn’t worked. So, what did he have to lose?

His planning and preparation wasn’t perfect, but so what? He went on to say ...

“...this marketing approach works only if there is a strategy behind it and, even more critically, there’s a big belief in yourself behind it. And, you’ve got a ton of guts to go for it, even when things aren’t looking so hot. And, you’ve got to have clarity and structure to what it is that you have to offer. You have to be clear and supremely confident about the ultimate value that you have to offer.”

The Bottom Line: *Create a plan, any plan, and start implementing. John wrapped up with “use both your intellect and your intuition to guide you. The success of this (or really any other marketing approach) comes from you being powerful, confident, energetic, and on purpose, and less so from what you are doing or not doing.”*

10. Not Risking ~ Risking by Not Risking

This is the final in the series: ‘Ten Silliest Marketing Mistakes.’ I have left the best for last – ‘not risking’.

It has often been asked, “What is the biggest mistake you have made in your business?” I am not suggesting that it is silly to avoid all kinds of risk. Some risks are truly RISKY. You could lose everything. These kinds of risks need to be considered very seriously.

So, let’s not even worry about big risks for now, let’s look at the risks that aren’t really risky at all but that we avoid anyway. I’ll divide them into two categories:

Risking to learn something new

You really wouldn’t think it was risky to learn something new, but you’d be wrong. You see, anything that is outside of our comfort zone is perceived as risky. Even if the upside of it is huge, it is easier to stick with the status quo.

I have recommended books to people and you would have thought I had asked them to jump off a cliff! “Oh, that’s not a topic I’m familiar with. What if I don’t like it? No, I don’t

think I'll read it." (This is why conservative books are read by conservatives and liberal books by liberals.)

Are there some things that you could really benefit from learning but you have put them off because they will take you out of your comfort zone? Take a moment to write them down and we will come back to them later.

Risking to try something new

And if learning something new is perceived as risky, then actually doing something new is.... well.... better thought about later! We will think about doing that marketing plan, that networking event, that presentation later on when conditions are better. But very often the risk is entirely imaginary. In fact, it can often be a much bigger risk with a business to not take a risk, for example doing that presentation. You might be earning less income, missing opportunities, stagnating.

Ultimately, we will only take a risk when we realise that the cost of not acting is greater than the cost of acting. Unfortunately, we often have these realisations a little too late. What are those things you're putting off? Again, take a second to write a few of them down.

Now you have a short list of things you are not learning but could probably benefit from learning and another list of things you are not doing but would likely profit from if you got around to doing them.

What I recommend is that you subject each item on your list to the following questions:

- 1) Is this something that would truly benefit me if I learned it or put it into action?
- 2) What are some of the possible benefits I might gain if I learned or did this thing?
- 3) What could I potentially lose if I didn't learn this thing or do this thing?
- 4) What's the worst that could happen if I took a risk and learned this thing or did this thing?

When you ask these four questions of every item on your list, you will have reframed your risk. What used to look risky might not look risky anymore. In fact, it might actually start looking like a great idea to 'learn' or 'do' this thing.

The Bottom Line: Start questioning those things you perceive as risky. Don't just look at the upside of avoiding them, look at the upside of doing them.

What are you risking? What is the avoidance costing you?

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Appendix 13: The Art of Follow-Up

Many people are looking for a "killer marketing message" that will make people jump up and down with excitement when they hear it, and its important to try and perfect the message. This message can get some initial attention. That's all.

And virtually every single marketing action after that is follow-up.

When someone shows some interest in your services (when you deliver a decent, but not mythical, marketing message), you need to follow-up with some more information.

Once they've read that information, you need to follow-up to determine if there's a deeper interest. And if there's a deeper interest, then you need to follow-up to set up an appointment.

But it doesn't end there.

Once you have an appointment, you need to follow-up to confirm that appointment (yes, people forget about appointments they make!). And once you've had the appointment you need to follow-up with a proposal or to close the sale. Follow-up never ends.

Follow-Up Secrets

Here are some follow-up secrets I've learned over the years that are important to understand and master if you're going to attract more clients.

1. Know where you are in the game

When you follow-up with someone, the purpose is to move the prospect from one base in the marketing game to the next base. If you try to jump bases (or move too fast), you tend to get rejected by the prospect. If you move too slow with your follow-up, you loose the interest you've generated up to that point.

2. Don't move too fast

When you get someone's interest (say at a networking meeting) and then say you'd like to call back to talk with them, that's fine. But when you make that call and immediately try to set up an appointment, you'll likely get some resistance.

Remember, people want more familiarity and some information before they meet with you. So your follow-up system needs to build that in. One way to do this is with pre-written emails and links to our website to gain access to free articles or for you to send them an article.

3. Don't move too slow

If you give a talk and get cards from people who are interested in knowing more about your services, how soon should you follow-up? The very next day. For each day you don't follow-up, interest wanes. If you have only a few follow-ups, use the phone. If you have many, send an email to set up a time to talk in the next week.

Stale follow-ups are just that. They've forgotten what interested them in the first place, so when you call back after several weeks it's like starting all over again.

4. Balance fast and slow

The key to effective follow-up is balancing the fast and the slow. Fast to get back to someone when they show interest; slow to get to know them. Fast to provide information requested; slow to discuss what this information means to their business. Fast to get a proposal in the mail; slow to discuss the details of that proposal.

5. Watch your assumptions

What if someone doesn't get back to you? You've followed up promptly and you don't hear back right away. What does this mean? Only one answer: Who knows? It could be anything.

But we are quick to jump to the conclusion that it's bad news. Not always. They might be very busy with a big priority or could even be away on holiday. So, don't jump to conclusions. Just keep following up. Just watch that you don't sound desperate!

6. When to stop following-up

Let's say you have a prospect you've either met with or done a proposal for. You thought everything was going well, but they aren't returning your calls. Do you keep leaving messages or do you give up? What I recommend is leaving one last message that goes like this:

"Hi John, I've been trying to get back to you about the project but haven't heard from you for a couple weeks. I don't want to keep pestering you, so if I don't hear back from you, I'll assume you don't want to move ahead. I'll leave the ball in your court. Please call if you want to take the next steps, but this is the last message I'll be leaving. Hope to hear from you. My number is ..."

This approach works. If they actually are interested, they'll call you back. If they don't, well there's your answer. It's time to move on.

7. Create follow-up systems

To streamline your follow-up, create systems you can use over and over again. A follow-up system consists of specific steps you take each step of the way.

It might work something like this:

- a) prospect learns about your service and visits web site
- b) prospect fills out form on the web requesting more information or registers for our newsletters
- c) prospect receives an automated email from you with web link
- d) you send out personalised email requesting an appointment
- e) you follow-up by email until appointment is set
- f) you meet with prospect by phone

- g) after phone appointment you send agreement
- h) after a few days you send another email
- i) after a few more days you leave a phone message
- j) prospect ultimately gets back to you with a yes or no

Once your follow-up system is designed and fine-tuned, you can use it reliably to turn many prospects into clients. It does not happen by chance.

I invite you to use it to build your business.

The skill of follow-up is the glue that holds all of your marketing together. It's what bridges the gaps between initial connections, information, meetings and proposals. Make it a priority to master this skill as soon as possible.

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Appendix 14: The Elevator Speech (revisiting the basics)

By Eric Albertson

We've been hearing about elevator speeches, seemingly forever. But, the fact is, it's one of the most powerful tools you acquire. A good one not only hooks your prospect, it also helps you define who you are and what your business really is. Believe me, that's an advantage.

So, let's revisit: You're in an elevator, and someone you recognise walks in. You realise you've been trying to reach this prospect for a year. You've got 15 seconds to make an impression. What do you say? Probably something like:

"Hi, my name is Stan Smith, I sell real estate."

"Hi, I'm Shirley Jones, I'm a financial consultant."

"Hi, my name is Elizabeth Gonzalez, and I'm an executive recruiter."

How far do you think any of these statements will take you?

Do they advance the conversation? Do they get you an appointment? Do they get you any business? Likely not. The reason these kinds of statements don't get you -- or anybody, for that matter -- a response, is because they're focused on you. What you do. Not what the customer is interested in.

When the response to your opening tends to be, "So what?" it's not engaging the other person. It's not doing you any good. And that's why you're probably not getting anywhere.

Another old, but basic concept: The most popular radio station in the U.S. is: WII FM (What's In It For Me?)

Until you've let your prospect know what's in it for her or him, you won't get to first base.

Alternatives to the introductions they've been using:

Stan might say: "Hi, my name is Stan Smith. I work with people who want to get higher returns on their real estate investments and save money on their taxes. I'm so glad I've finally got the opportunity to meet you, Mr. Trump. Do you have a moment to chat, or can I give you a call at your office?"

Shirley might say: "Hi, I'm Shirley Jones, and I work with people who want to build wealth by investing in undervalued securities. Do you have a moment?"

Elizabeth might say: "Hi, my name is Elizabeth Gonzalez. I work with growing companies that need talented people so they can expand and get more profitable. Do you have a moment?"

Benefit statements

I call these kinds of statements benefit statements, because they focus on the benefits that you offer to your clients and customers, instead of on what you do.

Take action...now

Try this: Write down a list of the benefits that your clients and customers derive from working with you. Then use those words and phrases to create your benefit statement, and finally, your elevator speech.

Keep the elevator speech as short as possible, and use words that are normally used in conversation. Make it sound natural, not like a late-night TV pitch.

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Appendix 15: What's a marketing problem?

It's when a prospect doesn't understand the value of what you offer and why they should do business with you.

All marketing problems, therefore, are communication problems.

If you understand how to solve your marketing problems through well-designed communications (usually written), you can dramatically increase your marketing results.

Let me outline the four key marketing problems:

1. Your prospect doesn't know anything about your business, who you work with, or the kind of results you produce.
2. Your prospect knows something about your business, but not enough to be comfortable calling you for assistance.
3. Your prospect knows more about your business, but is not yet sure your service is the appropriate one for them.
4. Your prospect knows a lot, and is considering doing business with you but hasn't yet made a decision.

You cannot solve all of these problems the same way. You need to write very focused marketing materials that address each of these issues specifically.

Let's look how:

1. Your first problem is an issue of attention. You need a brief, concise message that communicates the essence of what you offer. You use this kind of message when you meet someone, send a prospect a letter, or greet a visitor to your web site.

You don't need to tell everything, just communicate the basics. "These are the kind of clients we work with, the kind of issues we address, and the kind of results we typically get."

This form of simple communication will get attention and generate interest. The aim of this communication is not to get the prospect to buy, but to get them to ask for more information.

2. Your second problem is an issue of familiarity and information. When you have someone's attention, they then want to know who you are, and how (and if) your services works.

These days you can best accomplish this on a (the 10 Actions) web site. This material will answer most of the questions about your business, who you work with, your approach, track record and your background. The focus always needs to be on what the prospect will actually get if they work with you.

This more in-depth communication is often enough to get a prospect to respond with some version of "How can you help me?"

3. Your third problem is one of qualification. The information above can be enough to get a response, but sometimes not enough for the prospect to know if you're the ideal solution. And, just as important, for you to determine if the prospect could be an ideal client (instead of one who will waste your time).

The way to accomplish this when a prospect calls or emails you in response to your marketing, is to send them additional information by email that will qualify them. Let them know in more depth who your ideal clients are, the kind of results they get and the conditions under which you produce these results.

By the way, this is the one that you probably leave out. You jump into the sales process too fast. Instead, play a little hard to get. If you tell your prospect that you don't work with everyone, they will often fight to get an appointment with you!

4. Your fourth problem is one of commitment. Once you have met with a prospect, learned more about their situation, and determined the best way to work with them, you need to persuade the prospect to move forward (and pay you).

The next solution is a proposal. And guess what? It covers the same material you've covered before, only more specifically. You discuss the situation and needs of the prospect, the objectives you will meet, the measure of success, your methodology and terms of working together.

As Alan Weiss says, "A proposal is a summation, not an exploration." Come to an agreement as to how you can work together first, and then summarise that agreement in a written proposal.

Note that all of these marketing problems are solved by communications that provide the right information at the right time. All of these solutions follow pretty much the same formula:

1. Who we work with
2. The problems we address
3. The results we produce
4. How we do what we do
5. A call to action

The only difference in solving these four marketing problems is the depth and specificity of the communication.

The key to your marketing success will be your ability to develop solutions to these four marketing problems (i.e. create the right written materials). It doesn't take a lot of creativity, just an understanding of the process and a willingness to "tweak" the materials until they produce the desired results.

When you think of marketing as a process of solving marketing problems by communicating the right information at the right time, things get a whole lot easier.

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NOTES

Action Planning Worksheet

Note here any action points you want to be able to

refer back to:

(Ensure your action points are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound)

Completed by (when)

Desired Outcome (Why)

Priority Activity (What)

Action Points (How)

What have I learnt from this activity?

<u>Page in workbook</u>	<u>Priority Activity (What)</u>	Desired Outcome (Why)	Action Points (How)