INFO PRODUCT
BLUEPRINT

WORKBOOK

Your Comprehensive Blueprint and Action Plan for Creating and Selling a Successful Info Product

CREATED BY **Kenneth A. McArthur**

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INSTRUCTION SHEET

Congratulations on taking action and starting your journey to create your Info Product!

One of the first things I would like for you to realize is that this will take work. For some people this will be one of the toughest things you have ever done in your life.

Build A Success Path

In order to get the most out of this workbook you will want to study it several times. I recommend that as you are going through the workbook you take notes and use highlighters.

As you go through each module, break the sections down to see if each area is one you personally want to tackle or will hire or partner with someone who is an expert in that area.

Answer the Questions and Design Your Plan

As you proceed through each module make sure you pay attention to the questions. As you answer each question follow through with the action steps. These actions steps are designed to make sure you stay on track and accomplish your goal-your very own info product.

Tips And Hints

Italics: Throughout the workbook if you see part of the article in italics, this means that section is from Dan Giordano the workbook editor. Dan will sometimes introduce a contributor, give an overview of the section, or add some comments at the end of a section. It's just our way of letting you know a different person is writing, not the author of the section.

Section Overview: At the start of each section you'll have an overview of the article. As we have many contributors, you'll receive a brief introduction of the author. (For a more detailed contributor information go to the Appendix for information on Info Product Blueprint Contributors).

Things You Will Learn: In the boxes at the start of each topic you will find a list of key points covered in the section. Other points will be covered, but the section emphasis is on the ones in the box.

Notes: Take notes as you read. This is designed to be a working tool for you. So mark it up, highlight and write notes. We want you to succeed and noting important or ah-ha's will help you when designing your plan.

Questions: In the workbook, there are questions included to guide you in the development of your own info product. Take the time to thoughtfully answer the questions. This is the basis of your plan. Some questions will look simple and even repetitive. But it's all part of the blueprint. So take the time and invest in yourself. You will use the information to develop your product and your action plan.

Be patient with yourself. There's a lot of information included in Info Product Blueprint. We've included audios, video and plenty of printed material to help you in your product development. We're already planned on some more updated material that will be posted on the resource page. So make sure you register for the updates (www.infoproductblueprint.com/developer).

We want this to be your reference tool, your guidebook.

YOUR Blueprint for developing an info product.

Seize your opportunity and share your success with us.

The Info Product Blueprint Team

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your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

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Module 1: Brainstorming And Research

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 1: Determine Your Objectives

By Dan Giordano

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Determine Your Objectives

Welcome to Info Product Blueprint.

Take a moment to congratulate yourself for taking action. So many people decide they 'want to take action' but never take the first step.

You've taken the first step and Info Product Blueprint will guide you through developing a plan for an information product in *your* time frame, *your* choice of subject and *your* expertise.

This workbook is designed to compliment the DVDs and CDs in Info Product Blueprint. So whether you like to listen, see or write to learn and develop your plan, you have the tools in hand to get your action plan started.

We've gathered a team of Internet marketing experts to share their tips and techniques with you. Each has developed their specialty or niche and their own way of telling their story or expertise.

Listen to their words, not only for the information, but the way they put their words together. Each expert lets their own unique personality come through their writing. You'll hear and see many effective styles for getting a message to an audience.

Make notes about each expert to help you develop your own 'voice' when writing and developing your own info product.

Each section builds on the one before. Complete the exercises and questions as you go through each module. When you've completed this workbook, you'll have the start of your info product and a blueprint for its launch. Remember, it's only a start because so few people take action and *DO*.

In the words of John Pierpont Morgan, "The wise man bridges the gap by laying out the path by means of which he can get from where he is to where he wants to go." So gather pen, pencil, and some extra paper. Let's get your personal information product blueprint going. And get ready to launch!

Dan Giordano II
Workbook Editor

Determining Objectives

If you have been researching or involved in online business for very long, you have no doubt seen a multitude of offers for "e-books," books, reports and training courses on every subject imaginable.

Why? People on the Internet are looking for information. Whether it's how to cook a roast, build a house or save money on their taxes, there's always a demand for information.

Pure information is a product that doesn't require a huge financial overhead to produce – other than the hard knocks you get in gaining the experience – and information products are easy and relatively low cost to deliver to the customer. That is why information products work so well.

So why are you thinking about creating an info product? What form have you imagined? Is it an e-book, print book, training course or video how-to guide? Have you just imagined that an information production business would be a good Internet business to have? No matter where you are in the planning process, it's time to get more specific.

If you're still looking for a topic, you may need to look no further than your own experience.

If you are still searching for a topic, you may be saying to yourself, "But I'm not an expert on anything."

Well, think again. Everyone has life experience, training, and skills that others do not have. Everyone knows something that others want to know, or can do something that others want to learn. You may know how to have a lush lawn without pesticides, cook the perfect roast turkey or raise an ethical child. You have many marketable skills and talents you haven't seen in a marketable light – yet….

Whether you use life experience or other talents to develop your information product, there are millions of potential topics. One part of a successful info product is the USP. USP means unique selling position. That's the product 'hook' that differentiates you from the rest of the market.

In his book *Reality in Advertising*, Rosser Reeves describes USP as what transforms your product from a commodity to something special and desirably unique in the marketplace. He describes a three-step process where the USP must include:

1. A promise to the customer, "Buy this product and 'x' will occur."

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2. The promise you offer must be one your competitors do not or cannot offer.

3. The difference offered by the promise must be important so the potential customer pulls out their credit card to buy when they read or see the difference.

Here are some ways different companies asked what their USP was and their answers.

Is it how you deliver the product or service?

◆ Netflix® with 'DVD rentals delivered with no late fees.'

Is it that the quality of your finished product is better than the competition?

◆ Papa John's® Pizza offers 'Better sauce, better pizza."

Do you offer better customer service and support after the sale?

◆ Nordstrom's USP is their outstanding customer service.

Do you offer the best guarantee?

◆ LL Bean® offers this guarantee: "If you're not satisfied with your purchase, we'll replace it or give you your money back. It's that simple."

Can you package your products differently?

◆ Tiffany® has made their 'blue' jewelry box one of the most recognized jewelry packages in the world.

Do you want to write a book, e-book, or training course? The list of helpful software and online publishers is growing every day. But even if you write your own product or design your own software, you will still need a well thought out USP to stand out in the crowd.

Does that mean you have to be able to write a book? Not necessarily. Interviews, teleseminars, and transcriptions of interviews can all be successful info products.

What can you offer that is unique or different than your potential competitors?

Your USP might be that you have detailed knowledge about someone else's product that you are selling as an affiliate. It could be that humorous way you present the information you have collected on some subject of interest, or the fact that you offer the best customer service available. You may offer the

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same products that others are also selling, but find your own unique way of marketing or presenting them.

If you were to research the online marketers who are honestly making the money they claim to be earning online, you would discover that they all have a USP. Determining your USP can mean the difference between 'ho-hum, you're on the Internet' and outrageous success.

It may take some time to discover your USP, but the results are worth it. Remember, your USP *is* your product, however you package and deliver it.

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Notes from Editor:

Whether you use your life experience, knowledge you have, life skills you've acquired or information you've researched, I know you have an info product inside of you. Everyone does. Your gift is something to be shared and can earn a profit! Your first assignment will be to decide which of your many gifts you are going to offer to the world!

Info Product Blueprint

Determine Your Objectives – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write down the areas where you have specialized knowledge or skills or do well in and are passionate about.

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2. Who are the people that can help you?

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3. What are your Goals? (Why do you want to develop an information product?)

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Next . . . Fill a Need

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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 2: Fill A Need

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

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Fill A Need

The dot.com bust of the early 2000's is a good example of why it is important to find a need to fill. During the dot.com boom, online businesses and products came and went – some in a blaze of media hype – but most just faded into nothingness.

Some products, topics and websites became powerhouses of business by recognizing one important concept. Amazon® and Google™ both found a niche and excelled, while Pets.com, eToys.com and Webvan.com missed and failed.

You must fill a need in order to succeed.

Sounds trite, but it really isn't. If people don't want what you are selling or offering, it doesn't matter if it is the best product or service.

What you will learn in this Section:

- How market segmentation can make info product development easier

- Your potential market segments or niches

How do you set your direction for filling a need?

Research

For many people, research is boring and they just gloss over it and then wonder why they fail online. Take the time to see if your idea is online. In the next section, you'll learn to define your target market and start your research.

But what do you do if you have the newest, best, greatest idea for an info product and no one has done it?

You are going to have to have a serious conversation with yourself. New markets can be profitable or they can be merely expensive. The decision is yours.

But I've Got A Great Idea

If your idea is totally brand new, you'll need to consider some 'make it or break it' questions.

Do you have enough money to train and educate online users into buying a new product or service?

Do you have the time and patience to develop a new market?

New markets are expensive and time-consuming to produce, which is why many large organizations merely improve or mirror a competitor's edge. It is easier to build on an existing market than to develop a new market.

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There is one advantage of trying something online first. Entry cost is low. For the cost of a domain, a website and some copy, you can be up and running. For a couple of thousand dollars you can even pay to get targeted traffic with the profile that you need to validate your market.

The Path of Least Resistance

"*The Path of Least Resistance*" is a book about how the roads in Boston were 'designed.' It turns out it wasn't the civil engineers that laid out the roads, but cows as they returned or moved to grazing areas. The cows followed the path of least resistance.

There's work involved with having a successful online business. I believe in being successful, but I am not going to swim against the tide or climb a mountain to get there. I'm going to find a market of people online that want what I have to offer. I'm going to follow the path of least resistance and I suggest you do the same.

So how do you find your personal path? Begin by looking at both online and offline successes for trends.

Offline newspapers such as Germany's Bild-Zeitung, Britain's Daily Mirror or Morning Star, or in the United States the Sun, Enquirer, and magazines such as People, Vogue and Cosmopolitan can tell you what people are looking for. On television Barbara Walters and Larry King get top ratings when their shows are broadcast because they are aware of these trends. These businesses are all responding to a need, something people want and will pay either with money or their time.

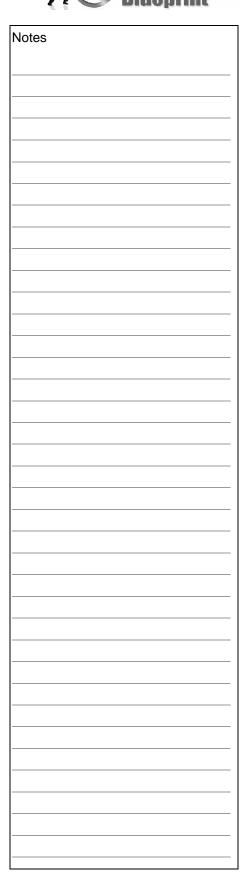## Eight Seconds and Counting

What are the trends or needs in the area you are considering?

What do you think your potential customer wants?

Too often we decide when determining our market, "I'm going to service everyone who is interested in _____." (You fill in the blank).

But that's not making it easy on you. On a website, you have eight seconds or less to convince a person visiting that you are the solution to their need.

Eight-second success is met by using niches or targeting. If you can't easily get the entire market in eight seconds, then go for a slice of that market and increase your chances of success.

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Niches Revealed

Everywhere you go online you hear the same thing: "You must find a niche for your business."

So just what is a niche?

A niche is a market segment or specialization of a broad part of the market that makes it a narrow target.

The short answer is, niche simply means distinct or individual.

For example, there are many diet sodas or soft drinks. In a smaller group or niche there are colas and non-colas. Breaking it down even further, there are colas for those who prefer Pepsi products and those who prefer Coke products.

Unfortunately, too many of us write a book or develop a product without finding if there is a market of people interested in buying our product. Wouldn't it be better to find a niche where people are actively searching – even crazy about finding your product? So why not work smarter and make it easier on yourself by finding a specialized niche.

To increase your success potential, you need to make sure there is a market with enough people to make it worth your time and effort. That's why researching your market is so important.

Take the female market. There are many profitable segments or niches. Young women, teens, mature women, stay-at-home moms, working mothers, executive women, blue-collar women, pink-collar women and single mothers. Each has different needs, wants and wishes. When we want to reach a segment, we need to think like our customer.

Take a moment to think like your customer. What do they want? What are they looking for? In our next section, you're going to be doing research to find the specific customer that will be just the right one.

Why Passion Helps

Ever read one of those website letters that is just 'flat' or dull? Odds are the person who wrote the words didn't have a belief or passion about the product or the niche. Passion conveys interest, enthusiasm and says 'This may be it' to your website visitor. Later, we'll be doing some writing as you start reaching out to your visitor to connect and help them make a decision. The decision may be to buy immediately or it may be to stay and read some more.

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The Niche or segment market allows you to clearly reach and fill the needs of a specific segment in the market. It lets you meet the eight-second decision-maker. It encourages your visitor to stay and learn more.

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Notes from Editor:

Remember, success in any business always comes back to supplying a product that the public has a demand for and the market has room for. Find the right niche and you are on the right path. It's the path of least resistance.

Info Product Blueprint

Find a Need to Fill – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are some niches or market segments for your product? List at least three potential niches?

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Next . . . Research Your Market

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Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 3: Research Your Market

By Ann DeVere

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Research Your Market

The best way to research your potential product is to check the competition. Don't worry, you won't even have to leave home for this research.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Definition of market analysis

◆ Steps to a helpful market analysis

◆ Reasons for conducting a market analysis

You can use any of the search engines (Google, Yahoo®, MSN or AOL®) to check out the competition for your potential product.

Getting Started

Type in the topic or subject of your product in Google (or other search engine you prefer). Print out the page with the top ten sites in that search category. Now go check out the websites of your potential competitors. You're going to be having a conversation with yourself, so make sure you cover the questions below. Take notes, as you'll be using the information later.

Start by visiting the website of the number one site on the list.

Think about it from a potential customer's viewpoint.

Now take a minute and ask yourself these three questions for each of the ten sites:

◆ Is there something missing from the product you can include when you're making a product?

◆ Does your change or twist make the product better?

◆ Would your way of making the product make it more attractive or desirable to a potential customer?

If your answer is "No," then you need to ask yourself if this is the product you should be developing.

If your answer is "Yes," now's the time to invest some effort in a more complete market analysis.

What is market analysis?

In the most basic terms, a market analysis is an assessment of:

◆ A particular problem or opportunity in a market.

◆ The needs of the target market relating to the problem or opportunity.

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- Ideas for marketing a particular product or service that fills the needs of the target market.

When should you conduct a market analysis?

- When you are starting a business.

- When you are entering a new market.

- When you are considering a new product or service.

Why should you conduct a market analysis?

- To minimize business risks.

- To understand the problems and opportunities.

- To identify sales opportunities.

- To plan your marketing/sales approach.

The process of conducting a market analysis can be divided into three parts:

Understanding Market Conditions: This gives you basic information about your entire market -- the size, the competition, the customers.

Identifying Market Opportunities: This gives you more targeted information about potential problems or opportunities in the potential market, and includes information about growth, current and future trends, outside factors and more information about specific competitors.

Developing Market-Driven Strategies: Here we get into what market research does for you. It helps you to pinpoint opportunities to grow your business. By understanding the market and knowing what opportunities are available, you can create a marketing strategy that leaves your competitors in the dust!

The more you know about your potential customers, the more easily you can meet their wants and needs. Also, it makes it easier to become the 'go-to expert' for a particular topic.

It's time for you to hear another perspective. Ann DeVere is a marketing expert online and offline. Ann talks about not only '*listening to, but hearing*' what your potential customers say. Ann is going to share her perspective on creating a profitable customer.

Notes

What A Camel Taught ME About Marketing

Tired of watching everyone else around you make money **easily**... while you work as hard as you can and still struggle to make the kind of money YOU want? Do you find yourself saying, "What am I doing wrong? Where's the big money? What am I missing?"

I want you to know that I have traveled the same road most likely you have when learning to promote my businesses. It was through a great deal of pain and frustration, not to mention the money I lost, that got me to learn 2 BIG marketing lessons. But the biggest marketing lesson that changed the course of my life was delivered by a camel driver in Egypt. Pay close attention; what I'm about to share with you could be just what you need to change the course of your life.

BIG Lesson #1

If you don't tell them, they won't know! If they don't know, they won't come!

In the mid 1980s, I decided to try my hand at the New York real estate market. Right away I noticed that the successful agents in the office were doing quite a lot of marketing. Since I had no money at that time, I said, "Well, when I make some money, I will invest it in marketing."

I was doing the same thing most small business owners do. I was waiting to make money so I could afford to spend money on marketing. So, I kept on waiting and waiting….

BIG Lesson #2:

If you don't decide who your MOST Profitable Customer is and speak directly to them, you'll be spending your time and money on people who don't want or can't buy what you are selling.

After the real estate market I decided to go into a totally different business, because I had heard, "If you do what you love the money will follow." I went into apparel manufacturing and retailing.

Because I realized the importance of marketing, what I ended up doing was spending a lot of money on the big billboards in the New York subways, radio ads and flyers... we ended up getting a lot of people who were NOT able to afford what we were selling.

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I knew the answer was in marketing, so I read books on marketing and listened to audios, but for some reason I just didn't get IT! Nothing seemed to be working. After 2 years of struggling and a lot of money down the drain I shut the doors and got a JOB working for a company that was importing apparel from developing countries. I spent 4 to 5 months a year traveling between countries like India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt… That's when I learned the greatest marketing lesson of my life from a Camel Driver in Egypt and became a lifetime student of marketing.

What I learned is a marketing strategy so fundamental and so powerful that it has been successfully used throughout the world for thousands of years. **It has been passed down from generation to generation and it is as powerful today as it was thousands of years ago.**

Do not underestimate the power of this simple strategy. It could be the KEY that opens the floodgates of the abundance in your life.

So now let me tell you how I came to learn this great lesson. It was 1993, my first business trip to Egypt. I was in Cairo to oversee our production. One of the factory owners I was working with took me to see the Pyramids. What an amazing experience! It is truly one of the most remarkable and inspiring places on earth.

After a tour of the Pyramids, I noticed there were camels for hire. Now, I had never ridden a camel and since I've always loved trying new and exciting things I couldn't wait to get on that camel, until I found out I had to ride with the camel driver. I don't know if you've heard this, but camels smell really bad and the camel driver didn't' smell any better.

The factory owner wasn't happy when I told him I wanted to ride the camel by myself. He insisted I get on with the camel driver while I kept saying over and over again that I wanted to ride the camel by myself. Only when he finally explained that he was responsible for my safety and I had no choice did I give in and agree.

During this entire conversation the camel driver was paying close attention. I saw him watching our every move. I saw him listening to every word. Well, as soon as we got out of sight of the factory owner the driver turns around and says, "You want to ride the camel by yourself?" I said, "Yes." He says, "Give me $20." So, I gave him $20 and he got off and started running along side of the camel.

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Now I'm happy. I got what I wanted and I'm really enjoying taking everything in. He looks at me and sees me looking at the desert. Now he says, "You want to ride the camel in the desert?" I say, "Yes." Again, he says, "Give me $20." So, I gave him another $20, he stood aside and smacked the camel on the behind. The camel took off in a full gallop.

I felt like I was in one of those Arabian movies. It seemed like everything was moving in slow motion. My hair was blowing in the wind and the hot desert sun was radiating on my face. I was totally enjoying this beautiful experience. And then it hit me. This camel is moving really fast and I don't know how to stop him. About the time panic set in, the camel came to a stop, turned around and started heading back. Fortunately for me, the camel was already trained to go only so far and turn around.

Why am I telling you this story? What does this have to do with marketing? EVERYTHING! On the ride back I got IT! Remember when I said the camel driver was paying close attention to the conversation? Well, he heard what I was saying. He listened to what I wanted, and he told me I could have what I wanted. All I had to do was give him some money. I gladly would have paid him 10 times as much for that experience. That's the bottom line. Marketing is knowing what your customers want and giving it to them. It's that simple.

"Marketing is finding out what your customers want and giving it to them"

The camel driver knew his MOST profitable customers were tourists. I doubt that many Egyptians would pay $40 for a thirty minute camel ride. He also knew that the best place to find the tourists would be at the Pyramids.

Marketing is all about understanding your customer. When you know who your MOST profitable customer is, what they want and where they are — you are in the unique position to develop and deliver a marketing message that addresses their wants and needs and easily walks them through your sales process.

"It is impossible to overemphasize the immense need humans have to be really listened to, to be taken seriously, to be understood."

--Dr. Paul Tournier, M.D.

Notes

How To Identify Your MOST Profitable Customer

In an effort to save money, many small business owners make the mistake of designing their marketing materials with the idea of selling to everyone. Everyone is NOT your customer. Stop wasting your time and advertising money on people who don't want what you are selling!

You need to focus on and talk directly to the people who are most likely to buy what you are selling. The ones who are likely to pay you top dollar. The ones you most like to work with.

Choosing the perfect target market can make the difference in your business being moderately successful or wildly exceeding your expectations. Answer the following questions and you'll be way ahead of most of your competition.

Your MOST Profitable Customer – Who are they?

General Information

- ◆ Gender: Is it a man? Is it a woman?
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Marital status: Single, married, divorced, widowed
- ◆ Children? (ages)
- ◆ Area of residence
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Occupation
- ◆ Income range

Your Niche Market

- ◆ Ethnic and Religious background
- ◆ Hobbies
- ◆ Health
- ◆ What problems keep him or her awake at night?
- ◆ What is their personality: Are they laid back? Are they very energetic?
- ◆ Do they have certain personality traits that make them difficult for others to work with them, but you find them very easy to work with?

Your Gold Mine Product or Service

- ◆ What is their biggest problem?
- ◆ Which one of your products or services solves their biggest problem**?**

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Notes from Editor:

When you complete the worksheet on market analysis, you will have a better idea of where your potential market lies. So read a little more and then start completing your worksheet.

Knowing the answers to the following questions will not only help you figure out if there is a need for your product or service, it will help you figure out the best ways to reach your customers, price your products or service and ultimately create more sales!

Research Your Market – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the market I want to reach?

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2. Who are they? (basic demographics) Where do they work, shop, what magazines do they read, TV shows do they watch, how many children do they have, where do they vacation.

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3. What is their biggest problem?

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4. Are their needs being met by the products or services provided?

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5. Who is my competition in this market?

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6. List your top twenty competitors and their contact information.

7. Are they successful in this market?

8. Are they marketing a similar product or service?

9. What is the market share of the three biggest competitors in this market? (Alexa information, NY Times Best Seller list)

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10. Is there room for growth in this market?

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11. What is the size of this market?

,12. Is the industry growing, stable, saturated, volatile or declining?

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13. How is my product or service different from the competition?

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14. How is my competition currently reaching this market?

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15. How can I reach this market?

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16. Is it the most effective way?

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17. What are the alternative ways of reaching this market? Would e-mail, direct mail, magazines, teleseminars, or newspapers be more effective? What companies do your potential customers do business with? What stores do they buy from?

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18. What companies do your potential customers do business with? What stores do they buy from?

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19. What do customers expect from this type of product or service?

- What do they want the product to do?
- How easy is it to use? Paint-by-numbers simple or just concepts?
- Is reliability a factor?
- What price point or level can you use?
- Are guarantees important? What's the standard length?
- Is customer service important or not? Does the product require service after the sale?
- Do customers want an introductory product or a complete A to Z package?
- Will the product need to be updated?
- How soon can they get it?

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20. What are the benefits and services everyone offers in the marketplace? (These are the basic services or information everyone includes.)

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21. What would make the product "new," "different" or "better" for the customer?

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22. How much are customers willing to pay for this product or service?

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23. What is my competitive advantage in this market (my Unique Selling Position (USP))?

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Next . . . Research Your Competition

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 4: Research Your Competition

By Dan Giordano

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 4

Research Your Competition

After you compiled the market information take a good look at your competition. Here are a few things that will help you.

> **What you will learn in this Section:**
>
> ◆ Discover how to research your competitors
>
> ◆ What are points to consider when doing competitor research

Getting Started

Find the top three to five competitors for the product niche you are targeting. Some great tools to research your competitors are search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN. Programs like Keyword Elite and Market Research Wizard will do even more of the work for you. .

You may find that there are many things you can do to create your info product and make it unique. Many people give up at this point because they think that someone has already developed their product. You want to create the absolute best product for the market.

Look critically at your product.

Do you have a twist or a unique value or viewpoint in your product?

The first product in the market doesn't necessarily dominate the market, but the person who talks and relates to a specific niche can dominate that niche. Are you meeting the 'wants' of a niche? Does your product say to your niche, "Grab your credit card, I can help you"? Take a minute to review your foundation.

Identify the needs and expectations of your potential customers. Discover the competition's strengths and weaknesses. If you still believe you have a great product, run your idea by some experienced industry people. Too often we fall in love with our idea and fail to see it through the eyes of our niche.

One of the best formats for feedback I have seen was at a jvAlert Live event where the attendees put their project ideas on the "Hot Seat." If you put your ideas in front of a panel of top-level experts, you will know if your product idea will be worth your time and ultimately if it will pull in big JV Partners when you are ready to launch.

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The final evaluation of the information collected by your Internet market research should provide the following benefits:

- Identify the needs and expectations of your potential customers

- Discover your competition's strong and weak points

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Info Product Blueprint

Research Your Competition – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Pick the top three to five competitors and rank them based on:

Name	Content	Type of Products (i.e. digital or hard products)	Quality of Products	Competitive Edge (their USP)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

2. What is the unique twist or viewpoint that you want to add to your product?

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3. What are the wants and needs of the niche you want to dominate?

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4. What are the expectations of the market niche you want to target?

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Next . . . Research Your Keywords

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 5: Research Your Keywords

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Research Your Keywords

Online effectiveness in selling means understanding one important concept. The days of surfing the web to just 'surf' or just discover are now part of Internet lore. People today are online to search or look for something specific. They type words and terms into search engines such as Google, MSN and Ask that describe what they are looking for.

Online visitors find you. You don't find them. Unless… you lock in to what they are trying to find online.

You have to know what they are searching for, the critical words, simply the **KEYWORDS**.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to use Overture search tool

◆ How to determine potential market profitability with Google AdWords Keyword Tool

◆ Top 20 search keywords to use for your info product

◆ To find your top competitors for your proposed info product

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Why Bother With Keyword Research

Keyword research is one of those areas, a 'have to' part of online success. In product design, success is finding out exactly **what** your customers want **and** how the potential customer is **looking online** for what they want. The two steps go hand in hand. In this case the 'what' and the 'how' can be found in one process.

We're talking about keyword research. Keywords is the term used to represent all of the words and phrases people use when using search engines such as Google, MSN, Ask and other search engines to find a particular product or topic.

Find 'What' People Are Looking For

The product design research stage involves developing the 'what' or the specific information your potential customers want. You discover that 'what' by looking for the many ways potential customers search for a particular topic. By having and using this information (i.e., the keywords) you build and use a targeted product in the terms your potential customer uses. That way you can potentially avoid having a product no one or very few people want.

Getting People To Find You

The second part of info product success is getting people to find you. Offline success is in good part due to location, location, location. Online success is in good part due to traffic, traffic, traffic. Success will not happen without traffic to your website. Rob McGann on Clickz.com summarized a

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DoubleClick and comScore networks study saying almost half of all online shoppers use a search engine to find information.

Potential customers will find your info product by using specific terms or keywords in their search, so having relevant keywords on your sales page makes it easier for potential customers to find you. Search engines reward you with higher rankings when you use the specific keywords on your site. Wouldn't it be great for *your* product to be in the top 10 or 20 listings for the search results when someone goes looking for a particular product or topic?

Some of you may be saying, "That's twice he used the word potential." Thanks and congratulations on your careful reading. We called this product Info Product Blueprint for a reason. Much like builders use blueprints and follow them step-by-step to build a house, we want you to do the same.

Imagine a builder who didn't have a plan? Doors, windows might be forgotten or placed in the wrong location. The blueprint provides a reference document to for the builder to follow. We want you to have each reference point so you can build your own info product success.

Info Product Blueprint can be that reference point for you in product development. Each step builds on another. Each step is important in its own way. Keyword research is used in many different parts or steps in your info product.

The Questions Keywords Can Answer

Keywords are used to find answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a potential market? If no one is buying, then move on.

2. How are potential customers looking for the topic or product? We need a more specific answer than 'looking online.'

Often people 'think' they know how people are searching online, but only your research will truly tell you what people are doing. Typos, misspellings and totally new words are likely to be part of your strategy.

Tip: You know when you find a 'typo' on someone's website? Well it may not be a mistake, but a totally brilliant way of reaching a customer. If many customers consistently mistype a word, and you include the typo on your page, the search engine robot is going to 'see' that as responding to the person's search. So maybe a typo or two could bring some new customers… and a customer, when reaching the page is going to say, "Yes, this is just what I was looking for."

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3. Are enough potential customers out there looking to make this financially viable?

I am making the assumption you want to be financially rewarded and paid for your work. Even if financial reward is not your goal, having a product or topic only a handful of people search for can make for some very slow days on your website. It is difficult to target an audience and check effectiveness when you can't easily get traffic.

4. That brings us to our next question. How can we use the keywords to get traffic to your website? We'll actually be covering traffic generation in a later section, but we'll start the first step when we use the keywords to write our sales letter.

5. What's my competition and how are they using keywords to get traffic?

6. Is there a timing issue with my potential market, topic or product?

I mentioned having a product very few people might want. Trying to sell holiday products the day after the holiday at full price can be difficult.

Rather than just talking about it, I'll show you the various steps and tools to use.

We'll use four different steps for our research. The first is to identify keywords. The second step is to find the specific keywords being used. After finding the words, you'll research the depth and passion of the market. When I say passion, I mean, are there people who will take out their credit cards and click to buy?

For your first step you'll want to take a piece of paper and write down each of the words you think people will use to look for your product. (You'll be doing this in your action plan.) Then, you'll start analyzing your data. Finally, you'll choose the keywords you want to use. We'll start with an example first.

The NASCAR™ Search

Let's get started. I'll use an example, the keyword NASCAR. For those of you unfamiliar with the term, NASCAR is one of the largest car racing organizations in the world. According to Wikipedia: *The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) is the largest sanctioning body of motorsports in the United States. It was co-founded by William France, Sr. and Ed Otto in 1948 in the USA. Officially incorporated on February 21, its purpose* was *to organize and promote the sport of stock car racing. The three largest racing series sanctioned by NASCAR are the Nextel Cup, Busch Series and the Craftsman Truck Series.*

Notes

As of this writing, 537,751 people searched NASCAR in the past month.

Yes, I mean in just one month. How did I find this out? Through keyword searches.

I also found out a lot more information about what and how this potential group of customers is looking for when they search for NASCAR. With the wide variety of races and topics, this will be a good example of how to search and start to narrow a search down to usable information.

What Tools Should I Use?

Let's get started with the tools we want to use. Many keyword research tools are available for your use. The results you receive will vary a bit due to the way they collect and process their data. I'll walk you through some of the free ones and then discuss some of the available software. I'm for saving time, so I tend to use the software, but it's not necessary. The free tools and an Excel spreadsheet can give you a lot of great information to design your info product.

Free Tools

Luckily there are two great free tools you can use for your keyword searches. One is the Overture keyword search tool, part of Yahoo! Search Marketing (Overture was purchased by Yahoo so you will see references to both names.). The second is the Google AdWords tool. Each has their tricks and quirks.

Overture®

Overture is a good starting point for our keyword research. The Overture search tool is based on database collection of searches done at Yahoo/Overture. The results you get show you information from the past month. If you are searching in June, the results displayed are for searches done in May.

The single month result is why many people use Overture as a starting point and then branch on to other tools for additional information.

For example, if you are searching in March for the number of people looking for Christmas decorating ideas, you are not going to get an accurate indication of the potential numbers in your market. You will still get good keywords, but you may not get the number depth you want.

For our purposes of finding and defining a niche, Overture's inventory tool can be very helpful.

Notes

Once again using our NASCAR example, go to (http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/) Typing in the term NASCAR gave me these results.

Count	Search Term
537751	nascar
20398	nascar racing
15807	nascar ticket
9032	nascar schedule
7717	fantasy nascar
7011	collectible nascar
5713	nascar news
5580	nascar result
4837	diecast nascar
4487	nascar race result
4438	crash nascar
4172	nascar race
3663	driver nascar
3372	i love nascar
3229	cup nascar nextel
3194	.com nascar
2985	game nascar
2844	clipart nascar
2832	jacket nascar
2790	nascar store
2562	nascar qualifying
2490	nascar wallpaper
2451	nascar talladega
2386	2004 nascar
2244	1 24 custom diecast nascar
2226	2005 nascar preview thunder
2226	jersey nascar pique polo
2212	nascar previous race winner
2196	games.com mobilefun n nascar
2166	merchandise nascar
2163	nascar picture
2163	nascar speedpark
2138	nascar online
2136	nascar qualifying result
1920	frequency nascar
1842	layout myspace nascar
1775	fox nascar
1702	nascar scanner
1685	car diecast nascar
1637	nascar race schedule
1611	betting nascar
1586	nascar wreck
1514	busch nascar series

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Count	Search Term
1511	nascar odds
1489	frequency nascar scanner
1477	flag nascar
1461	nascar online racing
1450	nascar photo
1418	07 nascar
1416	nascar racing schedule
1414	fantasy nascar yahoo
1412	bedding nascar
1402	nascar race ticket
1401	apparel nascar
1393	fantasy nascar racing
1390	nascar nextel
1379	layout nascar
1317	fan nascar
1302	hat nascar
1293	girl nascar
1274	nascar screensaver
1175	job nascar
1174	2006 nascar schedule
1169	car nascar
1156	decal nascar
1149	2007 nascar
1142	gordon jeff nascar
1132	nascar saver screen
1109	history nascar
1101	nascar simracing
1097	cafe nascar
1086	collectible nascar racing
1070	nascar toyota
1058	fan fiction nascar
1039	nascar racer
1022	logo nascar
1001	nascar standing
997	car nascar tomorrow
984	las nascar vegas
959	nascar radio
947	cup nascar winston
942	cheap nascar ticket
931	2003 nascar racing season
929	nascar shopping
894	ferrell movie nascar will
889	nascar wife
871	fox nascar sports
839	nascar package travel
838	free nascar screensaver
838	game nascar racing

Notes

Count	Search Term
829	check nascar
811	fabric nascar
808	free game nascar online racing
807	2006 nascar
802	driving nascar school
801	girlfriend nascar wife
798	haulers nascar
792	appearance driver nascar
781	2007 ea nascar sports
778	2007 nascar schedule

With the wide variety of NASCAR search words, it will give us a great chance to look at various decision steps. Keyword research can help you guide your path through decision-making, if you use it.

First, let's see if there is a market. We can use the Keyword Tool to see how many searches are done each month for NASCAR and related words. However most people make the mistake of going for the big numbers, the main keyword. There is more competition with the huge numbers and little chance to 'stand out in the crowd,' especially without a huge promotion budget.

Take your search and put your terms and numbers into an Excel spreadsheet for later use. Now, let's narrow it down a bit. Looking at our list, let's pick one with a good number of searches. Let's use NASCAR tickets. In our search 15,807 people were looking for NASCAR tickets. We would then type NASCAR tickets into our search tool and save those results in an Excel spreadsheet.

Count	Search Term
15807	nascar ticket
1402	nascar race ticket
942	cheap nascar ticket
554	nascar racing ticket
504	las vegas nascar ticket
389	bristol nascar ticket
388	nascar nextel cup series ticket
359	nascar ticket package
353	nascar ticket for sale
257	richmond nascar ticket
239	michigan nascar ticket
225	nascar ticket broker
197	nascar com ticket
196	dover nascar ticket
190	nascar nextel cup ticket
164	daytona nascar ticket

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Count	Search Term	Notes
162	nascar pepsi 400 ticket	
156	chicagoland nascar ticket	
156	nascar event ticket	
154	buy nascar ticket	
149	nascar ticket 2006	
149	texas nascar ticket	
148	cheap nascar racing ticket	
147	sell nascar ticket	
144	chicagoland nascar speedway ticket	
141	nascar busch series ticket	
141	ebay nascar ticket	
124	new hampshire nascar ticket	
122	daytona 500 nascar ticket	
117	nascar winston cup ticket	
116	nascar ticket sales	
115	chicago nascar ticket	
115	nascar talladega ticket	
115	nascar ticket win	
107	nascar pocono ticket	
105	2005 nascar ticket	
104	2007 nascar ticket	
104	nascar ticket prices	
101	city kansas nascar ticket	
100	nascar ticket texas motor speedway	
100	nascar nextel ticket	
99	california nascar ticket	
99	face value nascar ticket	
97	kansas nascar speedway ticket	
94	nascar ticket and schedule	
92	busch nascar ticket	
92	nascar ticket homestead	
91	kansas nascar ticket	
89	nascar phoenix ticket	
88	nascar package race ticket	
84	free nascar ticket	
82	atlanta nascar ticket	
80	discount nascar ticket	
80	nascar ticket online	
79	mis nascar ticket	
78	bristol nascar race ticket	
78	nascar purchase ticket	
74	martinsville nascar ticket	
73	charlotte nascar ticket	
70	las vegas nascar race ticket	
69	nascar ticket dallas	
68	nascar race richmond ticket	
65	nascar ticket package for las vegas	

Count	Search Term
61	2004 nascar ticket
61	nascar ticket info
60	joliet nascar ticket
59	ticket for infineon nascar
57	buy nascar race ticket
57	nascar nextel cup race ticket
56	atlanta motor speedway nascar ticket
55	2005 las nascar ticket vegas
54	california nascar speedway ticket
52	brickyard 400 nascar ticket
52	nascar winston cup series ticket
51	nascar ticket bristol motor speedway
51	nascar ticket and hotel package
47	banquet 400 nascar ticket
47	infineon nascar raceway ticket
47	nascar ticket wanted
46	nascar ticket sharpie 500
46	600 coca cola nascar ticket
45	indianapolis nascar ticket
44	400 ford nascar ticket
44	nascar pit pass ticket
42	nascar chicagoland 400 ticket
40	nascar craftsman truck series ticket
40	nascar ticket vegas
39	en language nascar ticket
37	nascar infield ticket
36	dover down nascar ticket
35	nascar samsung 500 ticket
35	nascar ticket phoenix international raceway
34	homestead miami nascar ticket
34	ticket master richmond va
33	nascar ticket sylvania 300
32	2005 daytona nascar ticket
31	2006 las nascar ticket vegas
31	watkins glen nascar ticket
31	hospitality nascar ticket
30	nascar sonoma ticket

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To really get a good feel for your potential market, you would do that with each of your keywords that came back in the search. We have counts from the searches and also CPC (cost-per-click). Now we have to find out if there is money in this market.

We want to find out what other business people are willing to pay to get the traffic in this market. Also, we can find out what affiliate programs are available in this market as well. That will give us an idea of competitors and potential business partners.

Google AdWords

Another free resource is Google AdWords. Actually, it's really a tool for people using a Google AdWords account, but we can use it too. This information can be very helpful when we talk about checking our competition. It's free! In my book that is very good.

I typed in 'NASCAR tickets' and want my results shown in US dollars. Use the currency where you want to market. I then typed in $10 as the amount of money I would pay as a maximum amount. I use $10 for most searches, which will give me good information. If you get few or no results try $100 as your max CPC (cost-per-click).

For some extremely popular and competitive searches, I have seen some numbers as high as $35 dollars. What does this information tell me? The results tell me that there is a profit to be made in a category/keyword where businesses will pay $x for one click.

How do I know that? I know if someone is paying $2 per lead or person clicking to their website they have to be making money. Otherwise the businessperson would not be buying the ad.

I know the person paying $6.37 for 'NASCAR ticket' is making a huge profit and is converting many of those leads into sales. It also tells me for that price the ad is in the first through third position for AdWords listings. Hint: if you go back and type in the keyword in the Google Search Box, you'll find your competitors.

Here's what the results of my Google AdWords search for NASCAR tickets looks like.

Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC	Estimated Ad Position
NASCAR tickets	$6.37	1 - 3
nascar race tickets	$5.42	1 - 3
texas motor speedway tickets	$5.58	1 - 3
talladega tickets	$3.70	1 - 3
cheap nascar tickets	$4.27	1 - 3
bristol motor speedway tickets	$3.12	1 - 3
nascar tickets texas	$5.15	1 - 3
tickets nascar	-	not shown
bristol nascar tickets	$3.95	1 - 3
talladega race tickets	$3.31	1 - 3
richmond nascar tickets	$4.84	1 - 3
tickets for nascar	$5.25	1 - 3
nascar ticket packages	$3.81	1 - 3

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Keywords	Estimated Avg. CPC	Estimated Ad Position	Notes
nascar tickets texas motor speedway	$4.97	1 - 3	
nascar racing tickets	$5.66	1 - 3	
nascar tickets for sale	$5.53	1 - 3	
buy nascar tickets	$6.36	1 - 3	
kansas speedway tickets	$4.35	1 - 3	
atlanta motor speedway tickets	$4.00	1 - 3	
martinsville speedway tickets	$3.44	1 - 3	
tickets to nascar	$5.50	1 - 3	
bristol speedway tickets	$3.15	1 - 3	
nascar nextel cup tickets	$6.07	1 - 3	
chicagoland speedway tickets	$4.16	1 - 3	
win nascar tickets	$2.67	1 - 3	
texas motor speedway ticket	$4.95	1 - 3	
phoenix nascar tickets	$3.75	1 - 3	
discount nascar tickets	$4.83	1 - 3	
nascar tickets dallas	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar ticket prices	$0.05	1 - 3	
martinsville nascar tickets	$5.12	1 - 3	
talladega nascar tickets	$7.62	1 - 3	
nascar tickets com	$5.84	1 - 3	
nascar nextel tickets	$6.05	1 - 3	
tickets for texas motor speedway	$5.19	1 - 3	
dover nascar tickets	$5.25	1 - 3	
atlanta nascar tickets	$4.71	1 - 3	
nascar tickets charlotte	$5.19	1 - 3	
dover international speedway tickets	$4.30	1 - 3	
darlington nascar tickets	$5.43	1 - 3	
tickets for nascar race	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar tickets for texas motor speedway	$0.05	1 - 3	
sell nascar tickets	$8.05	1 - 3	
california speedway tickets	$3.96	1 - 3	
nascar ticket sales	$5.94	1 – 3	
new hampshire int'l speedway tickets	$3.29	1 - 3	
michigan speedway tickets	$3.02	1 - 3	
nascar season tickets	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar tickets michigan	$4.95	1 - 3	
talladega infield tickets	$0.05	1 - 3	
richmond speedway tickets	$4.35	1 - 3	
dover speedway tickets	$3.57	1 - 3	
bristol motor speedway ticket	$4.31	1 - 3	
nascar ticket package	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar race ticket	$4.48	1 - 3	
nascar busch tickets	$4.97	1 - 3	
talladega ticket	$1.48	1 - 3	
texas motor speedway season tickets	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar tickets kansas	$5.60	1 - 3	
nascar tickets for texas	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar tickets texas motor	$0.05	1 - 3	
speedway tickets	$4.01	1 - 3	
international speedway tickets	$0.05	1 - 3	
nascar ticket	$4.71	1 - 3	

Another free resource that combines the two tools is ResultsGenerator.com.

Save Time And Use Software

Now all of this takes time and analysis, which is good to learn and to do. Personally, I want to spend time developing my product and writing my sales page, not cutting and pasting or downloading into Excel. That's why I use software to do the work the simple free tools do, plus a little bit more.

Like every other person working online I have my preferences in software. I'll include a list of other keyword research tools on the Resources page.

I like someone else doing all of the work for me, so I tend to like the faster results with Keyword Elite, Digital Point, Overture (Yahoo) and Wordtracker.

After you have your keyword list with programs like Keyword Elite it will actually show you your competitors, their ads and cost-per-click. This is one thing that shows if certain keywords are higher per click. If a competitor is running that ad consistently it's a pretty sure bet they are getting positive results.

When it comes to finding a niche market, the best resource available online is Wordtracker or Keyword Elite. These programs pull all of the information together in one place in an easy to understand format.

Keyword research is part of your path to info product success. Make your product answer the questions your customer is asking by including the keywords and they will be happy.

Have your websites include your keywords in content, promo materials and ads and the spiders will reward you with listings in search engines.

Finally, have the keywords included in your sales copy so when your potential customers arrive, they will say, "Yes, finally someone understands." It's all about meeting a customer's needs, and keywords are where you start.

Notes

Info Product Blueprint

Research Your Keywords – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are all of the keywords you can list about your product? (You may need a separate sheet of paper for this one. Include typos, singular, plural, misspellings, everything)

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_____

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2. Do your searches and write down the top 20 keywords related to your product?

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3. What are other business owners paying for these keywords?

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4. After analyzing your keywords, what are some potential words you want to use in your product?

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5. Who are the top ten competitors for the keywords you want to use? List their domain names here.

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Keyword research tools

Free tools

Apogee Keyword Research Tool – Apogee-Web-Consulting.com/tools/keyword_tool.php

ResultsGenerator.com/

Online Subscription and Software Keyword Search Programs

Wordtracker – Wordtracker.com

NicheBOT – NicheBot.com

NicheFinder – NicheFinder.com

Digital Point Keyword Suggestion Tool – DigitalPoint.com/tools/suggestion/

Trellian Keyword Discovery – KeywordDiscovery.com

Next . . .Selecting A Delivery Method

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 6: Selecting A Delivery Method

By Dan Giordano

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Selecting A Delivery Method

Choosing a delivery method is a strategic balancing act. You want to give your customers the immediacy of response. That is, your customer wants the answer to his problem as soon as possible. Do you choose electronic downloadable files or go for the increased perceived value of a physical product? Which do you choose? Or do you combine the two? Well, it depends on your objectives.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Questions to ask yourself about consumption of your info product

◆ How Internet connection speed can affect your choice of delivery

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Offline Or Online Use

Info product consumption is not usually one of the issues we take into consideration, but you need to do just that to pick the proper method for your customer.

Where do you see your customer using your product?

◆ Listening to a CD at the gym, on the train or in their car?
◆ Will they need Internet access?
◆ Sitting at their computer logged into a subscription site or webinar?
◆ Watching a DVD on their computer or TV?
◆ Reading a book?
◆ Downloading videos online?
◆ Completing an online or offline workbook?
◆ Calling in to listen to a teleseminar?

Digital Download Products

Is your product going to be all digital? If so, you need to consider several things, including file size. If they are PDF, MP3 or video files, you need to make sure you have a hosting account that can support the downloads and formats you will be marketing.

Is specialized software required to view or use the product? Does it work on PCs and Mac's?

Do your potential customers have dial-up Internet access or high-speed access? Waiting eight hours to download one file is not going to please your dial-up customers.

Other things to think about are…

Notes

Most shopping cart systems offer a digital delivery download feature that makes it as automated as possible for one item products.

If it is multiple downloads…

Will there be a simple download page after the sale that is password protected?

Physical Products

Being able to touch and hold a product is perceived by many to have a higher value than pure digital products. However, the increased costs and customer service issues of a physical product must offset the perceived value.

A physical product can be a book, transcripts of interviews, a workbook, DVDs and CDs. There are additional costs in addition to processing and shipping charges. Books and workbooks require layout, graphics and printing charges. DVDs and CDs need editing, graphics, and duplication charges and also require cases to hold them.

If your product is a physical product, I highly recommend using a fulfillment company.

Here are some of the benefits…

- Printing
- Duplication of the products
- Take orders
- Packaging
- Shipping
- Customer service

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Notes from Editor:

It amazes me how many people still want to print labels and burn CD's at home to save a few bucks. The quality will be nowhere near what these companies can produce.

Believe me, your time will be better invested doing the things that will advance your business. You will be amazed when you look into fulfillment companies that they are very cost effective and definitely worth it. Also, most of these companies offer print-on-demand service with low or no minimum quantities.

Selecting Delivery Method – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What type of product will you offer? (digital, CD, DVD, mp3, physical, teleseminar, manual)

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Next . . . Name Your Project and Pick Your Domain Name

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 7: Name Your Project And Pick Your Domain Name

By Dan Giordano

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Name Your Project And Pick Your Domain Name

You have the idea for your information product, you decided how the product is going to be delivered – now is the time to name your product. Naming is a crucial part of any product launch. You want the name to be easy to remember, meaningful for your target market and not being used by someone else.

What you will learn in this Section:
◆ Available resources to search for possible name conflicts

Brainstorming

Brainstorming the name can be a lot of fun. Use a variety of resources to get your ideas started. Surf the Internet.

Check a thesaurus for your keywords and bounce ideas off friends, family and business associates. Use Nameboy.com for domain and product name suggestions.

Coming up with tactics for your product name is your chance to be creative. Come up with an overwhelming benefit of your business above what other businesses have and make it catchy. Be bold, be different, one of a kind outstanding, magnetic! Rewrite for clarity. What is this saying? Choose your name to stand out. People will buy your product when it fulfills their need.

What is your product name?

Read without stopping until you reach the double **.

Here are some things people need:

- They need things FAST.
- They need things that make them FEEL GOOD.
- They need things that ELIMINATE PROBLEMS.
- They need things that ACCOMPLISH GOALS for them.
- They need things that FILL VOIDS in their life.
- They need SECURITY.
- They need to BE IMPORTANT.
- They need GUARANTEED RESULTS.
- They need LOVE.
- They need BARGAINS.
- They need HOPE.
- They need RELIEF.
- They need a FRIEND and ALLY.
- They need to SURVIVE and THRIVE.
- They need YOU to FULFILL THEIR DREAMS.

Notes

Satisfy any of these cravings once for your customer and you can add one product after another to your business and the customer will buy. It will be because YOU are the brand the customer has gotten to know with fondness and learned to trust.

When you combine a good name and successful marketing you will create a brand that is unique and desirable. Branding is the immediately recognizable "ah-ha, there it is!" That is what you want in your product and especially your business.

People may see it as in a picture, or hear it in a phrase that identifies the product or service as the one that focuses on them and their desires.

Upon entering the brain through the eyes, ears, or both, good feelings are triggered and drug-like chemical reactions in the body flood all nerve receptors with desire for the product.

Branding is a form of mesmerism by easy memorization to your prospects, which then become customers because when they go to buy the product they think of you.

You get famous through branding. The brand is you, how you get known, how you get success, and how you will get to charge more for what you have or do.

The jingle they cannot get out of their heads screams at them to buy and try your product.

It is a response, not a choice, because people know what they know, and through branding what they know is your product.

Branding makes your product sexy, seductive, irresistible, and a "must have."

Things such as USP (Unique Selling Proposition, Unique Selling Point, Unique Selling Position or Unique Selling Presentation), also called UCA (Unique Competitive Advantage) distinguish you from your competitors. It's all about BRANDING!

The brand, the symbol of your uniqueness, gives you the advantage by sticking in people's minds. Branding pushes you ahead of the pack. You want to hook and reel them in.

Brand yourself and your business with the right ideas to motivate and excite, and whenever people think of your product or service, they will think ONLY OF YOU!

**

Notes

Info Product Blueprint

I had you read the paragraphs just before this without stopping because I wanted you to get excited. Your product and what it does should make you excited. You have something to share, something valuable.

Now what is your product name?

_____

Naming also involves not infringing or using another product's name. Nothing is worse or more expensive than having to redo your product, graphics and advertising because someone else already has the legal right to use the product name you chose.

Take a few minutes and write a minimum of ten potential names for your product. Put the list aside for a few minutes and keep on reading.

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Keep Your Sanity, And Stay Legal: Start Your Name Search

Type the name(s) you are thinking of using into several different search engines. If the name is already being used, move on to the next one on your list.

Go to a Who-is search for domain names. One that is easy to use is NetworkSolutions.com/whois. Type in the potential product name and if it isn't there, continue with the next step of your search.

Go to <u>ThomasRegister.com</u>. The Thomas Register is a resource for finding industrial suppliers. It is also a great free resource for finding product and company names already in use.

Type in your potential product names and search. Then go to the United States Patent and Trademark office (<u>www.uspto.gov/main/trademarks.htm</u>) and type in your remaining list of names.

While this is not an exhaustive search, it will rule out the majority of names already in use. If you are planning an expensive launch, then consult an intellectual property attorney to verify in state, federal and international name databases.

Register Your Domain Name

At this point you want to register your domain name. Based on all of the previous information and the name of your product, you will want to select a domain name that relates to your product or niche. If your product name is available as a domain, buy it right away!

Choose any domain registrar you wish. <u>GoDaddy.com</u> or <u>NameCheap.com</u> are both good resources for this. (Note: Some marketers will warn you to stay clear of GoDaddy because they have a policy of seizing domain names from people who spam. You may not intend to spam, but sometimes complaints will be made. Numerous other domain registrars and web hosts have an identical or similar policy as well.)

Avoid similar names other individuals or companies have trademarked. Trademark fights are expensive. Save yourself the grief, aggravation and legal expenses.

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Your Brand

Remember, name choice is a part of making YOUR brand. Take time to pick a name that tells your potential customer that your product is special.

Make the name sing an opera, dance the twist, and sparkle like fireworks. This will drive your marketing into the minds and hearts of your potential customers.

Info Product Blueprint

Name Your Project And Pick Your Domain Name – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What needs do your product fit that could be used as part of your name?

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2. Develop a list of ten possible product names.

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3. Why is it important to do a name search?

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4. What is the name you have chosen for your product?

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5. What is the domain name for your product?

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6. What need(s) does this name satisfy out of the list below?

Here are some things people need:

- They need things FAST.
- They need things that make them FEEL GOOD.
- They need things that ELIMINATE PROBLEMS.
- They need things that ACCOMPLISH GOALS for them.
- They need things that FILL VOIDS in their life.
- They need SECURITY.
- They need to BE IMPORTANT.
- They need GUARANTEED RESULTS.
- They need LOVE.
- They need BARGAINS.
- They need HOPE.
- They need RELIEF.
- They need a FRIEND and ALLY.
- They need to SURVIVE and THRIVE.
- They need YOU to FULFILL THEIR DREAMS.

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7. List the domain registrar and date. Print out your domain registration sheet and post it on your wall or in a prominent place where you can see it frequently. You are on the way to selling your info product. Congratulations!

Next . . . Product Descriptions And Messaging Points

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 8: Product Descriptions And Messaging Points

By Dan Giordano and Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Product Descriptions And Messaging Points

Designing and writing a sales letter to convert visitors into customers involves several steps and techniques. In this section, we will go through the steps you need to get your message 'heard' by your visitor.

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You want website visitors to read your sales copy and then convert into customers. On a website you have a limited amount of time to engage someone and then convert them into a customer. Just informing or telling your visitors doesn't work. Successful copy 'talks' to your visitors with a message important to them.

Your niche market research has given you clues about what is important to your target visitor. Writing effective copy means showing you know your customer.

Tie the keywords you found in your research with a response to your customer concerns. This way your copy will 'talk' to your customers. This will lead to better search engine positioning and copy that has more meaning for your visitor.

Developing Customer Friendly And Customer Relevant Copy

The message or copy that works keeps the visitor interested and reading. Keeping the visitor involved means answering their questions and meeting their needs.

Copywriting expert Dan Kennedy says you understand your market when you know what keeps them awake at night.

Messages with emotional involvement pull your visitor into your message. They start hearing, seeing and feeling how your product can help them and make them feel better. Your message has pulled them along the sales process.

Use Selling Psychology

The psychology of selling says we buy with emotion and rationalize with logic, so buying is a two-sided process. We need to engage people's emotions and let them see how our product will benefit them. We also need to support the buying decision by giving them details that will help them rationalize or support their decision to buy.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ To write product description of various lengths to be used in your sales copy.

◆ The difference between features and benefits.

◆ To list all the features of your product

◆ To transform or rewrite your product features into benefits to 'sell' your visitor on your product.

◆ To use keywords to increase message effectiveness

Notes

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Logic takes away the risks and the resistance to buying. Emotions get the visitor involved in making the decision. Having one without the other misses the mark. To have a high conversion of visitors to customers we need both the emotional hook and the logical tie-in.

Balance is achieved by including both features and benefits in our sales copy. Features are 'things' about your product or service – the 'what' it does. Benefits are 'how' your product or service will have an effect on your customer's life. A benefit will answer one of three questions.

- So what?
- Who cares?
- What's in it for me?

We've all seen sites where writers start talking about all of the wonderful features of their product: 560 pages long, 280 DVDs, 454 Hemi engine, etc. This is nice but does not call or engage the customer. Benefits engage us creating a desire to buy.

The Car Buyer

Let's take a Corvette fan as an example. My friend in the market for a new car studies the information available.

The Chevrolet™ Corvette™ is a $65,700 sports car. The specs (features) are as follows:

- Has dry-sump 7.0 liter aluminum-block v-8 with titanium connecting rod
- Has 3 lb carbon fiber front fenders
- Has an all aluminum chassis
- Have trademark transverse composite leaf springs. (*Road and Track*: September 2006)

When I asked why he was looking at a Corvette, he said, "It's

- "…fun to drive,"
- "attracts females"

The Corvette features of high performance engine and springs all come together for my friend's benefits of being fun to drive and attracting females.

Or as *Road and Track* (September 2006) said, The Corvette… 'makes it appear to the outside world'…'you are God's gift to driving.' Now doesn't that benefit statement say why my friend might want to buy a Corvette?

Notes

Focus On *Your* Product

Features And Benefits

Take a few minutes now and write five features about your product that will make people want to have it. (A feature is what the product does or is.)

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Go back and rewrite your five items as benefits. The benefit is what it does for your visitor.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Does each item have listed a benefit for your customer? Is it a description of how their life will be improved or affected? Does it say life is easier, more fun, or they can spend extra time with family or friends and feel good? Use words that emotionally grab your visitors.

Stress Your Unique Selling Proposition

Earlier you developed your USP. This is the part of your product or service that distinguishes you from the competition. Write your USP below.

_____

_____

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Notes

Product Descriptions

In website and ad copy, you will need to describe your product. The most effective product description combines both features and benefits. Different uses require descriptions of various lengths.

Using a two-step process, you're going to write descriptions for your products.

1. Look back at your benefits list. Which is the main benefit when buying your product?

How can you deliver or promise this benefit to your visitor?

2. What will the product do to make the customer's life better?

Then let your visitor see, feel, hear or taste the experience of using your product.

This ad from Bath and Body Works® is a great example of a benefit-driven product description. The ad is for a bath and shower gel.

> *Sleep Better. Soothing essentials to help you prepare for bedtime bliss.*
>
> *Combat stress and enjoy deep, peaceful sleep with a soothing infusion of Chinese yuan zhi, vanilla and rose essential oils. This rich bathing gel also contains mango oil to condition skin and promote relaxation.*
>
> - *Promotes deep, restful sleep*
> - *Rebalancing*
> - *Cleansing*
> - *Calming and relaxing*
>
> *Bath and Body Works*
> *Molton Brown*
> *Moisture Bath & Shower Gel*

Target market is mostly women, with busy, hectic stress-filled lives.

The shower gel's main benefit is you get a great night's sleep. Through the copy the reader also receives a promise, using this product will decrease stress and also give a peaceful night's sleep.

Start with the headline. *Sleep Better. Soothing essentials to help you prepare for bedtime bliss.* If you're a person with a busy, stress-filled life, don't you want to read more?

The ad has your interest so you continue reading. Notice the words used: bedtime bliss, deep, peaceful, soothing, promote relaxation and rich. They paint a picture of calm, comforting, luxurious pampering time just perfect to get in the mood for restful sleep.

Smell the rose and vanilla oils. Feel the clean conditioned skin.

The writer has used sight, smell, and touch as part of the 'experience' to draw the reader in. *Chinese yuan zhi, vanilla and rose essential oils* are features mentioned in the copy, but the writer also tells the reader what they can experience with the features. She sells the experience (benefits) not the features.

Your Turn

Spend time developing your descriptions of your product. You will use the descriptions later in your website copy and ads. Choose your words to involve your reader in the description.

Short descriptions mean developing focus. Using your feature and benefit list, write a 25-word description of your product.

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Let's expand the description to 50 words.

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Notes

Finally, let's use 100 words to fully and completely describe your product. Include your USP.

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Reviewing Your Copy For Involvement

You want your sales letter to reach your visitors on an emotional level. Look back at your product descriptions. Does the copy tell visitors in clear terms what's in it for them?

Engaging as many senses as possible helps your copy. Target your copy to your audience. Make your imagery, the word picture you create as vivid as possible. How many senses are you using in your descriptions?

Write it so your visitor can see, hear and feel themselves in your words. If you can somehow tie in smells, do so. Many of life's memories are tied into remembered smells: bread baking, chocolate chip cookies or fresh mown grass. It can further help the engagement of your visitor and pull them along the sales process.

Have an objective friend or partner review your copy and give you feedback.

Note from Editor:

Completing This Section

Finishing this section gives you the basis for your website sales letter and ads for your product. Take the time and effort to complete each step. The work will pay off in sales copy that is engaging, meaningful and persuades your visitors to take the next step and become your customer.

Next . . . Write Your Sales Page

InfoProductBluePrint.com

your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 9: Write Your Sales Page

By Dan Giordano and Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Write Your Sales Page

Sales letters are the unpaid, untiring salesmen for your product working 24 hours a day every single day of the year. Make them effective and they will reward you. If they are ineffective, you are leaving a lot of money on the table.

Begin writing your sales letter now. I can hear you say, "But that's crazy! I haven't even started my product yet."

Think of it this way… you've found what your market wants and how they look for what they want. Writing the sales page first can focus, often with laser accuracy the development of your product for your target niche. Now your job is to sell it to them.

There are many points of view on copywriting. Some say study the best in the industry and learn how to write copy, while others say hire someone to do it for you. Copywriting is definitely a talent. Either invest in yourself and develop the talent or invest by hiring a copywriter.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Tips to overcome writer's block

◆ How to start writing headlines

◆ Personalizing your sales letter through story telling

◆ The role of the PS

◆ How to write an offer

◆ Elements of a call to action

◆ Use of testimonials and guarantees to provide reassurance

Cure Brain Freeze Using Professional Copywriters' Tricks

If you've ever sat down to write a sales letter and faced a blank screen or sheet of paper then you've experienced brain freeze. It's the moment you couldn't think of an idea, creative or not.

Professional copywriters avoid brain freeze through the use of a simple trick called a 'swipe file.' A swipe file is simply a collection of other people's ad copy you like. Every time you come across a piece of good sales copy, put it in your file for later use. You can put ads, sales letters, junk mail or online sales letters in your folder.

The main purpose of your swipe file is to give you inspiration and ideas. Good copy can give you starting points. Although the name is 'swipe,' I am not recommending you steal the copy. Swipe files are not for copying since that is plagiarism, which can get you into a lot of trouble very fast.

Swipe files can help you start headlines, write guarantees, design a layout and even write a P.S. When those brain freeze moments hit, a swipe file gives you 'something' to work with – 'something' to edit. A starting point or 'something' is always easier to work with than a blank page.

Notes

Start Your Own Swipe File

You can easily start your own personal swipe file. Grab a couple of file folders and label them. My personal files are headlines, layout, guarantees, calls to action, P.S. and thank you pages. In my files are magazine and newspaper ads, printouts of website copy, emails and junk mail pieces.

When I'm faced with writing some copy, I just pull out my files and start reading. The files may trigger a brilliant idea.

Or it may be just one of those days… In that case, I'll take a headline I think might fit the site I'm working with and I'll rewrite the headline to fit my product.

Start keeping those emails you receive for product launches. Print out the website copy for those products you see being promoted.

Start studying the copy. What attracts your interest? What causes you to progress through the process to eventually buy? As you study, you will begin to see patterns and soon you will be able to write to the patterns.

Have To Write Copy Now?

What if you don't have a swipe file yet and you have to write copy *NOW*? Here are some resources to get you started.

Websites to visit for good sales letters:

DanKennedy.com – Although Dan Kennedy is an offline direct marketer by trade, you'll see the same skills shown here.

InstantSalesLetters.com – Yanik Silver is an accomplished Internet marketer and copywriter. He is also a student of Dan Kennedy.

ButterflyMarketing.com – Mike Filsaime has put together an entire system to drive traffic to his sites. Look at the arrangement of testimonials and copy on this site.

SuperAffiliateCloningProgram.com – Ewen Chia uses audio testimonials effectively on this site.

Copywriters' Sites To Visit

Look at how the pros sell their services and products. Note the different styles and tone used in their writing for their own sites.

- ◆ Michael Fortin – SuccessDoctor.com

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- Robert Bly – Bly.com/newsite/home.html

- Mike Morgan – OutsourceCopy.com

- Carl Galletti – CopyCoach.com

- David Garfinkle – DavidGarfinkel.com/

Classic Ads

Take a look at classic ads. Copywriting pros have studied the classic ads from the 1900's to the 70's. You can find many of the classics at a great website at HardToFindAds.com. Michael Senoff has gathered a collection of great classic ads. There is no charge, you simply need to register.

Field Trip

Cruise your local bookstore or grocery store and check out the headlines on magazines and books. Some great headline copywriting is found in Cosmopolitan and the tabloid papers. (Enquirer, Star and the Daily News). These headlines drive people to buy the magazines and papers and their copy does as well. Take a few minutes to read them. Even if you don't care if Elvis was sighted in Kansas City or Why Men Hate Brunettes, you can learn how copywriting works by getting attention and drawing in the reader.

Don't Throw Out That Junk Mail

Pay attention to the junk mail you get, especially repeats. Companies continue sending out junk mail because the letters convert people who open into buying customers. Direct mail is expensive and companies track everything in the letters and ads, so you know the letters work. You don't get junk mail? Sign up for Publisher's Clearing House online (PCH.com). Fill in your home address (or a mailing address especially for junk mail) and you soon will be on multiple lists and receiving plenty of mail.

A swipe file can provide a good starting point for inspiration. The study of swipe files can give you the formula for online copywriting success.

Online copywriting success? It's when the customer buys from *You.*

Notes

Headlines

Starting The Sales Process

The days of surfing the web as a recreational sport are dead. People come to a site for a reason – they want specific information. Your goal is to increase their desire to buy your product. You don't have to convince them, you just need to increase their desire to stay and buy *your* solution or product.

In offline sales conversations the salesperson asks a qualifying question to determine interest in a particular product. Online your words act as your salesperson. Your headline is the first or qualifying question in your info product sales process.

You want the headline to grab the attention of the visitor, say something meaningful and then create curiosity so they keep reading. You also want the headline to screen out people not interested in your product and 'hook' only those who are.

I know some are saying, "But maybe if the rest read more they might…"

Think of it this way. Your research gave the information to reach your potential customer. You already know the words your target or niche has been using to find products are selling. You know the concerns of your niche market.

Knowledge is power, so use your knowledge of the market to sell to interested people. It'll save you time, money, frustration and energy in the long run.

When writing a headline keep in mind people are not buying your product or service. People are buying the result or the promise. People buy drills not to own a drill, but to make a hole. The hole will solve the problem or give them the result they want.

What Makes An Effective Headline?

Online you have three to eight seconds to grab attention or the visitor clicks away. To increase the effectiveness of your headline, it must:

- ◆ Get the reader's attention.
- ◆ Emphasize your credibility
- ◆ Show or tell what's in it for the reader
- ◆ Start the sales process

Once you have the person's attention you need to answer the question "What's in it for me?" The reader needs to read, think, feel or know there is something to benefit them, something to encourage them to read more.

How do you target the reader's self interest? The easiest way is to tap into the person's emotions. Successful copywriters know we buy with our emotions and rationalize with facts.

Life has many emotions, but with website copy we work with just two: the promise of gaining something or the fear of losing something. These two emotions motivate people to act, which is what we want in the sales process. The fear of loss or pain is a much stronger motivator than the promise of gain. Compare these two headlines.

<p style="text-align:center">Clear Skin in 30 Days</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Eliminate Acne Fast Without Skin Irritation</p>

Which addresses the pain of the person with acne?   The second one. The person with acne already has skin problems. They don't want skin irritation as part of a cure for acne. Use the psychology of buying and selling to pull people from your headline into the words of your copy.

Use Headlines To Direct Your Visitor

Mini-headlines, headers or subheads are those quick scan statements placed in sales copy to guide our visitors through the sales copy. The subheads not only guide visitors, they also highlight keywords and further develop the benefit of the main headline. For people in a hurry, subheadlines direct people to specific content sections.

Headlines and sub headlines (also called headers) can guide your visitor through your entire sales process. The key is to make the headline effective. Direct marketers and tabloid newspapers carefully craft their headlines. Whether it is a product or a tabloid, the headline's goal is to sell, pure and simple.

Types Of Headlines

Headlines can make an offer. They can promise a benefit. A headline can introduce or announce a new idea or product. A headline can ask a question or provide proof.

By using direct marketing techniques you're building on time-tested effectiveness. In a later module, we will talk about using testing to increase sales conversion.

Depending on your product or service, certain types of headlines are more effective.

Here are six types of headlines with online examples (courtesy of Google search).

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1. News or Announcement Headlines:

These are frequently used online with lead-in words such as "Revealed, New, Discovery, Presenting, Introducing, Just Released, Now Available or At Last."

- ◆ At last, buoyant economy lifts incomes

- ◆ An AIDS Vaccine at Last?

- ◆ Revealed: US dirty tricks to win vote on Iraq war

- ◆ 1.0% Car Financing Ends at 5 PM Today

2. Ask a Question that keeps your visitor awake at night

Curiosity aroused, an interested visitor will continue reading to find the answer.

- ◆ Will you have enough to retire?

- ◆ Whose Air Will You Breathe?

- ◆ Will your love last?

- ◆ Is Browzar Just An Adware Machine?

3. Tie a promise together with a guarantee.

- ◆ The Scholarship Guaranteed or Your Money Back

- ◆ Higher Test Scores Guaranteed or your money back.

- ◆ Thorlos feel better than your 'ordinary socks' or your money back.

4. Testimonials

- ◆ Have your customers sell for you. Use real quotes with specific details, not simply 'wonderful.'

- ◆ With Achievo, it saves us one-man day in a week.

- ◆ I'm never hungry and don't feel deprived like other diets.

- ◆ Restora made our shutters look brand new again.

5. How To

This is one of the easiest and most versatile headline starters. As of September 2006 555,908 titles on Amazon use the 'How

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To' format.

- Learn How To Play Poker
- Yes, You Can Learn to Knit
- How to Draw Manga

6. Reasons Why

- 99 Secrets About Guys
- 7 Steps To Stardom
- 10 Reasons To Date A Hockey Player
- 12 Ways To Set Yourself Smoke Free

Keep your headlines short using seven words or less. That way your entire headline is in one easy to read line no matter the font size.

Headlines can make or break your website and your ads. Curious visitors will be pulled into your copy and then onto the sale. It all starts by grabbing their attention.

10 Quick Tips for Good Headlines

1. Use active verbs and present tense: 'Save Now' not 'You will save money'
2. Keep words short and to the point.
3. Skip jokes and puns. Since the Internet is worldwide, what works in one country will not in others.
4. Avoid cuteness. It annoys.
5. Use honesty and accuracy.
6. Use actual numbers like 32, not thirty-two.
7. Keep the headline related to your product.
8. Make it understandable. You don't want people saying, "Huh?"
9. Be In good taste (this will vary by market)
10. Simple – your copy will sell. The headline's purpose is to get attention.

Now It's Your Turn: Headline Starters

Gather a large package of index cards and a pen or pencil.

Write your main benefit here.

Writing one headline per index card, combine the following words or phrases with your main benefit to form a headline.

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- How to
- Discover
- Announcing
- Secrets of
- Proven
- Success
- Immediate

Pull out your swipe file. (If you don't have one, either take a trip to the newsstand or go online to HardToFindAds.com.) With your main benefit written on an index card, go through your swipe file to find some inspiration.

Pull the ads, letters or whatever you have with headlines that possibly could work with your benefit and your target audience. This is the point where **you decide** to be successful or not. Using the swipe file as inspiration, write 100 headlines for your product.

The Body Of Your Sales Page

After being intrigued by your great headline, your visitor then wants to know more. What is this product or service you are selling? This is the time you have to fully describe your product or service.

The Internet can be a very impersonal place. It's your responsibility to establish a connection with your visitor. Remember, a live person is reading the sales copy. Put yourself in their shoes. What concerns do they have? What problems can your product solve? Why should they believe you? How did you happen to develop this product?

Connecting With Your Reader

Telling your story and experience helps the reader connect with you as a person and creates rapport as the basis for a relationship. Your visitor has the opportunity to see you as a resource, not just the salesperson pushing something at them. Your visitor can see you as a person with hopes, dreams, problems and concerns like them. All of this gives you and your product credibility.

Write the story of why you developed this product. Why did you see the need? How did you find the solution. Consider your visitor to be sitting down at the table with you. Let them know what you discovered.

In the process of outlining your story, be aware you will answer your visitor's questions. You will increase sales at the same time.

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Write An Offer They Can't Refuse

You've got the attention of your visitor with a great headline and provided an intro into the body or meat of your sales letter. Now is the time to present a compelling offer that convinces your visitor to act now.

Noted Internet marketer Mark Joyner says an irresistible offer must answer the "Big Four Questions."

- ◆ What are you offering?
- ◆ How much?
- ◆ What's in it for me?
- ◆ Why should I believe you?

> Mark Joyner, *The Irresistible Offer* – New York: John Wiley & Sons 2005

Making a buying decision has the person asking many questions. As human beings, money or the lack of it has many associated memories. Memories for most are both positive and negative.

People getting ready to buy hear voices in their heads.

- ◆ Does this product provide value?
- ◆ Is it worth what I am about to pay or more?

Many psychological studies have been done about people's experiences and attachment to money. Bottom line: we react emotionally. If we have a bad experience we feel cheated, betrayed or angry. Think of your good buying experiences. What made the difference? What made it a good buying experience?

In a good buying experience you perceived more value in buying the product or service, than the fear of making the wrong decision. Use this knowledge to help your sales copy.

Your website copy and offer must be prepared to minimize the risk and increase the value perception for the buyer. Bonuses, additional features, guarantee and payment plans and options can all be used to make an offer your visitors can't refuse.

Example Of A Great Offer

Here's an offer that connects with the reader to build value and minimize risk: PowerfulOffers.com

After reading that copy, aren't you saying to yourself, "I'd be crazy not to take them up on it. All that for only $97." That's the offer someone can't refuse. High value and low risk.

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Call To Action

Getting Visitors To Make A Decision

People often wonder why their website copy doesn't convert visitors into buyers. Your visitor arrives at your website with one of two goals: to gather information or buy a product. You have eight seconds or less to persuade them your site has the answers to their questions and/or solutions to their problems.

Developing your site to guide people to the sale requires planning – it doesn't just happen. The sales process is just that, a process.

Designing your flow or process needs to reach your visitor exactly where they are in the buying process. Some site visitors are in the early stages of gathering information. The rest are focused on narrowing down their options to make the final buying decisions.

So how do you address the needs of both groups? By using calls to action.

What Is A Call To Action?

Calls to action are mini persuasion/decision points along the sales process. That's a terrific dictionary definition, but what does it mean?

Here's an example many can relate to. I wanted to buy a piece of jewelry for my wife's birthday so I went to a very nice jewelry store. An associate greeted me as soon as I entered the store. I told the associate I wanted a bracelet for my wife's birthday. After asking questions about my wife's preferences I was shown several bracelets and selected one. Just minutes later I left, gift-wrapped bracelet in hand.

Several calls to action occurred that day. "Over in this display we have the bracelets."

"Does your wife prefer silver or gold?" "Do you want the bracelet gift wrapped?" "Which do you prefer using Visa, MasterCard or American Express?" Each comment guided me to the next buying decision. At no time was I left standing in the store wondering what to do next. I was gently led and persuaded to take action each step of the way. Each remark helped me reach my goal of buying my wife's birthday present and the associate's goal of making the sale.

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Online Calls To Action

On your website it is the same. Guiding and directing the visitor through the process makes the difference between a visitor advancing and buying or clicking away never to return.

You need to walk your visitor through the order. Your copy design needs to anticipate what your visitor needs to know. Some visitors require a lot of information, others minimal. Your sales copy can provide answers and direction to both types of visitors. Think of what you want to accomplish on your website. What is the desired end result?

What Is It You Want Your Visitors To Do?

- Call you?
- Buy a book?
- Sign up for your free report?
- Or buy the Wizmo Wonder Widget?
- Add the item to the shopping cart?
- Subscribe to your e-zine?
- Join the forum?

Whatever you want the visitor to do must be stated clearly. Give them the information they want. Then tell them the step to take.

The step you want them to take must be easy to find and use. Conversion is higher when using an action-oriented statement on buttons or links.

"Yes, Send me the first three chapters now!"

Put a benefit in your call to action.

"Click here to sleep peacefully tonight
knowing your family is protected"

When you have the visitor do more than read your copy, whether you say "Click," "Submit," "Contact," or "Talk with us now," you are interacting with your customer and moving the sales process along step-by-step. That is a call to action.

Just Buttons?

Calls to action do not have to be buttons or links to the order page. Depending on your product you can have text links in your copy. On the Internet we've been trained to click on blue links if we want information.

For example, you could say: "People who bought the Wizmo Wonder Widget had great success with their tomatoes." You could use that link to provide a page of awards or pictures of

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great tomatoes. This will satisfy the needs of the information seeker without disturbing the visitor who is ready to buy now.

Using Words To Make People Move

We all get distracted. The phone rings, our children call, life happens.

Include urgency or scarcity in your calls to action.

- ◆ "Buy now because the price goes up at midnight"
- ◆ "Sale ends Thursday"
- ◆ "Seating is limited"

You want to engage the visitor, and get them to make a decision *now*. The more you engage your reader with content information followed by calls to action, the higher the number of people you can convert from visitors to buyers.

Page Layout As A Call To Action

Page layout affects how your reader 'sees' your call to action. Think of your layout as the road map for your copy. Make the map clear and easy to manage.

Bold key phrases to stand out and lead the visitor down the page.

Use subheadlines and bullets making the page easy to scan and use.

$\implies$ Use arrows to direct attention to key points.

Use a variety of techniques combined with white space to gently pull the reader through the copy on your site. The key is balance.

Make the white space a part of your copy. Keep it clean, uncluttered and easy to read.

Photos And Graphics

Use photos and graphics to increase visitor attention to key points. Studies have shown website visitors are pulled to photos and graphics. Increase the effectiveness of the graphic by writing call to action descriptive text next to the photo.

Get The Results You Want

Be clear and concise. Spell out what you want your visitors to do, then guide them through the copy to your desired goal.

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Calls to action are a part of every successful website. Plan your calls to action to turn your website visitors into customers today!

Providing Reassurance

Your visitor has gone through each of the steps of the buying process. With each step they have said a tiny 'Yes, I'm interested.' They continued reading your sales letter and are seriously considering buying, **but**…Let's deal with the 'but…'

Everyone making a buying decision wants to know (as much as possible) they made the right decision. We all have those little voices in our head, the ones we've heard since childhood… "Think carefully before you make a decision," or "Make sure you check everything out before you buy."

The little voice breaks in with the reminders and the person starts to remember all of the times they lost money or made a mistake when buying. That's the moment you need to step in and reassure. People need reassurance at several steps in the buying process.

Inside the sales letter itself are two primary ways you can reassure the potential customer: the testimonials and the guarantee.

Testimonials

Testimonials reassure our visitors they are not alone. A testimonial gives credibility to our story in our sales letter. People think, "If someone else is saying it, it must be true." An industry expert giving a detailed testimonial on our behalf says in effect, "This product works, it's okay. The guy knows what he is doing."

Testimonials from other people are also important. Those testimonials say, "I tried the product and it worked for me." The unstated message is "It will work for you too." A testimonial reassures because a third-party endorsement is more credible and offers more proof of value. Think of how people use other third-party endorsers such as the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, JD Powers Customer Satisfaction Award or Deming Award.

How Many Testimonials Do You Need?

An effective online sales letter has five or more testimonials in the sales letter. I've counted as many as twenty testimonials in a sales letter when some of the major Internet marketers release their products.

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Getting Testimonials

After you finish your product, you can send preview copies out to your JV partners asking for feedback. Ask for specific details. What did they like about your product? How will it help someone in your target market? We'll go into more detail on testimonials when we talk about website design.

Testimonials work because they are a third-party (seen as somewhat independent) endorsement of your credibility. The advantage of testimonials is someone else can give information in a way that will be easily believed by your customer. Don't forge or fake testimonials. It will only hurt your credibility and your reputation. The Internet also has an archived memory, so fakes are not forgotten.

The Guarantee

The guarantee is the second way of reassuring through your sales letter. Assuming your visitor has followed your sales process all of the way through, the guarantee can then let your potential customer relax and feel at ease.

In your guarantee you are telling your customer you believe so strongly in your product you are willing to stand behind it.

When you use a strong guarantee you are more apt to get a person who is comfortable getting out their credit card and making a buying decision. Why? Because you've taken away the perceived risk. That is the risk of: maybe it won't work, maybe it does not look that good, maybe it is not for real.

But They'll Rip Me Off

Some business people are reluctant to use a strong guarantee. They're afraid of being ripped off. From listening to many sellers online and offline I can definitely tell you the people who are going to rip you off will do so *with* or *without* a guarantee. Some people are just like that. So forget about the rip-off artists.

Be concerned with the customer who needs reassurance and who wants validation that buying your product is a good decision. Another way of designing your guarantee is to check your competition. What are they offering?

What to include in a guarantee

Use positive words and tone in your guarantee. Choose terms like 'no risk' or 'risk free.' You want this to be a continuation of your invitation to buy. You do not want it to be a warning like the back of a medicine bottle. Graphics can be used to increase the visual impact of your words.

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Some possible guarantees include:

- If you are not completely satisfied, we offer a prompt and courteous refund.
- Your credit card will not be charged for 30 days. If you're not satisfied, just return it.
- No money down.
- If you're not satisfied, I'll not only refund your money, I'll pay you $50 besides.
- If anytime during the next 30-60-90- days, year or lifetime you are not satisfied, return it for a refund.

How Long Should My Guarantee Last?

The effective time of your guarantee can vary. If you are delivering a product through the US mail, by law you must offer a minimum of 30 days. What does a long guarantee period do? It takes away more of the worry. For a nervous customer or first-time big purchaser for your site, a longer effective period for the guarantee takes away the calendar and clock watching.

Guarantees increase sales by taking away the worry of the wrong decision. Guarantees also decrease return rates.

I'm sure you're like me, you buy products, especially marketing ones, but somehow you never get around to opening the products. With a longer guarantee, I forget about returning the product. Other people are similar and tend to forget about guarantees and returns.

Guarantees take away a barrier to buying making it less risky and easier for the customer. Don't we want to make buying easier for our customers?

The Role Of The P.S. In The Sales Letter

Many of your visitors will read your headline and quickly determine if they are interested in your site. If they are interested, for most it means a rapid scroll down to your postscript at the bottom.

If your headline and P.S. 'hook' them providing interesting information, the visitor will scroll back to skim the letter. This entire screening process can take less than five seconds.

Postscripts can play a major role in the sales process online. They remind the reader to take action NOW and can

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emphasize a deadline or limited special offer. Quick decision-makers may only read your headline and P.S.

What Should Be Included In A PS?

Like your headline, the P.S. should be intriguing, but also needs to go one step further than the headline. The P.S. also needs to arouse urgency, a call to action and answer the question, "Why Should I Buy Here?"

Here are some examples of PS's:

> *First 20 Buyers get 55 AdSense sites complete with articles, templates and graphics!*

> *Special $99 pricing today only. Click the button to start your success launch.*

Postscripts can be used as a quick summary of your main offer. Capture attention and win over visitors with PS's.

Your Turn

1. Write a P.S. for your sales letter using your 25-word product description with a special bonus.

2. Write a P.P.S. to include a deadline to add urgency.

Next . . . Consider Your Timing

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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 10: Consider Your Timing

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Consider Your Timing

Developing an info product takes time. When writing or developing your info product, give yourself enough time to do a quality job. Factor in all of the components of the project from start to finish.

◆ Development of product
◆ Writing of sales letter
◆ Website development
◆ Arranging fulfillment of product
◆ Developing launch promotion schedule
◆ Finding JV partners and affiliates
◆ Launch considerations
◆ Product delivery
◆ Customer service and follow-up
◆ Celebration and review

> **What you will learn in this Section:**
>
> ◆ Suggested timing for info product launches
>
> ◆ Items to consider when developing your project timeline
>
> ◆ Seasonal considerations for product launches
>
> ◆ Where to find out who's launching and when
>
> ◆ Why celebration is important

Like anything else, life will happen and projected time schedules will need to be adjusted. Allow 'wiggle room' in your time schedule to deal with unforeseen happenings.

Is There A Better Time?

Whether online or offline certain time periods are best for selling and promoting products and services. Some products and services by their very nature and purpose are seasonal.

It is difficult to sell snow skis and outfits when the temperature outside is in the 100's. Gift buying promotions are more successful when launched around major holidays such as Valentine's Day, Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year's Day.

Using Product Launch Formula Model

In *Product Launch Formula*, Jeff Walker has outlined a series of selling and promotional times for launching Internet marketing products. Based on Jeff's research, it seems that October and January are the two best months to successfully launch products.

His rationale for January is many of us are ready to start new projects and revamp things at the start of the New Year. At the opposite end, Jeff's feeling is that August is the worst month to launch a product. (Jeff does point out though John Reese had one of the most successful launches ever with Traffic Secrets in August—a $1,000,000 day!)

In Jeff's model with the low point in August, he sees September as a month building momentum into October. November sees

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a dip around Thanksgiving (4th Thursday in November) building again in December and then quieting down around the Christmas holiday.

January is by far the best month for product launches. February, March and April are also good months for product launches. June and July starts the lull into the August slow period.

What Else Is Happening?

Much like most authors don't want to release their books the same day as JK Rowling releases her Harry Potter novels, you don't want to release your product the same day as a similar product launch.

But how do you find out what's happening?   Attending seminars, subscribing to e-zines in your area of expertise and belonging to forums will give you valuable insight as to who is launching what in the marketplace.

Product Delivery

The way the product is delivered to the customer will also need to be factored into the product-planning schedule. Holding a teleseminar, which involves booking a bridge line, arranging a guest and promotion will take far less time than producing a workbook, recordings and DVDs. That is why deciding on the delivery method (electronic or physical) and type of media to be used must be decided from the start of planning the product.

Promotion Planning

Thoughtful promotion planning can make the difference between a launch success and a dud. Allow yourself time to write your promo copy, to get partners and affiliates.

The best time to plan promotion is as you are finishing up your product. Get some objective friends and associates to review your product. Listen to their reactions and adjust if needed.

Then get the word out.

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Plan Time to Celebrate

When all is said and done, plan time to celebrate! You've launched your product and accomplished something the majority of people will never make the effort or take the time to do. So congratulate yourself for launching. And start planning your next product.

Next . . . Pricing

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 11: Pricing

By Dan Giordano

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Pricing

Pricing a product is one of those important steps in having a successful business. The success of your products relies directly on your ability to sell the products. This is dependent not only on your sales copy, but your pricing as well.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to find out what the market will pay

◆ Remembering to include profit, overhead and expenses in price determination

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Price your product too high and no one will buy. Sell a product without having sufficient income to cover overhead and generate profit and you will have a short-lived business.

The two crucial parts of price determination are your profit level and what the market will pay. When determining price, you need to list all of your expenses, overhead and your desired profit. Desired profit needs to be built into your strategy, because without profit you won't have the funds to grow and expand.

Finding Out What The Market Will Pay

To find out what the market will pay, it is necessary to go back to your market research. If there's no or little competition you have flexibility in setting your price. Remember, your potential customer has the choice of buying or clicking away.

Having a high price may convince others to copy your product. Their strategy will be to enter the market and undercut you on price.

Have a price too low and the potential customer will either wonder what is wrong with the product or your product will be seen as inferior.

How Do I Determine Customer Demand?

Trial and error is often part of checking customer demand and price adjustment. That is why you will often see product sales online with $x as the starting price. After a certain amount of time the price will be raised.

For most of us, our product isn't totally unique. We can check out the competition to see what others are charging for a similar product or service.

Check out your top ten competitors. List their product name, website and sales price.

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With your overhead and expenses and desired profit, can you afford to sell at that price? If not, do you want to be in this market? Or do you need to search for a different market or different product? Or is your product sufficiently unique you can demonstrate and charge a premium price for your product?

You are in business to make a profit. You are not a charity or a non-profit. You are not in business to break even. Break-even doesn't allow for long-lived business models.

Developing a pricing model as part of a business plan is beyond the scope of this product. Governmental agencies online offer many free resources for helping. This is important as many forget to include overhead, salaries, taxes and other expenses. It is strongly recommended you check either these resources or with an accountant to ensure long-term business success.

Some Basic Guidelines For Info-Products

E-books – $47 and under

Audio courses – MP3's, CD's and transcripts $47 to $97

DVD course – $197

Home Study courses that have audio, video and written content – $497 to $997

Sell value, not price. It is difficult if not impossible to compete on price because someone can always come in cheaper. Sell on value, what you can uniquely provide to the customer. Research – do not guess.

Notes

Pricing – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What benefits and features do customers get from my product?

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2. How does that differ from what my competitor offers?

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3. What are costs in producing this product? (Paper, printing, notebooks, tab dividers, computer use, ink or toner, CD's, postage, packaging, etc.)

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4. What about my overhead? (Space, lights, phone, Internet connection, A/C, salaries for myself and others, taxes, storage space, carrying costs, etc.)

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5. What is the price for my info product?

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6. How does my price compare with my competitors?

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Next . . . Select Backend Products

![InfoProductBluePrint.com — your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product]

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 12: Select Backend Products

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Select Backend Products

As you've spent time researching, planning and developing your info product you are becoming more and more excited about your product launch. I'd like you to stop for a few minutes to do some extra planning which could make your launch and business even more profitable.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to find backend products

◆ Making your own backend products

◆ Things to consider when using affiliate programs as your backend product

Planning For The Moments After: Backend Products And Sales

You've been hoping for a successful product launch. Part of being successful involves having additional products and/or services to offer your customers. I'm talking about backend products. A backend product is one you offer to your customers after they have recently purchased 'a like product' from you. For example, if you sold a book on "How to Improve Your Golf Swing," you could tell your customers you have added a book on "Putting" to your list.

The reality is backend products sell. It's much easier to sell to an existing customer than a new one. There's a big plus from backend products – they add extra dollars to your online sales.

Backend products can be books, audio CD's, DVD's, reports, consulting, coaching, private membership sites or other items or services related to your original product or service.

Where Do I Find Backend Products?

You can find backend products in two ways. The first is search for an expensive product with a high mark up that is closely related to your original product and become an affiliate. Or develop an improved version of your original product with additional features. Mike Ambrosio will tell you how he did just that in the section on Private Label Software. Mike improved the 'lite' version and went back to his existing customers and sold the full-featured version.

The advantage of improving your own product is simple. The customer who bought and likes the 'lite' version knows the improved version is going to be even better. The customer already knows, likes and trusts you from the original buying experience. This makes the second sale even easier.

Notes

The second way is to use an affiliate product. Be careful in your choice of affiliate products. You have treated your customer well and sold a great product. Will the owner of the product you represent as an affiliate treat your customer well? Will the product bring value to your customer? It's your customer and your reputation on the line. You've spent time and effort getting the customer and nurturing the relationship. Do you really want someone else to ruin it by poor customer service?

When Can I Sell My Backend Products?

Backend product offers can be delivered in a variety of ways and at different times. You'll need to decide which one(s) best fit your business plan.

There are three times you can present a backend offer to a customer:

- at the time of purchase as an additional sale;
- upon delivery of either a physical or digital product; or
- presented through additional follow-up through emails, phone calls or direct mail.

When a customer is in the process of buying, it is the perfect time to suggest a complimentary product or an upsell. That's why when you go to a fast food restaurant they suggest fries and a drink with your hamburger, or the restaurant worker will suggest you supersize your drink to a jumbo size. The customer is ready to buy and in the mood. The credit card or money is out and ready to be spent. As the customer is ready to click 'Enter' to process the order, you can present a complimentary product.

The second moment you can offer a backend product is when you deliver the product. You can offer a special value for a limited time period. Women's clothing catalogues know this one well. The person is checking out, opening the delivery box and the company offers a time limited special. It may be a complimentary product or a special discount, but the key is that it is only offered to people who have purchased other items.

Finally, the third moment for selling backend products is in follow-up. By communicating with your customer by email, you can offer multiple products in the future. All of this equals profit for you.

How Do I Present My Offer?

At the time of sale, you can make an additional or backend offer on your 'Thank you' page. You can set up a pop-up or pop-under offer for the customer to choose. This way you're maximizing the profit stream and helping your customer at the same time.

Notes

If you're selling a physical product, include a special offer in the box. Include a free gift in the Louisiana style of lagniappe (a special unexpected bonus) like access to a special member's only site or a customer only specials site.

Follow-up communication through autoresponder emails and e-zines allow you to stay in touch with your customers. It also offers many opportunities for you to present additional products and services that can benefit your customers.

If you're not selling backend products to your customers, you're missing an opportunity to provide additional value to your customer. Remember they have learned to know, like and trust you as their resource. Be their expert and provide services they want through the use of backend products. As in all situations when you serve your customers, this way you will be rewarded with additional profits.

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Select Backend Products – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are some types of backend products that would compliment my product?

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2. Do I want to develop my own backend product?

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3. What are some affiliate products I could use as the backend to my product?

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4. When do I plan to present my backend products?

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5. Should I upsell at the same time?

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6. Should I upsell later?

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Next . . . Create An Action Plan

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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Brainstorming and Research

Module 1

Section 13: Create An Action Plan

By Michael Port, Hal Macomber and Dan Giordano

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 13

Create An Action Plan

Michael Port, our next guest author, is a coach and high-energy Internet marketer. Hal Macomber is a skilled project manager and consultant. Together they give you 7 rules to make your information product a remark-able one.

What you will learn in this Section:
◆ How to put together your action plan

7 Rules For A Remark-able Project

Remark-able projects build your identity in the world because others are "able" to "remark" on the project. You become known for being able to fulfill certain kinds of offers. You might think of it as reputation building, but it goes further. It's also business building and "you" building. Remark-able projects are emergent. The future is uncertain therefore we can't determine a result we can only create circumstances for navigating to a result. The building of a business is the successful completion of one project after another. The following 7 simple rules will help you create circumstances for navigating to remark-able projects.

Bring your passion to the product

Passion is a requisite for producing remark-able projects. You can't do a project that others are going to remark on if you don't engage your passion. As with anything, when we're creating something new, we're faced with problems, seeming insurmountable barriers and circumstances that are out of our control.   During these times, our passion and personal investment in the project is what carries us through to completion. How passionate are you about your project?

Work with others

At the earliest possible moment you've got to bring people in as you are developing the project. If you work with others… you will wind up with something far greater than you could alone. If this is a tough one ask yourself whether you are committed to having something truly great or just getting it your way? Who do you want to work with on your next project?

Call on your talents

Working on a project of any sort is the perfect venue for showcasing your talents. Talents are those gifts that are innate to the person you are, whereas skills are things that are learned. When you utilize your talents, the quality of the product really shines through. If you really want to create remarkable products, work from your talents and your passion will shine through.

Notes

What talents are you ready to showcase?

Develop habits of commitment making and fulfilling

Progress depends on the successful completion of promises. Create a routine that is appropriate for the project that has people coming together making promises to each other. The work that I promise to complete today allows you to start your task tomorrow. The downfall of not doing this is one breakdown after another. What will you commit to today and what do you promise to deliver?

Tightly couple learning with action

One of the things that keep people from getting on with their projects is that they think they need to know something before they start, instead of learning in action. The future belongs to the learner not the learned. What do you want to learn?

Have clear intentions

As the saying goes, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. The same thing applies to producing projects. In order to have clear outcomes you need to have clear intentions about what you want to accomplish. Your intention is comprised of your passions, your talents, your contributions, the commitments you make and the promises you fulfill. Define your project in as much detail as possible. Our definition actually serves as a guide or rules that create the circumstances that allow us to navigate to the results we desire. But, as with all creative pursuits we need to be flexible. Leave room for change, expansion, and possibly a new direction. This will create the most collaborative and exciting environment within which you can create. What do you intend to create?

Have a compelling story for your product

Projects never go the way you expect they are going to go! Keeping your passion and your focus depends on telling and re-telling the story of your project, and why it matters to you and others. Your story is all about why this project matters to you and why it is important for others. On a grander scale it is your vision and purpose rolled into one. It will become increasingly important as you face problems, setbacks or any type of project breakdown. You can always go back to your story – the underlying reason why your undertaking came about in the first place. Story telling is a tool of leadership, and the way you engage others in your project. It's the way you maintain your mood when things go wrong. Being able to articulate and rearticulate the story of the project is essential. What's your story?

Working on remark-able projects allows you to work on your business while working in your business and on yourself.

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Notes from Editor:

Develop the Right Philosophy

The first point is to develop the right philosophy. How you approach your business (and life) will determine your success or failure. Try to always be growing and expanding your horizons in some way. You might want to think about continuing your education or contributing to your local community in some way. (Make sure to set-aside enough money for personal development.)

Most successful people do not blindly follow someone else. They learn, evaluate, and make the necessary adjustments in their approach to career and life. Excellence is the goal, and continuous training and instruction are a very important part of the process.

As you continue to grow and develop, be sure to find other individuals who can help in the process. Good mentors are hard to come by, but indispensable when it comes to personal growth.

Decide What You 'Really' Want

Determine your true inner desire and then do it! If you don't really desire to accomplish what it is you are currently doing, when the difficult times arrive you will simply quit. It's a fact of life! Thousands of dollars are lost by people who invest in ill-suited programs, which they soon quit. The inner desire and "real" interest were not there in the first place.

Always remember...to be successful you must first determine your true inner desire. Identify what it is that you really want in your career and life. The answers to these questions will lead you to success.

Take Action

Do your homework, but by all means step out and do something. Not just anything, mind you...you can actually be busy and not accomplish anything.

Consistent action in the right direction will produce results. It is the law of sowing and reaping. You reap what you sow. In other words, you get what you deserve, not what you need. Plant enough seeds and you will find growth. Ask enough people and someone will join or buy what you are offering.

Create an Action Plan – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write down your launch date.

   _____

2. Find an Accountability Partner (Someone you trust and who will keep you on track)

   _____

3. Find Tech Partners (People who are willing to assist you with the technical set up)

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Find Potential JV Partners

   _____

   _____

   _____

If you have done all of the steps up until this point you have done more than most and here is where you need to finally take action. Start the process by doing everything in your power to learn from the training sections in this workbook.

One of the keys to your success is when you get stumped, don't be afraid to ask for help!

While it will not be easy, (nothing worthwhile is) it will be worth what you put into it!

5. What skills or things do you need to learn to produce your info product?

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   _____

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6. Get a calendar. List times and dates you can and will work on your product.

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![Info Product Blueprint]

7. Who are some resource people who can help you with your product?

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8. List stories you can include in your product.

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Next . . . Module 2: How To Build Your Content

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How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Module 2: How To Build Your Content

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 1: It's Your Turn

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

It's Your Turn

So far you've brainstormed and researched your path to a niche market. Now it's time to start working on the product to sell to that niche. With information products it's necessary to have information. So where do you start?

So many of us sit down to write and...and...nothing.

We look at the paper or the blank computer screen and we freeze. Our brain goes blank and we tell ourselves, "We'll write our product later."

*Well, I'm pleased to let you know later is **now**.*

I've asked two content experts to share their step-by-step system to building and writing original content. Lori Steffen and Jeff Wark of QuickContentSecrets.com and eCorepreneur.com are sharing hints and techniques they've used themselves and in their coaching practice to develop content easily and quickly.

What you will learn in this Section:
◆ How to develop content for your product
◆ The facts and figures as to why it's time to turn off the TV put away the magazine and develop your own info product.

Read the material through once to understand their system and how they teach and coach people to develop content. Then stop and complete each of the exercises. This will allow you to develop your product as you learn.

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Whether you are already motivated to create your own content or still need just a little more push, consider what is already happening.

In 2003, 55% of American households had home Internet access. More than triple the rate in 1997.

That number increased to 66% in January of 2005.

According to the Associated Press that number is now 73%.

According to Harvard Business Review, research has shown that it is 6 to 7 times more expensive to gain a customer than to retain a customer.

Bain and Company says that repeat customers spend 67% more than first time customers.

Approximately 33% of people have clicked on an email and made an immediate purchase according to DoubleClick's Sixth Annual Consumer Email Study.

DoubleClick's study also stated that 78% of people have made a purchase as a result of an email marketing campaign.

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The study also found that 59% of people have redeemed an email coupon in a store.

So, let me get this straight, 73% of American households have Internet access. It is cheaper to retain a repeat customer and they spend 67% more. And they buy through email campaigns.

Now, isn't that motivation to create a website with content that draws, offer content to subscribers, and use content to create products to sell?

Marketer after marketer will tell you they invested 2 weeks, some even more, to create an information product. They created content that promoted and marketed that product and that product returned them a six-figure income.

Even if it took six weeks to create that content, was the return worth it?

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It's Your Turn – Self-Assessment Questions

Quickly list ten topics you could use for your info product. Don't think about this, just quickly list.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Next . . . Content Is King

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How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 2: Content Is King

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Content Is King

> **What you will learn in this Section:**
>
> ◆ How to monetize your website

Notes

Content is king on the Internet. The Internet was created as a means to share information. It is still why people use the Internet – to find out information. And, information is content – so, content is king.

On the Internet there is free information available and there is paid information available. The value of your site, of your product, of whatever you offer is in the information.

This is unlike a hard product whose value is determined by the cost to create or manufacture the product. For example, say you sell bicycles. The selling price is primarily determined by how much it costs to make that bike (plus overhead costs including shipping).

With information, or content, the selling price is determined by how valuable the information is, especially to the person seeking the information. The value is not determined by how much it costs to put together that information.

For example, a marketer once sent an email that said he had a link to a very valuable resource. He stated that this was a free resource but requested a few dollars to share this information. If this is a resource you were interested in and believe it would be valuable to know this resource, would it not be worth the few dollars to know this information versus the time it would take you to find the information on your own?

There are membership sites, which charge a monthly fee simply to be informed of new resources available on the Internet. There are many members to different sites such as these. The value to the members is the time savings. Even though most of the information provided is available for free, the value is much higher due to the time savings of not having to find the information on your own.

What is the average cost of a college education today? What are they giving you in exchange for your dollars? Information. Content.

Be the college of your topic or niche. Give your "students" (your visitors, your subscribers and your customers) valuable information and charge them accordingly.

There are many ways to "charge" your visitors. This is called monetizing your content. With any website or blog (short for web log) you can have paid advertising. With good content you can earn money from advertising even with free content. Websites, blogs, newsletters, e-zines (electronic magazines), press releases and free reports can all be used to generate traffic, a following, and a subscriber base

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Content is King – Self-Assessment Questions

1. You listed ten possible topics for your info product. Please relist the topics below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

2. How could you monetize each of the topics? (Subscription site, ads, report, e-book, audio, teleseminar, software, book)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

3. List a delivery method you would consider using.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
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10. _____

Next . . . Good Content

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How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 3: Good Content

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Good Content

Good content is not fluff. Good content is not vague. You know and recognize high quality content when you see or hear it. But, how do you create it?

We're first going to discuss what makes content good. Then we'll look at many of the uses of content. After that we're going to show how you can create good content.

Good, high quality content is interesting and/or entertaining and informative. Tell your visitors enough to feel they have received value. Save your more detailed information for your subscribers. Your most detailed and most informative information can be reserved for your customers.

With that said, there are two points to note. One, the first information they receive should be content rich so that they want to know more. One of the best teachers in Internet marketing has said to give them your best content first. The recipient will think, "Wow, if I got this for free, what will I get in the paid information?" Make sure your paid information lives up to the same standards of quality content.

Second, you may want to give away detailed and informative information if there is a valid reason. One such reason would be to derive earnings from these recipients in another manner.

To create rich content about your topic or niche the information should be explicit. It should include details. Be exact when explaining. Do not use words or abbreviations that someone unfamiliar with the subject would not know unless you explain them.

Provide information that is significant to your audience. It should be information that they would find important. Do not talk about unrelated issues or topics.

Make sure the information is valid. They should be able to relate to why you are telling them the information.

Sensible information that they can put to use is valuable. Present the information in a way that is realistic for them. Fill them with no-nonsense, matter-of-fact information. But, don't be boring.

You want to be unforgettable. In the future when they think of the information they learned, they should automatically think of you. The information should be impressive to them and you want them nodding their heads saying, "That was excellent."

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Next . . . Why Should You Create Content?

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How To Build Your
Content

Module 2

Section 4: Why Should You Create Content?

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Why Should You Create Content?

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What content can do for your website and online business

Knowing how to quickly and easily create content will open many doors to you.

Create original websites and continually add fresh content to existing websites once you know how to create content.

Content can be used to promote your site through blogs, articles and press releases.

Build your subscriber database with original and entertaining information on your site. Encourage people to subscribe to your e-zine or your newsletter. You can also add to your list by offering free reports.

Content that includes a link to your website increases the links to your site.

Search engine spiders will be encouraged to return often if your site has new content.

Your search engine ranking can be increased when these spiders consistently find fresh content.

Utilizing content, you can increase traffic to your website.

When these visitors come to your website you will have valuable content to provide them.

These visitors will also have a reason to return to your site when they know that you consistently provide new content.

The content that you create will develop a bond with your visitors, your subscribers and your customers.

If you are creating good, high-quality content, your followers will not be able to get enough of your information.

You will become a trusted advisor to the people receiving your content.

You can become a published author through article submissions and go on to write e-books and books.

Notes

Your content will build your credibility in your topic, niche or industry.

Self-confidence and self-worth will be raised as you develop your content.

Through your content, you will become the expert.

Knowing how to create content will allow you to develop your own products to sell.

Good content will develop a loyal blog following for you.

Joint Venture opportunities will become available to you when you can create content.

This all adds up to having more time and more money to enjoy.

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Next . . . Uses Of Content

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How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 5: Uses Of Content

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Uses Of Content

Lori and Jeff give us some great ideas about using content. With their long list of options, you should be able to pick up some new ideas to use content in ways you had never before considered.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ The many different formats and places available to use original content

Content is a necessary and useful item for many applications.

Websites are one place to use your content. The home page of your website should not be static. It should change often, at least portions of it. New content should be regularly added to your site.

Some websites are sales letters only. With good content and good copywriting they provide the visitors with enough information to desire what you are selling.

Lead generation pages, opt-in pages and squeeze pages are websites or web pages whose sole purpose is to collect the visitor's information. This could be just their email address, their name and email, or other information. With well-written teaser content and the promise of more content you collect the visitor's information to add to your subscriber list. You ask them to subscribe to your newsletter or e-zine and entice them with an offer such as a free report. You can offer them a free report, require them to provide their information to receive the report and subscribe them. Tell them they are receiving a free subscription.

If your site does not have a newsletter or e-zine, it should. A newsletter or e-zine is sent to your subscribers regularly. A list of subscribers is your most valuable asset. Each issue contains content. Newsletters and e-zines are usually sent to subscribers via email. They can be text email, html email, a link to an audio file, a link to a web page that displays your written newsletter, or a link to an online video newsletter.

Autoresponders are used to send emails to all of your subscribers at one time on a regular basis. Specifically the autoresponders we are referring to are called sequential autoresponders. You create content for each email and set them up in an autoresponder to be sent at specific times. You can also send a broadcast email to all of your subscribers at one time. Both sequential and broadcast emails can be personalized for each recipient based on the information you collected when they subscribed.

Notes

A mini course is an autoresponder that is set up with a lesson in each email. The recipient would receive a series of emails that instructs them. Often these are 7 lessons, one sent each day after someone requests the mini course. They can span several weeks with one lesson each week.

Tips booklets contain a list of tips and a sentence or two explaining each tip.

Articles contain content on a specific aspect of your topic or niche. They can be included on your website. Articles can also be submitted to online directories. Other webmasters utilize these articles for content on their websites. The articles include a resource box with information about you and your website and a link back to your site. This promotes your site and provides links to your site.

A free or special report is a short report on your topic or niche that is used to promote your site. It contains enough content to be informative and makes the reader want to know more.

E-books are electronic books and provide information about your topic or niche. They would provide more information than is found in a free or special report.

A teleseminar is a seminar that is conducted by phone. The host of the teleseminar and any speaking guests are each on their telephones. Attendees of the teleseminar also call-in by phone to listen to the (tele)seminar.

E-courses are also delivered by autoresponder. They are a series of lessons that are scheduled to be sent out on a regular basis once the recipient has signed up. These are longer than mini courses. An example would be a 52-week e-course where the recipient receives an email every week for an entire year.

Information products are a broad category. Information is content and so content is the basis of all info products. Info products can be in written digital format (ex. .PDF), digital audio format (ex. MP3), digital video format, provided through autoresponders, provided on web pages, physical written products, physical audio products (CD), or physical video products (DVD).

Seminars, workshops and public speeches are all information products that are delivered live. These can be recorded for other uses.

A tutorial is a lesson to provide information. A workbook is a written document with spaces for the users to fill in information.

A book is content in physical written format that is bound with a soft or hard cover.

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A podcast is distributing audio and video over the Internet for use on mobile devices. Wikipedia says that "Podcasting's essence is about creating content (audio or video) for an audience that wants to listen or watch when they want, where they want, and how they want."

A blog, short for web log, is a specific type of website. It changes every time you publish a new post. Each new post is content.

Press releases provide information regarding your topic or niche but the content specifically relates to current events either within your business or how a current event relates to your business. These are used to promote your business and your website.

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Notes from Editor:

Lori and Jeff have given you numerous ways to use content. Now it's time for you to do some writing. Turn this page to the questions.

Uses of Content – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Copy your topic list here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

2. List at least 2 possible delivery methods for each of your proposed topics.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Next . . . Why You Don't Create Content?

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 6: Why You Don't Create Content?

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Why You Don't Create Content

So often we create excuses for ourselves. "I can't do _____." Or "I just _____ when I sit down to write."

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Jeff and Lori's tips on changing your mind, your attitude and making it easy to write content.

It's time to change your way of thinking, if you truly want to be successful.

It's up to you.

If you are struggling to create content, one of the first things to do is identify your issue. There is a TV commercial for a learning center that shows kids saying, "I hate school" and the announcer says what the kid is really saying is "I need help." Another kid says, "I can't do math" and the announcer says what the kid is really saying is "I don't understand."

If you are saying, "I can't write" or "I hate to write" be sure to identify what you really mean. Do you mean "I don't know where to start," "I don't think of ideas when I'm sitting at my computer," "A teacher once told me I'm not a good writer," "I don't have enough time," or "It doesn't sound right when I write it."

Dig down a little and do the "Why." If you are saying, "I can't write," ask yourself "Why?" After you answer, ask yourself "why" again in response. Keep going until you get to something significant.

Example:

"I hate to write"

"Why?"

"Because I do"

"Why?"

"Because I wasn't good at it in school"

"Why?"

"Because I didn't like what I had to write about"

Now there's your reason. And that's an easy one. Because now you are involved in something you like. And so, even though you weren't good at writing in school, the real reason wasn't that you weren't any good. The real reason was that you didn't

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like the subject. Now that you like the subject and since you are discovering some new and easier ways, you just might find that you don't hate to write.

Take a few minutes now and do the "why." Find out what your real reason for not wanting to write really is. This will be very helpful to you.

Let's Take A Look At "I Don't Know Where To Start"

This is a very common statement.

Have you heard the saying "The gold is in your list"? This statement refers to your subscriber database that truly is your gold.

But another list that is very valuable to you is your content list. Don't start out trying to write something yet. Just start making a list.

The list could be a list of topics to cover; facts about your topic or niche; the benefits to your target audience of visiting your site; subscribing or buying your product; a list of thoughts and ideas you have about your topic; a list of questions people have about your topic; a list of problems your target audience has; or the frustrations of your market. Have a list of your keywords.

Keep adding to the list as new items come to mind. You won't complete the list in one sitting. In fact, hopefully as long as you are involved in this niche you won't ever complete your list.

Your subconscious mind will keep working on the list even when you are not consciously thinking of the list. You know how thoughts just pop into your head from nowhere? Jot them down.

It is so important to take note of these thoughts as they come to mind. Keep a notepad with you all of the time. Or, carry a recorder. Call and leave yourself a message. Use an automated message system. These little nuggets are gold. Don't let them get away.

If You Find Yourself Saying "I Don't Think Of Ideas When I'm At My Computer" Don't Be Surprised

Most people do not think of ideas while they are sitting at their computers. If you are one of them, that is not likely to change. Stop trying to force it.

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The brain makes associations. Normally when you are sitting at your computer, hands on the keyboard, it is to do something productive or to accomplish something that is work.

Putting together content is a creative endeavor. Even if the project is technical in nature, the creation process is not technical.

Typing and being creative at the same time are often not effective. If you do not normally work at a computer, then you may be able to be creative while at the keyboard. Having a computer in a different location just for creating content may work. Your brain may not associate the computer with work, just the location. A different location may free your brain to be creative while at the keyboard.

A laptop comes in handy for changing locations. One Internet marketer said that he takes his laptop poolside to do his copywriting.

Inspiration often hits us when we are away from our desks, away from our computers, because our brains are in environments that are not associated with work. This frees the brain to be creative. Your brain is also stimulated by the different environment and is in a more creative mode.

Make sure you have that notepad or recorder handy when inspiration does hit. Again, leave yourself a message or do whatever you need to do to capture the idea.

A Teacher Once Told You That You're Not A Good Writer And You Have Been Repeating It To Yourself Ever Since

Teachers may have told you once, or they may have told you all throughout school, that you can't write. But, they were wrong. You have a story to tell. You, your life, and your experiences are unique.

The biggest problem with being told this is what it has done to your head. There is stuff in your head yearning to get out and be shared. If you can think, you have ideas to share. If you can think, you can create content. The obstacle to overcome is the barrier placed between those thoughts and bringing them to form. It's like a wall and you've got to start tearing it down.

First, realize that there are a lot of ways to create content that don't involve "writing."

Second, start with developing your idea list. You don't need the added pressure of creating something from thin air. Also, you're probably not ready to take a wrecking ball to that wall. Start by knocking it down a little piece at a time. Create a little content at

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a time. Do it consistently. You will quickly find that you have created a lot of content in little pieces.

You can then move on to creating a bigger project, either on its own or by combining the pieces you have created.

Schedule time for creating content. Once a day, once a week, once a month. Five minutes, a half an hour, an hour. Different times for different types of projects.

For instance, you could schedule 5 minutes a day to post to your blog. If you are continually adding to your idea list, a blog post should only take a few minutes.

Schedule a half an hour a week to write an article. With your idea list and the new techniques you have discovered, you could write an article a week.

Find a location other than your desk for your content creation. Utilizing many different locations is good, too. It could be a different room, the front porch, the back yard, and a secluded cabin. Just make it someplace different that you can also eliminate or at least minimize interruptions. The ideas will flow.

When you are ready to start your project read over the entire idea list and select the items to include in your project. The shorter a project, the fewer items you need. The longer your project, the more items you need.

Start small. A blog is a great place to start.

The Ever Infamous "I Don't Have Time"

One thing that everyone in the world has in common is they have twenty-four hours in a day. Effective time management is a skill no one should be without. If this is a skill that could use improving in your case, take the time to do so. The rewards are worth it.

Time management skills aside, something besides time is holding you back. Anyone can find something they have to do and be too busy to do the things they don't want to do, don't know how to do or are afraid to do.

Schedule time regularly to create content. Many people don't do this and say that it is because they don't have time. What is more likely is that they are worried that when they get to the scheduled time they won't be able to come up with any content.

If you think you have to set aside huge blocks of time to create content, this is not true. Once you are done with this course you should have enough knowledge to not be concerned that you won't be able to create content. Rare is the person who can sit

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down and create an entire e-book or info product at one time. You will have your list, you will have methods and techniques, and you will have the tools and resources to make content creation easier, quicker and more fun.

Becoming effective at using these will allow you to create content on a regular basis. Instead of thinking that you need to schedule hours, or an entire day or days on end for content creation you will instead schedule short blocks of time into your day and be building an empire of content.

You've Tried To Write Some But, "It Doesn't Sound Right When I Write It"

Taking a few minutes a day to write in your blog will rapidly improve your writing. Getting feedback is another skill booster. Make sure you are getting positive feedback. This could be a professional, mentor, coach, spouse, relative or friend.

It is most important that they are not critical. They are not there to review your spelling, sentence structure, and grammar, tell you how they would have done it, nit-pick or put you down.

The person you are looking for will tell you that they did not understand something, tell you to provide more detail, less detail, etc. They are also there to provide gentle guidance and encouragement.

This person is different from an editor. They are your cheering squad.

If you are comfortable speaking, but not writing, or if you feel your writing does not have the quality of your speaking, consider recording. Speak your content into a recorder, then write what you have spoken. Read it, tweak it, you're done.

Please Don't Tell Us "I Don't Have Anything To Say"

Yes, you do. You are in your niche or topic because you have an interest in it. Since you are interested in it, you have some knowledge of it. You know more than the average person, so you have something to say.

What has happened is that because the knowledge has become such a part of you, it is difficult to determine what you know that others do not. To you, it is common knowledge.

The trick is to draw that knowledge out of yourself. Your list is an invaluable tool towards this end. Make a list of everything you can think of that you know about your subject.

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Collect facts about your topic or niche. Jot down what you find out in books, magazines, from the TV, on the Internet, and from courses. Anytime you hear a new fact jot it down. Make a note of where you found the information.

When you are watching a TV show, reading a book, listening to audio or at a seminar and you think, "I knew that" or "everyone knows that," add it to your list. Most likely everyone doesn't know that.

Make A List Of Benefits To Your Target Audience Who's Visiting Your Site

Say you have a website on wild birds. A **fact** would be that certain birds eat this for food. The **benefit** to your target audience is that now they know what to feed to which birds.

Add to your list any thoughts and ideas you have about your topic. Don't pre-judge your thoughts. Write them down.

On your list, include questions people have about your topic. This could be from emails you receive. This could be from the frequently asked questions page of your website, if you have one. This could be questions you are frequently asked when someone hears what you are involved with. You could use a survey to find out what questions your visitors have.

Problems your target audience has should also be on your idea list. What are their issues, problems, obstacles, frustrations or difficulties? Again, you could do a survey to find out.

Have A List Of Your Keywords

Find a friend, mentor, coach, spouse or relative who is open-minded, but who is not involved with your topic. Take 15 minutes, a half-hour or even an hour – heck, do it over coffee or lunch and make it fun. Explain to that person about your subject. Have them ask you questions about what you are telling them. Take notes. Or, better yet, record it. Add to your list all of the things you told this person.

Take special note of anything they really had no idea or that they found particularly interesting. This can be a really fun time and will help you realize that you know more than people not involved in your topic. You probably know more than you think. You can help people by sharing your knowledge.

Anytime you are talking with someone about your subject and they say, "I didn't know that," alarm bells should ring in your head. Whatever you just said should be on your list.

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Visit discussion boards, forums, and chat rooms related to your niche. If you know the answer to a question, add that to your list. If you learn something new, be sure it's accurate, and then add it to your list.

Boy, that list is getting long. And you said you didn't have anything to say. As the list grows, so will your confidence that you really do know a lot about your topic.

Perhaps, If You Really Start Digging, You Will Find Out That Your "Why" Is Really That You Are Afraid Of The Feedback

You are worried that people won't like you. Or that someone will email you and tell you that your article was lousy. Maybe they will tell you that they disagree with your opinion. Possibly, in much stronger language. You cannot please everyone, so don't try.

People visit your site to be shown information, to be guided and instructed in your topic. In other words, they come there to be led.

A recent example given was of someone visiting a chiropractor for the first time. The person is in the treatment room and the chiropractor says, "What treatment would you like me to give you?" The person is shocked and stunned.

That person is thinking, "Excuse me, doc, that's what I came here for, for you to tell me." I don't know what I don't know. I want him to tell me, show me, teach me, lead me."

This is what your visitors are looking for from you.

To be the expert in your topic or niche you must be willing to be the leader.

Tell them, show them, teach, guide, instruct them – lead them.

Be true to yourself so people will get to know you.

Many will like you. Accept that some people will not like you or will criticize you.

Give good quality content. Some people will follow you even if they don't like you.

Terry Dean, a well-known Internet marketer, has said that his materials that make the most money are the ones he gets the most comments back that they hated it. Let people know what you think, share your opinions.

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Toughen up a bit. Listen, if you're tough enough to be in the Internet business or have a website up, than you are certainly tough enough to handle some negative feedback.

It's up to you what you do with it. You could just trash it. Let it go. Or you can use it for content. Use the criticism as an introduction to creating another piece of content on the same subject and explain further why you stand by your opinion.

Next . . . It's Time for Some Fun Idea Building

![InfoProductBluePrint.com — your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product]

Section 7: It's Time for Some Fun Idea Building

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

It's Time for Some Fun Idea Building

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Ways to harness your creativity

◆ How to change your mood so you can become more creative

◆ Discover your personal triggers to become more creative

Marlon Sanders of *The Amazing Formula* has said that the only thing he ever learned in his Master's Degree in psychology that ever made a dime was – "creativity comes from your child ego state."

Content does not come from your logical, thinking state. It's a creative endeavor that comes from your child ego state.

What do children like to do? They like to have fun. They play games. They laugh. They go outside.

It's time you do the same. As we've said, just changing your surroundings can help to stimulate your creativity.

This is also the reason that you always hear that you should follow your passion. It is much more fun to create content about a subject you are passionate about. It gets your energy flowing, gets you excited, it gets you more in touch with your inner child.

Throughout our lives we have been told to grow up. Many people confuse growing up with growing old. Growing up means accepting responsibility for yourself and your actions. It does not mean you are no longer allowed to have fun.

Stop feeling guilty about having fun at what you are doing. It is possible to get work done while having fun. Not only is it possible to create content while having fun, your content will be much better. Heck, having fun is just about a necessity.

If you think you do not have time to have fun you do not understand the principle that you will be more productive if you are having fun. Making what you are doing fun will make the time fly by and, in the process, you will be pumped and productive.

Make building your list a game. Every time you add a new topic, fact, question, or any item to your list give yourself a thumbs-up. Smile about it. You've accomplished something and you

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should be happy. If you have to force yourself to smile at first, do so. Laugh about it – ah ha, I've added another piece to that puzzle.

Allowing your creative mind to engage means disengaging or suspending your adult, critical, and logical mind for a bit. When you are creating content, do not edit your work. This is like putting a screaming stop sign in front of your creative mind just when you got it going. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, re-wording, being critical – none of it. Just create.

Go back later with your critical mind and do the editing and correcting.

So what if you are stuck in a place and going elsewhere to stimulate that kid inside is not an option? Use your imagination. Imagination is also from your child ego state. Do you remember how vivid your imagination was as a child?

Mentally take yourself to another location. Picture yourself having fun. If possible surround yourself with images that will help you.

Geeze, if you have to, hide in the bathroom for a few minutes and picture yourself skiing or swimming or whatever it is you like to do for fun. Let your body and your mind get psyched up and then go create your content.

Bring in some props. On one particularly difficult project, I went out and bought a magic wand, complete with sparkles and shiny streamers. Our customer would come to us and ask for the impossible. After he left, we brought out the magic wand. We waved it around for a few minutes and laughed about the request.

Then we started doing what needed to be done to meet the request. We came up with ideas of how to improve our completion. Even if we couldn't meet the customer's request we still did better than what we originally had thought. And this was with a bunch of construction workers.

Laugh, have fun, make it a game.

It's time to let go and be creative.

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It's Time for Some Fun Idea Building – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Close your eyes and remember three places or times in your life when you really felt creative.

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2. List five things you have fun doing. (This is your private list. So let your hair down and your inner child out to play.)

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Next . . . Article Building – The Start

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 8: Article Building – The Start

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

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Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Article Building – The Start

Don't tell yourself you can't write one article or even more. With the techniques Lori and Jeff cover here you'll soon be writing pages and pages.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ A quick and easy way to write articles.

Look at your idea list and pick items that are related. You could pick just 3 items for creating an article. This would be a good place to start.

Arrange the items you are including. Group similar items together and put them in an order.

Next, come up with a working headline. You can change it or tweak it later, but this will help bring the project together. Use attention grabbing words in your headline. Use as few words as necessary. Write first, then delete words to shorten the headline without changing the meaning.

Jot down 10, 15, 100 headlines – changing words around, switching one word for another. Don't take time to think about each one. Jot them down as quickly as you can. When you are done, pick one you will use as your working headline for now. There is software that can help you quickly create a variety of attention grabbing headlines.

Now, pick any item on your list. Just pick one, any one. Write down everything you have to say about that item. Pick another item and write down everything you have to say about that item. Repeat this for each item until you have done all of the items.

Arrange everything you have done into the order you designated on your list. It's okay to change the order if you want to at this point.

Read though what you have done in the order you have arranged. Add transitional sentences – something to connect the items if needed. Add anything you forgot the first time.

Now create the beginning or introduction.

Write a few sentences to put at the end to sum up and close out the project.

Step away. Let the project sit for a couple of days. Then go back and read your results out loud. Make any changes or tweaks. Run spell check on what you have written.

You can use this method whether you choose 3 items for writing an article, 10 to 30 items for an e-book or 52 items for a 52-week course.

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Notes from Editor:

No matter the number of articles, this technique can place you on the path to your info product.

Next . . . Article Magic Technique

Info Product
Blueprint
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How To Build Your
Content

Module 2

Section 9: Article Magic Technique

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

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Article Magic Technique

When Lori and Jeff first described this technique I thought it was just too simple. But I soon realized that was my old history talking. Writing can be simple, easy, and even fun. That's why this technique is called Article Magic. It's so simple, it seems like magic.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ A magical technique to get you writing quickly and easily.

Now let's suppose that you want to write an entire article on one item on your list and don't have any sub-items. Or, you want to just start at the beginning and flow with it.

Try these openings to get you started:

Once upon a time…

This is what I learned…

Someone once told me…

My girlfriend (boyfriend, spouse, etc.) said…

I figured it out…

It happened when…

There I was…

Before I knew this I…

Pick one of these openings and start going. Just start putting down or recording everything that comes to mind in the order it comes to you. Don't even think about spelling. Don't concern yourself with paragraphs. Keep going. Allow your thoughts to keep flowing.

After you have finished, go back and revise the opening sentence. Often times you will find that you can just delete these starter words and use what is left.

Example:

Once upon a time there was a fellow who thought he couldn't write at all.

Delete the starter words:

Once there was a fellow who thought he couldn't write at all.

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Then you can do a word count and see if what you have created is too long or too short. You may find that if you just let yourself go like this that you will have created something that is too long for one article. You can break it up into multiple articles. Add some paragraph breaks. Tweak the wording a bit.

Have someone proofread the project. This is the time to break the content into paragraphs, edit it, run spell check. You're done.

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Info Product Blueprint

Article Magic Technique – Self-Assessment Questions

1. Choose one of these openings to get you started:

        Once upon a time…

        This is what I learned…

        Someone once told me…

        My girlfriend (boyfriend, spouse, etc.) said…

        I figured it out…

        It happened when…

        There I was…

        Before I knew this I…

2. Then just start writing about your top topic. Just keep writing till you run out of paper, ink or ideas on that topic.

Next . . . Content Creation As You Talk

![InfoProductBluePrint.com - your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product]

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 10: Content Creation As You Talk

By Lori Steffan and Jeff Wark

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Content Creation As You Talk

Lori and Jeff keep coming back with more and more ways to help you create original content. Their final technique will take away the last little pieces of your hesitation about content creation.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Create new content by talking through an article.

If you can talk, or know someone who does talk, well you'll see very soon.

The fastest way to create content is to speak it. You learned how to speak before you learned how to write. Speaking comes more naturally and you speak three times faster than the average person can type. Most people speak at approximately 120 words per minute. The average typing speed is 40 words per minute.

When you are hand-writing or typing your content, often your brain will speed ahead of your writing/typing speed and you loose the thoughts you were just thinking. Speaking your content makes it much easier and because it is so much faster, you will be able to capture what you are thinking.

There are many ways to turn the spoken word into content.

You can record into a digital recorder or record a live event and have this transcribed. You will have to pay for every transcription that you have done.

Digital recordings can be placed on your website or blog. Many people like to listen to your content. Not only is this convenient, but it also gives them the opportunity to hear your voice and therefore, get to know you some.

The drawback to digital recordings on your website or blog is that search engine spiders can not identify the contents of the recorded information. It is important to also include written text.

Voice-to-text software has become very efficient at recording your verbal input into the computer and turning it into written text. You can sit at your computer, talk to it, and your words will be converted instantly into written text. This is awesome.

To just start speaking and seeing your content being created before your very eyes is exciting. The previous three paragraphs combined are over 100 words long. This is less than a minute of speaking.

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When creating a blog post, you could pull out your idea list and pick one item. Speak for a minute on that item and your blog post is complete.

Again, you could combine blog posts into an article. Just add an introduction of a few sentences in length. You could share why the topic is important, share a personal story that relates to the article, state why people are interested in the topic, tell some type of introduction to the article. Add a couple of sentences in closing and you have an article.

The average length of an article is 400 to 700 words. At a speaking speed of 120 words per minute this is from just over 3 minutes to about 6 minutes. Using your idea list, select three related items. Speak for one minute on each item, add your introduction and closing. If you count the time to gather your list, pick your items and then speak your content, you can have a completed article in 10 to 30 minutes.

It would be wise to still let the article sit for a day and come back to review the article. Do some editing and tweaking and make sure to run spell check. You could consistently create one article a month utilizing less than a half-hour of your time. Heck, once you get this down and realize how easy and how much fun this can be, you can be creating an article a week.

You can lean back with your eyes shut and create content. Imagine yourself in the back yard with a glass of ice tea, enjoying a nice summer day. Set the laptop on the table next to your lounge chair. Kick back in the lounge chair for a half hour break and while you're there create content by talking to your computer.

Voice-to-text software can also be used to convert digital recordings to written text. If you use a digital recorder to save your thoughts, you can plug your recorder into the computer and have the software type up your notes. You will have a typewritten list and not have written a word.

Let your imagination roll with this for a few minutes. Where is your favorite place to be? Where are you when you think of your best ideas? Is there someplace you wish you could spend more time, but have too much to do?

Using this method, you can create content almost anywhere. If you are passionate about your topic or niche and are in a place that you find enjoyable, there is a synergy – a flow – you are in the groove. You will create content in no time and have fun while doing it.

Voice-to-text software is a small one-time investment that can be utilized in different ways to create your list, add to your list, and to create any type of written content. We recommend that you visit the following link to discover how voice-to-text can

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increase your content creation speed and ease: QuickContentSecret.com

We've talked about writing an article and using it on your website, in your newsletter and submitting it to directories. Taking blog posts and putting them together for articles or e-books has been explained. This is called multi-purposing your content.

This concept of multi-purposing your content is very important. No matter how quick you become at content creation, getting the most out of that content is an important time saver.

Let's look at a few of the many ways to multi-purpose your content.

In addition to combining shorter pieces to create longer content, you can cut longer content to create shorter content. Sometimes you can use the content as-is, sometimes you may have to tweak it a little. Much of your material will still be valid a year from now with minimal or no updating.

Articles can be re-published. After a certain time, which varies by directory, the articles are deleted and may be re-submitted. The articles can be re-worded, updated, or combined to create new content. Revising content you have already created is an easy and quick way to create new content.

Don't be afraid to send your subscribers the same material more than once. You need to allow an adequate amount of time in between uses of the same material. You will have many new subscribers who have never seen the information before. Long time subscribers will either not remember having seen it before or will be grateful to hear it again.

Pieces of articles and e-books can be used for autoresponders or blog posts. Tips and facts from your idea list can be used also be used for newsletters or autoresponders. Sales letters are also great for breaking into pieces to include in email.

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Notes from Editor:

Recycle, reuse, repurpose your content for the maximum possible benefit. It will save you time, energy and money.

Next . . . Public Domain

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 11: Public Domain

By Case Stevens

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 11

Public Domain

Lori and Jeff told us of quick and easy ways to develop original content. Our next contributor brings an international flair to our material. Case Stevens is based in the Netherlands and has people world wide on his subscriber list at Affordable-Online-Strategies.com. Case will tell you how public domain works can be a valuable tool for you when developing content for your info product.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What is a public domain work?

◆ Uses of public domain works.

◆ Ways to recycle, repackage and reap the benefits of public domain works.

Public Domain is an information resource that allows you to almost immediately create new products, website content, viral marketing tools, AdSense income, list building techniques and a lot more.

Let me explain.

You have a website. You need content. You need subscribers. You need traffic. You need articles. You need viral marketing tools. You need so many other things.

Do you have time to achieve this all by yourself, one after the other?

Or do you prefer 'ready-to-go' content? If you selected the latter, then Public Domain information is absolutely something interesting for you!

So, Public Domain is a great resource for any website owner. You only have to learn some rules, be careful, check and double check and use your common sense.

Here's why.

Public Domain Is The Term Given To Any "Work" That Is Not Copyrighted

A "work" can be anything like books, movies, songs, pictures and photographs, (instruction) manuals, courses, (scientific) reports, games, plays, posters, etc.

This means that, whether deliberate or not, the creator, owner or patent holder of a work has no interest to legally protect it anymore. For whatever reason they do NOT want to maintain proprietary interests within a particular legal jurisdiction.

As a result thereof, the work becomes a part of a common cultural and intellectual heritage, which we now call Public

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Domain. In general, anyone may use or exploit these works, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

In this report we will talk about Public Domain in the United States. But it really isn't limited to the US.

In (almost) every country in the world there's a law about copyrights. And although the details of such laws may be very different, the basics will almost always be the same. So, Public Domain isn't restricted to the US only, it exists everywhere.

The copyright laws of the place where you are located govern what falls into the local Public Domain category. But strangely enough they also govern what you can do with Public Domain works from other countries.

If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on Public Domain information.

Another reason to check and double check about copyrights, even if you are in the US, is, that these laws in most countries are in a constant state of change.

Can't be careful enough! I'll show you a great resource later on.

Ok, in the US, at a very basic level, we define Public Domain as:

> ...anything that is NOT protected under US copyright law. This includes ALL works published before 1923 AND, under certain conditions, works published up to 1978. A 'work' can be anything: a book, a play, music, photographs, movies, instruction manuals, courses, reports, posters, etc...

And THAT, dear reader, opens a lot of opportunities.

First, I should state clearly that there is no other business in the world that is more profitable than the 'information business' i.e. selling books, manuals, reports, photographs, posters, coupons, gift certificates, courses, etc...but...

Why Is Selling Information So Profitable?

Well, you don't need stock, there's no shipping and there's no handling, because all of the information you sell is electronic. That means you create your information product, automate the whole sales, payment and delivery process and you sell that same product over and over again while you're on the beach or spending time somewhere else.

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The biggest problem for most individuals who want to enter this enormously profitable business is that they have to either create their own information product or secure (by paying an up-front fee) the rights to sell someone else's product.

So most people creating their own information product is very hard to do... they can't write or don't like to write, they find it...

> ...difficult or impossible to even think about writing an entire book!

If you love the idea of publishing information as a business model but you don't want to or can't create your own book or manual... what do you do?

Public Domain!

Here's Another Advantage

You may know that you can buy 'resell-rights' to other people's products. You find a deal where someone else will allow you to purchase a 're-sale' license to their book or manual. In most cases these 'rights' can be purchased inexpensively. The problem, of course, is that everyone else has discovered this secret and ...

> ... have purchased the rights to the same book you just bought and is selling it all over the Internet!

Not only have you lost exclusivity, but in most cases the 'product' has been discounted to attract sales that there's no profit margin left in the sale of the book!

On eBay e-books are heavily discounted and sell for pennies. What profit is there in that?

Now, you can also purchase rights that are much more expensive and exclusive... $900, $1,500 up to $15,000 or more for the 'rights' and, in many cases, you'll have to pay royalties on each sale payable quarterly to the copyright holder. This will certainly make your product more exclusive and sales will be better, however, you are still faced with enormous competition... because...

> ...the investment required to purchase these rights will have attracted the most dangerous competition of all... sophisticated marketers or as I like to call them: "players with money."

Yes, these players are competing against **you**! Not good news if you're just starting out or want a good chance at making a lot of money with your 'reprint' right product.

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Now, Let's Compare That With Using Public Domain Info

First, securing the rights to public domain information will cost you nothing- **they are 100% free to use**! It may cost you a few dollars to 'buy' a used book or course you find in a used book store, but those costs are really minimal.

Second, there are thousands of works to choose from in thousands of categories and since almost no one knows this kind of opportunity even exists...

> ... you will be able to dominate entire markets before your competition even knew what hit them!

Third, since you do not have to purchase a large stockpile of inventory and you have no major competition you can spend your money where it matters most: creating marketing that makes you money!

Not every kind of work in the public domain will have a market but here are some examples of book topics you could be re-publishing that have an **excellent** market right now:

- ◆ mind reading, thought transference, etc.

- ◆ marketing, advertising and copywriting

- ◆ trading stocks and commodities

- ◆ collecting: figurines, Wedgwood, pottery, etc.

- ◆ handwriting analysis, palmistry and the occult

- ◆ herb remedies and natural healing

- ◆ children and stories (especially those with color illustrations)

- ◆ posters (or images that can be turned into 'posters) of all kinds – the 'patriotic' ones are especially popular right now

- ◆ ... and so much more!

The market is huge!

I'm Sure You Know Who Walt Disney Is –

Do you also know that he based his entire business on fairy tales that were popular in the early 1800's, The Grimm Fairy Tales? Yes, he knew that the Grimm Fairy Tales were

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wonderful stories and he also knew they were recently added to the treasure of 'public domain' works. He changed the names of some of the characters and 'modernized' them a bit, but **essentially copied them and made a large fortune selling the stories to a new generation**!

You can do that too! Well, maybe not as successful as Walt Disney, but still...you can dominate a niche market by only using Public Domain info.

Here's What Internet Marketer Rebecca Fine Did

One day she received a book called *The Science of Getting Rich*. The author had been dead nearly 90 years. This book intrigued her and she devoured it in a single session on a spring afternoon in 1998. She realized how wonderful the book was and started to implement the suggestions the book taught and her little home business doubled and then tripled in income from the advice!

She created a website, made the book available for download (she scanned or 'digitized' it), and has built an entire business around that one book that was in the public domain! She has followers from over 111 countries who have requested a copy and ...

...has thousands of people on her mailing list who all wanted a copy of that ONE book!

How does she profit? She sells a 'CD' version of the book and even created an 'audio-book.'…she is succeeding because of that one book... imagine what you can do with the vast treasure chest of information in the public domain! She has an opt-in mailing list the size of which most Internet marketers would be envious of...

Isn't that amazing?

When You Start Using Public Domain Info, You Have To Be A Bit Different From All Others

Of course, the most obvious thing to do, is scan a book and deliver it electronically, using your own layouts and maybe a few remarks or an introduction written by you. You can copyright the additions you make.

And you can use the info as content for your website by dividing it in bits and pieces so the parts will fit into a webpage.

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But you can also read it out loud and record the information. I have had many requests from people having trouble reading electronic stuff asking for an audio recording. And some people want such audio to listen to it in their car while commuting so they have something useful to do.

Don't underestimate this market! Parents would love to buy children's stories on CD, so they can have a few quiet moments for themselves. Huge niche!

If you have a Public Domain recipe book and you're able to create videos while you cook the recipes, it's possible that you can create a huge business.

Other ways to use Public Domain info are giving them away as bonuses, create articles, mini-courses or viral E-books or ....

List Building

Set up a mini site about a certain topic, like self-improvement, where you offer great Public Domain books for free in exchange for an email address and a first name. People interested in your topic would love to read these books. They don't know where to get them or they don't have time to find that out.

You do that for them and they'll be happy to give you their email address. Follow up with great topical information and presto... you're building a list!

Remember Rebecca Fine in the example above? She did it!

Now, where do you find Public Domain information?

Actually it's all over the place. The Internet I mean. But also in your local library.

You just have to look for them.

The US government spends billions yearly to have reports and information written about all kind of topics. Tons of them are available for free, because they are in the Public Domain.

I even know of a guy who knows exactly where to find very specific governance information. Guess who he's selling it to?

Yep, the US government!

Powerful stuff!

So what are you waiting for?

Think how public domain might help you, and go find the information.

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Public Domain – Self-Assessment Questions

Take your workbook to a place near your computer. Go to: <u>Gutenberg.org</u>. This is one of the larger resources of public domain works. Look at your possible topics list. What works might compliment or enhance your topic?

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Next . . . Private Label Rights

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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 12: Private Label Rights

By Gail Buckley

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Private Label Rights

So far we've covered how to create totally original content with Lori and Jeff's help. Case showed us how to save time and money through public domain works.

But what if you just don't want to start from scratch? Other options exist. Some of these include private label rights and adapting other people's work.

Gail Buckley owns and runs several private label subscription sites online. Here she shares with us the best way to use private label rights for your content.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Pros and cons of private label rights products

◆ Where to hire a ghostwriter

Private label rights are nothing new. In fact, they have been around for many years. It is only recently, however, that private label rights have entered the Internet marketing game and become so popular with both buyers and sellers.

But what are private label rights, exactly? To put it simply, private label rights involves the selling of a digital product that can be manipulated in any way the purchaser sees fit and then sold as their own product.

An Internet marketer may purchase the private label rights to an e-book, change some of the content of this e-book, add their own name as the byline and create an interesting cover and they can resell it. What makes this opportunity truly unique is anyone willing to buy private label rights can then become an Internet marketer. You can make money with minimal effort. All you have to do is modify the content just a tad and you're good to go. You can be off and making money in no time.

The beauty of it is that someone who buys the private label rights to a product does not to have to pay anything to the seller once the rights are purchased. Any income they make from selling the e-book is the buyer's own to keep!

Why is this so?

Simply put, the seller of the private label rights only acts as the provider of the product. The buyer can resell this e-book endlessly because they have bought the right to do so and even claim the work as their own.

The Benefits Of Buying Private Label Rights

The benefits of buying private label rights are virtually limitless. Not only is it a fast and easy way to enter online marketing, but you also don't have to go to the trouble of coming up with a product to sell. Just look at all of these fantastic reasons to buy private label rights:

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◆ You don't have to come up with your own product. Rather than spend days or even months coming up with an informational product to sell, you can use what is already written. This way, you can still make money without the specialized skills necessary to create your own product.

◆ You can change the contents of your purchased private label rights product if you wish. If you want to place your own name as the byline or throw in some personal stories to make the product more customer-friendly, you can. There's nothing holding you back from manipulating this pre-made product however you see fit.

◆ You can create your own version of the product. For instance, if you purchase the private label rights on several articles, you can compile these into one e-book. Or, you can sell the informational product as is and allow buyers to resell your product. You can also break the product apart into small articles or reports for newsletters and other such marketing devices.

You can do just about anything with your private label rights product once you've purchased it.

The Benefits Of Selling Private Label Rights

Selling private label rights also carries with it numerous benefits. Just look at what you can do by developing a private label rights product and then selling it over the Internet:

◆ Private label rights are highly profitable. Because you are selling virtually all rights to a product to your customers, the product will cost more, therefore raising your profits considerably. Plus, those who buy from you are most often Internet marketers themselves and are very willing to shell out a bit of extra cash if it saves them time!

◆ Different rights mean more cash. If your customers wish to just buy your product, you'll make a standard amount of money. However, if you offer resell rights or master rights, you can charge up to ten times the normal amount! This is where the big cash comes in. When you sell the master rights to your product you not only allow your customers to resell the product, you also allow their customers to resell the product!

Of course, everything comes with its own price. That is why it is important to know the disadvantages of buying and selling private label rights as well.

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Disadvantages Of Buying Private Label Rights

Buying private label also carries with it a few problems that should be addressed before plunging head first into this business. They include:

◆ There is a hefty price tag on private label rights products. While it costs less to buy a product with private label rights than it does to hire a ghostwriter, it can still be quite expensive, especially if the quality of the product is extremely high or if it is a very successful product.

◆ Private label rights content is often obviously the same. While you are buying the rights to resell a product as your own, it is very easy to spot private label content, as there are many versions of the same thing on the Internet. Words don't lie, and repetition across competing products (that turn out to actually be the SAME product) can turn off some people from going this route.

Don't be discouraged yet, though! After all, what business venture does not carry a few cons with the pros?

Disadvantages Of Selling Private Label Rights

◆ You've created a fantastic product yet cannot take credit for it. One of the main stipulations of private label rights is that you, the author, cannot take any credit for creating the product. Rather, each person that buys private label rights from you can claim the work as their own.

◆ You only make money from the initial sale. Unlike other Internet marketing businesses, you will not make additional money through affiliates or backend links in your informational product. This is due to the fact that those who purchase your private label rights product will be able to modify the content to include their own affiliate links and such.

◆ You must possess the skills to create the product. Because you are the creator of the informational product to be sold, you must possess the ability to write coherently and research thoroughly. You must also be able to create a product that is unique that will be in demand. These are very hard things to do and require a lot of time and commitment to get just right.

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◆ You must be ready to commit time and a lot of it. To start from the beginning stages of research and outlining to a completed product that can be sold (and resold) can take several months for a really in depth product. Even though this is a lot of money to be made by selling private label rights, it may not be worth it for you.

In the end, you will need to weigh the pros and cons for yourself. However, private label rights are a very successful way to make money. It may not be easy money, but once your product is created, the sky's the limit!

Hiring A Ghostwriter

So far we've discussed how it would work if you were to write your own private label rights product. However, most Internet marketers rely on the talents of ghostwriters to craft their private label rights products.

You can find a ghostwriter on sites like <u>eLance.com</u> and <u>RentACoder.com</u>. While you will pay a fair amount to have these products written, you'll more than make that money back once you start selling private label rights products. The amount you'll make from selling the products is much more than what you'll pay the writer. Plus, you won't have to go through the headache of writing the product yourself.

If you are really ambitious you can even sell more than one private label rights product. It all comes down to perspective, really. How much work are you willing to put in and how much do you want to get out of this venture?

If you are willing to buckle down and create a product (or buy a product to resell) that is above par, you might just have what it takes to run a successful private label marketing business.

You can do whatever you put your mind to. Luckily, the Internet has made capturing opportunities much easier for anyone that wants to be a success. So, what are you waiting for? Start buying or selling private label rights today and you could be raking in the cash tomorrow!

Private label rights can save you time, money and effort. Successful products can be designed and ready for use quickly minimizing the time needed for product launch. The important tip to remember is to tweak/revise the content or software to put your personal touch on the product.

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Private Label Rights – Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are some resources for private label rights for your niche?

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2. When evaluating a private label site, what points must you check to avoid problems?

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Next . . . Stealing Someone Else's Content For Profit

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Section 13: Stealing Someone Else's Content For Profit

By Fabio Marciano

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Stealing Someone Else's Content For Profit

Another option in content development is to adapt other people's work. You can do that in several ways: hire a ghostwriter, use public domain articles or use resell rights package material or software.

*Our next guest authors are Fabio Marciano and Mike Ambrosio. Fabio's expertise is in writing. He'll show you how to quickly and **legally** adapt other people's written materials to have great info products.*

After Fabio finishes this Section, Mike Ambrosio is going to show you in the next section how to adapt software ideas and programs as a way of developing info products.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Six methods for creating info products with other people's material

◆ How to find content to adapt

◆ How to create a system to differentiate yourself in the marketplace

◆ Create a framework or outline to build the product

◆ Package your product for success

Read for information first, then go back and analyze Fabio's organization of material. Look how he brings the reader along step-by-step.

In this section we're going to cover how you can quickly and effortlessly create product after product by using other people's content, expertise and even their products. Despite the sensational title of this section, you're not going to actually steal someone's content…just leverage it for maximum profit, with minimal effort.

I will show you how to quickly create products from other people's work and effort so you can focus on marketing your products (that's where the money is made). All in all, I'll be covering six proven methods for creating killer info products by getting the majority of the content from other people.

And we'll of course cover the controversial method for outsmarting your competition and ensuring that you create the best product in your niche…so you can dominate the competition. That's method #6 in case you were wondering.

There are really five main steps that you need to follow in order to adapt other people's content.

1. Find The Content

2. Create Your System

3. Create Your Outline

4. Create Your Product

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5. Make It Pretty

Normally I create my outline first, but that's because I've already done my research and know my topic. In this instance I'm guessing that you probably don't know a ton about your topic, so you first have to find the content on your subject and figure out how to put your own unique twist on it (create your system).

Find Your Content

After you read these two lessons from Mike Ambrosio and I, you're going to realize that it's a lot easier to find content than you ever imagined. Once you get your hands on the raw content, putting together a product will be an easy task that anyone (yes, anyone) can master. So where do we find the content? Easy, just look around you.

There's a world of information on the Internet thanks to search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN. You can enter in the keyword for your niche and find dozens of resources for the raw content for your product – all thankfully provided by someone else.

Without dragging this out, let's just say that you can get your content from:

- Interviewing experts (some effort)
- Articles (little effort)
- Private label products and packages (some effort)
- By repackaging someone else's products (little effort)
- The public domain (some effort)
- Reinventing someone else's product (a little more effort)

We'll cover exactly how to get your content using the above six proven methods later in this lesson when we talk about product creation, but let's just say that it's a lot easier than you ever imagined. In fact, five of the six methods really involve little to no effort.

Create Your System

Creating a system (with its own unique language and techniques) will help set your product apart from the competition.

Before You Get Ahead of Yourself, Define Your Solution…

Too many people jump into the product creation stage without taking the time to really think through the solution for their

customer's problems or needs. They just say, "I'm going to write about this subject, so let me do some research and start creating the product."

WRONG.

That's a ticket to a dead-end street with no hopes of every getting back on the information superhighway! To put it very simply, before you can start creating your product, you have to define your solution and then create an outline for your product.

Do NOT pass GO! without doing this first!

> "**Defining Your Solution** – Very simply what you need to do, decide step-by-step, how to solve your customer's problem. Take a piece of paper, and once you've identified your problem that you're going to solve, **write some simple steps on how to solve it**. That's it, just a basic outline of how you envision what your application or information product should be, and how you're going to go about solving that particular problem."

> Armand Morin, Founder of *The Big Seminar*

When you create a system, no matter how simple, you become known for it and your name gets attached to the system. Whenever someone talks about the method, your name gets mentioned.

Any time someone talks about NLP, they bring up Anthony Robbins. Anytime someone talks about guerilla marketing, they mention Jay Conrad Levinson. The same holds true for Neil Rackham and his SPIN selling technique.

So what system can you come up with?

Not really the type to come up with new systems? How about taking an existing system or method and putting a twist on it and presto…you've got a killer product proposition. Read on…

Same Information, Better Package?

Of course I'm talking about what we are going to cover in proven product creation method #6 for using and adapting other people's content to create your own products and services.

Chances are that whatever you're going to write about has been written about by many, many other writers. Chances are your software product is not going to be unique, nor is your diet program.

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So the best thing you can do is learn how to create a compelling message for why consumers need to buy your product absolutely, positively RIGHT NOW. You do this through a process of looking at the major problems of your target market and looking at your product. Then you come up with a unique twist/hook that you use to sell your system to your starving crowd.

Now the above might sound difficult and time consuming, but the reality is that it's not.

Tony Robbins = NLP
South Beach Diet = A Healthier Atkins Diet
Jay Conrad Levinson = Guerrilla Marketing
Robert Kiyosaki = Rich Dad Poor Dad

The above writers took some existing technology or material, put a unique spin on it and made millions. Make that hundreds of millions of dollars from creating unique and powerful twists on information that already existed. That's the power of creating your own system for people to use.

If you're writing a non-fiction book that's geared toward the self-help market or is intended to help someone do something or achieve something, then it's absolutely critical that you develop a unique selling proposition or a hook as to why your book and system is better than what's out there.

Think hard and find out a way that your system will save people more time, money, effort and so on and you'll be rich beyond your wildest dreams. Time is our most valuable asset and in this new century we have less of it than ever before. We're all overloaded with information and we just need to find that simple magic pill that's going to work for us…effortlessly. If you can find a way to solve a major problem that people have and do it in a way that's faster, simpler and gets results faster, you'll be a millionaire before you know it.

Systemize to Profit

I'm not going to go into too much detail on this step because I don't want you to over think things. Just brainstorm and think up a way to create a simple system that's different than your competitors.

For inspiration, just look what Stephen Covey did with **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**. By coming up with new language and creating a simple seven-step process or characteristics people had, he made it easier for people to remember some of the characteristics. Then whenever someone said, "We've got to think win/win," they instantly thought of Covey's book.

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The absolute master at doing this is Robert Kiyosaki. Take a look at any new book he creates and there's usually one or two diagrams, seventeen catch phrases and a host of new words that he's created or pushed together so that they're unique to him and his Rich Dad™ books, tapes, CDs, forums, software, and coaching products.

Use Acronyms Or Memorable Characters If Possible

One way to get your product to stand out is to try and make the steps in your system spell something with the first letter or letters in each of the steps. This makes it easy for readers to remember the steps in the process and be able to tell others about the steps in your program.

If your system lends itself to an acronym, then go for it.

Don't try to force feed it if you've got nothing to work with. Just stick with it long enough and even if you come up with all "S's" you might create the next "7-S Model" which business schools love to talk about (but I still never remember all 7).

It can be said that two of the most important components of a successful information product is the core content and the personal experiences you include in the product.

People want to know that you've "been there, done that" when it comes to presenting them with information and new systems. Make sure you show them and tell them about your personal experiences by using personal examples throughout your product to clarify the main points of your system, as well as communicate how easy something is to implement.

The Easy Way to Create a System

Probably one of the easiest ways to create a system within your niche is to look outside your niche or field of interest and see what others are doing. You can analyze products and approaches in order to see what might be best used for your products and services.

This is a quick and easy way to create a "new" system that no one in your niche has seen. It might be a new training method that someone in the insurance field is using and you can bring over, modify and use for your HR training system. The possibilities are endless and best of all, most of the hard work is already done for you.

Just **be careful not to copy or use proprietary materials or terminology** from the other field. Doing that will land you in some hot water (i.e., legal trouble).

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Create Your Outline

Develop Your Perfect Detailed Outline

Developing the outline of your e-book or info product is the most important step in the whole product creation process. Yes, you read that right – the most important step you'll take. In order to get your book written and written on time, you're going to need a well thought out and detailed outline.

Why?

The system I'm going to share with you requires that you pick out a topic or sub-heading from your outline and write about it for five to ten minutes at a time. You need to have the topics and points you want to make in your book ahead of time.

Most writers flounder around and get that scary disease called Writer's Block because they don't have a detailed plan about what they want to write. I know about the perils of not having a well-thought out plan of attack first hand. Without an outline, you're going to find yourself writing stuff that you don't need in the book and not writing the things you do need in your book.

Don't believe me? How about this horror story from my first book *The Secrets of Wealth*. It took me three years to write that book because I didn't have an outline and I was constantly editing that first chapter. Every day I would wake up motivated to write and bursting with inspiration, but when it came time to write, I didn't know where to start. I didn't know what topics I had written about and what I should write about next.

The result was that I never knew how much more I had to write, what topic to write about next or how much longer I had until the book was completed.

After I completed *The Secrets of Wealth*, I vowed never to repeat the same mistakes again. There just had to be a better way to get my thoughts and ideas down on the page in an organized matter. There just had to be…and I found it!

Once the manuscript was completed, I read every book and article that I could get my hands on to learn more about the process of writing. I visited chat forums, websites, and scoured the web for any information and tips I could find. I bought a couple of e-books that promised me I could write a book in no time following their system.

Most were pure trash and I didn't get anything out of them except a lighter wallet. Eventually, the solution that I came up with was to create two outlines for my next book and this enabled me to write my second book *The Wealthy Pauper* and

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have it edited, proofed, and off to the printers in less than 30 days.

Yes, you read that right. It only took me 30 days to complete my second book.

Do you want to know my solution?

Do you want to learn how to make sure you never write more than you have to and, well, practically have the e-book or book write itself?

I thought so. The solution I came up with was to…

I already told you in the introduction to this step. Quite simply the solution was to:

Always create a very detailed outline to write from before you start writing ANYTHING!

Yep, that's the big, secret solution I use with all my coaching clients. It works. Here's why.

Create Two Outlines: A Table of Contents Version And A Detailed Version

Why two outlines? Both serve two different purposes and, in my opinion, will help keep you organized and on track.

The Table of Contents Outline

First, take a stab at a Table of Contents Version, also known as a synopsis or broad stroke outline of what you want to cover.

Here's an example of the Table of Contents from my e-book I co-wrote with Ewen Chia: *How to Become an Expert in Your Niche in 30 Days...or Less*:

Author's Note
Introduction

Step #1   Basic Business Tools
Step #2   Your Website
Step #3   Writing Articles and Publishing a Newsletter or E-Zine
Step #4a Your e-books – Your Ultimate Viral Marketing Tool
Step #4b Your Books – A Must-Have Marketing Tool
Step #5   Networking & Creating a Joint Venture(s) and
          Creating Your Affiliate Program
Step #6   Coaching Clients
Step #7a Creating Additional Infoproducts
Step #7b Creating Raving Fans
Step #8   Holding Seminars, Tele-seminars, and Boot Camps

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Step #9   Media and PR
Step #10 Learning How to Sell and Promote Yourself: What
               You Need to Do NOW!

30 Day Action Plan
Afterward
Resources

With this approach, we were able to create a filing system that we used to segment any research, book excerpts, quotes, and articles that we came across while researching the e-book. We were able to create quickly and easily a binder to section out the research and keep our writing organized concerning our printout and pages written to date, as well as our electronic copies and folders through programs like File Manager on our computers.

The Organized Writer Is The Successful Writer

The Detailed Outline

Now take that Table of Contents Outline and start adding subheadings and additional points that you want to cover. This makes it a snap to jump to a subheading in your outline and write on that topic for five or ten minutes and then you're done with that topic until you're ready for editing and the second draft (which isn't for another 30 days).

You can check off the subheading and move on to the next one. By "breaking down" your Table of Contents Outline, you're better able to know where you stand with your book, its content, and how much more you have to do to fill in the gaps.

As for how "perfect" this detailed outline needs to be, the tighter and more succinct you can be with what you want to cover in a chapter, the easier it's going to be to write your book.

Don't sweat it if the entire detailed outline isn't done during this first day or two. In all likelihood, you're going to encounter some great bits of information or data while doing your research or reading through some of your notes and you can just add to the outline at that time.

The key is to get as much of it done so you have enough fleshed out topics to write on for the next couple of days.

Caveat: Don't spend endless hours fleshing out every subtopic you want to cover. That valuable time could be spent writing. Your outline is like a map that plots out your future course. You're creating this map in advance of actually getting to that topic and writing about it so of course there are going to be

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changes and adjustments that you're going to make along the way.

Remain flexible but stick to your outline as much as possible to ensure that even though you might be taking a few detours and side roads, you end up at your end destination – a completed e-book.

Okay, enough chatter. Let's talk about creating your own outline for your e-book.

Creating Your Perfect Outline

Now that you've determined the major problems of people in your niche, it's time to gather your notes and create an e-book that focuses on solving these problems. You have their exact words used to describe their issues and concerns so you can use them for chapter titles and subheadings. You Table It.

By tabling it I mean it's time to break your subject or niche down into pieces. You're either going to break it down based on the number of steps it takes to cure or fix the problem or you're going to section the material into 10 to 15 different areas. This is an important step and is critical to getting you in a position to write and finish your e-book quickly.

Why break it down into steps or tasks to complete? Because each step or area becomes a chapter in your e-book. By breaking down the material into manageable chunks, you're going to find it much, much easier to write your e-book. Make that FINALLY write your e-book.

What would this process look like? Well, take this e-book, for example. I have broken down the process of writing an e-book into seven steps:

1. Think It
2. Research It
3. Table It
4. Write It
5. Edit It
6. Polish It
7. Publish It

By creating these seven steps, I made it easy on myself (and you, the reader). I'm able to quickly research a particular step, open up the file on my computer and insert ideas, notes, thoughts and definitely a lot of text in that step. Then when the "well" runs dry, I can move to the next topic. Try it for your e-book or info product right now.

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Major Steps or Tasks My Reader Must Take To _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

I generally advise my coaching clients to stick with no more than seven to ten steps. People want quick and easy results and the more steps they have to take, the harder they think the process is going to be.

Create Your Product

Okay, now it's time to talk about one of my favorite topics: **Easy Product Creation Methods**. If you thought creating a product and writing was difficult, think again. It can be a lot easier – and more enjoyable – than you ever imagined, especially when you don't have to do a lot of it. Most of the proven product creation methods below, except for #6, will have you writing maybe 5 to 10 pages of content for a full-length product. Not bad, right? Let's get into it…

Proven Method #1. Interviews

Problem: you want to create a product in a niche/market that you know nothing about.

Solution: interview an expert.

Interviewing experts is the easiest way to create an info product these days, especially if you record the interview, have someone else transcribe it and you then turn that word document into a downloadable PDF product.

Whether through collaboration or co-authoring an e-book or perhaps interviewing the expert, you can instantly create a product to sell based on the knowledge of the expert. This is

the exact technique that Shawn Casey used to make over a million bucks…in one year…from ONE product.

Not sure what to ask? Just poll your subscriber list, hold a teleseminar and open up the lines for questions to be asked or head to your favorite forum and find out what questions are getting asked over and over again. It's really not that difficult to go out and find a questionnaire that someone else developed and create your own list of questions based on your "model" questionnaire. Keep it simple, remember that.

As I said a few seconds ago, conducting interviews with experts in a niche, then transcribing the interviews and packaging them into an e-book is one of the easiest ways to create a product. Unfortunately, when something is easy to do and easy to profit from, everyone and their mother tends to jump on the bandwagon.

That's exactly what's happening right now on the Internet. There are dozens of "compilation" and interview-type e-books on the market. The really bad news is that some of them are poorly put together and don't offer anything new to the customer who is shelling out their money.

So beware of this "easy" way to create products. If you're going to go this route, I suggest you take a look at what John Evans did with *Success Alert*. He took a common format and idea (interviewing experts who are making millions online) and added a new spin to it: interviewing ordinary people who aren't big names that are quietly making a lot of money online.

Another example of taking the interview concept to the next level is Corey Rudl. He created a membership site where you could go and there's a ton of resources on their to teach you how to create information products, but what made it unique is that every month he profiles/interviews two ordinary people who are making boatloads of money online. The site, *Secrets to Their Success* is an overnight best-selling service/product.

By the way, you don't even have to do the interviews live or in person. You can email a list of questions to your expert(s) and have them email you back their responses. Talk about easy!

What could you do with proven product creation method #1?

Proven Method #2. Article Magic

I'll keep this short and sweet because this method is really simple to understand. You create a killer outline of the information you would like to cover in your e-book or book, then you go out and find articles or blog posts that fit under the topic in your outline.

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◆ Take the Content - Copy, paste and format the content and you're pretty much done.

◆ Add an Introduction and Closing – Okay so you have to add a page introduction and a page at the end to say what they learned and so on, but we're not talking a lot of writing. Just the bare minimum.

◆ Get Permission - Don't forget to ask permission from the author to use their content in your product. Most authors will have a line after their articles that tell you that you can use the article if you just include their contact information.

Can you actually do this? As you'll learn later in this e-book when you read my interview with Yanik Silver, it's very possible and very easy to do. Yanik used this very technique when he created *Autoresponder Magic* and *Million Dollar eMails*. He just asked the biggest gurus he could find for their messages in their autoresponder series and copies of the emails they've sent out.

And no, he wasn't some huge industry insider at that point. He was just getting going with *Instant Sales Letters*, but he came up with a killer sales letter (go figure) to these gurus to get them on board.

Proven Method #3. Private Label Rights

Let's talk about the perfectly legal way you can take someone else's product, put your name on it and claim it as your own.

What? How's that possible you're thinking?

Let me explain. This is really a new concept that's exploded on the Internet in the past few years. What you do is buy the private label rights to a product from the product creator and you get your hands on a completed product in a word document format. You can do anything you want with the information – cut it up into articles, use it for blog posts or even create a full-length product out of it (with your name on it).

Private Label Rights or PLR for short really got kickstarted when Jimmy Brown first created his *Profits Vault* membership site. What Jimmy did was take a hot niche, research it and come up with what he called a raw product. This was a rich text or Microsoft Word® file that had a very simple e-book already done for you. All you had to do was repackage the e-book by adding new content and data. Next you came up with a new title and cover and you had a product that was ready for sale.

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Jimmy then partnered with Ryan Deiss to come up with *Nicheology*. *Nicheology* is a membership site that will provide you with a rich text file for 2 to 4 niches every month, plus analysis on several key niches. The analysis will tell you how many people searched for the keywords and the cost per click of advertising those terms. I recently joined and have produced close to a dozen e-books just from the material in Nicheology's vaults!

Today there are dozens of sites that sell PLR products and if you're lazy like me, you can just go to the site and buy a PLR package and in a few minutes you can create your very own product.

Proven Method #4. Package It

Reprint or Resell rights to a product are a quick and easy way for you to start selling a well-established and profitable product. All that's involved on your part is plunking down the money to buy the rights, and then market the heck out of the product and your website.

This is exactly what I did with *Instant List Profits*. I took a bunch of e-books on list building and bundled them together. I then used proven product creation method #1 to help me write two accompanying manuals. Total time to create? Less than seven days of work. I brought in the master Mike Ambrosio to help me with the website (because I'm a technophobe) and in less than 30 days, my site was live and I had a cool $2,000+ in my pocket. Not a lot, but more than most would do. Now that product and site brings in revenue into my bank account each and every month.

Again, all you have to do is:

- ◆ Find a few killer products
- ◆ Buy the resell rights
- ◆ Package the products according to a theme
- ◆ Maybe add a short e-book or special report to the package
- ◆ Promote your package

A method of purchasing resell rights that involves a little more work is through buying reprint rights to say 200 to 500 reports that are on a single CD or through one of the many sites offering massive resale rights packages. You then have the option of taking all that material, bundling it together into several different products and selling it to your end user.

Now the one issue I have with going with method #4 is that you have to do a lot of work to find great products and then buy the individual products with resell rights every month in order to add new products to your stable. One easy solution is to use a service like *Push Button Publishing*. The beauty of *Push Button*

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Publishing is that it comes with web hosting, autoresponders, products, and a ton of resources you can use to create your own products. It's definitely worth looking into.

Proven Method #5. Public Domain

Not interested in paying for your product's raw content? How about finding information in the public domain…for FREE.

The public what? The public domain, that's what. When something is in the public domain, it just means that the book or written material is now part of public property and is free to be copied and distributed by anyone. Savvy Internet marketers are scouring the web for out-of-print and non-copyrighted material to market, all the while keeping 100% of the profits from selling something they got for free on the Internet.

This method is just gaining acceptance, or should I say "visibility" within the Internet marketing arena. But is it really that easy? Yes and No. Yes, all you have to do is write a new foreword to the book or maybe bundle the book with a few bonuses, put up a website and you're in business. That's a cakewalk compared to researching, planning, writing and editing your own information product.

However, it used to be a rule of thumb that if it was X years after the author died or published before a certain date, you could be certain that the material was in the public domain. That's not the case anymore. You have to do your homework and make sure that it definitely is public domain or else you'll find yourself on the wrong end of a lawsuit.

One caveat, most government documents and publications are available free of charge. This means you get to copy the information word for word and sell the information as is or incorporate it into one of your products. When you read *33 Days to Online Profits*, you'll read about the story of Terry Dean who took a book called *Scientific Advertising* which was in the public domain and added some of his own writing to it to create a product that he now sells for $29.97. To see what he's done to create a great product out of free information, visit: MrMarketer.com.

And if this method of creating products has peaked your interest, Yanik Silver came out with the definitive guide on the subject called *Public Domain Riches* that tells you everything you need to know about finding, marketing and profiting from products you didn't even write or create.

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Proven Method #6. Reinventing Another Product

And now for the method that inspired the title of this lesson…

Terry Levine once wrote, "**Being an inventor is an expensive proposition. Be a makeover artist**. That is much easier to accomplish. In other words, find a market that some companies are currently trying to reach. Then, figure out what mistakes they are making...what the customers really want...and create a better mousetrap in the process."

I simply love that above quote and it's no wonder. Improving products is one of my favorite ways of coming up with my own products. It can be argued that all my e-books except for *Become an Expert in 30 Days…or less!* have a lot of competition. To a lesser extent, *Teleseminar Magic* doesn't have a lot of competition, but there are a few other info products out there that it competes with.

But I mean how many e-books are there on writing e-books and writing books? Tons and yet my two e-books *The One Minute eBook* and *Write It Fast!* have cut through and become best sellers because they had **sexy titles** and have better than average sales letters.

Oh, and they deliver…unlike some of the other products they compete with.

The way I use this "Improve on an Existing Product" technique is I take a look at some of my favorite books and e-books and I ask myself some questions:

- What do I hate about this product?
- What do I wish it did more of?
- What do I wish it did less of?

I write down my first reactions to the questions and then with my answers in hand, I start shaping my product idea and the outline of a system that addresses the issues I have with the other products on the market.

Note, this is much easier to do with a physical product versus an e-book or a book. For instance, if you're using a vacuum cleaner and notices that it's always losing suction, you could go and create a vacuum cleaner that never loses suction. This is exactly what that guy with the cool accent did for this pretty boring niche. He's made millions.

To recap, you MUST find a product and **improve it**, focus in on a specific niche with the product, then market the heck out of it and you'll make a very healthy income thanks to your efforts.

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Buy The Competition And Analyze Their Products

So the first step is to buy the top products in your niche. A few weeks in advance of writing my e-book, I hop on over to Amazon to see what the top books in my niche are and I buy them. I then scan through the books and highlight a good passage or material that I can quote for my e-book. I take notes, notes, and more notes.

Actually, right after I order the best-selling books in my niche from Amazon, I hop on over to Clickbank and see what e-books are tops in my niche. What do I do? You guessed it. I buy the best sellers and read them cover-to-cover. Highlighting and making notes in the margins where necessary.

Then I take all my books, e-books and notes and set them on my desk in plain sight. I like having my research at arm's length. Then with all of the information I've gathered over the past few weeks, I create my outline. More on this in a moment, but first, let's talk about an important lifesaver that you should definitely have.

Your Model E-Book

In the process of reading all of these books and e-books, you're going to come across an e-book or two that you absolutely love. What do you love: the layout, the font, the cover, and the resources the authors have included, and so on? Why do you have to analyze these e-books so carefully?

Because they become your model e-book(s). What's a model e-book? It's something you're going to rely on A LOT over the next few days and weeks. This e-book or book will help you with everything from the research to the editing to the polishing stages. Trust me. Keep them close at hand and see how many times you refer to them.

Don't Plagiarize: Rewrite And Refresh

And lastly, a word of caution: please don't plagiarize someone's work. That's a big NO-NO. It's easy enough to use a product as a source of inspiration to help you write the sections of your product. If you get stuck trying to write your e-book or create your info product, bring in a partner if you have to or hire a ghostwriter to smooth out the rough edges of your product.

Again, take a look at their content, create your outline, find a few more pieces of content by using methods 1 through 5 and then create your own unique product. Just don't overcomplicate the process!

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Now what's left?

Why it's time to take that model e-book and use it to help make your info product pretty.

Make It Pretty

One thing I stress with all my coaching clients is that they have to absolutely positively, no question about it put out a professional looking product. There is no excuse under the sun that you can use as to why you cannot have a great looking product and a professional looking website. Why is this so important?

Because the marketplace is so competitive and you're going to need all of the tools at your disposal to make yourself stick out amongst the crowd. Simply put, when your product is evaluated side-by-side with a similar product in your niche, you want yours to come out ahead. And yes, buyers on the Internet do compare products. They don't have an unlimited budget and they're going to compare your e-book on losing weight with five others before making their decision.

There are a few main ways that you can immediately impact and improve the perceived value of your product. We're going to talk about the following in the next few steps after we do a quick content edit on your e-book/book/product:

- ◆ Your Professional Looking Product
- ◆ Your Killer Web-Site
- ◆ Your Testimonials

Include your great domain name and Killer Title and you'll be on your way to instant riches. But before you go off counting your money before you've made it, let's talk about doing a quick content edit on your product.

Do Your Quick Content Edit First

Scroll through your e-book from start to finish and look for all those markers that you left in it to remind yourself to add more information.

NOW is the time to go out and find the remaining information that you need to fill in the blanks. Don't kill yourself wasting hours and hours. If you're having a big problem finding unique content or writing your own, find an author who's written an article on the subject and insert it into your text. Make a note to email them and ask for permission and you're done.

Remember, don't waste too much time doing your content edit. You don't have to elaborate too much when you're writing e-books. Just get to the heart of the matter and don't worry

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about providing all of the footnotes and backup to what you're saying. You're the expert, remember? Your readers will take your word for it.

Polishing It

I go through this process in detail in *The One Minute eBook*. I think I devote several pages to the subject in that e-book, but I'll tell you how to do it right here in as little space as possible because I don't want to sidetrack you from getting your web-site up and running!

Get Your Model e-Book

Get yourself a model e-book or book or whatever type of product you're working on. By model I mean best in class for your category. Let's pretend you're working on an e-book. Your next step is to take that model e-book and print out a few pages. Then you go through your e-book and you try to format your borders, your font and your spacing in the same style as the other e-book. Why borrow from the best? Because this little tactic dramatically decreases the amount of time you spend on stupid formatting issues.

Use Bullets and Lists

This helps to break up the endless stream of paragraphs. They also act as mini headlines because they call attention to themselves. Bulleted items also serve to reinforce the material in your paragraphs and they help break things up a bit and give your readers eyes a break.

The White Space Game

Where appropriate, add in an extra space between paragraphs or subjects to make it easier to both read and keep two different thoughts, strategies and ideas separate from one another. Use this technique selectively because you don't want your e-book to be considered a long special report that your customer overpaid for.

Keep it Consistent and Simple

If you're using a 12point font in one chapter and you use a 10-point font in another, you're not being consistent. The same goes for your headers, subtopics and other formatted areas of your e-book. When you're consistent, your product will look professional. And one more thing, don't get fancy. Don't get cute and don't get weird with your formatting. Create a clean-looking and easy to read product and your customers will thank you…with their dollars and their referrals to their friends and subscribers.

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Killer Tip – Tell Some Stories

I attended a seminar put on by Mark Victor Hansen of Chicken Soup for the Soul fame and there was one major "A-HA" that I had: Everyone loves stories. When you can tell a great story that conveys the main strategy or system that you're hawking, people are going to be able to quickly and easily understand what you're talking about and be able to identify with you and your system.

This is why Anthony Robbins tells the story of how he was broke and 38 pounds overweight. This is why Robert Kiyosaki tells you that he was broke and living out of a Toyota. This is why Carlton Sheets tells you that he was downsized from his job and didn't have money for his first real estate deal.

Why do all of these multi-millionaire infopreneurs share their life stories with you before getting into their product pitches or the meat of their system? Because everyone loves a great story and stories help to quickly communicate the information you have for sale. It also helps give people that "carrot" to keep on reading.

A Jury Of Your Peers

I highly recommend that you send out your e-book to a number of your peers within your industry for their review. You do this to secure a quick blurb or testimonial for your e-book that you can use on your website and in promotions for the e-book. Tell your peers to give you an honest review of what they see and tell them to make suggestions to make the e-book better. Tell them to be brutal if necessary and make recommendations for what to cut out or what to tighten.

These individuals will act as your editors, critics as well as your typical reader. Since you have chosen people who have written e-books before, you'll get an honest critique about your writing, your grammar and the content. They will help you by making suggestions on what to cut out and where to add some more meat.

Once you've received their comments, thank them profusely and tell them you'll send the finished copy shortly. Then when you've spent a few days NOT WEEKS, you can send them the file to review and ask them for a testimonial for the product, along with the web-site they want "showcased" on your sales page for your e-book. More on this in a second.

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Make Sure You Take The Time Though To Incorporate Their Suggestions And Changes

If enough people are saying "Chapter 3 is a little light" or "Chapter 3 needs some work" you'd better get cranking because chances are they're right.
Don't take it personally. While it might seem like it at this point, your e-book is not a part of you. It's a product, that's all. Your job is to create the best product possible and get it to market as quickly as possible. You want to create an e-book that people are going to love and mention in news groups, discussion forums and their e-zines…so take your peer reviewers' comments to heart and make the necessary changes.

Your bank account will thank you.

What's In It For Them?

When you send a request to your peers and other gurus to give you a testimonial for your product, you'll get 99 out of 100 giving you a very favorable testimonial for your e-book. Why? It's the whole "What's In It For Me" mentality. Your guru that you've reached out to is now going to get exposure to everyone who visits your web-site AND if you give them first crack at promoting your e-book through your affiliate program, they'll make a LOT of money from promoting YOU.

And just like that, in the span of a few days you can have your very own completed info product. Does the system work? Of course it does. I recently created 30 e-books in 30 days as part of a self-inflicted challenge to myself to prove that the above system I shared with you works.

Don't get me wrong, it wasn't easy and there was some effort involved, but now all those sites are operating on autopilot and my next job is to drive traffic to my sites, kick back and cash my checks.

Don't you just love being a published author? I know I do.

So what can we learn from all of this? Quite simply...

- You DON'T have to be an expert on a topic to create a product
- You CAN create a product even if you don't know how to write well or fast
- You DON'T need a lot of money to do it
- You DON'T need a lot of time to create your product
- You DON'T have to have an original idea to create a bestselling product
- You CAN repeat this processes over and over again

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Let's just review the steps again and then I want you to close this book and get started on creating your own info product using someone else's knowledge, resources and/or product:

- ◆ **Find Your Content** – We covered six ways of finding content for your info product, but the reality is there are dozens of ways to get content for your product. Do me a favor and hone in on one or two, stick with it and go get your content. The faster you do this, the closer you'll be to having a finished product.

- ◆ **Create Your System** – While you have the competition's material in front of you, take out a notebook and a pen. Quickly scan through the table of contents and see what key areas that you need to cover in your e-book.

- ◇ **Simple Steps** – Now see what type of simple steps (5, 7, 10) you can create around those topics.

- ✦ **Keep It Simple** – Don't overcomplicate it, just rename some of the steps/information from the competition and come up with your own unique twist on the topic – but keep it simple.

- ◆ **Create Your Outline** – Take a look at the information you listed in your notebook and the system you just created. Now add some sub-topics under each of the steps and chapter headings. Creating a detailed outline with many subtopics makes it easier to finish your product. Why? Because all you have to do is write a few sentences under each topic and you're done.

- ◆ **Create Your Product** – We've covered six main ways that you can create your product based on the content that you "found" online or in other people's products. The key to creating products FAST is to focus on creating the product and not editing it. Save the editing process for when you've finished the first draft of your product.

- ◆ **Make it Pretty** – Take a look at your model e-book or product and then take a look at yours. What format changes, borders can you add, space breaks and white space can you add? Do you need to change the font type or size? Once you're done, send it out to a few of your peers and have them review it and make suggestions on how you can improve your product.

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Don't over think the process. Just get started and work on your product every day. Follow your outline, minimize the distractions and before you know it, you'll have a finished product ready for sale!

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Next . . . How To Make Money With Rebrandable And Source Code Software And Scripts

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

How To Build Your Content

Module 2

Section 14: How To Make Money With Rebrandable And Source Code Software And Scripts

By Mike Ambrosio

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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How To Make Money With Rebrandable And Source Code Software And Scripts

Mike Ambrosio is MrOverdeliver.com and once you read this section you will realize how he got his name. One important thing to know. Mike is not a computer programmer. With his work experience in a scientific area and online experience, he's learned to spot trends and edit software.

So take the time to read this section, and see if adapting software might be in your info product future.

Making money with rebrandable software (Private Label Rights) or with source code is not only possible, but also simple . . . and often times, inexpensive! This is something I have done several times.

This is NOT to say that every time you do this you will make a killing. Not likely. But you CAN make a few hundred dollars a month if you come up with software people want, and you market it right.

Let's use a real-life case study. I obtained the rights to a PHP script that automatically backs up databases. It was a very functional, but a bit limited, piece of software. It is installed on a website and backs up MySQL databases automatically.

So lets take a look at what I was able to do . . .

Let's start off with a quick look at the script as I received it:

- ◆ Could only back up one database per install, unless you named your databases with the same user name and password.

- ◆ Could only put the backed up SQL file in a folder on your server.

- ◆ Back up manually from within the script admin area

- ◆ Could email user whenever an auto backup was complete, sending a link to download the backup.

- ◆ You could log in to the admin area and do a manual backup and download.

Now, let me tell you – this is limited but still WAY better than logging into your Cpanel and doing it yourself. Let's face it – who actually DOES that on a regular basis! But after using it for a few months, I decided I wanted more features, and ALSO wanted to make the admin panel more user friendly and sell it.

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So with all that in mind, I chatted with the programmer of the script. Turns out he made the little tool for one of his hosting clients so they could back up their database, so this nifty little tool was not even on the market.

Great for me!

After some lengthy conversations, we agreed on a price. Actually, more like an agreement. We arranged for a 50-50 split on all sales for one year.

Great! No up-front money there. BU…no additional programming included. THAT would cost extra.

Ok, not a problem. I decided that to raise the money for improvements and additions, I packaged it "as is," gave it a name, a website, and put a price tag on it. Let's break this down a bit so you can see the costs involved:

1. Domain name - 9 bucks a year (GoDaddy)

2. Website Hosting – truthfully, I have my own web server, so I simply set up a new account. But you can find low-cost hosting almost anywhere these days. 10 bucks a year, five bucks a month . . . VERY affordable for what our needs are.

    a. Needs for hosting: a small package would fit just fine here. 50 MB is MORE than adequate. Email, database, ftp, etc. All pretty standard these days.

3. A website. Now, depending on your skill level or budget, you have many options here. I tend to build my own websites, but my design skills lack severely, so I usually pick up a free or low-cost template. $25 will get you a decent one for a site like this. After all, you only need a sales page, and a download page. You can also outsource this – more on that in a bit.

4. Graphics. In this case I made my own box cover. But you can find people to do this for as little as $37 if you search hard enough. Check on some of the marketing forums for people running specials, etc…

5. A payment processor. Once again – you have choices.

    a. PayPal is free to join and set up to take payments. It is very popular and widely used.

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b. ClickBank is also a good choice. You have built-in affiliates. To be able to sell products, there is a one-time setup fee of $49.00. VERY cheap compared to a merchant account! Plus, they take care of the affiliate payments for you.

c. 2Checkout is another low-cost option at $49.00 setup fee.

So now, for less than a hundred bucks, you have a product, a website and a payment processor. Superb!

In this case, I decided to tackle the marketing from two angles. One was word of mouth. I had some online friends have the script for free to play around with, and then write a testimonial for the website.

I wrote the copy myself, but I had it critiqued and reviewed by several people – all for free. This is where being an active member in a forum is VERY handy. I simply put up a post asking for feedback on my site and the contents of my sales page. I got some terrific feedback from some very helpful people, all for free. In fact, I even got a few sales. I was on my way!

So now, I was ready. I had the site finished, the copy written, reviewed, re-written and put up on the site. Now it was time to make a few sales.

I launched with no great fanfare. A few of my on line friends put out the word, I created a "Special Offer" for a few forums, I emailed my own modest list. And I also visited several software repositories, such as HotScripts.com and listed my new software!

So now here we are, launched. Total time from idea to launch – about a week and a half of working 3 hours a night. Not too bad.

Results: after the first week I had made roughly 18 sales at $67, less 50% commissions. Net profits so far: roughly $575 (after processor fees too). Taking the up-front expenses into account, and paying the programmer his half of the profits, I was left with about two hundred bucks.

Not stellar – but not bad either.

Week two saw about 14 sales. Profits: approx. $230

Now I had over four hundred dollars. Time to look into upgrades and add-ons.

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Next Phase:

Now it was time to sit down and decide on what I wanted to add to this software. It is important to know exactly what the program CURRENTLY does, and what you WANT it to do. So take the time to play around with it, experiment with it and really think about what you want. This is VERY important for the next step.

Now it's time to get it programmed.

I went back to the original programmer with my "wish list." The wish list included:

- ◆ The ability to back up multiple databases with one installation.
- ◆ The ability to back up databases from different sites with one location/install.
- ◆ The ability to be more flexible with the automated time setup. I wanted to be able to back up some databases weekly, and some daily, choose which day of the week, and the time of day.
- ◆ I wanted the ability to automatically send the backups to another server via FTP. This way I could have a copy of the backup in multiple locations.
- ◆ The ability to not only send you an email with the download link, but also detect whether or not you downloaded the file and send you a reminder to download the backup. This feature with the ability to turn it on or off.
- ◆ On-board popup help tips throughout the admin area.
- ◆ The ability to test the automatic backups

Important note here: the list you see above is not very detailed for the sake of space in this section. However, it is important to be VERY detailed in what you want, what you don't want, how you want it to work, how you want it to look, etc. This is because most programmers will give you exactly what you ask for.

YOU know what you want. If you don't tell them, you will only get what you asked for. Then you will have to get additional programming at additional cost. Remember – measure twice, cut once. This applies here.

Next Step…

I now have my detailed specifications ready to go. I submitted it to the original programmer. But the price was a bit out of my budget range. My next step was to put it out for bid at RentACoder.com (my personal favorite – but there are others out there).

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When using one of these services, you must really do your homework before selecting your coder. There is usually a rating system, which includes feedback, any arbitration results, etc. This is very valuable information. You need to take all of this into account when making your selection. Cheapest is not always the best answer.

Once I chose my programmer, the wheels were set in motion. He had all of my updates incorporated inside of two weeks. After testing, and sending it back for a few tweaks and fixes, it was ready. I happily paid my programmer.

Total cost for my upgrades: $200

Marketing The New Version

Well, now I was ready to go to market. Only now, I had a very robust piece of software.

All I did here was give this version an entirely new name, tweaked the sales copy to include all of the new features, changed the graphics, and I was all set. I was able to do all of this with the remaining profits left from the initial sales – but I had also made a few MORE sales of the old version while all of the upgrades were in progress. It was funding my project.

That is powerful and you need to think about that a moment. It was a self-funded project. No cash outlay from me. It all came from sales of the original product.

Since the new version had more features, the price – of course – went up. As well, I lowered the price of the "lite" version.

- Lite version - $39.97

- New version - $77.00

I put the word out to my affiliates, testers, my list and my customers. My new launch started with a bang – 28 sales the first week.

Now, I realize when compared to some launches this is not much. But that's ok. It was making a profit. And it was steady for about a year at eight to ten sales a month. I was profiting about $350 a month. Again – not stellar...but that IS a car payment. Or in some areas, a mortgage payment.

During the course of the year, I was able to leverage things a bit. I held a limited resale rights package at $97. I sold 50 sets. Then later in the year, I sold 10 rebrand licenses at $147 each.

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And finally, in it's current form, I now offer the script for only $27, with an automatic upsell (resell rights) for $37. The upsell converts at roughly 65%.

I also now put in a required registration for upgrades – allowing me to also use it as a list building tool.

As you can see, taking ONE source code product, making it my own and negotiating a fair deal, I was able to make a decent amount of money. But here's the BEST part...

I have done this with SEVERAL pieces of software.

In one case, I bought rebrand rights/sourcecode rights to a Wordpress plugin. I added a few small features, made it my own with graphics (which incidentally, now most sourcecode products COME with a sales page AND editable graphics now. They're usually not great, but they ARE a great starting point!).

I then wrote the copy, and launched it – all in a weekend. Hey – it was rainy and I had nothing better to do. By Sunday night, I made back ALL of my investment in the purchase of the source code rights, domain name, website, and graphics work. And made a good profit.

This one now averages about $300 per month. Put that together with the last one, now we're pushing $700 a month. And I do not actively promote either software. It is mostly driven by affiliates.

Which brings me to the final piece of the puzzle. You need to make it easy for affiliates to promote your products for you. There's several things you need here...

First, a good commission. I typically go with 50%, and why not? Half of SOMEthing is better than all of NOTHING, right? Plus, it makes it worth their while too.

Next, have affiliate tools ready to go: Graphics, banners, pre-written emails, articles, signature ads, e-zine ads, keyword lists/PPC ads… you get the picture.

When you make it lucrative and easy, you will get more people to promote for you. Then you simply sit back and watch the sales come in.

So what can we learn from all of this? Quite simply...

- You DON'T have to be a programmer to create and sell software
- You DON'T need to take out a loan to afford to do this
- You DON'T have to be an expert copy writer
- You DON'T have to be an expert marketer
- You CAN repeat this over and over again

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No matter how good your tutorials are, some people are just not comfortable with installing scripts. So, you charge a nominal fee to do it for them – $25 is rather typical these days for a "not very complicated" installation.

And there you have it. Your own little software business. One that over time, can earn you some big dollars if you continuously find source codes and make them your own. The possibilities are limited only by you.

The only thing you need to do when you put out software is to make sure you put out good quality. Nothing will hurt your credibility faster than putting out garbage.

You may also need to supply support. But let me give you a tip on how to cut down support emails by 90%.

Yes – 90%

Make a set of installation and setup/use tutorials. These tutorials can be Camtasia videos or they can be screen capture/text instructions. It doesn't matter.

They just need to be VERY DETAILED. The more details you give on these two subjects the better.

One thing I have learned in regards to support issues with scripts – 90% are install and setup/use questions. So if your tutorials are detailed, you effectively eliminate those support questions. Now your support questions are actual issues.

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Next . . . Module 3: Product Development

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product Development

Module 3

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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product Development

Module 3

Section 1: Creating E-Books FAST!

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Creating E-Books FAST!

In this section we're going to cover how you can quickly and effortlessly create e-books… FAST! We're going to cover the key steps you must follow in order to avoid falling prey to Writer's Block and get your e-book written fast.

If you think you've already read this, seen this and know it – I did, too and it led to failure.

Stop and take a second. Realize we're going to take it from the start and go all of the way through. Even the professionals start with the basics. Let's get started.

What's in Store for You?

This is going to be a <u>quick</u> and <u>hard-hitting</u> guide to helping you write, create and sell your very own e-book. If you're not the writing type, I'll show you six other ways to create an e-book…FAST! In short, I'm going to tell you how to do everything to get your e-book published and ready for sale on the Internet.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ **Brainstorming** the winning (read: saleable) idea

◆ **Researching** the topic

◆ **Planning** the outline of the material and the formulation of a program that you can use in your seminars, speeches and other info products

◆ **Writing** the e-book as quickly and efficiently as possible

◆ **Publishing** your e-book and getting your website and sales letter together

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What Exactly is an E-Book?

If you're new to the Internet, you might be new to e-books and might not know exactly what an e-book is. There's also a lot of confusion over what is and what isn't an e-book.

For those new to the game, "e-book" is short for **electronic book**. They are nothing more than "self-contained executable files" or PDF files that someone can open and read. The best e-books are rich with links to the Internet, graphics, video, and even audio files.

My job is to teach you how to create an e-book that is loaded with information and presented in a very user-friendly manner so that you're viewed as a highly-respected author, period – not just an Internet marketer who took an average product and hooked up with a great joint venture partner and thousands of affiliates to make a killing.

Now that's a lot to cover in just one lesson, so we're going to go pretty fast here. Take the time to read through the information carefully and as always, take notes.

Pick a Topic

Do you have your idea for an e-book yet? Do you know what you're going to write about specifically – or do you have a

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bunch of ideas on the table? How do you choose? How do you figure out what makes the most sense to pursue? Let's answer that question right now.

You need to write about topics that:

- You're passionate about
- Have large markets
- Have paying customers.

I advise my clients to focus on one great idea first, and then once they've written and promoted their e-book, they can then move on to the next project. The key to being a success is finishing that first project.

As for topics, it's always best to start your writing career by picking topics that you know and are interested in, not just ones that have huge potential to make money. Once you've gotten that first e-book under your belt, then you can start the process by FIRST figuring out what PEOPLE WANT TO BUY, then you go and create the e-book, regardless of whether or not you're passionate about the subject.

The reality is an e-book takes between 12 and 24 hours to write. So if you are going to work 2 hours a day writing, it will take you 6 to 12 days. If you only have 1 hour a day to write and work on your e-book, it will take 12 to 24 days to finish.

So please take the time right now to review your list of topics and focus on the one topic that you're going to be working on over the next few weeks.

Potential Topics:

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You should never write a book or an e-book without knowing beforehand if it's going to sell. One way to find out if it's a best seller or a stinker is to send a survey out to your e-zine subscribers. Once you know what topics they want to learn more about, you can create your e-book virtually overnight.

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If you don't have a list of people yet, but want to get cracking on writing your e-book, just look into one of the consistent best-selling topics or categories.

Go to NicheBot.com and type in some key phrases that have to do with your topic or 'niche,' as it's called in the marketing world. If you find that you have more than 20,000 searches, the market is definitely big enough to go after. The thing I like about NicheBot.com is that it's free, but also that you can see how many competing web pages there are and you can figure out if you'll have a tough time cutting through the clutter or not.

Who Is And Where Is Your Starving Crowd?

Do NOT waste your time writing a book or creating a product unless you know who your customers are BEFORE you waste your time and money on an idea that has no market. Writers and product creators who want help promoting and marketing their stuff contact me all of the time, but they have no idea who will buy it or how it will solve their target market's problems.

It's much easier to start with your target market first and THEN create the product to fill their needs. Actually, there's one more step to making a ton of money with info products: sell it to them. That last step is outside the scope of this lesson.

3-Step Process to Instant Riches

- Find a starving crowd
- Find out what they want
- Give it to them

Your job is to give them what they want in a simple, easy-to-understand language and you'll soon have an information empire in your hands. That's it. You just have three steps to success.

Chances are that 99% of the niches you'll come across won't be overcrowded and satisfied, which means that you can still make money in them. If you feel that the niche is satisfied or overcrowded, you can always slice the pie a different way and go after a different subset of your original niche. But first you have to find out if you can make money by meeting some unmet needs in your chosen niche.

Is There Money to be Made?

How do you determine if there are enough current paying customers in the niche? You can do this in a number of ways. The easiest way is to look at the best-selling e-books on Clickbank.com or you can look at the best-seller list on Amazon.com to find out how well certain products are selling.

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You can also look at the data you got by surfing competitive websites. Do they have products and services for sale? What kind of products and how much are they charging?

Get a Killer Title

You must absolutely have a killer title for your e-book. This is what grabs people's attention when they hear it. It's got to be short, descriptive (i.e., immediately says what the product is about, and memorable).

How to Pick a Great Title:

- Do a search or ClickBank.com to see what's selling and who your competition is.

- Do a keyword search on NicheBot.com to see what keywords in my topic are searched frequently.

- Brainstorm some killer sexy titles.

- See if the domain name is available and if it is, buy it.

I don't generally bother with Amazon because it's not relevant to selling e-books, but it is an extra step that some of my coaching clients like to take. So I'm telling you that the order of the next steps is up to you, but you MUST do all four steps listed above; skip one of them and you might choose a marginal title. Remember…

Marginal Titles = Marginal Sales

Create Your Table of Contents

Most writers flounder around and get that scary disease called **Writer's Block** because they don't have a detailed plan about what they want to write. Without an outline, you're going to find yourself writing stuff that you don't need in the book and not writing the things you do need in your book.

Yep, that's the big, secret solution I use with all my coaching clients; it works. Break your subject or niche down into pieces. You're either going to break it down based on the number of steps it takes to cure or fix the problem or you're going to section the material into 10 to 15 different areas. Each step or area becomes a chapter in your e-book. By breaking down the material into manageable chunks, you're going to find it much, much easier to write your e-book.

Always create a very detailed outline to write from before you start writing ANYTHING!

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Yep, that's the big, secret solution I use with all my coaching clients; it works. Here's why.

Create Two Outlines: A Table of Contents Version And A Detailed Version

Why two outlines? Both serve two different purposes and, in my opinion, will help keep you organized and on track.

The Table Of Contents Outline

First, take a stab at a Table of Contents Version, also known as a synopsis or broad stroke outline of what you want to cover.

Here's an example of the Table of Contents from my e-book I co-wrote with Ewen Chia: **How to Become an Expert in Your Niche in 30 Days...or Less**:

Author's Note
Introduction
Step #1   Basic Business Tools
Step #2   Your Web Site
Step #3   Writing Articles and Publishing a Newsletter or E-Zine
Step #4a   Your e-books – Your Ultimate Viral Marketing Tool
Step #4b   Your Books – A Must-Have Marketing Tool
Step #5   Networking & Creating a Joint Venture(s) and Creating Your Affiliate Program
Step #6   Coaching Clients
Step #7a   Creating Additional Infoproducts
Step #7b   Creating Raving Fans
Step #8   Holding Seminars, Tele-seminars, and Boot Camps
Step #9   Media and PR
Step #10   Learning How to Sell and Promote Yourself: What You Need to Do NOW!
30 Day Action Plan
Afterward
Resources

With this approach, we were able to create a filing system that we used to segment any research, book excerpts, quotes, and articles that we came across while researching the e-book. We were able to create quickly and easily a binder to section out the research and keep our writing organized concerning our printout and pages written to date, as well as our electronic copies and folders through programs like File Manager on our computers.

The organized writer is the successful writer.

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The Detailed Outline

Now take that Table of Contents Outline and start adding subheadings and additional points that you want to cover. This makes it a snap to jump to a subheading in your outline and write on that topic for five or ten minutes and then you're done with that topic until you're ready for editing and the second draft (which isn't for another 30 days).

You can check off the subheading and move on to the next one. By "breaking down" your Table of Contents Outline, you're better able to know where you stand with your book, its content, and how much more you have to do to fill in the gaps.

As for how "perfect" this detailed outline needs to be, the tighter and more succinct you can be with what you want to cover in a chapter, the easier it's going to be to write your book.

Don't sweat it if the entire detailed outline isn't done during this first day or two. In all likelihood, you're going to encounter some great bits of information or data while doing your research or reading through some of your notes and you can just add to the outline at that time.

The key is to get as much of it done so you have enough fleshed out topics to write on for the next couple of days.

Caveat: But, don't spend endless hours fleshing out every subtopic you want to cover. That valuable time could be spent writing. Your outline is like a map that plots out your future course. You're creating this map in advance of actually getting to that topic and writing about it so of course there are going to be changes and adjustments that you're going to make along the way.

Remain flexible but stick to your outline as much as possible to ensure that even though you might be taking a few detours and side roads, you end up at your end destination – a completed e-book.

Okay, enough chatter. Let's talk about creating your own outline for your e-book.

Creating Your Perfect Outline

Now that you've determined the major problems of people in your niche, it's time to gather your notes and create an e-book that focuses on solving these problems. You have their exact words used to describe their issues and concerns so you can use them for chapter titles and subheadings. This is what you do during the third step in my e-book formula: Table It.

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By tabling it, I mean it's time to break your subject or niche down into pieces. You're either going to break it down based on the number of steps it takes to cure or fix the problem or you're going to section the material into 10 to 15 different areas. This is an important step and is critical to getting you in a position to write and finish your e-book quickly.

Why break it down into steps or tasks to complete? Because each step or area becomes a chapter in your e-book. By breaking down the material into manageable chunks, you're going to find it much, much easier to write your e-book. Make that FINALLY write your e-book.

What would this process look like? Well, take this e-book, for example. I have broken down the process of writing an e-book into seven steps:

1. Think It
2. Research It
3. Table It
4. Write It
5. Edit It
6. Polish It
7. Publish It

By creating these seven steps, I made it easy on myself (and you, the reader). I'm able to quickly research a particular step, open up the file on my computer and insert ideas, notes, thoughts and definitely a lot of text in that step. Then when the "well" runs dry, I can move to the next topic. Try it for your e-book or info product right now.

Major Steps or Tasks My Reader Must Take to

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I generally advise my coaching clients to stick with no more than seven to ten steps. People want quick and easy results and the more steps they have to take, the harder they think the process is going to be.

Research Your Topic

Get an Idea Journal (Binder)

First things first. Go and get a 3-ring binder and buy a set of divider tabs. This is now the home for your research, sample website sales letters, and, of course, your e-book. I like to keep all my notes and writing for a particular project in one place and I've found that a binder works best. If you happen to be in a meeting and you jot down notes or an idea on a notepad, you can simply punch holes in it and insert it into your binder.

If you find that you have too many papers and pages or notes/research, get yourself a few folders and a filing box. This will help you stay organized and reduce the amount of time spent looking for that piece of research or text you found two weeks ago.

How I Do My Research

A few weeks (or sometimes months, since I tend to collect a lot of research on a variety of topics I want to write about) in advance of writing my e-book, I hop on over to Amazon to see what the top books in my niche are and I buy them. I then scan through the books and highlight a good passage or material that I can quote for my e-book. I take notes, notes, and more notes.

Actually, right after I order the best-selling books in my niche from Amazon, I hop on over to ClickBank and see what e-books are tops in my niche. What do I do? You guessed it; I buy the best sellers and read them cover to cover. Highlighting and making notes in the margins where necessary. Then I take all my books, e-books and notes and set them on my desk in plain sight. I like having my research at arm's length. Then with all of the information I've gathered over the past few weeks, I create my outline. More on this in a moment, but first, let's talk about an important lifesaver that you should definitely have.

Get a Model E-Book

In the process of reading all of these books and e-books, you're going to come across an e-book or two that you absolutely love. What do you love: the layout, the font, the cover, and the resources the authors have included, and so on? Why do you have to analyze these e-books so carefully? Because they become your model e-book(s). Your model e-book will help

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you with everything from the research to the editing to the polishing stages.

Trust me. Keep them close at hand and see how many times you refer to them.

Make a Writing Schedule

You need to create a writing schedule for yourself and stick to it. Period. End of story.

Aside from creating your *detailed outline*, this is the second most important factor in getting your book completed.

Be realistic about the amount of writing you will accomplish every day. **I tell my coaching clients to aim for a minimum of 2 to 3 single-spaced pages per day.** This is a VERY realistic target to reach.

After 28 days, you're staring at 56 to 84 pages of solid information. Add in some white space, some filler, quotes and guest articles, take the single-spaced to 1.5 spaced, as well as chapter headings, a table of contents and intro pages and you're looking at a 150- to 200-page e-book.

That's a lot of pages. The reality is that most e-books these days are in the 100 to 150 range and should take you a maximum 14-24 days to write/create. Spend another 14 days writing your sales letter and getting your website up and running and **you can put out a product every month to month and one half!**

Now Start Writing…EVERY DAY!

Don't complicate the process. Don't worry if you've never written so much as an article before. Just pull up that detailed outline in Word, pick a subtopic and start writing. Don't edit. Don't worry if it sounds good or bad. Every writer and every editor goes through multiple drafts. The key is getting the first draft as complete as possible. Just write, write and write some more.

No editing, just writing. Don't waste your time going back through your writing or you're going to sit there and rewrite it and rewrite it and rewrite it to death. Then you're never going to get your pages done. You'll have time enough to edit your book afterwards. Even if you think what you're writing is not *bestseller material* you need to meet your quota every single day. Resist the temptation to read your work thoroughly. Just get down the bones of what you want to write about and move on to the next topic.

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Once you meet your quota for the day, you can stop writing. Seriously. I mean it. Once you get your five pages done, you can shut down your computer and do whatever you want for the day. Even if you knock out 5 pages first thing in the morning, you don't have to write any more.

Don't complicate the process. Just start writing. Period. End of story. I'm serious here. Too many people have to get a cup of coffee, put on their writing pants, wait until the mood is right and so on and so on and…you get the point. They never get started or worse, they waste valuable time. You already should know when you're at your most creative and you should be allocating that time for the next 14 to 28 days for writing and writing alone.

Turn Off the Editing Machine

The number one problem my e-book coaching clients have is that they edit too much. In the middle of their writing, they stop to read what they just wrote. They don't like it, so they start changing the words around or deleting it altogether. All this editing gets them nowhere…FAST! You must realize this and realize it right now:

YOUR FIRST DRAFT IS A DRAFT. IT'S NOT GOING TO BE:

- PRETTY

- PERFECT

- READY FOR PRINT

And that's OKAY. Seriously. Your first draft is supposed to be rough. It's supposed to have "holes" in it and have spelling mistakes and all that jazz. Trust me on this. Just keep on writing. Don't edit anything and if you want to add more to a section and can't think of it right now, use my special technique. What do I do when my brain isn't working on a particular topic? I simply write:

[ADD MORE HERE]

I highlight and bold it just like the above example. Then when I'm FINISHED, notice I said finished, with my manuscript, I can go back during the EDITING stage and fill in the holes. Does that make sense?

The Lazy Way (Alternate Ways) to Create E-Books

There are 7 different ways you can create an info product. I have listed them below and cut down on the information just so we can get through this quickly.

Notes

1. Create your own product
2. Create a product with another writer or partner
3. Have someone create the product for you
4. Buy the rights to a product and market/sell it
5. Find Public Domain information to repackage and market
6. Chicken Soup It! – Get others to contribute to your project
7. Transforming a raw product or data you bought

Again, I'm not going to go into too much detail on the 7 different ways that you can create products without having to write a word of the e-book or write the code for them. Why not? Because this e-book is about YOU creating products quickly by writing and creating them yourself, not getting someone else to do it. But, I know the power of using the 7 techniques listed above, so let's go over them briefly.

Option 1. Create Your Own Product

No need to discuss this option because we're covering exactly how to create your own product from scratch in this lesson.

Option 2. Create a product with another writer or partner

Whether it's through doing a joint venture with an expert in your niche or finding a co-author to help you put together your product, it's not too hard to find willing and able partners to work with.

Or if you're really lazy, why not interview an expert? To use this tactic, just think up a list of questions (or post a survey on a forum asking for help in coming up with questions or look at your list of common problems your starving market has) and then ask your expert to respond via email or by phone to the questions. Now you have your content.

Option 3. Have someone create the product for you

Ghostwriters are people who write books and other materials for others but the products are published under the buyer's name. This is a quick and easy way to create a product in less than a month. How do you find a ghostwriter? Thanks to the power of the Internet, the process is very simple. Just go to Elance.com, which is a phenomenal site that will put you in touch with freelancers offering all kinds of writing, editing and other services. The site is very easy to use.

Option 4. Buy the rights to a product and market/sell it

Reprint or Resell rights to a product are a quick and easy way for you to start selling a well-established and profitable product. All that's involved on your part is plunking down the money to buy the rights, and then market the heck out of the product and

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your website. Again, all you have to do is find a killer product, buy the resell rights and promote the product. You keep 100% of the profits if you buy the Gold resell rights. It's that simple. A great resource is a site like <u>WholesaleResellRights.com</u> which has hundreds of resell rights available

Option 5. Find Public Domain information to repackage and market

When something is in the public domain, it just means that the book or written material is now part of public property and is free to be copied and distributed by anyone. Savvy Internet marketers are scouring the web for out-of-print and non-copyrighted material to market, all the while keeping 100% of the profits from selling something they got for free on the Internet.

All you have to do is write a new foreword to the book or maybe bundle the book with a few bonuses, put up a website and you're in business. Just make sure you do your homework and make sure that it definitely is public domain or else you'll find yourself on the wrong end of a lawsuit.

Option 6. Chicken Soup It! - Get others to contribute to the project

This method is just like it sounds and is named after the best-selling series of books. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen had people contribute stories and they made books out of them. They just did a little introduction and they dealt with marketing and promoting the book. You can do the same by having a bunch of articles, stories or content from other contributors and package it all together. This way of doing things was more popular a few years ago, but it's still a great way to knock out an e-book fast!

Option 7. Transforming a raw product or data you bought

I'm talking about Private Label Rights (PLR) where you get the rights to use a product as your own. This is really a new concept and idea that Jimmy Brown first created with his Profits Vault membership site. What Jimmy did was take a hot niche, research it and come up with what he called a raw product. This was a rich text or Word file that had a very simple e-book already done for you. All you had to do was repackage the e-book by adding new content and data. Next you came up with a new title and cover and you had a product that was ready for sale.

Quick Editing

Once you're done with your FIRST DRAFT, it's now time to do some quick editing. Scroll through your e-book from start to

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finish and look for all those markers that you left in it to remind yourself to add more information. You remember them. They look something like this:

[ADD MORE HERE]

NOW is the time to go out and find the remaining information that you need to fill in the blanks. Don't kill yourself wasting hours and hours. If you're having a big problem finding unique content or writing your own, find an author who has written an article on the subject and insert it into your text. Make a note to email them and ask for permission and you're done.

Don't waste too much time doing your content edit. You don't have to elaborate too much when you're writing e-books. Just get to the heart of the matter and don't worry about providing all of the footnotes and backup to what you're saying. You're the expert remember? Your readers will take your word for it.

Bulking Up Your E-Book

Is Your e-book Still a Bit Thin? If you're staring at your completed manuscript and you have 58 pages of 1.5-spaced text, then you have three options:

Don't Sweat It

If your content is really good and direct and to the point, you can get away with having a "small" e-book. Just make sure your writing is action-packed and filled with invaluable resources and you'll be good to go. Yanik Silver's best-selling e-book of all time, Instant Sales Letters, is exactly 50 pages.

Enough said.

Add More Content

Of course, you always have the option of adding some more material to your e-book. This will add to the projected completion date of your project, but it could pay off in the end. Your e-book could become very comprehensive and the industry reference guide, so the upside is worth the extra time you may need to research, write, and edit new material.

Add More Fluff

This is a favorite of some e-book authors. They wind up with an e-book that's 100 pages and so they add in a lot of

<div align="center">White space</div>

between paragraphs and their topic headings or they break up their writing into two sentence blurbs.

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In addition to adding some white space, authors will add lists of things, websites, resources and other STUFF to make their e-book longer. I HATE these kinds of e-books and I always feel ripped off after I read it…in 20 minutes!

Another popular technique I do actually endorse is to **add interviews to your e-book**. You can interview five to seven experts on the topic you're writing about or a relevant topic and include those interview Q&A's in the back half of your e-book. I like this approach because it definitely adds value because it serves two purposes: the experts' responses should reinforce the main points that you've made in your e-book and it should also provide additional information and resources that your readers can use.

Final Edits

Okay, now that you're done with the content edit, let's talk about the actual editing process. NOW you finally get to turn on that internal editing machine of yours. Yes, you fought that inner demon for the past few days or weeks, but you have to turn it back on now.

Do yourself a favor and save your electronic document under a *different* file name. For example, I named the original file for this e-book: iauthorWIP.doc (WIP = Work In Progress)

When I started editing it, I called the file: iauthorWIP2.doc

Why do this? Just in case you cut out something you want to retrieve later. It's happened to me several times. Why? Because the next step in the process is to print out your e-book and you need to start to…

Cut Away Excess Words and Tighten Up the Language

Now is the hard part of **cutting away the excess words** from your e-book and **tightening up the language** that you used in your manuscript. Just print out the current version of your e-book and get yourself a **red pen** and get ready to have some fun. Yes, fun. It didn't start out this way for me with my first book, but while editing my second one I realized that **SIMPLE IS BETTER**. Forget fancy words. Use common language. Use the language you use when you talk to someone one-on-one.

Speaking of talking one-on-one, make sure you eliminate the "all of you" and other plural pronouns throughout your e-book. You're writing to and TALKING TO ONE PERSON and you want to use YOU as much as possible.

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Break up your paragraphs into short bursts of energy that are two to three sentences long. Cut out long descriptions. **Bold** words or make some ALL CAPS to add emphasis to your writing. Make your writing JUMP OFF THE PAGE at the reader and get him or her to take action and continue reading.

Use Your Model E-Book

You should already have your hands on your competitors' e-books (whether you have to buy them or they're on their sites as freebies) and studied them. And, by the way, you should have already done this…but just in case you didn't listen to me earlier on, I thought to mention it again. But back to your competitors' e-books…

- ◆ Do you like the look and feel of them?
- ◆ What would you change?
- ◆ Is the font easy to read?
- ◆ Is the writing clear? Concise?

Write down all your initial reactions and comments in your notebook/binder and then get to work tweaking your e-book if necessary. Now keep this "model" e-book in front of you. I find that I like to turn back to my model e-book to find out "How did they introduce their e-book?" or "How did they make the transition from subject to subject?"

How Long are Your Chapters?

Take a page from a best-selling author, James Patterson. I can never put down his books because his chapters are so short. I read a few pages and realize I'm close to the end of the chapter. Then I'm hooked and start reading the next chapter and realize I'm almost done with the chapter, I read the next. I do this frequently by doing "Step 4" then "Step 4a" and so on. It's a quick trick to break down your chapters into bit-sized nuggets of information: information to digest easily by your reader.

How Do You Know When You're Done Editing?

You're done editing when you're 90% done. I'm serious. The best advice I ever got from self-publishing guru, Dan Poynter, is that your book is completed when it's 99% done. What happened to the other 9%? I'll show you how you can get some other people to edit your book for you and take care of that pesky 9%…for FREE.

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Get It Ready For Publishing

Once you've handled the task of adding some additional content, filling in the holes in your text and doing simple editing work, you now have to polish your e-book. No, it's not like spring-cleaning. By polishing it, I mean that you need to take this raw product and add the bells and whistles reader's have come to expect from e-books. You need to add in some additional pages and add borders, change the look of your titles and so on.

In short, you're taking your simple Word® document and making it look like the Model e-book that you have in front of you, but let's not reinvent the wheel here. Look at each section of your Model e-book and follow the same look and feel for the Table of Contents, Chapter Headings, Headlines, and even the font if you want. Tweak the font style and layout if you want, but that's just more work for you. You decide how "unique" you want your e-book.

Title Page

This page is easy enough to create. You simply type out the title of your e-book, insert the cover shot of your e-book, type out your subtitle under the cover picture and write out your name. It's that simple. If you want to add a company logo or a brief description of the work in addition to your subtitle, you can do that on this page.

Copyright Page

On this page you add in your copyright information, your "Limits of Liability" and your "Disclaimer of Warranty" section. Don't sweat writing out these last two points. You can look at your Model e-book and several other e-books to get an idea of the language you need to insert. (Please consult an attorney or other disclaimer providers rather than risk copyright violations by copying what a sample e-book uses.) If you happen to have an attorney in the family, run it by him or her.

It is on this page that you also let people know that this e-book is NOT FREE.

How to Make Some Extra Money

If you don't have an affiliate program, then you need to get one…immediately! An affiliate is like a full-time salesperson out there promoting your e-book to the public. Beginning e-book authors generate 80 to 95 percent of their sales from affiliates.

More on this important subject shortly…

Notes

The Ten Second Table of Contents

If you're using Microsoft Word to write your e-book, you can easily build your Table of Contents in the matter of a few seconds. To build your Table of Contents, just click on the area where you would like to insert it (right after your copyright page is best), then scroll over the "Insert" button on your toolbar.

Now click on "Reference" and over to "Index and Tables" and click on the "Table of Contents" tab. You then select the desired format for your Table of Contents and start the process by hitting the "OK" button. Microsoft Word automatically begins building your Table of Contents by searching for all of the headings and sub-headings throughout your document. It will then take all that information and create your Table of Contents. Ten Seconds later, you have your Table of Contents.

About the Author(s)

On this page you're going to include a quick little bio about yourself, your company, what you do, other e-books or books you wrote and the name of your pet turtle in second grade. No, just kidding, on the last point. But you should think of something personal to include about yourself to connect further with your readers. Include a picture of yourself to add a "face" to the information your reader is poring over. I've found that this one little page can do a lot to add **credibility** to the work.

Welcome or Introduction Page

Now is the time to add that Opening Note to your reader. This could be a quick paragraph or two about why you wrote the e-book or the results you've attained because of the information contained within it. This is also a nice place to give the reader a broad overview of the material covered and what they should expect while reading the book. **Don't get too fancy** and don't think too hard about writing this page. If you get writer's block, turn to the introduction page of your Model e-book and write from there.

The main thing your introduction has to do is:

- ◆ Explain why you wrote the book
- ◆ What major problem are you addressing?
- ◆ What benefits and solutions people will get from your e-book?
- ◆ Why are you an expert in the area?

Keep your introduction under a page if possible. People who buy e-books want information and they want to get it fast. Don't spend time telling them what you're going to tell them…just tell them!

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The "Capture Emails" Page

Some e-book authors are including a page in the beginning of their e-books to make sure that they capture email addresses. A free mini-course or report on a topic related to the e-book is the best way to get people to give you their email address. This is particularly important if you sold the resale rights to someone and would have no way of knowing who's buying the e-book from the reseller.

Chapter Headings

I like my chapter headings to start at the top of a new page and be big and bold. I want to tell the reader that they've just completed one step or section of the e-book and they're moving on to the next one. Use larger and bolder fonts and sometimes color will help as well to ensure that the chapter headings stand out from the rest of the headings and subheadings.

Some Additional Formatting

Besides the above pages you created, you're going to need to add a few more items to polish off your e-book so that it looks professional and is ready to sell.

The Header

If you buy enough e-books (and actually read them), then you'll notice that most of them have a header that sits above a solid line. I strongly recommend that you insert a header at the top of your e-books to give it an authentic "book-like" feel. The process is simple enough…

While in the view "Header and Footer" mode, you type in the header that you want to appear on each page of your e-book. Then click on the "Format" button and click on "Borders and Shading." When the pop-up box appears, click in the box on the right to insert a line at the bottom of the header.

The Footer

Repeat the same process you just used on the header for the footer. This time you're going to type in your copyright notice on the left side of the page and on the right you're going to include an active web-link to your website. For a solid line that will appear at the bottom of your header and the top of your footer like this e-book, just go to the "Format" button on the toolbar while still in the "View Header and Footer" mode. Select "Borders and Shading" and insert a solid line using the Borders and Shading wizard.

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Adding Page Numbers

Go to the "View" button on the toolbar and select the "Header and Footer" option. While in the view "headers and footers" mode, you can click on the "Insert Auto Text" button and a drop down box filled with options will appear. You can select "-PAGE-" or the other page numbering options and then re-format them to suit you.

Fancy Stuff

Forget the fancy borders and PowerPoint clipart. They don't add to the presentation and might actually distract your reader. Stick with the basics of page numbers, a header and footer, and call it a day.

Font Size Does Matter BIG TIME

Most e-books use a font size between 11pt and 12pt, but it all depends on the type of font used. Some fonts are naturally bigger than others are, so make sure you do a test run to see what type works best for you and your jury of peers.

I normally use 12pt Georgia font for my e-books. I like it because it stands out but it's still classy. A lot of e-books are written in Arial or Times New Roman 11pt or 12pt font.

Whatever you choose, **do a print and readability test** to see if it's easy to read. It's important also not to make your font size ridiculously big. That screams "amateurish" and your reader will feel like you're ripping them off by trying to take a little content and make it into a lot of content using the tricks others use.

Your Paragraphs – Short Burst of Information

Go through your document to see if you have any excessively long paragraphs. Remember, people are reading on screens and you want your words to be easy to read and comprehend. Take the time now to quickly go through your e-book and break up long paragraphs where possible. Aim for 3-5 sentences where possible. And remember to cut out unnecessary words and sentences. Be short and to the point.

Bullets and Lists

A great way to be short and the point is to use bullets when appropriate. Bullets are great because they:

- Call attention to themselves
- Act as mini headlines because they call attention to themselves (see above)

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- ◆ Reinforce the material in your paragraphs
- ◆ Get to the point a lot easier than long sentences
- ◆ Help break things up a bit and give your readers eyes a break

The White Space Game

This brings us to the importance of white space. Where appropriate, add in an extra space between paragraphs or subjects to make it easier to both read and keep two different thoughts, strategies and ideas separate from one another. Use this technique selectively because you don't want your customer feeling they overpaid for an e-book considered a long special report.

Lastly, Be Consistent and Keep it Simple

If you're using a 12-point font in one chapter and you use a 10-point font in another, you're not being consistent. The same goes for your headers, subtopics and other formatted areas of your e-book. When you're consistent, you're professional.

Don't get cute and don't get weird with your formatting. Create a clean looking and easy to read product and your customers will thank you…with their dollars and their referrals to their friends and subscribers.

Adding Autopilot Affiliate Cash Streams

You probably know about affiliate links and how you can make money from promoting other people's products, but I will talk about that in just a second. What I want to cover is **making additional money by promoting products *within* your e-book**. Whenever you mention a resource that was helpful for you, such as an e-book that you read, make sure you sign up for that author's affiliate program and insert the affiliate link in your e-book.

So take the time now to go through your e-book and note the e-books and resources that you mentioned. Visit the author's sites and see if they offer an affiliate program.

Actually, before you go through the trouble, visit ClickBank to see if the author sells his/her e-books there. You can easily and quickly sign up to promote products and you can instantly promote their products by generating your affiliate link and inserting it into your e-book.

Now every time someone says, "Hey, that's an e-book I need. Let me check it out." and goes to the website and purchases the e-book, you get a commission. I call this Autopilot Affiliate Riches because **you set up the link once, forget about it and you make money for the rest of your life**.

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WARNING: Just make sure you don't overdo it and load your e-books with affiliate links. That's a bit blatant and readers will tend to get angry and try to circumvent your links. That's why I always, always put in affiliate links and mention products about things it's relevant to what I'm referring.

Getting Help From A Jury of Your Peers

I highly recommend that you send out your e-book to a number of your peers within your industry for their review. You do this to secure a quick blurb or testimonial for your e-book that you can use on your website and in promotions for the e-book. Tell your peers to give you an honest review of what they see and tell them to make suggestions to make the e-book better.

These folks will act as your editors and critics, as well as your typical reader. Since you have chosen people who already wrote e-books, you'll get an honest critique about your writing, grammar and the content. They will help you by making suggestions on what to cut out and where to add some more meat.

What's In It for Them? – When you send a request to your peers and other gurus to give you a testimonial for your product, you'll get 99 out of 100 giving you a very favorable testimonial for your e-book. Why? It's the whole "What's in it for me" mentality. The guru you've reached out to is now going to get exposure to everyone who visits your website AND if you give him or her first crack at promoting your e-book through your affiliate program, **they'll make a LOT of money from promoting YOU.**

Killer Covers: Spend the Money and Do it Right

People DO judge a book by its cover or a product by its package! Don't believe me? Go into any bookstore or video store and look around. Nine times out of ten, the cover design or packaging first draws your eye to a particular product. It's at that moment you form your first impressions and the sale is made...or lost!

So do people really do judge a book by its cover? Yes! And guess what? The same is true on the Internet, probably more so. That's because everything on the Net is two-dimensional. If you want to make a good first impression, to build trust, and create value in your customers mind, then you have to present your product in a way to which your customer can relate.

Keep your cover and your graphics simple. Don't have too much going on visually on your e-book cover. You don't want to make people "work" to read your cover. You want them to

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scan it over, instantly get it and get on with reading your sales letter.

There are many graphics designers on the web, so take the time to look at their portfolios and choose wisely – that cover's going to communicate to your potential customer what's inside for them.

Publishing It – Formats, Files and Formalities

Up until now, you have used Microsoft Word or some other word processing program to create your e-book. Now it's time to convert that information into one of the two formats that most e-books come in: an .exe file or a .PDF file.

WARNING - Some of the biggest distributors of e-books DO NOT ACCEPT .EXE FILES, but they gladly accept PDF's.

My advice: just go with PDF's. Adobe® is the best PDF maker out there, but they're expensive. If you want to make the investment, go for it: Adobe.com. An alternative and cheaper software for creating PDF's at CreatePDF.com

Check out Software995.com for software that will get the job done or you can also look into using PDF995.com.

You can also check out Download.com for the latest software to convert Word® documents to PDF files.

So what can we learn from all of this? Quite simply . . .

- ◆ You DON'T have to be an expert on a topic to create an e-book
- ◆ You CAN create a product even if you don't know how to write well or fast
- ◆ You DON'T need to write the majority of your e-book if you choose to use ghostwriters or partners
- ◆ You DON'T need a lot of time to create your e-book – most can be done with 12 to 24 hours of writing
- ◆ You DON'T have to have an original idea to create a bestselling e-book
- ◆ You CAN repeat this processes over and over again – can create autopilot income streams for life from your e-book(s)

Let's just review the steps again and then I want you to close this book and get started on creating your own info product.

- ◆ **Find Your Topic and Make Sure it Will Sell** – Pick a topic that you're passionate about and know a lot about. This is critical to do for your first e-book because it makes it easier to get your e-book done

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because you know the information so well. Make sure you choose a killer title because you want to instantly grab the attention of your potential buyers.

◆ **Create Your Outline** – Take a look at the information you listed in your notebook and the system you just created. Now add some sub-topics under each of the steps and chapter headings. Creating a detailed outline with many subtopics makes it easier to finish your product. Why? Because all you have to do is write a few sentences under each topic and you're done.

◆ **Make a Writing Schedule and Write Every Day** – Don't complicate the process. Don't worry if you've never written so much as an article before. Just pull up that detailed outline in Word, pick a subtopic and start writing. Don't edit. Don't worry if it sucks. Just write, write and write some more. No editing, just writing. Don't waste your time going back through your writing or you're going to sit there and rewrite it and rewrite it and rewrite it to death. Then you're never going to get your pages done…or your e-book for that matter.

◆ **Alternate Methods of Creation** – If you're having trouble creating your e-book, then re-read the 7 different ways we covered on how to create products with little to no effort – creating it yourself, getting a writing partner, using a ghostwriter, buying resell rights, using public domain works, Chicken Soup method, or using private label rights.

◆ **Quick Edits and Formatting** – Take a look at your model e-book or product and then take a look at yours. What format changes, borders can you add, space breaks and white space can you add? Do you need to change the font type or size? Once you're done, send it out to a few of your peers and have them review it and make suggestions on how you can improve your product. Add in your title page, about the author, table of contents, copyright and lead capture pages.

◆ **Add in Autopilot Cash Streams** – Real quick, make sure you add in some affiliate links throughout your e-book. Make sure to focus on products that you 100% endorse and that your readers will love and absolutely need to implement the information in your e-book.

◆ **Killer Covers** – Make sure you get a cover and header graphics that is professional looking and immediately draws your reader in.

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◆ **Publish It** – We didn't go into detail on this step because it's outside the scope of this lesson, but I would suggest publishing your e-book as a PDF file because they work on both PCs and MAC computers.

Don't over think the process. Just get started and work on your product every day. Follow your outline, minimize the distractions and before you know it, you'll have a finished product ready for sale!

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Next . . . Adding Audio to Your Website

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product Development

Module 3

Section 2: Adding Audio To Your Website

By Curlan Moore

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

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Adding Audio To Your Website

Our next writer is actually a professional musician, so who better to talk about adding sound to your website. Through his website Mastermedia.com, Curlan Moore shows people how easy it is to get started adding multimedia to your site.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What you need to consider when using audio

◆ Equipment needed for recording

◆ Available audio recording programs

◆ Legalities to consider when adding audio to your site.

Overview

In this article, I'll explain some of the benefits of integrating audio into your website, what you can accomplish with audio and how to get started placing audio on to your website – including hardware and software recommendations. So let's get started.

Benefits of using audio

There are many benefits to having audio on your website. One of the biggest benefits can be an increase in your number of opt-ins and conversions (if you are trying to capture email addresses and/or sell a product or service). Audio can be a very powerful tool if used correctly, allowing you to give your website a voice and achieve better overall results.

Other benefits

Giving your website visitors another way to get your message (they may not necessarily need to read your website's copy if you integrate that into your audio message).

Allowing you to easily express yourself in your natural manner and have that heard by your visitors. (Some people don't like writing or are much more comfortable speaking than writing.)

Giving your website "character," making it more "personable" to your visitors (allows your visitors to gain a sense of your personality, emotion, etc.)

Helping to keep your visitors on your website longer (utilize audio to capture their attention immediately and keep things interesting).

Get visitors to take action. (You can simply instruct your visitor on what you want them to do, fill in forms, "click there," etc.)

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"Amplifying" your website's copy. (This can help to make good copy more persuasive and even help improve a website with 'bad' copy.)

Helping to add credibility to your website and build trust. This can lead to better results for your site as it is easier to get people to take action and do what you ask of them when they feel that they are dealing with a credible person or company – whatever your site represents – ultimately you.

Increasing the number of opt-ins and conversions from your website (again, credibility helps here). Improvements in conversion ratio of as much as 300% have been attributed to simply adding audio to a website.

These are just some of the benefits. Utilizing audio effectively adds another dynamic to your website, increasing your chances for better results overall.

A few things you can do with audio

Create an audio information product that you can sell (an interview, a tele-seminar, an audio e-book, etc.)

Present it as an alternative to reading text (e.g. audio books).

Place it on a webpage to complement your website's copy.

Personalize your web page; add elements of character and emotion to your website.

Have as an "attention grabber" (have audio play automatically when loading your webpage).

Add music with new or existing audio to give it a more professional 'feel.'

Make it available for distribution (e.g. downloadable mp3s, podcasting, streaming audio).

And much, much more. Creativity is the key here.

Something to think about BEFORE getting started

Here's an important and often overlooked issue you must take seriously when using content other than your very own, whether it be pre-existing audio or the use of written material that you now wish to convert into audible content. Ask yourself this: Do you have the right or permission to use that content for your own usage?

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Now let me preface here that I am not a lawyer so I am in no way giving you legal advice, just a friendly warning. I recommend that you learn more about what you legally can and cannot do regarding your content creation and that you seek legal advice from an attorney whenever you are in doubt about the legitimacy of your content creation.

Copyright infringement, the unauthorized use of other's material, particularly, copyrighted material (by which, practically everything that is originally authored, is protected under copyright laws), is illegal, so make sure you're not inadvertently breaking the law.

Also, be aware that in the United States, it is illegal in some states to record a conversation without first getting permission from all involved in the conversation.

Here are a couple of safe practices to follow whenever you are recording content with other contributors:

◆ Get permission from others that you are intending to record – before you begin recording.

◆ Notify all parties being recorded that they <u>are</u> being recorded – upon contact.

◆ Get or confirm that you have permission to use material that you did not create. (There are some exceptions to this rule, particularly when dealing with content in the public domain, but I won't get into that here.)

Again, I'm not a lawyer so don't just take my advice here. Seek legal counsel for anything you need to verify regarding your content creation. You should at least be familiar with the legal matters surrounding it. With that said, don't get "bogged down" by all of the legal "stuff" either. Be sure to have fun learning and exploring all that you can do with audio.

Let's look at a creation process for creating audio for your website.

The Audio Creation Process

In a nutshell, here are the common steps you will need to take in order to create audio content for your website. (I will elaborate on these steps going forward.)

Get the content to be used for your recording. (scripted material, interviewer/interviewee, voice talent, people, music, etc – whatever it is you are trying to record)

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Record your content

Get the audio into your computer. (If you did not use your computer to record the audio then you may require this step. I will elaborate on this later.)

Edit your audio. (This is an optional step – removing unwanted material, 'cleaning up' sound, adding background music, finalizing the audio quality to be released, etc.)

Convert the audio into a compatible format to be used for your method of distribution (flash, streaming audio, podcasting, etc – more on this later).

Upload the audio to the Internet (copy the audio file to a web server using FTP, etc.).

Provide a means for others to play your audio from the web (play back buttons on a website, podcast, etc).

Step 1 – Getting content

Obviously you will need something to record. You will want to make sure that you are properly prepared to handle recording your content (exactly what are you recording and how?)

Are you recording a teleseminar (a seminar broadcasted via the telephone), a phone interview where you'll be engaged in interactive conversation with another? Is it pre-recorded material that you wish to re-record and/or possibly mix in with a personal message of yours? Is it musical content such as a song or a jingle? Are you using intro, outro or background music?

Some of these examples may require a different approach when it comes to capturing and producing your audio, making it readily available to your website's visitors. So be prepared ahead of time.

Step 2 / Step 3 – Recording Your Audio / Get content into Computer

You could conduct your recording in a professional setting such as a recording studio where there is professional recording equipment, the proper sound environment, etc. The end result would be that you would receive your recording in either analog (tape) or digital (such as CD-Rom) form. You could then use that file for later usage. This could be a costly and probably inconvenient way to go for most and might be used when you are looking to get the absolute best recording quality available to you.

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Or, you could choose your own environment to record in, where you provide the equipment for the recording. Using the proper methods and equipment, a quality recording can be easily achieved, without costing much, yet produce excellent results. Most people reading this would probably go this route so I will assume that is the case here.

Equipment Needed

Your Computer

Your computer can serve as your audio recorder provided that you have a working sound interface (most personal computers already have this built-in), the software to capture and save your audio recording and enough system resources available to meet the recording software's requirements as well as your recording needs.

The more powerful the computer, the better, especially when performing tasks that may demand a lot of CPU processing power such as using software generated audio effects (such as reverb or noise reduction) in the editing process. With that said, be sure that you have enough system resources (available RAM, disk space and CPU power) to handle your recording needs.

NOTE: The software that you choose to use may or may not state its system requirements information (minimum RAM, hard disk space needed). For the average situation, you will probably want to have a system with 256-512 MB or more of installed RAM and at least 2GB of available hard disk space (you may be able to get away with less depending upon your audio software's needs).

In general, different software programs have different system requirements so, if possible, know what those requirements are and be able to meet them before you begin recording.

System Resources Tip

When you are recording on your computer, try to close any programs that you are not immediately using. This will help to make more memory available to you as well as take some of the burden off of your computer's CPU – two things your recording software will probably demand more of. Doing so may also help to avoid potential problems with your audio recording, problems such as this example.

I was once recording audio directly to a computer that had its screen-saver enabled. Every time the screen saver would start, the audio software I was using would introduce noise into the recording which I would not hear until playback. This drove me *crazy* until I figured out what was happening. Turning the

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screen saver off fixed the issue (the problem was related to the way the sound card and video card shared resources).

Now this particular problem may never happen to you but do be aware that your system resources play a large part in helping to achieve a successful recording.

You also want to make sure that you have enough free hard disk space available. Basically, the longer the recording, the more hard disk space you will need. You obviously do not want to attempt recording 60 minutes of audio when your available hard drive space only allows for 10.

For example: Recording stereo sound in uncompressed, PCM wave file format (more on that later) will use approximately 10 Megabytes of hard disk space for every minute you record. So if you were to record in that format for 2 hours (120 minutes), you would require approximately 1.2 Gigabytes of free hard disk space to be available. If you are editing such a recording, your software may create several copies (or parts) of the audio data and may require more hard disk space (and/or memory) to accommodate the additional audio files produced while editing. For these reasons, you will want to have plenty of hard disk space available.

Your Sound Interface

Some sound interfaces (sometimes referred to as soundcards) are better than others, so depending upon the quality of sound you are striving for, you may want to upgrade to a higher quality interface if you find your sound unsatisfactory. Upgrading will most likely require adding an external sound interface in addition to the built-in interface (and avoiding the built-in one).

If you are using a computer that can internally accept actual soundcards (such as a desktop computer,) then you could upgrade using an internal card instead. However, the external interface is more versatile as it is physically easier to install (just connect a cable), and is portable, making it easy to move between other computers (e.g. desktop to laptop).

If you plan on also producing a physical, high quality audio product (DVD, CD-Rom), then you may want to consider upgrading your interface. Although not absolutely necessary, this can help to achieve the best results. With that said, if you are only creating audio content for the Internet, you can 'get away with' many of the more common interfaces available to you.

NOTE: There are a growing number of audio interface kits becoming available on the market. This may be due, in part, to the ever-growing Podcasting craze that's been happening lately. These kits generally come with all of the audio hardware you will need to create your audio content.

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Digital Audio Recorders

Digital audio recorders offer several advantages over the traditional analog recorders such as the potential for better sound quality, longer recording times, as well as the ability to quickly and easily reproduce recordings and/or manipulate them. If possible, use a digital recorder that is capable of transferring the recorded audio via a data connection to your computer. Also, try to use one that will allow you to save and/or export the audio as a common audio format such as .wav or .wma type. This will ultimately save you a lot of time. Trust me on this.

Analog Audio Recorders

We all know them, cassette tape recorders, reel-to-reel tape (remember those?), mini-tape dictaphones, etc. These recorders have served us well and still do for many of us. If you decide you want to stick with your analog tape recorder, that is fine. All we need to do is digitize the audio coming from your tape recorder's output. This is where our computer comes into play. I'll explain how to do this in a bit.

A note about recording with cassette recorders: When recording with a cassette recorder using its built-in microphone, the quality may already be compromised since some recorders pick up the mechanical noise made by the recorder itself – so make sure you are satisfied with the resulting audio quality.

Recording Methods

To record your audio, you can either record directly into your PC (provided you have the proper software and hardware) or use a separate recorder to capture the audio (such as a tape recorder, digital recorder or dictaphone/message recorder).

Let's take a look at the direct to computer method first.

Recording Method 1 – Direct to Computer

This consists of simply plugging your audio source (microphone, CD, DVD player, etc.) directly into the appropriate audio connection on your computer (line input or microphone jack) then running audio recording software that will record your audio onto your computer's hard drive. You can decide on your desired audio format from this point or worry about that later on (more on audio formats later).

Recording Method 2 – Using an Intermediary Recorder

This method consists of recording with another recording device other than your computer initially. First, you would record your material on your recorder, after which, you would

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transfer the audio recording from the recorder onto your computer.

If you choose to record this way, I highly recommend that you use a digital type recorder that allows you to copy the digital recording (reasons mentioned previously). If you don't have the luxury of being able to do this, you will need to convert the audio output from your device (cassette tape output, CD player output) to digital.

To create the digital audio, you will first need to connect the audio output from your recorder device to your computer's audio interface and record the audio being played back from the device.

Inputs – Mic or Line In?

If you're unsure of what a 'line in' jack is or what it is for, or just uncertain about how to best use the line input – here's an explanation.

The purpose of the line input jack is to accept line level signals. Wow.

(okay, but there's more…)

A line level signal is basically a stronger electrical signal than that of a microphone's electrical signal so the line input jack has circuitry behind it that is designed to handle these stronger signals (such as a CD or DVD player output, a TV or radio). If an audio device has a line output, then the receiving device with a line input is the ideal connection to connect into.

With that said, there may be circumstances where it is more desirable to connect a line level (or 'line out') signal to the microphone input jack when the signal is not really at "line level," but somewhere in between line level and microphone level.

The main objective here is to achieve a clean yet strong level of audio signal while avoiding audio distortion, so you may need to try both inputs, choosing the one which consistently produces the best sound overall.

In general, connect microphones into the "mic" jack and other audio sources (such as the line out or headphone output of CD, DVD, Cassette and other players) into the "line in" jack.

Time for an upgrade?

If you're on a tight budget, I recommend that you simply use what you have and make the best of it (provided you have the minimal items necessary to create your audio content of course). If, however, you are unsatisfied with the results you

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are getting from your audio card and wish to upgrade, I would consider upgrading to a more professional sound card, especially if you're a laptop user.

Although there are some machines that have exceptionally good sound quality, most computers' built in soundcards are not of the highest quality, tending to produce a noisy sound quality instead. You may be one of the lucky few who already have an exceptionally clean, high quality audio card in their computer. If that's you, great, but if it's not, you may want to consider getting a more professional audio interface that provides a more professional sound.

External USB/Firewire Soundcards

I recommend getting a USB or Firewire type of sound interface (sometimes referred to as an external soundcard even though it's not really a card) if you are planning on upgrading your computer's sound system. Using a USB or Firewire interface avoids the issue of having to install an audio card into your PC.

You would simply install the new sound interface and plug your headphones, microphone or other audio device directly into it. These external soundcards can be a great solution for getting around a 'noisy' computer sound card, especially if you experience unwanted noise, hiss or hum when you plug directly into your computer's sound jack.

Things to be mindful of

Initially recording into the computer typically saves us the most time since we ultimately need to work with our audio file on the computer anyway. Having to first record on another device then transfer it to our computer would, of course, be more time consuming, not to mention the likelihood of needing to convert the file format (more on formats below).

Do keep in mind, however, that when you are totally dependent upon the computer to handle things, you also run the risk of potentially loosing your recording in the event of something happening to your computer during the recording (e.g. power outages, problems or Murphy showed up).

The last thing you want is your computer going down while you're using it to record your live tele-seminar that took you months to arrange (restarting the live seminar probably won't work). This may or may not be of concern to you. Maybe you've got the most reliable PC in the world. Just keep in mind the ramifications of such an event if it were to happen and have a contingency plan ready (simultaneous recording or a backup recorder). Don't get me wrong, I actually prefer the direct to computer method of recording given the time savings and the potential for higher quality sound that it offers, just understand the risks associated with it.

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Standalone (handheld) Microphones

Standalone microphones offer the most variety of quality and price as there are so many to choose from. But you don't need to go crazy getting a $1000+ ribbon microphone setup unless you are going for a truly professional sound and will be producing CD and/or DVD quality content (for which, a ribbon microphone is great but certainly NOT necessary). Keep in mind that the quality that you gain from such a microphone could most likely be lost when preparing your audio file for distribution over the Internet.

Utilizing file compression formats such as MP3, WMA and Real Media can reduce the original sound quality captured during the recording in the effort to reduce the file size and bandwidth used).

Don't settle for the 'cheapo' $5.99 microphone either. Choose the highest quality microphone that will fit within your budget. You should choose a high quality computer microphone like a good gaming mic or semi-pro to professional condenser microphone, which should be of a higher quality when compared to a standard computer microphone.

Pro Audio Microphones

High quality condenser microphones, which are typically the next best thing to ribbon microphones in terms of audio quality, can be expensive but produce excellent results. Many of these microphones (not all but several pro-audio microphones) will have what's called an XLR connection (three recessed prongs) at its end. This type of connection typically accepts a detachable XLR cable (unlike most non-pro-audio microphones which have a permanently fixed cable attached).

You would probably need to purchase an XLR cable if it is not already included and also get a pre-amp for the microphone (this is an amplifier that boosts the microphone's signal, outputting a line level signal that you could connect into your pc with). Many external USB or Firewire audio interfaces already have pre-amps built-in to the interface.

Headset Microphones

Headset microphones, as the name implies, are headphones with built-in microphones attached. These make it easy for speech recordings because you never have to worry about where your mouth is in relation to the microphone – it is always at a close, fixed distance from your mouth so you are able to achieve a relatively consistent level of volume during use.

With a standalone microphone, you need to make sure you position the microphone in front of yourself correctly and that you speak directly into the microphone at all times. There is

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always the possibility that you may "stray away" from the microphone, which may cause your voice to sound as if it is fading in and out – something you will want to avoid.

USB Headset Microphones

You can also use a USB headset containing a microphone to record yourself with.

Although these are not of the "high-end" pro-audio type, this type of microphone can produce a very desirable, high quality sound. This is due in part because they utilize their own circuitry for audio and can produce a sound that is 'cleaner' than that of the circuitry already built in to the computer. I have found that some tend to produce much less 'hiss' (that airy sound you may hear within the audio on some computers) when compared to the sound obtained when using a traditional headset microphone, connected directly to the built-in microphone jack of the computer.

Microphone Stands

Use a microphone stand if you plan on doing a lot of recording with a handheld type microphone. Desktop stands are good as are extendable arm stands which have a retracting arm that you can swing in or out of position. You could also go for the boom type of microphone stand which will allow you to position the microphone comfortably while either standing or sitting (these are the kind that you may have seen a musician using while sitting down such as a piano player).

Telephone Recording

There are several devices available to you that support recording your telephone calls.

You could, of course, record directly to the computer or use an intermediary recording device as explained above. There are also services you could use to facilitate recording a phone call such as *AudioGenerator*. Also, many conference line services support recording so you can pre-arrange to have your call recorded by the conference service and they can send you a digital copy of your recorded call. There are also third-party companies that will record your calls for you as well.

If you have decided that you want to record the calls yourself, here are some quick methods.

Telephone Recording – Handset Recording Method

Record what you say and hear at your telephone's handset by connecting a pickup device between your handset and the telephone. This device would have connections for your phone and an audio output connection for your recorder (or computer).

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NOTE: If your handset is also the dial pad, this solution may not work. In that case, you would want to try the next method, the phone line recording method.

Telephone Recording – Phone Line Recording Method

Record what's heard throughout your telephone line by connecting a pickup device between your wall jack and your telephone. This device would have connections for your phone and an audio output connection for your recorder (or computer).

NOTE: If you are using a digital PBX phone system, this solution will not work. In that case, use the handset recording method mentioned above instead.

I have listed some links to telephone hardware devices to help you record your phone calls. Refer to the Recommended Resources section at the end of this article for more information.

Telephone Recording Tips

Prepare your environment. The goal here is to have as much control over your environment as possible, avoiding any foreseen events.

If possible, **make your calls from a designated place**, such as your office, or a particular room in the house that is quiet and away from other sounds or noises.

Alert others such as family members or friends, even the dog that you will be unavailable during the recording period (for however long you think your phone call will take) and that you are not to be disturbed. Just kidding about the dog, but you should get the point

Try to use rooms that are silent in nature. Large, empty rooms containing a lot of reverberation may add a cavernous quality to the sound, especially if you are using a speaker phone. A more direct sound is typically more desirable.

Avoid using a speakerphone unless it is necessary to do so.

Make sure that you are the one initiating the phone call if possible. If you are using a conference calling service for the call, make sure you are a moderator, dialed into the moderator line.

If possible, **turn OFF your telephone's call waiting feature.** For most carriers, this simply means dialing *70 as a prefix to the phone number we are dialing. This will avoid the beeps that are heard on your telephone, alerting you that there is another call coming through while you're already on the line. Turn it off.

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Steps 3 – 6 may be eliminated if you are using a service such as *Audio Generator*, which will allow you to record your message over the telephone and have it available for you to link your website to, with the play back buttons all ready to go. All you would have to do is choose the look of your buttons, copy the generated html code for the playback buttons and place the html code into your website. It will also allow you to upload your own audio recordings into its system provided that you have formatted your audio correctly. (I will explain formatting in a bit). You will incur a monthly fee for using this service, so make sure it makes sense for you to do so.

The benefit here is that you can simply make a phone call from virtually anywhere and have audio created instantly for use on your website. After copying the corresponding html code for the audio to your website, you're done.

Some drawbacks are that you give up some control of your audio and that you are limited to phone quality audio, unless you use their upload function which allows you to upload your own audio file.

"Testing, 1, 2, 3…"

ALWAYS test your ability to record successfully BEFORE you go LIVE, that is, before the actual event takes place. You'll be surprised at just how things can go wrong when you least expect it.

Things to be aware of

Recording time – does your device record for the amount of time needed?

Battery life – is there a fresh set of batteries in your recorder?

Removable media – Do you have enough supply? Always have extra media available (e.g. mini discs, cassettes, etc) in case you need to extend the allotted recording time. Ideally, you want to avoid having to ever change media during a recording since doing so will cause you to your recording to stop, potentially loosing wanted material (unless, of course, you had multiple recorders and was able to start recording on one before the other stopped).

"Plan B"

Depending upon how critical the recording situation is, you'll want to be sure you've taken every *reasonable* step to achieve recording success. This may mean using several recorders used for the recording.

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Noisy Connections

Sometimes connecting devices to your computer can cause a phenomenon known in the audio world as a "ground-loop" (you heard it before, I'm sure – that low level, constantly humming sound heard throughout the sound that's quite annoying, especially at loud levels). This might be heard when you connect one audio device (I'm considering the computer to also be an audio device in this case) to another where both devices are plugged into an AC outlet.

This "hum" is the nemesis of anyone working with sound and it may try to challenge you as well. The good news is that it usually can be beaten. There are several solutions for this but some can be technically challenging.

Here are a few simple suggestions if you ever come across this problem. Although these are not guaranteed to work, they may help:

- **Make sure your connections are completely plugged in.**

- **Try brand new cables (poor grounding from a bad cable can also cause this).**

- **If your recording device is connected to an AC outlet different than that where your computer is connected to, try connecting both of them to the SAME outlet.**

- **If your recording device is already connected to the same AC outlet as your PC, try connecting your recorder to a DIFFERENT outlet. (Yes, sometimes the opposite way works instead!)**

- **Use a high quality power strip, especially one that was created for digital audio and computer devices.**

- **Unplug your recording device from the AC outlet and run it off battery power, if possible.**

- **Use a hum eliminator box. (Can be expensive)**

- **Use an AC line conditioner and plug both computer and recording device into it. (Is very expensive)**

Step 4 – Editing Your Audio

Editing your audio could mean improving sound quality, erasing mistakes, eliminating re-takes or even adding background music along with your audio message. To edit your audio, you will require audio editing software such as Sound Forge,

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Acoustica or Audacity.

The editing software, at a minimum, should allow for several 'tracks' to be played simultaneously. These tracks represent your sound and should be editable so that you are able to manipulate your sound as desired (given the capabilities of your editing software). You should be able to add or delete tracks as you wish with the ability of having several tracks played back simultaneously.

If you are using another recorder besides your computer that happens to create the format you are looking to use such as .wma, then all you may need to do is transfer the audio file over to your computer and work from there. But most likely, you will need to convert the audio file produced by the device from one format to another.

For example, some digital recorders record in some proprietary format specifically designed for the device and, consequently, you cannot easily play back the audio on your computer without using that same software designed for the recorder itself. In that case, you would first need to use the device's software to convert the audio into a more common format such as .wav or .mp3, etc. provided that the software supported such a function. Most should.

Then the audio could be used either within the same program or another to manipulate the recording. Being able to erase mistakes or eliminate 'do-over' parts to adding music in conjunction with your audio message should be possible.

Step 5 – Converting Audio

Your audio editing software should allow for you to save or export in several different audio formats. I recommend that you convert and save your audio into MP3 format since it is probably the most compatible audio format available. It can be streamed and offers excellent compression capability making it a viable format for all.

Audio File Formats

(The references here are directed primarily to Windows PC users)

There are several audio file formats to choose from with advantages and disadvantages for each. Here are some of the more popular formats:

.WAV – Waveform Audio Format

This is the standard audio format used on the PC.

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The main advantage of using this format is that it is compatible with all PCs, requiring no additional software for it to be played. Practically all audio editing software programs for the PC will utilize this format.

The main disadvantage of using this format is that it typically produces very large files when compared to other formats available (1 minute of stereo audio can use approximately 10MB of disk space).

.MP3 – MPEG1 Audio Layer 3

The MP3 format is one of the most popular audio formats being used today with many software programs and hardware devices supporting its use.

A major advantage of using this format is that it is compressible, using up much less disk space than that of a PCM .wav file (about 1/10th depending upon the amount of compression used) while still providing great sound quality.

A disadvantage is that the software or hardware playing this file format needs to be mp3 compatible, however there is ever growing support for this format.

.WMA – Windows Media Audio

The WMA format is a very popular audio format compatible with several hardware devices. It provides great compression while retaining great sound quality.

A disadvantage of using this format is that it is a proprietary format so your users will need to have the Windows Media Player® or other compatible software installed in order to have it played, however practically every Windows PC should already have Windows Media Player installed.

.RAM or .RA

The RA (or RAM) format is an audio format created by Real Networks Corporation.

Advantages of this format are that it provides great compression and streaming capability for your audio.

A disadvantage of using this format is that it is a proprietary format so your users will need to have the RealPlayer® software installed in order to have it played.

.MOV - QuickTime®

This format, originated by Apple® Computer, is a versatile file format that allows not only audio but video and other content as well.

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A disadvantage of using this format is that it is a proprietary format so your users will need to have the QuickTime software installed in order to have it played.

.OGG – Ogg Vorbis

This format provides great compression and streaming capability.

A disadvantage of this format, like many others, is that it is a proprietary format requiring software with built in support for it.

.SWF – Macromedia (Adobe) Flash® – Shockwave™ Flash

Flash format supports audio, video and other data.

One major advantage of using this format for audio is that it allows for streaming.

A disadvantage of using this format is that it is a proprietary format so your users will need to have the Shockwave Flash Player software installed in order to play flash files. However, most PCs should already have the flash player installed.

NOTE: As of this writing, all of the formats mentioned have players available for free that may be easily downloaded.

Step 6 – Uploading Audio

If you have produced your audio content on your own, you will need to transfer your audio file to your website. If you have a website, most likely you are already familiar with using an FTP program. However if you're not, it is pretty straight forward.

The FTP program is similar to that of the Windows' explorer program, allowing you to manage your files on the Internet. You'll need to know the FTP user name and password that was either given to you by your host or that you were able to setup for yourself within your server's control panel.

Once you are able to connect, it's just a matter of copying your audio files and any relating files up to your server.

Step 7 – Finalize Your Audio – Audio Playback

Create a means for your audio to get played back. Here are some of the more common methods of delivering audio on the web.

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HTML Link

You could provide a simple html link to your audio file for your visitor to download from.

You would want your audio file to be of a common audio file format, making it easy for your visitors to playback after downloading. (Some might refer to this as a podcast – more on podcasting below.)

Streaming Audio

Streaming audio is basically audio that can be played without having to be completely downloaded to your computer before it can be heard. The audio data is broken up into smaller 'bits' as it is being downloaded, stored in the computer's memory buffer, and those 'bits' of audio are played back as soon as they are received. This flowing or "streaming" method of playback allows for us to send large amounts of audio data to the user's computer, but done so throughout the duration of the recording.

People using a dial-up connection would find this method of distribution more convenient since they would not have to wait very long to hear the audio stream – unlike the case of using a simple link, where they would have to wait until the entire audio file was downloaded to their computer first before it could be played. (Depending upon the size of the audio file, this could mean having to wait from several minutes or even hours!)

Some of the audio software available to us will use flash technology, allowing us to create streaming audio using the player it provides. The player might resemble that of the controls found on a CD or tape player, with play, pause and stop (sometimes less or more) buttons.

Basically, you would be able to place the player on your website and have it playback your audio file (usually an mp3 file), in effect, streaming the audio. The software would not only provide the player, but would also provide the html code necessary for it to appear on your webpage. Software such as *WebsiteVocalizer* will allow you to accomplish this.

Podcasting

By now, you've probably heard a thing or two about Podcasting. But in case you haven't, the term "Podcast" could be used to refer to either your audio content or the method by which it is distributed.

By letting others know of your podcast (through podcast directories and software such as iTunes®, Jpodder, etc.) a web user could find your podcast and receive audio your content. There are entire articles and e-books devoted solely to this subject so I won't get into detail here.

Notes

Well that's all for now. I hope that this article helped give you a better understanding of what you can do to get started creating audio for your website.

Recommended Resources

External Audio Interfaces

Edirol UA25 USB Stereo Audio Interface

M-Audio USB Audio Interface Kit – Podcasting Package

Andrea USB

Digital Recorder

Olympus WS Series Recorders (saves in .wma format)

Microphones

Audio Technica AT3505 Condenser Microphone

Marshall Electronics MXL V57M Condenser Microphone

Headset Microphone

Plantronics USB Headset

Telephone Audio Capture Devices

Wireless Phones Pickup (requires a headset microphone for conversation)

For capturing wireless phone conversation

Radio Shack Item #17-855

Wired Phones Pickup (uses handset to pickup audio)

For capturing sound through wired handset

Dynametric – (Model # TLP-102)

Radio Shack – (Item # 43-1237)

Wired Phones Pickup (uses phone line to pickup audio – handset independent)

For capturing sound through the phone line

Radio Shack – (Item # 43-2208)

Notes

Audio Editing/Conversion Software

Audacity® – Free Audio Editor – Entry Level Audio Editing

Acoustica

Sound Forge Audio Studio™ – Entry Level Audio Editing

Sound Forge 8™ – Professional Audio Editing

dbPowerAmp Music Converter – Can convert almost any audio file type to another

Audio Recording Services

Audio Generator

Hipcast

FTP Software

FileZilla – Free FTP Software

WS_FTP Home – 30 day free trial

WS_FTP "How To" Video

Podcasting Software

JPodder

iTunes

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However you choose to add audio to your site or product, it can add an extra plus. It personalizes your website and makes you more 'real' than just words. In an info product it makes consuming or using your product much more accessible to the buyer.

Adding Audio to Your Website Self-Assessment Questions

1. Does audio add value to your info product?

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2. What types of audio do you want to use for your info product?

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3. How could you incorporate audio, to give an added plus to your website or product?

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Next . . . Adding Video To Your Website

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Section 3: Adding Video To Your Website

By Mike Koenigs and Robert 'Rocket' Helstrom

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Adding Video To Your Website

Video is adding a totally new dimension and feel to online marketing. Depending on your niche, videos and online infomercials can reach your potential visitor. The conversion increases so more visitors become customers. Michael Koenigs and Robert 'Rocket' Helstrom are two experienced Internet marketers who have taken their offline video and production experience online with InfomercialToolkit.com. Here they share their tips on bringing video and infomercials to your info product.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to set up video on your site.

◆ How to increase subscriptions and convert to more sales by effectively using video and infomercials

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Who Else Wants To…Convert 40% or More Web Visitors Into Leads or Buyers?

Impossible, you say?

Not if you harness the phenomenally powerful combination of **video** – the most effective selling medium there is – with the **Internet** – the greatest communication tool ever invented – AND the proven **infomercial formula** that has generated more than $100 BILLION dollars in sales.

When you combine these three elements to create **Internet Videos and infomercials** – 30-second to five minute supercharged sales messages that convert better than sales letters or websites.

If you want proof, our video–enabled websites have consistently generated 20, 30 – even **40% conversion rates**. With the right formula, yours can too.

You don't have to spend days or weeks writing and formatting an online sales letter anymore!

Anyone who can use a word processor and a Web browser can learn how to make his or her own sales-driving Internet video in half a day.

Bestselling author and marketer **Mark Victor Hansen says**, "This is something I think is going to change the world. This is the future. **If you want to be in on the front end of what is going to be a tsunami of busines**s – p**ay attention!"**

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How Can You Make Money With Web Videos?

What if your website consistently converted 10%, 20%, 40% or more of Web visitors into leads or opt-ins?

That's exactly the kind of results we've experienced by placing Internet videos and infomercials on our websites and our client's sites.

What Are Internet Videos and infomercials?

Simply put, they're short three- to five-minute, content-rich video presentations that use the time-tested, proven television Infomercial formula to convert Web visitors into buyers.

Unlike "Web videos" you see, Internet videos and infomercials are engineered to grab your visitor and get them to reach for their wallets, place an order, register or take the next step in your order process.

In this course, we're going to tell you what you need to know to put them on your website.

If you don't know the first thing about putting video online or Internet videos and infomercials, you'll get all of your questions answered in the next several pages.

And if you DO know about video on the Web, you'll probably learn some important secrets about how to use it to improve your conversions, opt-ins, leads, sales, referrals and personal income.

Are Internet Videos and infomercials Hard To Make?

No. Anyone with basic skills can make them. If you can use a word processor, a camcorder or Webcam and have basic computer skills, you have what it takes to make one in less than a day.

The technology isn't the hard part, the message is!

It's the biggest challenge most people have – crafting their marketing messages – not the process of producing Internet videos and infomercials.

And it's also the big distinction between simple Web videos and Internet videos and infomercials: the message. Face it, anyone can turn on a camcorder and talk, but convincing your viewer to take action requires a well-organized sales message.

Notes

Are Internet Videos and infomercials Expensive to Make?

In a simple word, no. They don't have to be. If you're willing to spend a little time writing, you can make an Internet video infomercial with as little as $100 worth of software and equipment – assuming, of course, you already have a computer and a camcorder. With a little know-how, you can even experiment for free.

What Equipment Do I Need to Make Internet Videos and infomercials?

Here are the basic equipment requirements:

- Computer (Windows or Mac)
- Webcam or camcorder
- Software for editing and capturing video (you can get it free)
- Lights
- Microphone (an inexpensive $20 unit will do)

You need a Webcam or a camcorder.

On the low end, you could get by with a $50 Webcam but we recommend you get a digital camcorder if you don't already have one.

More on hardware, software and tools later.

People Say Compressing Video is Difficult and Expensive. Is That True?

If you would have asked us six months ago, we would have said yes. But recent advances in services and technology have pushed the cost of hosting to zero or nearly zero. We're not kidding! There are now several services that compress your videos for free. And if you prefer to do it yourself, there are other tools to prepare your video for the Web that are easy to use, fast and free.

Isn't Hosting Web Videos Expensive?

Again, this used to be the case. Just two years ago, an average size website with 1,000 visitors and a small amount of video might cost $1,000 to $2,000 per month.

But due to the commoditization of these services, it now costs a few hundred dollars (if you're using a paid service) or it's free. That's right. There are dozens of ways to host your video

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content at no cost. So if the main obstacle for you is a fear of hosting expenses, stop worrying!

Do Internet Videos And Infomercials Work?

Yes! Would You Like Proof?

Here are just two quick samples that took less than four hours to create and launch.

Your Projects					
Project Name	Page Views	Successes	Avg. Conversion	Total Unique Optins	Best Headline Conversion
Infomercial Toolkit Business Affiliate Test	714	307	43.0%	0	43.0%

Believe your eyes – that's a **43% visitor-to-subscriber conversion rate**. The final conversion results came out to 35.5% when we stopped the test.

Here are those results:

Project Name	Page Views	Successes	Avg. Conversion	Total Unique Optins	Best Headline Conversion	Au Co
Infomercial Toolkit Business Affiliate Test	1368	485	35.5%	0	35.5%	

If you'd like, take a look at the Web page that generated those results: http://businessop.infomercialtoolkit.com/

We won't apologize for the fact that it's simple and perhaps even a little rough – after all, this isn't an advertising agency video that took months to plan and hundreds of thousand$ of dollars to create.

Everything you see here – the video and Web page – took less than three hours from concept to completion.

In direct marketing, slick doesn't always sell. Just ask world-class copywriters Gary Halbert and Dan Kennedy. Many of their most effective ads and sales letters have been simple, cheap and rough.

This video generated over $2,000 in affiliate revenue from only 485 total opt-ins in fewer than 48 hours.

Want Another Example? Take a look here: http://successseminar.infomercialtoolkit.com/

This one converted 22% of our visitors into opt-ins. And like the first sample, it's simple and took less than four hours from concept to completion. It's the result that matters, right?

Notes

That's Great, But What Do the "Experts" Say About Internet Videos and Infomercials and Selling Online With Video?

Another great question. Here's what the experts say:

"Full-motion video ads are quickly emerging as the Web's next big moneymaker for advertisers. Big-name brands will spend $198 million on the medium this year – a 70 percent jump over 2004, according to Jupiter Research and that's expected to surge to $657 million by 2009 as broadband stretches everywhere and compression technologies evolve."
Business 2.0 – May 2005

"Add it all together, and video ads are outpacing the torrid growth in Internet advertising, including search."
Business Week – May 2005

"Best of all, dealers reported a 58 percent spike in Galant sales after the spot ran."
Business 2.0 – May 2005

"Audi's Site Revamp Increased Leads Generated to Dealerships by 325%."
MarketingSherpa

"Video ads are outperforming the non-video ads by about nine to one."
From article, "Video Shows Strength in New Verticals," Imediaconnections

What you need to know and remember is simple:

- More than 68% of U.S. homes have computers and Web access
- Nearly 75% of those have broadband connections
- There are already hundreds of millions of video-ready cell phones in service worldwide
- Every one of these prospective customers is content-hungry
- The storage and distribution of digital content has become inexpensive and commoditized

What Does This Mean for You?

If you know how to use a word processor and an Internet browser, **YOU** can make Internet Videos and infomercials:

- Affordably
- Quickly
- Easily
- That you can distribute worldwide

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- That access nearly any electronic device (computers, phones, PDAs, iPods® and new devices that aren't even available yet!)
- That convert better than any other medium
- Even if you're not technical or computer savvy

Computers, video technology, hosting, compression and software have become commoditized, affordable for entrepreneurs and small businesses, easy to use and increasingly powerful.

It's as simple as that.

On the Web, You Can't Tell Whether You're a One-Person Company or a Billion-Dollar Firm Anymore

The old days of expensive video broadcasting are fading away. Increasingly, you're able to share your sales message, information and products with almost anyone, anywhere, on any device.

Design and Web programming are inexpensive and easy to come by. And a person with a simple home video studio can create powerful, attractive, professional videos that get the point across quickly.

What can you use Internet Videos and Infomercials For?

- Selling your product or service
- Fundraising
- Affiliate marketing
- EBay sales
- Product demos
- Product promotions
- Conferences
- Teleconferences
- Book promotions
- Speaking engagements
- Proposals
- Video autoresponders

But, above all, for…

- GENERATING HIGHER CONVERSIONS THAN ORDINARY SALES LETTERS!

Notes

Why Are Internet Videos and infomercials Better Than Other Sales Techniques?

There simply isn't a more effective way to present or sell, short of being in front of your customer or audience in person, one-to-one.

Most people who make Internet videos and infomercials find the process becomes easier and faster than writing a sales letter.

Why? Because most of us can talk about the things we know intimately and are passionate about!

Those are two of the most important things you need to know about connecting with your audience with Internet videos and infomercials. Your product knowledge and passion are what comes through as credible and genuine. It's what viewers connect with.

Here is some more information we've learned in our own research:

- A recent Wharton Business School study showed video outsells print by as much as 600%.

- A Harvard University study reports people remember video messages almost as strongly as they remember actual experiences. That's why TV is such a successful marketing tool.

- The broadband pipeline is already carrying online video to 75% of all U.S. Internet homes and businesses— without the high cost of TV media time.

- That means nearly anyone you want to market to is online and probably has high-speed access. The challenge is capturing their attention and developing a relationship.

- Direct response video is a well-established, extremely successful marketing tool. Since its inception on TV 20 years ago, direct response video has sold more than $100 billion of products for entrepreneurs and small business owners just like you—people with great ideas and vision.

Let's focus on the bigger question…

Notes

Why Should You Care About Internet Videos and infomercials?

Because Internet videos and infomercials are:

- ◆ Faster to make than sales letters
- ◆ The most effective sales medium
- ◆ Easy to make
- ◆ Geared for small business budget
- ◆ Use hardware and software you probably already own
- ◆ FREE to host and compress
- ◆ And ultimately, a competition-killer

The word is out about the effectiveness of Internet video in the sales process. Do you want to play catch up or do you want to make your competitors scramble to match your new-found marketing prowess?

Why Do You Want to Use Internet Videos and infomercials?

- ◆ Video is a Powerful medium
- ◆ The infomercial formula is a Proven success (TV videos and infomercials have sold more than $100B worth of products)
- ◆ They're Fast – visitors can get your whole pitch in less than five minutes without reading
- ◆ You can deliver your message and drive home your Point more effectively
- ◆ They appeal to all of your Senses: sight, sound, motion and emotion
- ◆ They're Easy to make

But What if I Have a "Radio Face," am Self-Conscious or are Afraid of Speaking or Presenting?

Hey, look, it's a commonly quoted fact that the one thing that leaves most people white-knuckled is the idea of speaking in public. In fact, more people say they're afraid of public speaking than say they're afraid of death!

How Do You Produce an Internet Infomercial?

You probably already own the equipment you need. We'll cover the basic tools in a moment, but first let's discuss the process you go through when you want to make an Internet infomercial.

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There are seven basic steps. Here are the basics:

- ◆ Set up your equipment (plug it in, turn it on)
- ◆ Write a script (using the secret Infomercial formula)
- ◆ Shoot the video
- ◆ Edit it
- ◆ Compress it
- ◆ Upload the video to a Web server
- ◆ Put your video clip on your website

In our experience, most novices get hung up on the equipment and the process. It's a classic "can't see the forest for the trees" mistake most newbies make.

Here's the BIG Secret about making Internet Videos and infomercials…

It's NOT the Technology! It's the STORY You Tell!

As "King of the TV Infomercial" producer Tim Hawthorne says:

The More You Tell, the More You Sell

But to satisfy your curiosity about what you need and how much it costs, here's a basic breakdown of the equipment you need to make a basic Internet video Infomercial and cost ranges:

Webcam or DV Camcorder	$50 - $700
Lights	$40 - $100
Microphone	$20 - $30
Headphones for Editing	$10 - $20
Video Recording & Editing Software	$700
Cables, Tripod, etc.	$40
Total Cost	**$860 - $1,590**

The two big variables will always be your camera and software.

We assume you already have these:

- ◆ Computer (Mac or Windows PC)
- ◆ Web Browser & Internet Access

Camcorders and Webcams

We recommend using a digital camcorder instead of a Webcam. Why? Because there is a substantial difference in picture quality between camcorder video and Webcam video.

It's all right for Internet videos and infomercials to look homemade – and that's how they'll look if you use a Webcam. However, you can upgrade your video just by using a camcorder and you can find a used one for $150 or a new one for as little as $250.

Notes

Chances are you already have a camcorder. The important thing to know is it needs to be a digital video (DV) camcorder with a "Firewire" port. This is called an IEEE-1394 port.

Just check your user guide for a breakdown of your camera's features.

Connecting a camcorder to a computer is as simple as plugging a Firewire cable between the two.

Video Recording & Editing Software

Not long ago, video editing software was expensive, slow, difficult to use and hard to learn.

Now, there are dozens of great packages available. Here are a few:

Windows Versions	**Mac Versions**
◆ Windows Movie Maker® (Free)	◆ iMovie®
◆ Sony Vegas® series ($50-$800)	◆ Final Cut®
◆ Adobe Premiere® ($100-$500)	
◆ Magix ($30-$100)	
◆ ULead® (Free-$400)	
◆ Pinnacle™ (Free-$800)	

The list goes on and on …

Each program basically works the same way.

Here's a snapshot of what a typical editing screen looks like:

The screen may look a bit daunting at first, but editing video is no more complicated than editing word documents in a word processor.

It's beyond the scope of this mini-guide to walk through the entire editing process, but all you really need to know is:

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Video editing is just a process of cut-copy-paste. Instead of words, you're moving around blocks of images and sound.

Most people get the hang of the process in about 30 minutes.

Just select a clip and move it around

Now That You've Chosen Your Software, Have Your Camera, Let's Do a Quick Equipment Test

Set Up Your Production

- Connect the Cables, etc.
- Test lights and audio
- Capture a sample video
- Play it back for review

This process will only take about 10-15 minutes.

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Note from Editor:

If your niche uses high-speed connections to the Internet, consider video to your marketing plan. Adding video can improve conversion and add a new dimension to marketing your info product.

Adding Video To Your Website Self-Assessment Questions

1. Does your market use high speed Internet access? If no, please go to the next section.

2. If yes, would video or a video infomercial help sell or explain your product better than just using words?

3. What equipment would you need to produce a video?

4. Can you recover your initial costs through the sale of your product? And still make a profit?

5. What three points would you cover in your video?

Next . . . How To Create Screen Captures

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your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product Development

Module 3

Section 4: How To Create Screen Captures

By Bob Chambers

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

![Info Product Blueprint logo]

How To Create Screen Captures

There are many software programs out there today to assist with the creation of screenshot and screen video capture. Camtasia is one of the best out there for this, and of course there are several other programs that are similar. If you like free stuff, I have found Windows Media Encoder to work very well also. Simply Google Windows Media Encoder and you can download it directly from Microsoft's site for free.

What you will learn in this Section:
◆ What you need to consider when using screen captures
◆ Software needed for recording screen capture
◆ Possible ways to use screen capture as an info product

Well, now it's time to put in the skill set CD by Bob Chambers of MultimediaProfitsRevealed.com into your computer to learn more about creating screen captures. Bob, of MultimediaGuy.com, will show you how easy it is to create screen captures using Camtasia.

How To Create Screen Captures Self-Assessment Questions

1. Does screen capture make it easier for your customer to use your product?

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2. What types of screen capture do you want to use for your info product?

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3. How could you incorporate screen capture to give an added plus to your website or product?

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Next . . . How To Create Teleseminars

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product
Development

Module 3

Section 5: How To Create Teleseminars

By Gary Knuckles

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

How To Create Teleseminars

Our next writer has developed many different types of info products including software, e-books and digital downloads. However, Gary Knuckles is widely known in Internet marketing circles as the congenial host of e-Teleconferencing.com.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to find quality services

◆ What content you can create from your teleseminar

Gary shares his views on how to make teleseminars work for you.

Benefits of a Teleseminar

Depending upon the resources available to you, you can have a successful seminar within 2 to 5 days. Lets say you already have a list or newsletter. You have a topic and knowledge of that topic. By following a few steps, then after setting up your sales page and method of payment, you could easily shoot out a promotion to your list and hold a seminar within 2 days.

Finding Quality Services – Low or No Cost Startup

There are many companies that provide teleconference services now, and some offer free services. This means you could conduct a teleseminar for up to 99 people at no cost for the conference services. By having low startup costs you can generate a nice net profit for very little cost. A few of the free conference companies are FreeConference.com and FreeAudioConferencing.com.

There are many others that offer paid services. Some of the most popular being Eagle Communications, Black and White, and Voice Text.

Content

Create products from the teleseminar event, too.

By having the event recorded and/or transcribed you can create two products from your teleseminar.

One product is the MP3 audio file that you can have recorded.

You can have the conference call company do this for you or buy an electronic digital voice recorder and record it yourself. If you plan on doing several seminars then I would suggest

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buying a digital voice recorder. This can be used for several projects and tasks as well.

The second product would be an e-book created from your event.

This can be either in electronic format using an e-book creator software package or in PDF format using Adobe Acrobat once the teleseminar is transcribed. There are also some services that allow you to convert the document to PDF format. You can transcribe the event yourself from your audio file or have the conference call company do it.

Recordings

There are many ways to record your calls. One is to use the recording service that these companies offer to record the calls. There are also audio programs that you can use on your computer to record your calls. One that I prefer is Audio Acrobat. This is a monthly service but has many features – one being able to record teleseminars and converting them to MP3 format.

Delivery Options

You can then have these recordings delivered digitally in MP3 and/or PDF format or as a physical product such as CD's or transcripts.

Follow-up

Having a teleseminar (depending on the type you have) will allow you to interact with other people within your industry. By this, I mean if you have panelists and guest speakers joining you in your teleseminar.

Usually these guests will be experts in their field, (or should be) if you are having them join you because of their expertise. By working with them you build a better relationship for future events, e-books or joint ventures on other projects.

A teleseminar gives you exposure as well as giving you creditability. Just by hosting an event associates you with your speakers thus building your reputation. This can lead to you being invited to join other teleseminars and projects as well.

Build a relationship with your customers or list. You can use a teleseminar to build a better relationship with your current customers or newsletter subscribers, especially if it's a free teleseminar where the only cost is a phone call. Now this would be primarily for long-term benefits and sales, though the event could generate some sales for your current products as well. Provided of course you have some current products.

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If you don't have any current products then you could offer a free condensed report of important points from the event to the attendees, then list any products that you might discuss during the teleseminar. Then use your affiliate links for those products to generate sales from your free report you send to everyone or post online for them to read after the event.

Sell higher priced items from the teleseminar (free seminar)

Teleseminars are being used by many experts to sell higher priced products by giving a free teleseminar to their targeted audience. They are delivering content-rich free events and at the same time they promote a higher priced service or workshop/seminar to be attended. Some are using them to promote coaching services and private member sites.

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Start a list or add new subscribers on your current list.

If you don't have a newsletter or list you should consider starting one. Most experts will tell you there is money in the list. By having a seminar, you can start a newsletter at the same time if done properly. If you already have a list then you can use the event to add new subscribers to your list.

Next . . . Preparing Teleseminar Audio For A Professional

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1st Edition

Packaging

Module 3

Section 6: Preparing Teleseminar Audio For A Professional

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Preparing Teleseminar Audio For A Professional

Sometimes you will want to have a better quality recording to use for your info product, then you will want to work with a sound engineer. Our next contributor is Ben Blakesley the Chief Engineer for Philadelphia based Javboy Records (JavboyRecords.com), which specializes in creating custom audio solutions. Sound engineers can add intro and outro music, even out voice levels and in some cases even get rid of funny background noises.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ The difference between stereo and mono recordings

◆ Definitions of terms your sound engineer will use such as sample rate and bit depth

◆ Why compressed audio is better for files sent via Internet

◆ Legalities to consider when adding audio to your site.

When working with digital audio there are two opposing factors that must always be considered: file size and sound quality. The following is an explanation of common file types, their attributes, and options.

Lossless Audio

Digital audio formats can easily be broken up into two categories: compressed audio and full resolution audio.

Full resolution files are usually what can be called "source files" or "lossless" audio. This is because audio is typically recorded in the digital domain in this format and they do not use any sort of compression methods to decrease file size.

The two most widely used lossless file types are WAV (.wav, standard for Windows-based systems) and AIFF (.aif, standard for Mac-based systems). Although WAV and AIFF started off as OS specific, today both file types can easily be used by either platform. WAV and AIFF files offer the best sound quality available, but their large file size can be restrictive in certain uses.

A typical ratio for WAV or AIFF files is 10MB for every minute of audio (assuming stereo, 44.1kHz, 16-bit). So a 3-minute piece would be around 30MB.

WAV and AIFF files should be used when creating master CDs for duplication, when handing off audio to a third-party for editing or mastering, or any application where quality is of the utmost importance.

Notes

Stereo vs. Mono

When dealing with lossless audio files there are options that can be manipulated to increase/decrease quality and increase/decrease file size.

The first and simplest option is choosing whether the audio will be in "stereo" mode or "mono" mode. Stereo refers to having separate left and right channels of audio running simultaneously.

Monophonic (or "mono") is simply using one stream of audio and having no independent left and right channels. NOTE: A mono file will still play through both the left and right speakers of the audio system, but both the left and right speakers will play exactly the same audio and will have no sense of 'space.'

For spoken word recordings, using the mono mode is very desirable because the audio will retain its original quality while decreasing the file size by 50% (one channel of audio instead of two).

If you are using music in conjunction with spoken word, usually the music will sound better in stereo mode (depending on how it was recorded and mixed). When file size does not matter, always go with stereo as this retains all of the audio file's information. You can always convert to mono, but you can't recover stereo information from a mono file.

Sample Rate and Bit Depth

Sample rate refers to the number of reference points regarding sine wave amplitude per second.

The bit depth of an audio file completes the digital grid representing the sound wave.

I know, a bit confusing, but for all practical purposes the higher the sample rate and higher the bit depth, the higher the audio quality. (The more snapshots of the audio wave you have, the closer the digital representation will be to the actual wave).

The most common and widely used sample rate is 44.1kHz (44,100 samples per second). This is the sample rate of a normal audio CD and the majority of digital music available to consumers. This is the rate at which you should record your audio and generally, unless you have significant file size issues, you should always keep your audio at this rate. It is able to be played by all players and will never cause a compatibility issue.

Sample rates vary and include common rates like 11kHz, 22kHz, 48kHz, 88.2kHz, 96kHz, and the highest quality available in recording studios today, 192kHz. If you choose to use a sample rate other than 44.1kHz, the file size will change

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accordingly (lower sample rate = smaller file size and lower quality, and vise versa).

Bit depth follows the same principle, the higher the bit depth, the better the sound quality, but the larger the file size. A typical audio CD has a bit depth of 16. Other common bit depths are 8, 20, 24, and 32. There is also an option called "floating bit depth" and is usually coupled with 32. For all intents, stick with 16 as this will be the bit depth required for CD duplication. Generally, it's a good idea to keep audio at it's highest quality until it gets to its final format. So if you intend to create a standard CD from your audio, do not go below 44.1kHz and 16-bit.

Compressed Audio

Although using the highest resolution audio possible maintains the best quality, often the size of such files is prohibitive. In cases where files must be transferred over the Internet or through email, compressed audio might be the only option for efficient use of time.

Common compressed or "lossy" audio types are: MP3, AAC, and WMA. AAC is associated with Mac systems and is the default encoding format for iTunes and other Apple programs (file extension .m4a). WMA is the proprietary format developed by Microsoft for Windows and Windows Media Player. Although both file formats are comparable in size and audio quality, the universal standard for lossy audio is the multi-platform MP3 format.

It's a good idea to use MP3 whenever compressed audio is needed, as there will be fewer compatibility issues.

Bit Rate

Compressed audio follows the same guidelines for sample rate, bit depth, and stereo/mono options as lossless audio. Again, it's a good idea to use 44.1kHz, 16-bit, stereo as your default if you're unsure of what should be used. But in addition to those three options, lossy audio has a fourth quality-measuring feature called bit rate (different from bit depth, don't get confused!).

Currently, there is no standard being used across the board by everyone for bit rate, but the most *common* bit rate is 128kbps.

As usual, a higher number indicates better quality but larger file size. A stereo, 44.1kHz, 16-bit, MP3 file encoded at 128kbps will generally yield a file size of 1MB per minute of audio, so a 3-minute audio clip would be 3MB, about 90% smaller than its WAV counterpart.

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Other common bit rates are 32kbps, 64kbps, 96kbps, and so on in 32kbps increments all of the way up to 320kbps.

NOTE: Bit rate is measured on a per channel basis, meaning that a stereo MP3 at a bit rate of 128kbps is the same quality as a mono MP3 at 64kbps, because the stereo file has a left channel at 64kbps and a right channel at 64kbps that combines to 128kbps. So the most common bit rate for mono files is 64kbps.

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General Guidelines

Always record source audio as a lossless file (WAV or AIFF). Try to avoid using lossy file formats for recording original material. A lossy recording cannot be returned to lossless quality once it has been converted.

When transferring files over the Internet for editing or mastering purposes, use lossless audio if time and space permit. If this is not possible due to file size, convert the file to an MP3 and use the highest bit rate possible while maintaining a usable file size.

When in doubt, use 44.1kHz, 16-bit, stereo for all formats. (Spoken word can usually be in mono).

Lossy formats are great for websites where file size is imperative. Use the lowest settings possible without compromising quality. Check the audio before posting it online as very low settings can become un-listenable and intelligible.

When making your original recording it's good to have a 'hot' recording level, but NEVER LET THE AUDIO 'CLIP' (exceed the maximum input, usually indicated by in red on your input level meter). Once an audio file has clipped or distorted, it cannot be restored. Low levels can be fixed but distorted levels cannot.

Info Product Blueprint

Preparing Teleseminar Audio For A Professional Self-Assessment Questions

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Does my audio product require a standardized open and close for each section?

2. Do you plan to add a piece of introductory music or closing music to your digital recordings?

3. Are the voice levels consistent throughout the recording or does it need help?

Next . . . Membership Sites: Why Paying For Content Just Makes Sense

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Product Development

Module 3

Section 7: Membership Sites: Why Paying For Content Just Makes Sense

By Gail Buckley and Michael Angier

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Membership Sites: Why Paying For Content Just Makes Sense

Gail Buckley and Michael Angier are two successful online entrepreneurs. They both have chosen the membership model for their online business. Gail starts the section and Michael summarizes. Take a few moments to read their perspectives on starting and maintaining a membership site.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Benefits of membership sites for owner and member

◆ Different models of membership sites

◆ Software options for membership sites

Not that long ago content was free. Just about every website you went to was chock full of informative content that you didn't have to pay a penny for.

Yet many of these once free websites have turned into membership sites over the past several years. Now, those who pay a subscription fee gain access to better and more in-depth information.

It may seem like website owners have suddenly gotten stingy, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Many people started websites with the intent of sharing information with others. They wanted to help. But as the effectiveness of banner ads and other such free techniques wore off, they found themselves paying out of their own pockets to supply you (yes, you!) with that free information.

Quite simply, barely anyone can afford to do this anymore. This is where paid membership sites come in.

You see, by charging an access fee or subscriber fee, website owners can continue to share their valuable information with the world without having to reach into their own pockets to do so. Plus, they can make a nice side income that encourages these people to continue to share their information at a reasonable price.

Paying for content really does make sense. I mean, you can't get the fantastic information in a book without purchasing it first, right? And you can't expect to receive expert information without paying for it, yes? So what is it that makes the Internet so different that people just assume it should be a free for all?

Honestly, this sort of mentality can be blamed on how the online world first began. People thought of it as a new marketplace, where information could and should be shared. Anyone could have a presence on the web and anyone could

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start a business. While these notions are still relatively true, the cost factor is now an issue.

Free ad campaigns only work for so long. Once the market (in this case, the Internet itself) is overrun with banner ads, pop ups and link exchanges, these forms of marketing no longer work as well as they used to. Without the income derived from ad hosting, website owners are left with only two options.

- ◆ Start charging visitors for access to information.

- ◆ Shut down the website.

Here's another interesting fact about paying for content: people like to do it! While they may not know it at the time, web surfers enjoy the feeling of gaining access to "insider" information.

That is, if the information they are sold is actually unique. No one wants to pay for something that they could get for free.

This makes it imperative to do your research before you even think about starting your own membership site. Even if you have a killer idea for a niche, it just won't sell very well if there are tons of other websites that offer all you do for free.

What you have to do is come up with content that people can't help but pay for. You have to ask yourself, "What about my niche is unique and interesting enough that someone would pay for it?"

Research plays a major role in finding a niche that is both profitable and interesting. Take a look around the web for websites in your niche. Do they offer free information? What can you offer that is different? Do you have information that you can market as "insider" or unique?

If you answered "yes" to the above questions, your niche just might be worth marketing.

If you're still skeptical, just look at the amazing benefits membership sites bring:

- ◆ No reliance on advertising. Free websites rely on advertising only for income. This makes it very difficult to run a site when the money being brought in is also iffy. A membership site uses both user fees and advertising to run the site, making for a much more reliable source of income.

- ◆ Big Profits: Running a membership site can bring in big profits. Specifically, the low start-up costs make it easy to turn a profit quickly. Plus, each time you acquire a new member subscription your income increases.

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- ◆ Easy To Expand: Membership sites are very easy to expand. Should you acquire a larger membership base than originally expected, you can update your hosting and server subscriptions easily and cheaply. You can also add more features to your site with minimal cost.

- ◆ Easy To Introduce New Products: With a healthy subscriber base you can easily introduce new products or services. For instance, if you have a lot of subscribers to your membership site, you can offer a new service or product. The key is to introduce products to those customers that have a need for your product.

- ◆ Access To A Global Market: With your website up and running even while you're sleeping, you can reach a huge market. Your target audience also increases dramatically. So much so, that it may be beneficial to make your membership site serve many languages. People will search for your niche 24 hours a day, making your information relevant and profitable.

Starting your own content membership site may seem like a daunting task, but with the right direction, you can succeed easily.

One key thing to keep in mind is the profitability of your chosen niche. For instance, if you choose "dog grooming" as your niche topic, you need to be sure that there is a demand for this sort of information.

Once you've conducted a bit of research on your niche topic, you can start to build up content. If you know a lot about your chosen topic, write from experience. Try to offer your subscribers something they can't find anywhere else. Make sure they get their money's worth.

How To Start Your Own Membership Site

In order to start your own membership site, you'll need to purchase a domain name and web hosting.

The domain name should reflect the content of your site accurately. It should also be relatively short and very memorable. Don't pick anything that is difficult to say aloud or is confusing.

Next, you'll need to actually build the site. You can use any sort of web developing software such as Microsoft® FrontPage®, Adobe® GoLive®, Macromedia Dreamweaver®, or you could hire a web designer to build the site for you.

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Avoid fancy flash intros and large images. You want your site to be eye-catching but not so overdone that your visitors don't know what to do. Be clear and descriptive when describing your subscription service and thoroughly tease visitors with good free content. No one will purchase a subscription if your free content is entirely lackluster. You want your customers to feel that the purchased content will be even better!

It is also important to keep in mind the usability of your site. Will your visitors have that plug-in? Will they have that font? Be mindful of what the average web surfer will be able to view.

You'll also need to make visitors feel secure in giving their information for a subscription. Make sure your web server is properly encrypted to prevent the theft of personal information.

A method of collecting payment and delivering products is also a necessity. Many sites offer merchant accounts and shopping carts such as ClickBank.com and Verisign.com that allow you to accept payment and deliver products without lifting a finger!

Finally, you'll need to decide how much per subscription you will charge. How much has it cost you to start up this venture? How much do you anticipate you'll pay in operating fees? Once you figure out your expenses, you'll need to come up with your desired profit margin. Combining these two factors will give you the amount you'll need to charge your customers in order to start making money.

Membership sites are the way to go in the 21st century. While free content may be nice to find, the quality and exclusivity of memberships sites make them worth their cost many times over.

Michael Angier talks about his experience with membership sites and offers suggestions on what you need to do to start one.

Overview

In the last couple of years, membership sites have been gaining in popularity. Maybe it's the maverick in me, but I've had a membership site since 1996. It's gone through a number of redesigns, but it's worked very well for us and our 94,000 subscribers.

Up until two years ago, membership dues was the biggest income category for our company. Even though it has been surpassed by other revenue streams, it's still a significant part of our business model.

Technically, any site that requires registration and a login (whether paid or not) is a membership site. But most of the time, when someone refers to a membership site, they're

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referring to a site where an ongoing subscription or a one-time payment is required in order to access the content on the site.

For purposes of this segment, I'm talking about paid sites. And there are several models.

Community websites are virtual venues for people to interact with one another. Places like MySpace and eHarmony are examples of huge communities with millions of users. But there are hundreds of thousands of smaller community sites built around almost as many different subjects.

Usually the more community-oriented the site, the more "stickyness" you will experience. Stickyness is a term used to describe users who frequent your site often and are loyal fans of your services.

Free and Paid Sites

This is the most common model. Visitors are allowed to register and are given access to part of the site. In order to gain additional access, they must upgrade to a paid level. In some cases, a number of different access levels are offered.

Example:

The free and paid model is the one we have had for over ten years. At SuccessNet.org, we allow any visitor to subscribe at no cost and we don't require a login. These "Guests," as we call them, are given limited access to our extensive site (over 10,000 files) which provides resources to help people be more successful in all aspects of their lives – both personal and professional.

All subscribers (guests) receive email broadcasts (at least weekly). As our guests explore the site, they will occasionally run up against some limitations of their free access. And when they do, they are encouraged to upgrade to Gold Membership ($49 a year). In doing so, they gain full access to all of the articles, e-books, audio recordings, discounts, freebies and more.

Typically, with this model, paid members are automatically renewed unless they cancel – which for us, thankfully, is fairly rare.

One-Time (Lifetime Membership)

Another variation of this model is to offer a lifetime membership with a one-time fee instead of a renewable membership (monthly, annual, etc.).

This lifetime membership is often done as a one-time offer when subscribing as a free member/subscriber.

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This type of membership site and one-time-offer (OTO) has been popularized by Mike Filsaime as "Butterfly Marketing."

One of our sites, PresentationsMadeSimple.com, is an example of this model. We offer two free reports ($58 value) with a one-time chance for a full lifetime membership right after they enroll as guest members. Paid members receive full access to a growing list of hundreds of dollars worth of resources designed to help the part-time as well as the professional presenter.

100% Paid

This membership model does not have the free and paid two-tier option. The only access to the site – other than a sales or entry page – is through payment of membership dues or subscription.

This works best for sites with highly specialized knowledge or services. A typical use would be for a trade association or some kind of membership organization where the pre-selling of the benefits of membership is clearly presented offline.

Design

Designs for membership sites vary widely. They are as diverse as any you would find on the web. A clean and simple design with easy navigation is, in my opinion, more important than a fancy, complicated design with a lot of bell and whistles.

Since most membership sites are communities of some sort, they lend themselves to a database-driven website or Content Management System (CMS). Most websites are static sites. In other words, the text and graphics reside on the various pages hosted on the website.

A CMS site has only a few dynamic pages and all of the content is "pulled" from a database depending upon the requests of the user. The page is dynamically created for display "on the fly."

Almost all Blogs are database driven. And more and more sites are being built using this technology. Unless your website will only be a 2-3 page "online brochure" I recommend a CMS even if your site is small.

Not only does CMS make MANAGING the site easier, but the design can be easily and quickly altered based upon widely available templates (many for free) using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). All you have to do is make a single change in the style sheet and the entire website is updated—very slick. See Joomla™ sites below.

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Software

Turnkey: The easiest way to offer a membership site is to use a turnkey solution. The one we've found to be the most user-friendly and cost effective is Vision Gate at SuccessNet.org/go/visiongate.htm.
For less than $100 a month, you can have a vast array of services and a database-driven (CMS) site that your members will find easy to navigate and you will find easy to manage. This solution includes an automated payment processing system that enables you to easily manage expirations, recurring payments, non-payments and cancellations.

Open Source

With a little more setup time, but with no purchase or ongoing cost, you may want to consider an open source solution.

Open source software simply means that the source code is open to developers and can be used and modified without infringing upon any copyrights or licensing agreements. Open source solutions are created and improved by people rather than companies and no one "owns" the code.

Support is usually provided by other users through a forum. There is not typically any help desk or live tech support.

The open source, CMS solution we use and recommend is Joomla.org. It's a widely supported community portal that's surprisingly easy and quick to set up. You can see an example of it in action at SuccessNet.org.

This is a particularly good solution for one-time payment membership sites. Once a member has paid, they are sent to a registration page and will have access to the membership site through their login.

If you are going to have MANAGED subscriptions (expiring after certain periods of time) it gets a little trickier. There is a plugin for Joomla that will monitor your expirations and do recurring charges, but we found it to be a bit buggy at the time of our testing in early 2006.

We use aMember from CGI-Central.net in conjunction with Joomla to handle this for us. We had been using aMember for three years prior to going with Joomla, and we were able to integrate it for a one-time fee of only $40.

Joomla is extremely easy to manage and it can be done by a number of administrators with varying levels of authentication. You can even allow monitored or unmonitored submission of content by members.

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There are other open source community and CMS sites, like Drupal.org but Joomla seems to us to be the most popular, most robust and the best supported.

If you need to customize your site you can inexpensively and easily hire PHP programmers at places like RentACoder.com or Scriptlance.com. Or with some knowledge of HTML and CSS, you can customize the templates yourself from the Admin Control Panel.

Summary

Membership sites can be highly profitable, but they do require constant attention.

In order to keep your members happy and coming back, you must provide worthwhile content yourself and/or link to relevant content that's perceived by your members and prospective members as valuable. The more compelling and highly desired the information and services you provide, the easier it will be to sell memberships and keep them active.

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Membership sites can provide community, and good content to members. The model requires updates, monitoring, but can be very rewarding financially.

Membership Sites: Why Paying For Content Just Makes Sense Self-Assessment Questions

1. Does a membership site fit your product?

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2. What steps do you need to start your membership site?

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Next . . . Module 4: Packaging

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1st Edition

Packaging

Module 4

Module 4: Packaging

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Packaging

Module 4

Section 1: How To Create Photographs

By Mary E. Mazzullo

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How To Create Photographs

Mary Mazzullo is an amazing photographer who has done photography sessions for Kendra Todd (only female to ever win The Apprentice), Bill Romanowski (football player for 49ers and Broncos – just in case you did not know) and Joe Polish, not to mention almost every Internet Marketer worth mentioning.

What you will learn in this Section:
◈ What you need to do to produce quality graphics
◈ Create quality professional graphics of you and your products

When thinking about photography for your websites, there are some important things to consider.

Poses, Attitudes and Suggestions

First, you want to think about your product. What is it that you are selling? Does it have an attitude?

Is it serious, fun, or educational?

Check out some similar product websites to see how they are represented. What do you like about the way the models are presenting that product?

Do you like the facial expressions? What about the stance of the person – is it right for the product?

Are they seated, or standing, jumping or thinking? What body language is suitable for your product?

Are they holding a product? Is it a book or a CD, or a golf bag? Is the person in the photo comfortable and believable in their interaction with the product?

Now that you have observed what you like best in the poses of those models, either print out that page, or write down the description. Sitting, leaning forward, hands folded in front between legs, looking up at the prospect, with a concerned look? A smile? A frown? A quizzical look? Which best suits your product and the image that it is important to project? Include all details in your description.

Think about this – Leaning against a tree, casual in stance, musing about the bike ride in the country on a sunny day, which was just enjoyed because of the quality bike they just received from your site. In this case your model (or you) would be appropriately dressed for a bike ride, hair a bit tousled, helmet in hand (your 'go-with' sale). You want to look energized and refreshed, not tired or winded!

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Because this particular product may call for an outdoor shot, assure that there are no distracting backgrounds. Then if necessary, do a little Photoshop work, and blur the background a bit more.

Take your time with the shot, and check it often in the digital camera viewer. Are there bright sunny spots, or too dark shading? It may be a good idea to take your laptop and check the photos right there on location. If it isn't what you need, you will be able to adjust positioning right then and there.

You will be delighted to see that with some forethought and care, your photos will become exactly what you need.

What do you wear?

If you are selling professional services and products – dress appropriately. Men – suits (or sports coat and dress slacks) and ties are going to be your best choice. You want to project the style and attitude of the quality your product is going to bring into the lives of the purchaser. Stay away from white.

Do NOT wear a jacket with any kind of even a hint of plaid patterns. These will distort into a wavy pattern, and it is quite distracting. You can blur a bit to take that affect away somewhat. However, I believe that the least manipulation that needs to be done, the better. Always try to wear a color, rather than white shirt. It will enhance you, and will photograph better.

If you choose to wear casual clothes, be sure that the color is flattering to your skin tones and hair color. Never wear yellows or oranges, and even reds can be difficult on a lens. Again – no plaids, and stripes are questionable. If you aren't sure, ask a friend who gives good advice about what looks best on you.

Ladies – Suits with skirts or slacks will be your best choice. There are always appropriate exceptions – such as if you have an image you want to project that will complement your product better if you wear a dress, black leather or soft sweater look. Judge each product/information you will offer, and dress accordingly.

Of course this goes for anyone – but be sure that your outfits are clean (no stains on the front that you may have forgotten about – they will show up on camera). They should be ironed, no wrinkles are best – you want to look fresh, crisp, polished. It relays an attitude that your customer will pick up on instinctively.

Grooming

Haircuts should be at least a couple of days old. You never want have your hair cut the same day as your photo. If it

happens to be absolutely necessary, ask your stylist to make it look a few days old! They know how. If you color your hair, make sure you touch it up before your date with the camera.

You will not be happy with the results if you don't!

Ladies and Gents – take your comb or brush, and check a mirror. You know what you want to see as the end result. Help your photographer achieve that for you.

Ladies – take your lipstick and any necessary makeup (mascara?) with you. Touch it up as often as necessary. You want each shot to look as perfect as the last. Hair spray – take it if you need it.

You are the only one who knows what you want to look like – do all you can to assist that end result.

Preparing for your Photo Shoot

Practice the poses you like best before you ask a photographer to take the shots. This will make you feel more confident when they begin to arrange you according to your instructions. Be sure that your photographer understands the importance of capturing the right emotions in your pose. This is absolutely vital – and the key to what sells the product on your website.

Do take some time before your photo shoot, to research websites that have product presentations similar to what you have in mind. Print out the pages that have poses that appeal to you. Your photographer will be able to use those samples to pose you accordingly. Then you can achieve the results that will work for you.

Most photographers will be taking digital photos. If you are paying for their time, ask them to show you a Slide Show of what was just taken. This way you can know for sure if the moment you were striving for, was captured. Above all, do not get discouraged – Keep Practicing! It will become more comfortable.

Take your product with you, or use a white foam core board. The white board actually assures that your hands are in the proper positioning to be holding the message you will create for that space on your website. It is a vital part of your photo shoot. Have fun with it! Move it in front, to the side, kick it, hold it over your head, point to it – up, down, sideways – lean over it, cross your arms over it…You get the idea – Be Creative!

Have Fun – Your Confidence Shows Through

Most of all relax and have fun with the process. Enjoy the moment, and it will show through in your website. You will

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appear as someone who genuinely likes what they are offering to their customer. Be sincere and it will show through to your prospect. Your customer will know.

Excellent photography will go a long way in assisting you to create an ongoing relationship with your customer. Get those photos onto your websites, and change them up often. Keep it fresh and new with each new addition to your product list.. Give your customer a reason to keep checking back to look at new products – and have a new presentation photo for them to view. They won't get tired of seeing you.

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Next . . . Graphic Design Advice That May Save Your Life…Or At Least Your Project

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Module 4

Section 2: Graphic Design Advice That May Save Your Life…Or At Least Your Project

By Arnie Brooks

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Section 2

Graphic Design Advice That May Save Your Life…Or At Least Your Project

Graphic design is one of those things that can make or break your info product. Good graphics enhance your message and give your project that professional edge. Amie Brooks, Artistic Director of ACOM Creative, takes us through the steps of hiring a graphic designer and gives us tips on having a successful graphics project.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to find the right graphic designer for your project

◆ Questions to ask when hiring a graphic designer

◆ Tips on creating a successful working relationship with a graphic designer

Design 101

Some say there is a graphic designer in everyone. And although I believe that's true, I also believe that when you need a job done right, it's usually a lot simpler and more cost effective to call in the right professional.

In a market that calls for expert knowledge, quick turnaround and creative flare a graphic designer can be your best friend. Whether they design books, billboards, information products, or websites, a designer will take your message and, by selecting the right mix of type, color, imagery and texture transform the content into an informative, persuasive piece of visual communication.

Have you ever been stuck in traffic only to look up and have a billboard grab your attention? Or just think about the longs lines we have to sometimes stand in to buy groceries. Isn't there always a magazine or book of some sort that always persuades you to pick it up? And even our children, who don't have a clue about graphic design, seem to always gravitate to candy, toys, bubble gum (that's marketing to them, of course) while we're standing in those lines.

No one really thinks about the graphic designer who is behind it all, but without the expertise of this professional, the idea and the message, the product would never make it to market and be competitive enough to command the attention of consumers and ultimately facilitate the sale.

As the owner of an independent graphic design and marketing firm, I have worked with clients and projects galore: from small and large businesses all over the continental United States and abroad to Internet-based businesses, non-profit organizations and professionals (such as authors, speakers and brokers).

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In 13 years, I've learned a lot about pleasing clients, and all through the years, I've never had a client that did not become a repeat client.

Through this writing, I hope to offer some advice that will:

- Help you facilitate strong, profitable relationships with graphic design professionals

- Help you to better understand the graphic design professional and their industry

- Show you how having an awesome designer on your team can prove to be one of your best investments

Finding the Right Professional For Your Project

To find a designer, a prospective client should ask friends, business colleagues and graphics industry professionals to recommend design firms or freelancers and then study examples of their work. If you see pieces you admire, find out who designed them and investigate their professional background. Be sure to inquire about the designer's specialties, reputation, dependability and working relationships.

Jack-of-All-Trades?

It's important not to make a quick decision during the selection process, as all graphic designers are not the same. Graphic designers often specialize, focusing their talents to serve particular markets, such as magazine or book publishing, product identity and packaging, or advertising and promotions. You need a designer that specializes in your project area and communicating to your target market or at least find a designer who, although they specialize in various types of projects, have proven themselves in the area you need.

You are not looking for a jack-of-all-trades. And in reality, there is none. An honest designer will tell you upfront what they do well, and their portfolios should substantiate their claims. Be careful of the designer that claims they can do everything.

Exceptions to this rule do exist. If you are looking to work with a design firm that employs many talented individual, then they will more likely be able to follow-though on promises to provide multiple services well. In this instance, the firm likely has a pool of talent to pull from to meet your needs. They should still be able to show design samples that show consistent successful executions in a certain area of expertise.

Then, there is always the talented and experienced freelancer that seems to be able to do it all: catalogs, brochures, ads,

billboards, product packaging, books, coloring books, magazines, newsletters, greeting cards, calendars, sell sheets, trade show banners and displays, logos, icons, T-shirts, and websites. That's quite an exhaustive list, but you will see designers offering these services and more all of the time…and many of them can actually deliver quality designs of all of these items very well.

The thing to know is that these designers will typically have a wide array of skills, but usually focus on creating these promotional items for very specific target markets.

For example, this simply means that these designers may concentrate on providing designs for teens or children, but may not have much experience in producing designs for a more mature audience. Or they may be well versed in designing for retail markets, but may not have much experience in designing a corporate look and feel for a more business-oriented market. Now, this is not *always* the case, but it is a good rule of thumb to follow as you carefully make your selection. You just need to ask plenty of questions and see plenty of work samples to be sure, the design professional can produce well the type of work you need.

Top 3 Questions To Ask

1. May I see your portfolio?

Don't just ask to see design samples, discuss the samples with the designer. Inquire how they came up with a particular concept. This one question will show you a lot about the designer. It will not only allow you to see if they have a solid work history, it will also let you know how well the designer verbally communicates.

You'll also be able to see if your designer is unprofessional and speaks poorly or disrespectfully of past clients. Be sure to also ask the designer what his or her role was in the development of each design. You want to know for sure that he or she played a main role in developing the design you are impressed with and that they really are capable of producing something of like quality for you.

2. How long have you been a professional graphic designer?

Experience is key when selecting a designer. If you are working on a very important project or a project with a rather large scope, you want to make sure you employ a designer that will indeed meet your requirements.

I do have to warn you, though, that these designers may not be inexpensive. They are well seasoned in their field and can give

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you awesome design options fast that can do wonders for your image. And in my opinion, the right professional is well worth the investment.

3. How did you get into the industry?

From this question, you want to find out if the designer was professionally trained or self-trained. Nether is right or wrong. Principles of graphic design can be learned and it can also come naturally to those who seem to be born with creative talent.

Most importantly, you want to know that your prospective designer is a trained professional. This question will also help you to find out if they are truly working out of their passion and expertise or if they were, for some reason, forced into the industry and just want to pick up a few extra bucks.

What To Look For In a Professional

In addition to questioning and listening, it's important to know exactly what to look for in a designer. According to the Graphic Artist Guild, some factors to that may affect a your decision to hire include:

Talent/Expertise

Talent may be difficult to define, but standard measurements are based on evaluation of the firm's portfolio, references and design proposal. As a prospective client, you will need to assess if the designer has the capability to develop an idea or concept successfully as well as if he or she can use type, color and imagery effectively for the message and intended audience. In your assessment, ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ Does the work have impact?
- ◆ Does it fulfill its function and purpose?
- ◆ Did the designer find refreshing and innovative ways to solve unique problems?

Chemistry

In any creative process, personalities count, and being able to communicate easily is essential. You'll need to establish a comfortable working rapport with designers.

Reputation

It may be prudent for you to interview clients or vendors whom designers have worked with to see if they have been team players, delivered on time and stuck to the budget.

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Capacity

The scope and scale of your project, and/or the designer's capability to accommodate your special needs will often dictate in the selection process.

Winning Attributes of a Graphic Designer

As with any other professional, the graphic designer you choose to work with should be:

- Excited about your project and needs
- Professional
- Punctual
- Familiar with your industry
- Flexible
- Organized
- A strong communicator
- Attentive and able to carefully manage minor details
- Courteous and always polite
- Ready to show a varied portfolio that displays a consistent high caliber of professional work samples
- Knowledgeable of basic principles of marketing and grammar usage
- Well-informed about how their designs will support the big picture

Be an Ideal Client

Provide the designer with all required project information.

As the expert in your fields, you must communicate your needs and objectives to the graphic designer in terms of the product and the market. Using their particular style and expertise, the designer should offer you solutions for your unique situation.

Being ready and willing to give the designer all required information and project components in a timely manner helps the designer to be able to focus on what they do best – design.

Give clear, honest feedback.

When a design concept is submitted to you, take the time to review it thoroughly and give clear, detailed and honest feedback. If a part of the design doesn't seem to be working well, be upfront and say it early, and be sure to tell the designer why that particular element is not working. The designer should then offer workable solutions that satisfy your needs and objectives.

If you have hired a qualified designer, then you should be willing to try out their suggestions. Don't feel pressured, though, to go with a design you don't feel good about. If a design makes

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you feel uncomfortable in any way, then it will likely have the same effect on your audience and may not go over so well once it hits the market.

Just remember to take the time you need and work together with the designer so that you can be sure to end up with an innovative design that captivates your audience.

Be sure to have a written agreement.

Whether you draw up a contract or one is provided by your designer, please, please, please make sure you have a document that defines the terms of your project and the responsibilities of both parties. Clearly outlining project deliverables and expectations will help to eliminate any misunderstandings and future disagreements about the project.

Thorough discussions about objectives and contract terms work to create a relationship that addresses the concerns of both parties. All contracts are different, but there are some basic elements that should be included in order to help outline and clarify your relationship with the designer you select. Make sure your agreement addresses:

- ◆ Project fee(s)
- ◆ Payment terms and schedule
- ◆ Project deliverables
- ◆ Scope of work (including the amount of revisions allowed)
- ◆ Project schedule
- ◆ Cancellation policy
- ◆ Ownership of designs
- ◆ How you agree to handle major disagreements (i.e. third-party arbitration)

Depending on the project, some contracts will need to be more detailed than others. Both parties will need to determine and agree on what they feel comfortable with.

Pay on time and according to the terms of the agreement.

Nothing frustrates a designer more than for their client to not make good on the payment terms that were agreed upon. It's unfair to the designer, and the time they've spent on your project can never be gotten back.

As a young designer, I was burned many times trusting clients that I thought meant well. I completed the work and never got the thousands that were owed to me. It's just not fair to the designer.

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The Do's and Don'ts

Getting the most out of your relationship with a graphic designer just comes down to following a few simple rules that are commonly found in most ethical business practices. Here's a brief list of do's and don'ts that will help to facilitate a smooth relationship with your design professional:

- ◆ DO thoroughly investigate the designer

- ◆ DO provide all information before the project starts

- ◆ DO be sure about what you want and like

- ◆ DO give honest and constructive feedback

- ◆ DO provide feedback, approvals and information in a timely manner

- ◆ DON'T expect free work

- ◆ DON'T neglect a written contract

- ◆ DON'T beach your contract

- ◆ DON'T be pressured into approving designs that you don't feel comfortable with

- ◆ DON'T change the scope of the project after you begin unless you are willing to pay for additional time spent

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Editor's Note:

Graphics enhance the perceived value of your product. If you do not have the expertise yourself, hiring a graphic designer can provide the 'finishing' touch for your info product. Make sure you check portfolios and define expectations: needed time for delivery and budget, desired feel, and experience in matching graphics to content and market.

Good graphics paired with your content can make your info product outstanding and a desired 'buy' for your target market.

Graphic Design Advice Self-Assessment Questions

1. What graphics do you need for your info product?

2. E-book cover?

3. CD or DVD labels and case labels?

4. Workbook or notebook?

5. What's the look or feel you want for your market and your product?

6. Has the graphic designer you are considering ever done graphics for your niche market?

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Next . . . Exploring Your Packaging Options

![InfoProductBluePrint.com — your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product]

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Packaging

Module 4

Section 3: Exploring Your Packaging Options

By Brenda and Eddie Zimbardi

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Exploring Your Packaging Options

Our next writers, Brenda and Eddie Zimbardi, run a fulfillment house. Read as they share tips to make delivery and fulfillment of your info product go smoothly.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What costs to include for production of a physical product

◆ What is print on demand and how does it work

Exploring your packaging options

You always want to give a perceived value greater than what the customer paid for it. You can do this in several ways.

First of all, when you are pricing your product for sale include an 8% to 15% markup in there for production costs. This does not include your cost of shipping. Your shipping costs will be passed along to your customer. An 8% to 15% markup is an average. It may be a little bit less or it may be a little bit more, but that is an average to get you into the mindset that you need to set aside that money so that you can concentrate on the things that are going to generate the business.

Some of the ways that you can increase that perceived value is through the size of the package, the color of the package and using some little inexpensive additions to that packaging.

Let's cover the size first. The size of the package is basically going to be determined about the price that the client has paid. If they're paying $20, they're going to expect less than if they paid $2,000 for the package. If you have a $20 package or a $49 package, generally one CD or one DVD of content would be plenty for the perceived value of that product. Additionally, you may even through some bonuses in – either digitally or actually ship them through the mail through sheets of paper.

Packaging For Higher-End Products

The higher you go on the price, the more product you need to increase and the more bonuses you need to put into that package.

That being said, the number of DVDs or CDs that you put into that package based on that price will determine the way that it needs to be packaged in regards to either one CD in a case, to CDs a case, three CDs a case or all 24 to one case. It is all back to the price that they pay.

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I have seen somebody have a $100 product for one CD, I've seen someone pay $100 for three CDs in a triple case, and I've seen somebody spent $300 on 24 CDs in one case. I have also seen someone pay $2,000 on the same basic 20 or 24 CDs that are packaged in individual DVD cases, then grouped into similar subject areas and shrinkwrapped together and then separated again through use of color. We will be going into color next.

You can use color to actually have that perceived value be even greater. Let's say, if you are using a set of blue for all 10 of your CDs, you are going to use three or four colors segregating areas of interest and trying to divide that package into small little bits of information when actually it is the same subject or topic.

You also need to invest in graphics that are professionally done that pop color, not only on the jacket in any printed covers of your manuals, but also on the matching and coordinating CD or DVD label. So color can also be used if you have the inserts. An inexpensive way is to print that content on a pastel color or something that is easy to read, not something too dark, to give them that perceived value of what you are trying to portray.

Some of the additions that you can have is:

- shrink wrap that set together or those groups of sets together
- polywrap than individually so they are nice and shiny and clean when they get them
- you can put a plastic cover on a workbook or a textured background on the workbook to give that perceived value
- you can put in transcripts
- you can put in quotes
- you can throw in a little extras such as pens or different types of things such as magnets to put in.

You just have to work with your fulfillment center on what is reasonable to put into the package and how it effects the package weight class. Would that person be willing to pay that dollar amount to ship it to them because they are going to be covering the cost of that shipping? Shipping costs can be expensive if you start putting heavy items in your shipment. You don't want your $49 package to cost $58.00 to ship.

Print-On-Demand (POD)

The other option you can use when you are doing your packaging is to look for a print-on-demand option with somebody who will actually just print a few for you. Your price-per-product actually will be higher, but this will allow you to go in and see how that product is going to do. If you are looking just for buying in bulk and looking at buying 1,000 or 10,000

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pieces and then you find a typo or you find something wrong, or you find information that is not correct on your product that you didn't know then that you know now, then you are kind of stuck with that product.

Printing-on-demand allows you the flexibility to keep the marketing dollars in your pocket and then you can use that money to do split marketing if you want to, change your product or tweak your product.

There will come a time that it may be a smart business decision to buy in bulk and then start shipping it to your fulfillment company. Sometimes print-on-demand companies will give you a break, whether they do it themselves or they have a partner set up somewhere, where they can get that bulk product for less than you potentially could get it. That may be an option for you as you grow.

The other great thing about the print-on-demand packaging option is that if the packaging doesn't work, if the physical package does not work and you get a higher level of returns coming back, then you can maybe send a survey to that client or try to get some feedback from them. If it comes back that the packaging was either difficult to work with in one way or another it can be changed.

Some people get their workbooks and they make them perfect bound, but the workbook doesn't lay flat if it's a perfect bind. A perfect bind is very attractive for some people because it is very inexpensive when you buy in bulk, so they go, "Oh, I'm going to buy a bunch of books," but then it's difficult to use and the customer gets frustrated with the product.

Or they go to an inexpensive vendor and later find the CDs come loose from the cases and they get scratched and have a lot of replacement CDs. Those are actually your costs since it is not something the client is going to pay for again. The fulfillment company is not going to pay for it either so you are going to be eating that cost.

Make sure that you are choosing your packages not only just based on cost, but also based on being smart. Sometimes the least expensive way is not the best way to go.

Keep in mind your goal is to get this client to buy again.

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Exploring Your Packaging Options Self-Assessment Questions

1. Have I built in the 8% to 15% for production costs?

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2. How am I going to handle shipping costs? (Be sure to include thoughts on international orders.)

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3. What steps do I need to take to accomplish this?

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Next . . . Doing It All Yourself

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Packaging

Module 4

Section 4: Doing It All Yourself

By Brenda and Eddie Zimbardi

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Doing It All Yourself

We are joined again by Brenda and Eddie Zimbardi. Give careful attention as they talk about some of the drawbacks of Do-It-Yourself.

> **What you will learn in this Section:**
>
> ◆ What is involved if I do the fulfillment myself

The Do-It-Yourself Option

You may not have a problem fulfilling your orders in the very beginning, but eventually you will be spending more time filling orders than getting business.

Believe it or not, your product will look like it was not professionally done. You may never have done graphics before and you thought, "What a great idea. I'm going to do the graphics, it's easy." You impress yourself to no end, but most likely you are not going to impress your customers when they get something that looks like they could have done. Your goal is to not do that.

You want to become an expert and that is why they want to buy from you and invest in you. Your goal really is for them not only to perceive you as an expert, but to like your product well enough that they keep it instead, but than they go to you to purchase more product.

If you have to give up a little bit of your profit to hire somebody to help you in professionalizing your product and your system, then you need to do that. Most of your money is not going to be in that first product, it is going to be over time with the repeat customers and also the referrals they give to you.

It's difficult to, especially when you're multitasking, you say, "I can do that." You don't want to give that up to somebody else. You're not accustomed to paying that kind of money for something you can look at and say, "Well, I can do that for less and it will only take me x amount of hours."

Well, you've got to value your time enough to let somebody do it, have it professionally done, get it off of your plate and that you're not stressed out about it. Then start marketing your product.

Of course, there is help along the way in that as well. You may have the greatest product around, but if no one knows about it then it is also not going to move.

The key is to get balanced in your product by hiring someone professional so it looks professional. It should look good on the outside, be good on the inside where you can hear the audio

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nice and clear, you can see the video and the faces are clear. You do not want stuff going on in the background or a bad noise factor because it was done with a microphone on an actual video recorder instead of a microphone on that person.

You want to really think back to the times when you purchased something, you received that product, and you were disappointed because it was pretty much crap, and you felt like you were scammed.

I know there is a confidence level in your product, which is awesome, because you know the content and that content may great. But the presentation may undermine your message. If it does that, then it is worth nothing.

You need to think about hiring in and investing in your product and yourself. You don't save yourself any money doing it yourself in the long run. You're actually going to lose money because of the higher returns and the loss of repeat business from people not having the confidence level to buy again from you or to refer you to their friends or their sphere of influences.

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Save yourself the hassles and pay the price from the very beginning. Let your idea make you the money. It may make you less money per product, but if you can get it in people's hands you're going to make more profit in the end.

Doing It All Yourself Self-Assessment Questions

1. If I am still considering doing it all myself, what background and experience do I have to confirm my work will look just as professional as hiring someone?

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2. Even if I'm confident I can do it myself, have I given enough though to what my time is worth? Is it worth giving up that time that I could be doing something else such as marketing my product?

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Next . . . Module 5: Copywriting

Module 5: Copywriting

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
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Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

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Copywriting

Module 5

Section 1: Copywriting

By Carl Galletti

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Info Product Blueprint

Section 1

Copywriting

Carl Galletti is one of the most successful copywriters online. Read as he shares his tips for making your copywriting effective in selling your product.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ The 3 critical questions a reader needs to know about copy on your website

◆ Starting points for effective headlines

◆ How to use subheadlines to focus the reader's attention

◆ Tips on formatting and layout to improve conversion

◆ Keys to meaningful testimonials

◆ Search engine optimization through keyword rich copy

Overview

Copywriting is often misunderstood. It is not so much about writing as it is about selling.

Many years ago, an advertising genius, Albert Lasker, made a lot of money in the advertising business. Yet, he couldn't define it to his satisfaction. He knew that if he had a proper definition, he would be able to create even more successful advertising.

Along came an former Canadian mounted policeman named John E. Kennedy who spelled out the definition to Lasker's satisfaction… in only 3 words: "Salesmanship-in-Print."

Lasker went on to be one of the most successful ad men of all time. To this day, no one has come up with a better definition.

So, there you have it. The foundation of all advertising, salesmanship-in-print. Of course, to update it to modern times and go beyond just print advertising, you could call it "salesmanship multiplied." That applies to any medium, whether the Internet, or radio or TV.

Well, now that you have the proper definition, what are you going to do with it?

I suggest that you evaluate all your promotions, paid or not, on the basis of the results it brings in rather than on how pretty it looks or how good it makes you feel to see it. This is the trap that most people get into. They have someone produce a good looking ad and run it. When someone hands them an ugly ad, they reject it and go with the pretty one.

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I've seen this happen over and over again. Yes, and even today, nearly one hundred years after Kennedy defined advertising for Lasker.

If you doubt this, just test it and find out for yourself. But, ever since Kennedy defined advertising as salesmanship in print, people have been turning out ugly ads that get better results than pretty ones. So, don't be quick to judge on looks alone.

In this section on copywriting, I'll try to give you some of the important points you'll need to look out for to produce your own successful ads, websites, etc.

I won't talk much about graphics…only to the point that it makes it easier to get the sales message across. What I focus on is results, not aesthetics.

Getting results makes you money. Aesthetics makes you pretty. Which would you rather be, pretty broke or filthy rich? It's your decision.

The Personal Touch

The first thing you need to learn about the actual writing of the copy is that you should write as if you are writing to one person. This makes it easy for your reader to realize you are directing your thoughts to him or her. It also helps to build rapport with your reader. It further helps you to focus on the most important thing: your reader. And not yourself.

Imagine your reader thinking this as you ask them to read your ad/website:

- So What?
- Who Cares?
- What's In It For Me?

Now, start from there. You have to break through that barrier. There are thousands of advertisers/websites competing for your reader's attention. Therefore, they have to skim everything they come upon and make a quick decision about whether to read further or not.

If the first words they read don't break through this barrier, you will not have a sale.

So, you'll need to say something which grabs their attention (it's the headline and we'll get to that in a moment) and HOLDS their attention throughout.

Here are some ways you can do that.

First, use "you" and "your" instead of "I," "me," "we," and "us" whenever possible and when it makes sense. This will force you to focus on your reader.

Rather than say, "We have the best product," say, "Your sales will double when you use this product." Do you see how the focus shifted from "you" the seller to "you" the reader?

Another way to add the personal touch is to relate a personal story. Make your product the hero of the story and remember to slant it so that you are always focusing on how the product benefits the user, even though the user may be you.

Headlines

David Ogilvy, one of the most famous of all advertising men, said "Headlines, more than anything else, decide the success or failure of an advertisement."

The first thing an advertisement must do is attract the attention of the reader. Without the reader's attention, nothing else will be read and therefore no sale will be made.

Why is this?

Well, the headline got it's start in the newspaper industry. When the newspaper got so big that no one had time to read every story, they needed a method to pick out the stories that interested them most.

The newspaper industry invented the headline to solve this problem. By putting a short few words in bigger type at the top of the story, readers could decide if they were interested in that story and read it or not based upon their interests. Obviously, different readers had different interests but regardless of what their interests, they could use the headlines to find which stories they wanted to read.

The advertising industry, being allied closely to the newspaper industry (that's how newspapers made their money), quickly adopted the same technique.

So, how do you create good headlines?

The scope of headline writing is well beyond this piece, so I'll give you some resources to follow up on. But, here are some quick tips that will make your headlines much more interesting.

First, address the reader. Yes, that means use the words "You" and "Your" whenever you can.

Here are some famous examples of successful headlines using these words:

- "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?"
- "You Press the Button – We do The Rest"
- "The Skin You Love To Touch"

In general, you should be a collector of successful headlines. By studying them you can possibly find out what made them work and adopt that technique for your own headlines.

There are many different types of headlines that have been successful.

One type introduces a story. Some examples:

- "They Laughed When I Sat Down…But When I Started To Play…"
- "A Hog Can Cross The Country Without Changing Trains – But You Can't"
- "Oh, Darling – You Shouldn't Have!"
- "The Kid in Upper 4"
- "The Lazy Man's Way to Riches"

My favorite type of headline is the "How To." For example,

- "How To Tune A Piano"
- "How To Win Friends and Influence People"
- "How To End Money Worries"
- "How To Get A Better Job"

Another variation of this is to just use the word "How" without the "To." Some examples are…

- "How I Raised Myself From Failure To Success Through Selling"
- "How Pepperidge Farm Bread Helps You Keep That Radiant Look"
- "How This New Invention Is Revolutionizing Concrete Construction"
- "How The Tin Lizzy Became a Lady"

Here are some things to inject into your headlines:

- News
- Specifics
- Price
- Special Offer
- Easy Payment Terms
- Something for FREE
- Information of Value
- Quote/Testimonial
- Challenge

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For more information on headlines, you may want to pick up the following books:

- ◆ "Tested Advertising Methods" by John Caples
- ◆ "How To Write A Good Advertisement" by Vic Schwab
- ◆ "The Robert Collier Letter Book" by Robert Collier
- ◆ "Ogilvy On Advertising" by David Ogilvy

Subheads

Imagine your reader going through your copy and being challenged for his attention by other things going on in the room. A telephone ringing, a spouse or child wanting something, etc. All of these things are competing for your reader's attention and somehow your copy must prevail.

Subheads, like headlines, grab the reader's attention and re-focus it on what you are saying.

The rule for subheads is to use them to break up the "block" of text that is your copy. They are used in combination with paragraphs, which work fine for a while but every few paragraphs you will want to place a subhead which grabs the reader's attention and announces what's coming next.

I always bold the subhead (just like the headline but in smaller type, closer to the size of the body copy, sometimes slightly larger but never as large as the headline.

On websites I use color to further call attention. Red and dark blue are my favorites. Black is also acceptable as long as it is bold.

Format and Layout

Take a look at popular, successful examples of what you are writing copy for and use the same or similar format for your piece.

In print, I like to use a Times Roman font for the headline and either a Courier (typewriter-like) font or Times Roman for the body copy.

On a website it's different. I use a san-serif type font like Arial or Tahoma for the headline and make it big, bold and red.

Use a smaller version of the same font in black for the body copy – 12 to 14 points is good for most fonts but again, look for examples that look good to you and are easy to read. And, hopefully, are successfully getting results (i.e., "sales"). Then copy their style.

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Do not use a pattern or dark color as a background to your copy. It makes it hard to read. You want your copy to be easy to read. Don't risk chasing your reader away because it was too hard to see the words.

Always stay away from "reverse" copy. That is white letters on a black background or any light color on a dark background. Again, it makes it hard to read.

Don't use more than one font for your body copy. You can use one other font for your headline/subheads but that's it. Too many types of fonts make it look cheap and gaudy. You don't want your reader to look down on your writing even before they read the words.

Use italics sparingly. Italics are very often used for quotes but when the type size is small, it makes the quotes hard to read. You don't want your reader having trouble reading your testimonials, do you?

Italics are best used for emphasis in headlines and only for one to three words at a time.

If you use italics for quotes, try to make the point size big enough to be easily read but not look out of place.

On websites, one technique that is used successfully is to put the testimonial in a box with a border around it and to put a very light yellow background in it. And then use a courier font because that is what most people read personal email in. It therefore gives your testimonials a more "personal" touch.

Stories

Stories are one of the most successful copy techniques of all time. Two of the longest running ads (each ran for about 40 years) are:

- ◆ "They Laughed When I Sat Down – But When I Started To Play…"
- ◆ "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?"

Both of these tell a story.

Other examples include:

- ◆ "The Lazy Man's Way To Riches"
- ◆ "The Story of Two Men"
- ◆ "The Story the Street Car Tells"

The first thing you should know about using stories for copy is that the story "shows" or "demonstrates" the product solving the problem it was designed to handle.

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What many do not know is that the reader injects himself (or herself) into the story, usually as the narrator or user of the product…the one who receives the advantage of using the product.

The whole thing happens at a very subliminal level, which is why it works so well.

The best way to learn how to write story copy is to read a lot of ads that use this technique and practice writing them yourself.

Testimonials

Testimonials are some of the most powerful tools for the copywriter. They represent a user of the product or at least someone willing to endorse the product and certify that the product really does work as described.

Let me tell you a story about a testimonial that helped me in my career. One day Direct Marketing magazine came in the mail and I noticed a picture of Tom Collins on the cover. Tom was a legendary copywriter, so I turned to the article and read it.

A few months later I received a brochure from New York University for their extension classes in the evening. As I was paging through it I noticed a class being taught by Tom Collins.

Even though I lived nearly two hours away, I immediately signed up for the class and drove to New York City once a week for eight weeks to take the class. Mostly, I wanted to be taught by the master himself.

The class was filled with students much younger than I was and they all regarded Tom as being "some old guy" who was probably out of touch with the subject. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was the only one who knew he was one of the world's greatest copywriters.

So, I made sure I got to know Tom. We'd talk after class about marketing and got to know each other on a friendly basis.

After the class was over – I got an "A" by the way – I called Tom on the phone and said I was thinking of looking around at some of the ad agencies in New York for a copywriting position and did he have any advice for me?

Well, yes he had and he made some very good suggestions. Later, I decided to go the freelance route but a couple days after our telephone conversation, I received a "recommendation letter" from Tom.

I later made good use of Tom's recommendation in constructing a testimonial for my copywriting services.

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That testimonial helped get me credentialed as a top rate copywriter and paved the way for me getting assignments with Gary Halbert, Jay Abraham and many other top marketers.

It helped establish my career as a copywriter.

That's my testimonial story.

So, how do you get testimonials? Well, the first thing you do is ask for them from your customers. Usually, your customers will send unsolicited comments about how great your product is. This is especially true of products which are high in quality.

When someone sends you an unsolicited comment, contact them immediately. First, thank them for the kind words and then ask for permission in writing to use their testimonial. It's best to send them a "release" form which basically gives you the right to use their testimonial in any way you see fit and for whatever reason. There are a lot of "standard" release forms around but be sure to check with your lawyer to make sure it adequately protects you.

Sometimes, to stimulate the inflow of testimonials, a company runs a contest or gives away a prize for the best testimonial. You can also give away something of value but low in cost to every person sending in a testimonial.

You should also know that whatever is said in the testimonial is treated by the governmental regulatory agencies as if it was said by you. In other words, if one of your customers makes a claim in the testimonial and you use it in your advertising, you will be required to back up that claim with scientific proof that it is true.

For example, if the customer claims in a testimonial that your skin crème makes them look twenty years younger and you use it in your advertising, a government regulatory agency can ask you to provide clinical proof. You must also show that you had the clinical proof before running the ad.

If you have any questions about the legal ramifications of testimonials and product claims, be sure to consult an appropriately experienced attorney.

One last thing about testimonials that many do not know is that you do not have to include the entire testimonial. In fact, you shouldn't. Just pick out the salient point or points you want to make and leave out the rest, putting in ellipsis (…) for missing words that occur in the middle of the quote.

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Keyword-Rich Copy

On the web there is a special requirement for using words which will get you a better ranking with the search engines.

You can consult the Overture Keyword Search Tool to find what keywords have been used over the last month to search for subjects that fall into your category.

You can find an easy software tool to do the same thing at GoodKeywords.com.

Let's say you are selling "golf clubs." A search at Overture reveals that the third most common search term used with "golf" in it is "golf club." How would you use this information?

Well, the first thing you'd do is use the full term "golf club" whenever you need to refer to a "club," especially at the beginning of your copy.

So, the sentence, "Now pick up your club and hold it…" would then become "Now pick up your golf club and hold it…."

As you can see, it might be a little awkward for a human reading the second sentence but it is still very readable. And for the search engines "golf club" would give you more points than just "club" would. "Club" could mean an organization, etc. With the word "golf" next to it, it would be more closely associated with the actual term you want.

Also, look for other terms that don't exactly have the words that describe your product but are closely associated with it. For example, in the above example, you might notice that "golf gift" is the sixth most searched for term with "golf" in it. Well, your golf clubs would make an excellent "golf gift."

So, instead of saying "These XYZ clubs make an excellent present for that special person in your life," you would, instead say "These XYZ golf clubs make an excellent golf gift for the golfer in your life."

Now, your English teacher would not approve and professional writers might cringe, but the search engines would more accurately place you in their searches.

One other thing, be sure to use proper names and product names in your copy, if those names are searched for terms.

For example, you might mention Callaway golf clubs, if you sell those because they are the eleventh most searched for term with "golf" in it.

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And you might want to mention Arnold Palmer, if relevant, because 2500 searches were done for him last month.

Reading Level

The reading level of a piece of copy is a measurable score which approximately tells you what school grade level a piece of text is written for, on average.

This term is often misunderstood.

Those who wish to reach a college market might assume that their copy needs to score at the college level and nothing can be further from the truth.

The fact is that powerful words score at lower grade levels and are much more effective regardless of what your market is.

I recommend going for a low grade level on your score. The lower the grade level, the more people will be able to read and understand your copy. If you are trying to reach the most buyers, you will need to appeal to the larger numbers.

If you want to limit your sales, aim for the higher grades (why would you?).

Now, how do you tell what the grade level of your copy is? Simple. If you use Microsoft Word, you must turn on "readability statistics." To do this, pull down the "Tools" menu, select the "Options" choice, select the "Spelling & Grammar" tab and make sure the "Show Readability Statistics" box is checked in the "Grammar" section at the bottom of the box.

If the "Show Readability Statistics" box is not able to be checked, first make sure the "Check Grammar with Spelling" box is checked.

When that is done, the "Show Readability Statistics" box will now be able to be checked. Then, pull down the "Tools" menu, and select "Spelling and Grammar F7." When Microsoft Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it displays information about the reading level of the document.

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This is an example of what you'll see. The bottom score "Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level" is the one you're looking for.

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Attention Span

Remember, your readers are bombarded every day with demands for their attention. They are continually interrupted. That's why it seems like they have a short attention span.

If you make your copy easy to read and understand, and make sure it is also interesting, you will hold your reader's attention for as long as you need…which is until the sales process is complete and you have the order.

Copywriting Self-Assessment Questions

1. If you have absolutely no interest in writing copy at this time, the best thing to do is hire or partner with someone who is good at it.

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2. If you are ready to learn more about copywriting, take the time now to watch the DVD with notepad in hand to make sure you get the most out of it.

Next . . . Module 6: Designing Your Website

Info Product
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Designing Your
Website

Module 6

Module 6: Designing Your Website

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Designing Your Website

Module 6

![InfoProductBluePrint.com - your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product](logo)

Section 1: Websites That Sell

By Adam Ray

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Websites That Sell

Your website is your salesperson for your info product. Make sure your website is created to sell, not just inform. Whether you use a program like Dreamweaver, a template or hire a website designer you need to understand what to include and expect from your website. Adam Ray of PageOne Real Estate takes you through the critical points you need to include in your website.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Why you need to give your web designer the sales message to include on your website

◆ Why tweaking a website can improve your conversion

There are literally millions of websites out there. Perhaps you even have a site for your business. When creating a website with the intention of generating leads and increasing sales, several important factors must be taken into consideration. Your business is sure to see the profits once you understand the correct process for building a successful site. To produce a website that sells, keep the following points in mind:

◆ The Website Itself
◆ Driving Traffic to the Site
◆ Converting Traffic into Leads
◆ Follow-up
◆ Testing

Before shopping for a site designer, create a general layout. What type of feel do you want for your site? Consider your sales message and imagine how it will look on a screen. Prepare an effective sales scrip prior to building your site, this will pay off tremendously in the end. Remember, it is not the job of your Web Designer to sell your product.

The website itself should be visually appealing. Colors and images are important, but should not distract from the overall objective of the site, your product.

It is important to keep both the content and aesthetics of your landing page as simple and concise as possible. A potential customer should be able to easily navigate your site without feeling overwhelmed by information. If a visitor has any reason to leave your site, you have lost a sale.

Driving traffic to your site is the next step building a successful website. After all, what is the point of having a website if it is never seen? The easiest way to promote your website is by accessing your existing database. Let current customers, as well as prospects, know that you have a website as a new source for information. Describe the content and be sure to tell them the web address.

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Another important way to get hits to your page is through search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, or MSN. The beauty of the search engine is that it is direct marketing in its purest form. You are on the path to success if your site is in front of a person searching for your product. The hardest part is getting your site to the eyes of the consumer.

Once a query is entered, a search engine results page (SERP) comes up with websites that best match the keywords. Although several pages of sites come up, users rarely advance past the first or second page. Being on the first page of a SERP means more visitors, and ultimately, more sales.

There are two ways to get your site on the SERP. The first is by paid placement and the second is through natural, or organic, results.

Paid placements are the highlighted sites found at the very top and to the right of the SERP. Search engines charge an exorbitant amount of money for these slots, depending on the competitiveness of the search terms. A major benefit to this type of marketing is that right away, you are on the first SERP. Being on the first page equals more traffic to your site. Paid placements are great if your budget allows you to pay for each visitor. However, it does add up.

Natural rankings are all of the other sites, usually 10 per page. The search engine has determined these websites provide the very best information for a given search term. The good thing about a natural ranking is that there is no charge for visitors; unfortunately, getting to the top is a bit tricky. In order to be in the top 10, a search engine must determine that your site is the best on the Internet.

The easiest way to get your site recognized by a search engine is through Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO is a technical process involving coding, site content, and the number of other sites with links pointing to your page. There are several companies out there that specialize in this service and can effectively drive your site to the top of the search engines.

Converting these visitors into leads is the next step. Capturing contact information is the most proficient way of achieving this task. Most people are unwilling to give out personal information unless they get something in return. Have the prospect fill out a contact form with their name, email, and phone number in exchange for something free. You will see a much higher conversion rate by offering a reason to fill out a form. Web surfers want something free and they want it instantly. By giving a little, you get back so much more.

You have a lead, now you must develop an efficient follow-up plan. You can probably handle writing individual emails to 20 leads. However, what happens when you start receiving

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hundreds, or even thousands of leads? You no longer have the time, energy, or resources to respond to each and every one. Implement a method that will systemically respond to new leads.

There are programs that will send a series of emails tailored to fit an individuals request. This type of automation means a prospect will be contacted immediately and you will have more time to run your business. Communicating proficiently with thousands of leads is a necessity to any great sales page.

So, you have a visually clean website, focused sales message, and traffic is being driven to the site. Contact information is being captured and your database is updated constantly. Prospects are receiving an automatic follow-up, but you still have one more important step.

With any great marketing campaign, testing and measuring the results is key. To further increase sales, you might need to adjust one or several parts of the page. This could be as simple changing a color or as in-depth as re-writing your sales message. Sometimes, a small, seemingly insignificant change will yield a much greater response. Remember to keep a close eye on traffic logs and calculate conversion rates on a regular basis. You always want to try and improve your visitor to lead ratio.

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Now that you have a website equipped to sell, you can sit back and let the power of the Internet work for you. Your 24/7 sales presentation is ready for the world to see.

Websites That Sell Self-Assessment Questions

1. Are you going to do the site on your own? If not, who is the #1 person you will delegate this task to?

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2. List 3 URLs of websites that have a proven record of selling effectively. (If you need help, ask a friend, a JV partner or someone how has a proven record of a site that sells effectively.)

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3. Spend some time reviewing the three websites to determine what you think makes them so effective.

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Next . . . How To Capture Leads

Info Product
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Designing Your
Website

Module 6

Section 2: How To Capture Leads

By Eddie Zimbardi

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

How To Capture Leads

In the world of ecommerce, millions of sites are fiercely competing with each other to gain new clients. For any ecommerce site to succeed, it must capture the interest and the trust of its visitors. It is not enough that your site is impeccably designed or has the latest in animation of content.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Tips on picking an autoresponder company

◆ Things to include in your contact strategy plan

You should focus your efforts not only in attracting visitors but also in leading them to make a purchase. There are dozens of marketing strategies you can use to attract more buyers and pump up your sales. One of them is by establishing an excellent and professional reputation for prompt and efficient response.

As more potential customers visit your site, you should expect a flood of inquiries and requests for information. This is an excellent opportunity for you to capture more clients and lead them to buying from your site. Thus, it is important that you carry out an efficient and prompt response to every email you receive. The fastest and most effective way to do this is by utilizing Autoresponder services.

Autoresponder services use a computer program that automatically returns a prewritten message to anyone who sends an email to your site. It is widely used for responding to consumer inquiries and visitor comments and suggestions. Autoresponder services are also used by e-zines in responding to people who subscribe or unsubscribe to their online magazines. Companies, who send out their e-newsletter regularly, also use autoresponder services.

How can effective Autoresponder services help?

The answer lies in its ability to return a prompt response to any e-mail the site receives. By responding rapidly and efficiently, you create a very good impression on your potential customer. Good autoresponder services help you get important information back to these customers immediately. An effective autoresponder service helps you communicate your message promptly, creating a sense of professionalism and efficiency that your clients will definitely appreciate.

Another very important advantage of autoresponder services is that it saves time with multiple marketing tasks. Certainly, you do not have enough time to personally make and send all correspondence. Autoresponder services allows you to send

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thank you letters, newsletters, product information, brochures, orders, et cetera, to hundreds of clients almost immediately and simultaneously. Autoresponder services are also indispensable in any email marketing campaign.

Choosing an Autoresponder

Choosing the right Autoresponder services is very important. What then should you look for in an autoresponder service? First, you should pick an autoresponder service that is reliable and can give you 24/7 service. You cannot afford to lose a customer because your autoresponder service failed to answer his query or request for information. The ability to respond promptly is the first thing you must look for in any autoresponder services.

Another key factor you should consider when choosing autoresponder services is flexibility. Good autoresponder services allow you to customize unique responses that will have maximum effect on the customer. You should avoid creating an impression that the customer is communicating with a machine instead of a real human being. Excellent autoresponder services lets you provide the information that is specifically targeted for what the potential customers are looking for. Because any email from potential customers essentially represent the customer's intent on getting more information about your product, which can ultimately lead to direct sales, all emails are important. Thus, a top autoresponder service must fulfill all of these duties to help you boost your business.

There are many autoresponder services out there. Here are three of the ones we know have worked effectively for us – 1ShoppingCart, Email Aces and AWeber.

Developing a Contact Strategy

After you have selected what system you are going to use, the next step is to layout your business strategy to begin building your list.

NO matter what business you are trying to build online, you will need sales leads if you are ever going to make sales, and sales leads are what you are trying to generate if you are marketing on the Internet. In order to survive, any website needs a steady flow of qualified leads.

The aim of any lead generation campaign is to build your mailing list. Internet marketers often say, "The money is in the list," which is totally true. A list of responsive buying customers that trust you is worth its weight in gold!

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While spam filtering has lessened the impact of email marketing, it's still a viable means to getting your sales messages out there. In theory, email marketing is free, although of course its costs you in terms of your time. The theory behind email marketing is that by using a "hook" such as a free product or some other incentive, you can "funnel" interested parties onto specific products and services.

When you consider generating leads via an email campaign there are basically three avenues you can explore: email signatures, joint ventures and safe lists. One word of warning though, and that is avoid spam at all cost. One spam complaint can seriously damage your online business. You should familiarize yourself with the laws concerning spam, and at the very least ensure you include a un-subscription link in ALL of your marketing emails. Due to spam, it is advisable that you avoid buying leads, no matter how reputable the company. Buying leads can easily lead to a spam complaint – you have been warned!

In its simplest form, email marketing is a matter of putting a signature in all your emails that contains a link to your main product.

JV's

If you are looking to vastly increase your list quickly then a joint venture (JV) may well be the key you need. In its simplest form, in a JV you supply the product and a fellow marketer supplies the leads and you share the profits. Hopefully, you will then get the emails of your fellow marketer's customers, so you can then mail them with further offers.

When considering a joint venture there are many considerations you have to think about, but the main one, before you consider contacting anyone about mailing to their list, is "what's in it for THEM," not "what's in it for me." NEVER write to a fellow marketer unless you can offer them something of value in return for their help, and that is not necessarily just a share of the profits. Be inventive!

Safe List

Finally you have safe lists. A safe list is a list of people that have agreed to receive marketing emails in return for being able to send their own marketing email. The value of this form of marketing has never been that good. After all, you are trying to sell to people who are only interested in selling to you!

Forums

One other highly effective way of generating interested leads is posting in forums that are related to your area of business.

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Include a link to your site in your signature and people interested in your sphere of business will often click it if your forum post was interesting.

Other Means of Lead Generation

Three other popular sales lead generation techniques are submitting articles to e-zine publishers and article directories, press releases and testimonials for products in your target market. You can use pay-per-click advertising such as Overture or Goggle AdWords to advertise your site and draw in interested leads.

No matter what lead generation technique you employ, you will need a way to capture your leads email address when they arrive at your site.

Pop Up and Pop Unders

The traditional method has been to use a pop up or pop under which contains some incentive to get someone to sign up. With the invention of pop up stoppers, their effectiveness has dwindled and therefore unstoppable pop ups (also know as hover ads or slide in ads) have evolved. This new generation of pop ups are built into your webpage and as such cannot be stopped. Simply do a search on Goggle for "unstoppable pop up" and you are sure to find a software solution to produce these types of pop ups for you. You may personally hate pop ups, but they do work.

Name Squeeze Page

The other alternative is to use what is called a "name squeeze page."

In essence, a name squeeze page is a web page whose sole purpose is to capture an email address.

They generally contain a small amount of information about the product or service you are selling as a "teaser" for the reader and will contain a sign up form, with a message like "to find out more simply fill in the form to be immediately directed to further details on this amazing product."

A name squeeze page not only helps build your list, this information can also be used with certain software to help personalize your site for your visitor, a technique that has been shown to increase sales. Again, simply do a search for name squeeze page generators.

No matter how you generate sales leads there is one thing always to bear in mind, and that is to be effective your leads must be in your targeted market. If, for example, you are selling

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Internet marketing products, then it's no use advertising on a site that is all about scuba diving!

When you start to build your online business, ensure you include a well thought out sales lead generation strategy from the beginning. Do not make it an afterthought; this should be in place from the very beginning if you want your business to be a success.

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Make sure you mastermind with other successful marketers to determine what will work best for your product and/or services that you will offer. You may have a certain type of lead capture page in mind when a few simple variations may work better for your site.

Test, Test and more testing! And you will deliver customers and sales to your business.

How To Capture Leads Self-Assessment Questions

1. What three strategies are you going to use for lead generation?

2. What do you need to do to implement those strategies? (Write an ad? Write an article?)

3. Get an autoresponder company and write a series of emails?

4. List the steps for implementation. Now pull out your calendar and put a time on your to do list.

Next . . . How To Work With Autoresponders

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

**Info Product
Blueprint**
1st Edition

Designing Your
Website

Module 6

Section 3: How To Work With Autoresponders

By Tim Cleaveland

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Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 3

How To Work With Autoresponders

Tim Cleaveland, of TheWebSkeptic.com, is an IT pro with a difference. He can talk 'people talk' and explain technical issues in easy to understand words. Tim will go over what you need to do to use autoresponders on your website.

Autoresponders – A Key To Your Business Automation

Autoresponders are one of the most important tools for your business. Without them, you are doing more work than necessary. Without them, you have the potential to lose prospects, thereby making it harder for you to grow your lists for your Internet business. Using an autoresponder correctly can automate a great portion of your Internet business, thereby freeing up your time for other things in your life.

We'll discuss the following:

◆ What is an autoresponder?
◆ Types of Autoresponders
◆ Criteria you can use to choose an autoresponder
◆ Strategies you can use with your autoresponder service

What is an Autoresponder?

So what exactly is an autoresponder? It is a piece of software that originated from the very popular fax-on-demand software. It is designed to automatically respond to an email message sent to it. It can also be used in an ongoing fashion to simplify and automate many communication tasks in your business. We'll go over specific examples later.

Types of Autoresponders

Autoresponder programs can vary in terms of their cost, capability, and function. In terms of costs, you can receive autoresponders for free. You can also purchase some at a specific price, where others charge a monthly fee.

In some cases, you may receive an autoresponder service with your hosting service. In general, you would want to avoid these types because they offer only basic functions. Also, if you switch hosting later on, you will either lose all your lists or have to migrate them to another autoresponder service. Likewise, all

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of the scripts you have set up will need to be rebuilt as well. These migration activities are not always easy.

The majority of successful Internet marketers choose to use a separate auto responder service to help manage their business. The most popular services are AWeber (AWeber.com) and GetResponse (GetResponse.com). Another good option is AutoResponse Plus (AutoResponsePlus.com). You pay one price for this product and it is yours for lifetime use.

You can also choose to purchase an autoresponder service that is a separate component of a complete ecommerce solution like 1shoppingcart.com. This is a viable option as well. You may want to choose this option if you want to eventually use the entire ecommerce solution for all your Internet business as it grows.

Criteria to consider when choosing an autoresponder

So how do you know what features in an autoresponder are valuable to have? There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration.

The autoresponder service you select should provide many of the following features:

Personalized Responses

Instead of sending out generic messages to a prospect or a customer, wouldn't it be better to use their last name and/or first name? This goes a long way to build and maintain rapport with your list members. It makes them feel like the message was personally sent to them.

Spam Tools

When you compose a message to send, you want to make sure it gets to the person you want. You don't want email services blocking your messages because they think you are sending Spam. A good autoresponder service will have Spam tools that will assist you when you compose messages. For example, in AWeber, it has a tool called *Spam Assassin* built into it. It grades your message and its potential for Spam. This is especially useful.

The ability to create and maintain multiple autoresponder lists at the same time.

This means you can create a list for whatever purpose you want. I do some autoresponder work for Ken McArthur. He has things categorized by projects, products, and internal communication. You can do the same thing for your Internet business.

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The ability to create an autoresponder series within a list YOU create.

This allows you to create multiple messages in a list and that can be sent out in a timed sequence. This is also known as a sequential autoresponder series. You should be able to indicate the interval in days between messages as well.

Having this one feature alone allows you to preprogram a series of messages for a list, potentially for years in advance. Can you see how having an autoresponder can save you tons of time and make your life easier?

- The ability to test your message or message series before you actually activate the message(s) and send them out.

- The ability to create your autoresponder messages in either text or html format.

If you give a person a choice, they'll be more responsive and appreciate the choice. Some people are more visual-based and will appreciate the html format. Others like text based messages. Just remember that you'll need to test both types if you are going to use them.

The ability to send out broadcast messages at will.

This feature enables you to send out an email to a list instantaneously. Because you are sending it out from an autoresponder system, you can keep all of these messages to refer back to later.

The ability for Subscriber signup via a web form.

This enables you to build a form you can incorporate into a web page to capture lead information. After the info is entered, the lead information should be recorded in your autoresponder system.

The ability to captured those people and their relevant information that subscribe to your Autoresponder list.

You want to be able to capture all this data for people who are on your list, whether they are prospects, customers, affiliates, or former customers. Having all this information stored automatically eliminates the manual task of keeping track of all this information.

The ability to easily import and export opt-in subscriber lists.

This allows you to use the data from your list for your own analysis. You can also export the data to another autoresponder system if the need arises.

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<u>Automatic removal links within each message</u>

If this feature is included, the process of unsubscribing a person becomes automated, hence saving you time.

<u>Statistics and graphs</u>

A good autoresponder system will have reporting and tracking features built into it.

Functions that can be automated with an autoresponder

An autoresponder service used in the correct way can not only automate the daily tasks of manually replying to requests for information, but also provide a means of instant response to the recipient.

Autoresponders can be used in an unlimited number of ways. Here are some of the following ways:

- Sample e-zine or newsletter for potential subscribers
- Offer free content-filled reports on various subjects.

Use your signature file at the end to promote your business offering to them. Also, use links within the report to promote your business as well as affiliate business.

- Offer a free resource list with information about your site, product or business included with it.
- Product listings
- Price lists
- Welcome letters
- Thank you letters
- Order confirmations

Manually sending an order confirmation for each customer after they order can be very time consuming. Create a standard confirmation response template and place it within an autoresponder that allows personalization. By doing this, you can increase response time and, at the same time, provide good customer service.

- Advertising rates for ads

Strategies you can use with your autoresponder service

Below are examples of strategies you can use with your autoresponder service.

<u>Distributing a newsletter</u>

Keep your visitors informed about your products or services. You can also relate to them personally about your what's working for you as well as your own life in general. This helps to

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build credibility as an expert in a particular area and hopefully build you a long-term relationship with your readers.

<u>Distributing an affiliate newsletter</u>

Provide tips, advice, and techniques your affiliates can use to promote your business. Remind them of current and future promotions you're running.

As affiliates sign up for your affiliate program, add them to a separate autoresponder list for affiliates only. Use this list to communicate with them frequently so they are more likely to promote your products or business.

Later, if you wish, you can separate your affiliates into separate lists by level of activity or level of income produced.

You can then provide targeted additional training and communications to these sublists. Anik Singal's course at AffiliateManagerSecrets.com, and Russell Brinson and Stu McLaren course at AffiliateInferno.com are excellent resources for affiliate management.

<u>Post Sales automation</u>

When you make a sale, as we mentioned earlier, you can automatically send out thank you letters, and order confirmations. A good strategy is to then add them to a separate autoresponder list for follow-up communication.

Veteran information marketers like Armand Morin use the immediate time after the sale to instantly build up credibility and user loyalty. After a sale is made, they use an autoresponder series to keep in contact almost daily after the sale is made. The first messages sent explain specific features of the product or service that was just purchased. If the purchaser has questions, they can contact customer service immediately. As the weeks pass after the purchase, contact becomes less frequent, but contact is still being made with messages so the purchaser does not feel forgotten.

During the initial months after the sale, it provides an excellent opportunity to cross-sell any other products or services that may complement the initial purchase. Armand Morin has products in his business that all complement each other so it definitely makes sense to use this strategy. You can use this strategy as well. Give them the opportunity to learn about your other products and services. Can you see how this means of promotion can help build customer loyalty?

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Customer Service

If someone logs a customer issue, an automated message with their assigned ticket number, stating someone will be responding soon an be produced.

Following up with your customers on an ongoing basis helps to develop a good relationship and enable you to introduce new offerings to them.

Automatic distribution of information from a blog

As I do auto responder work with Ken McArthur, I noticed that anytime he updates one of his blogs, the contents of that post automatically go out to one of his lists.

Distributing articles

You can send an article you recently found or that you recently wrote. Allow your readers reprint rights on the articles, if they are your own. This will bring you some additional traffic and potentially increase your exposure throughout the Internet.

Also, look to promote your readers articles if it makes sense for both of you. That way, you end up in a "joint venture" with each of you being in a win-win relationship.

Creating and distributing reviews

If you buy other people's products, write a review and then distribute it with your autoresponder. If you approve of the product, include your affiliate link for the product so you can make potential sales.

Offer a product trial or service period offering

Give your visitors a snippet of your e-book, script, or membership site. For a membership site, either limit the functions available, or limit the time available before charging full price for the offering.

For an e-book, you can include the first one or two chapters to be read by a potential buyer. An alternate option would be to have your e-book listed on Amazon already. Then, send potential buyers to Amazon through a link where they can read the first one or two chapters, and then purchase the book.

Distributing excerpts from your E-Book

If you have a new e-book coming out, start including excerpts in your autoresponder messages. Include a link to purchase the e-book in each message.

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Using eCourses

Smart Internet marketers like Cody Moya and Willie Crawford know and use this valuable technique. When a visitor opts-in, they opt-in to an free ecourse you offer them. The course, though, is offered over multiple weeks, so they are constantly seeing your name and content, generally a new lesson, every week in their email mailbox.

As the course content is sent over 20 or 30 weeks, you have an opportunity to offer them the course in its entirety for a full price. You can periodically market your own offerings, as well as affiliate product which you have signed up for and believe in.

Using Goggle AdSense

As you send your correspondence, don't forget to include your AdSense code. This creates the opportunity for you to earn additional revenue as your emails are read. Even if a reader clicks out of an email through an AdSense ad, they can still go back to the email over and over again since it stays their in their inbox until it is deleted or moved.

Minimize Spam

If you want to really minimize Spam, insert a link for the reader to click on which takes them to the actual message you want them to read. That way, you aren't sending them the entire message, subject to Spam, in the email. This increases the chances the email will reach the reader.

Using Sub-lists

If you choose, you can use the characteristics of a list's members to move some members to other lists that you want to promote to. For example, let's say someone signs up for an free ecourse. During the 20 weeks it is promoted, they end up buying a $97 product.

Then, you ID all members in the free ecourse list that have purchased $97 products. You now copy their data to another list that promotes products greater than $97. Next, you promote to them on that list as well and they buy a $299 product.

Now, you would move their name to the next list and start promoting higher priced products. This can continue over and over again.

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Now that you learned about autoresponders, go out and automate your business. It will save you time and money many times over. Utilize some of the strategies and grow your business making smart use of automation.

How To Work With Autoresponders Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the main features you want your autoresponder system to accomplish?

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2. Do you want an all-in-one system (including shopping cart, tracking tools, etc.)?

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Next . . . Forums

Section 4: Forums

By Xavier Nelson

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Forums

What you will learn in this Section:

- ◆ Why having a forum encourages visitors to return

- ◆ How to get traffic to your forum

- ◆ Why forums can help site ranking

- ◆ How Google AdSense can fit into forum design

Having your own Forum (also known as Bulletin Board or Web Community) is an excellent tool that you should definitely consider adding to your marketing efforts if you have not already done so.

Forums are a perfect way to generate valuable content that will entice your visitors to come back time and again and will be regarded by the search engines as perfect information suited for indexing.

Increased new, targeted traffic, along with the ability to grow your list all can lead to more sales and also help spread your name and branding to other parts of the Internet that may have never heard of you before.

Be warned though, while starting a forum isn't a hard thing and is pretty quickly set up (many web hosts even offer 1-click installations and your Bulletin Board can be up and running in less than 5 minutes) that does not mean you will have hundreds or thousands of active members flocking to your cyber-doors to read the latest posts and participate in your conversations.

Creating the buzzing hotbed of gossip, advice, burning questions and a loyal following that you really want as part of your Internet presence is not impossible though and we are going to look at some of the tips and tricks that can make this happen sooner, rather than later for you, but never forget that it will require some work and dedication from you as well as some patience.

There are a lot of different tools you can use to create your own Bulletin Board, from scripts installed on your server to third-party service providers.

All of them have their pros and cons and each one will definitely need some customization to give it the look and feel you want everyone to associate with your site and branding.

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Which one you use is not the most important thing though, because almost all of them allow you to create a wonderful site (with some work) that has a lot of potential and can be an incredibly useful resource to your visitors, providing the answers to the questions they may have.

Your first priority after setting up you forum, if you haven't already done this, is to choose the overall topic of your community site. Even better would be to choose a couple of different sub-topics or categories that are part of this topic or niche (don't start out with a ton of different categories, most surfers won't stick around or participate when they see a bunch of silent (no posts) categories).

Let's assume for a minute that your topic and overall niche is the Hobby Gardener that is looking for information on Organic Gardening or Environmentally Friendly, Pesticide Free, that sort of thing.

The overall topic of your community site might be Organic Gardening, but then you could choose (remember, only a couple to start with you can always add more later) a couple of sub-topics as the individual boards in your site. In this example, perhaps the categories of Pesticide Free Gardening and Soil Types might be a good fit (just make sure you've done the research on your niche and you will know what the most burning questions are and what hot buttons are affecting your target audience and you will already know exactly which sections to set up on your Bulletin Board).

Don't forget to have some terms and conditions on your site to make sure all of the legal aspects are covered and you, as well as your visitor are protected.

Offering access to your 'Special, Members-Only Forum' would make a great bonus to any product and is also an excellent way to grow your opt-in list. After all, not only will you be providing great content on your bulletin board, but you are also providing a resource, where your visitor can come back time and again, ask their very own questions and even help other members of the community out.

Essentially what you are trying to create is a place online that your visitors can feel at home at, that gives them that sense of community. A spot where they can come to time and again and find great information, like-minded people that share the same interests. An online oasis where they can feel comfortable asking questions and can easily help the new friends they are meeting.

Now that you have a good idea of how to get things started and what topic to choose, let's take a look at how you are going to get your soon to be friends to stop by your bulletin board and how you can ensure they come back time and again to visit for

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the latest news. Some forums are so popular that the site owners have developed almost a cult-like status and you can be sure that if they make a recommendation to their community site, their visitors will definitely listen and quite often, the response rates are incredibly high.

There are two different aspects we need to take a look at, because just driving traffic to your new forum is not going to magically cause new posts to be added, intriguing questions to be asked, you have to help it along a little.

So, to get things started, you will need to add some posts and comments of your own, as well as some questions you are seeking answers to, after all, no one knows everything, so don't be shy yourself, but definitely post your own questions.

When you originally researched your target audience, your niche, you most certainly came across some questions other people that are passionate about your topic have. In some cases you may already have some helpful tips and advice for these burning questions, in other cases you may not be sure yourself, but that doesn't have to stop you from using it.

One thing you could do is to post that question to your forum and perhaps even run some searches through your favorite search engine or do a little digging at some of the article directories to get some suggestions on how to tackle your question. Here's the good part, if after you've posted the original question you follow up with some information you've found, you're showing that you are indeed interested in the topic at hand, not just some marketer.

And there's no reason you shouldn't take advantage of the articles you find in the article directories. They make excellent content for your new forum and you could even add your own thoughts (as an intro or perhaps a closing summary) to each one, just to show your expertise or that you don't quite agree (great way to start some controversy or showcase an alternate viewpoint).

Depending on which software or solution you chose to set up your forum, check the settings because most have the option to make each page search engine friendly, with easy to remember URLs that are often based on the name of the title.

Setting it up this way, and even better, perhaps adding a site map, allows the search engine to come by and grab all of the latest information and posts and index your site. Most forums are excellent showcases of questions and answers, controversy and discussion and as such make a great source of high quality content the search engines love to showcase on their results pages.

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Over time, you will see new targeted traffic coming to your forum, courtesy of the search engines and your job is to convince your new visitors that you are a qualified and respected source of help and advice.

Now you may see some people suggest that when you start your forum, you should create fake identities and start posting with them as well as your own name, essentially, having some conversations with yourself, but honestly, do you really feel that is needed? If you post questions you have come across, along with information you found while researching these questions, or some opinions you have seen, you can generate interest in your topic without having to deceive anyone. Be honest and your visitors will appreciate it a lot more and you won't have to worry about anyone ever catching on to your little deception.

There is nothing wrong with telling your visitor that this is a new web community and that you look forward to sharing information, as well as important questions you come across and that you want to also get their input. Honesty always pays off in the long run.

Controversy or something that makes your visitor stop and take a minute to think something over is an excellent way to get some people motivated to participate. You don't have to be negative about anything to stir up some controversy, but let's assume that you hear someone say you should use some fake personalities when you first start your forum (and in this example, let's assume that is the topic of your board, your own web community), why not make a post that talks about using fake identities and then subsequently add your own, personal thoughts to the thread? A couple of days later take a look at the pros and cons and add them too. Ask your visitor what they think and you will definitely find that they have different and varied opinions about it.

As the host of the forum, you definitely need to keep contributing, and if you can answer a question, by all means do so. Sometimes having an online business can become very time consuming, so make sure to block some time in your calendar on a regular basis to stop by your forum and add a couple of posts or add some questions.

Not everything you post has to be your own original idea, as we've talked about already, you can visit other sites to get ideas for questions to discuss or grab an article that allows you to reprint it (don't forget to leave the author's resource box in place) that might answer a question or give some tips.

Over time, and keep that in mind, it doesn't happen magically overnight, you will have a valuable site with targeted visitors, regulars who participate and make posts (giving you even more

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new content), a place where you have established your own expertise and branding and people look forward to your latest posts.

Earlier, we briefly mentioned that you should add some terms and conditions to your forum. For example, do you want to allow your members to advertise their own offers using your site, or do you want to restrict open advertising to just one particular section? Perhaps you don't want any advertising, or you allow a signature, but it can only be two lines long. It's your board, you define the rules. Share the vision you had in mind when you started your forum and tell your visitors what you expect, such as no flaming or verbal attacks.

Keep in mind however, that you will regularly have to also check the forum's posts and police the users to make sure everyone is following the rules and not just doing whatever they want.

Also keep an eye on the posts themselves because there are some tools out there that spammers use to spread all over the web and forum communities are not immune to them. Depending on the software you chose when you set it up, there are quite a few tools and plugins you can add and customize that can help you keep that under control too, and if all else fails, you can require that each comment has to be approved by you before it's posted.

Getting that first trickle of traffic to your new site can become frustrating, but here's a simple way to start getting some interested visitors to stop by…

Write about 3 or 4 articles (more if you feel like it) on a very specific question your target audience deals with. The more urgent or burning the question, the better your results will be.

These articles don't have to be long, they can be as simple as a few bullet points and a couple of lines of details for each bullet, but the key thing to keep in mind is that you want to leave the reader wanting more. If you can, you want to maybe stir up some emotions with the reader too, maybe some controversy, it's totally up to you. The really important part of your article is going to be the ending that invites them to come to your site to talk about it all.

Let's take a look at a quick example…

Assuming your topic is organic gardening, write an article on the top 10 tips to make your organic garden grow and blossom. Now write a couple of sentences about each of the 10 tips and at the end of the article, add a resource box (or About the Author) where you tell the reader that for more detailed

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information about each of the 10 tips, they should visit your site and they are welcome to share their own experiences and ask their most urgent question to get some help.

If you create a few articles using this method and then start distributing them to the article directories as well as any e-zines or websites and blogs that are in your target market, you will start to see some traffic heading your way pretty quickly.

On your forum, add your own article and then in some extra posts for that topic, add some extra information or some controversial thoughts you have seen or heard about as they pertain to each of the ten tips that you wrote about.

What you have done is gotten your reader interested enough with your article to stop by and check out your forum, and the extra information you have shared there, especially if it makes them stop and think a little bit, can be all you need to entice your visitor to share their thoughts or ask their own questions.

Here's another benefit of using articles to jumpstart your site. The Search Engines will probably grab the article content from the article directories or the other sites that you have submitted it to, and since you have a link back to your own forum at the end of each article, they will follow that on over to your bulletin board and grab all of the content there too for indexing, and since a lot of the search engines consider links that point from other sites to you as an important indicator, the more of these you can generate, the better. By having 3 or 4 articles out there at the start and submitting them to as many directories or newsletters is only going to help you have things happen faster, rather than slower.

Keep in mind, however, that you don't want to post your article on a site that has nothing to do with your topic. Let's look at the Organic Gardening topic again. If you wrote about the 'Top 10 Ways' you wouldn't want the article to show up on a site that's all about cars. So carefully choose the categories that apply when you submit your article to the directories and sites.

Of course, if you already have your own newsletter or opt-in list, all the better. Tell your readers about your new site and tell them a little about the topics or questions you have already added there.

Okay, so now you have a new community site with some traffic and a few visitors are starting to post as well. Most of the battle is done – the hardest part and biggest hurdle overcome. Now it's time to take a quick look at why you would put yourself through all this trouble, your reward…

With an active forum community, you can easily weave in suggestions or reviews of products and service that make a good match for your visitors, but you can also warn them if

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you've come across something that you feel didn't work well for you, a product that didn't deliver what it promised perhaps. Your visitors will appreciate your honest candor and you will be able to save your readers from wasting their money.

If you are an affiliate for that product, created it yourself or perhaps have the rights to sell the service, you can easily generate some revenue to help you towards your own goals and dreams.

Another thing you can do is to add content-related advertising, such as Google AdSense, that will contain ads targeted to the topic of the post and each click generates you some extra income.

These are only a couple of ways you can monetize your own forum and how you can get it all started. Make sure to take a look at other bulletin boards on your topic and see what they are doing and incorporate the things you like in your own community.

With patience and dedication you will soon have a thriving web community with a lot of active visitors that come back time and again. You will be able to grow your own opt-in list and generate new subscribers for your newsletter by adding opt-in boxes throughout your forum and giving your visitors an extra incentive to sign up. Perhaps a special report or some content/articles that you've not posted on the forum yet, the choice is yours.

Ask your visitors questions, such as what their biggest challenge is and you can use the information to create your own products and special reports to ensure your readers come back again and again.

For example, if the biggest challenge you see asked often about your 'Organic Gardening' topic is which plants can help keep your garden free of pests, then you could use any of the information you have already researched, or any answers you see posted by other members to create a special report. This special report could be used as an extra incentive to get your visitors to sign up for your newsletter, or as a lead in to your recommendation for a product, perhaps a thorough e-book about the best plants to add to your garden to keep pests under control and your special report talks about just a few of them.

You could even take it a step further and do the research and work yourself (or hire a ghostwriter) and create your very own book or resource that you can sell for a handsome profit. You already know there is a market hungry for the information you can provide, so why not give it to them?

Here's another thought to close out our look at forums and bulletin boards that you can use to grow your business and

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increase your revenues. Take note of all of the questions you come across over time that relate to your topic, and if you notice certain individuals always answering and providing high-quality information, why not invite those experts to participate in an interview and co-produce a product, such as a teleconference or online web-conference series?

Over time, with the help of your dedicated visitors you could easily create a whole series of products and special reports that will all bring you revenue for years to come, new subscribers that you can market to time and again and new, targeted traffic that is very interested in your topic.

One thing that may surprise you is that you just might make some new friends, too, and what is better than to meet like-minded individuals that share your passion and help each other succeed?

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Forums Self-Assessment Questions

List two benefits a forum would have for your product website.

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Next . . . Blogs

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Designing Your Website

Module 6

Section 5: Blogs

By Craig Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Blogs

What Is A Blog?

Back in the 1990's blogs were first introduced to the online community. Originally web logs were designed as a techie administrative thing for logging requests into a server. They have since expanded and changed. Today, blogs are everything from a personal journal to a corporate communication tool.

What you will learn in this Section:

- Promoting your blog

- Getting traffic to your blog

- Making your blog search engine friendly

- Building readership

- How to set up a WordPress Blog

For those of you not familiar with blogs, they are a website set up like a diary. The latest entry is at the top and usually written by one person (or one group of people). Focusing on one subject or topic the person makes an entry or post. The entries or posts are added to the blog with a title and a date and time stamp. Then the person writing the blogs generally invites comments to the topic or post they have written.

What Can A Blog Be Used For?

People write blogs to inform the online world of their thoughts, views, philosophies and rants. Another use for blogs is to use them for marketing and promotion of your info product. Because of the personal nature of blogs you can really connect with customers and potential customers. Brian Edmondson, in the List Building section, talks about getting your list to know, like and trust you. A blog offers you that opportunity.

Let's Talk…

Blogs let you promote your products in a conversation with the online word. The key word is conversation. You want to establish a two-way conversation with your readers. You want to persuade people to become frequent visitors and involved with your blog.

Fresh content such as articles and inviting comments will bring your visitors back again and again. The fresh content is a plus with search engines that like new content and will help with your page ranking on search engines. The possibilities are endless.

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Endless Possibilities

Following this section, you'll have the opportunity to set up your own blog to promote your info product. All of the work you did earlier in the research section is about to be used again. Now let's talk about the ways a blog can help you with your product.

Product Promotion and Education

Write posts to promote your product. Not the "Buy now" type of post. Include a post that shows a customer how your info product helps solve their problems, issues, hopes or dreams. You can do this by telling customer success stories or use articles or tip lists.

When writing your posts include the keywords you chose earlier in the Research section. The search engine bots will love to see those keywords and will reward you with higher search engine ranking.

Take your keywords and write fifteen to thirty short articles (200-500 words). You will be able to use these as posts on your site. You can also work to have them included on other sites and blogs or submit them to article directories. Having an article in reserve is great for those days when you are busy. Just pull out an article and post it on your blog.

Suggested Topics

Since a blog is a conversation with your online niche (and the world) you can use the blog to talk about how you came to develop your info product. People are always interested in 'the rest of the story.' With your posts you can tell them the "how's and why's" behind your product.

As people buy and use your product, you can talk about successes of people who bought. You can invite people to share their successes. Alex Mandossian, in his Teleseminar Secrets, suggests teaching people how to 'consume' your product. You want people to know how to use your product. You can use your blog as one of your product resources.

New Product Development

You are developing new content each time you post. With the questions and comments you receive from visitors and customers, you will start to get information you can use. Are there improvements you can make to your existing product? Is there a backend product that will add to the value of your existing product?

Many people have bundled their posts together over a period of time to build an e-book or offline book.

Newsletter Articles

Looking for content for your newsletter? Your blog posts and the comments can be part of your newsletter. Add some tips and you're done for the issue. It's like Jeff and Lori said in Module 2, "Recycle, repurpose and reuse."

Lazy, Time-Crunched Or Both?

Not sure you want to commit to a weekly newsletter to stay in touch with your customers? Use an autoresponder to initially connect with your customer. Then use your blog as a newsletter.

Getting Traffic

You can get traffic to your blog in a number of ways. Pick one or two techniques and focus, as Workbook Editor Dan Giordano says. Learn the techniques and then move to the next. Starting everything at once will lead to frustration and little accomplished. Search engines, article writing, submission to directories and search engines, traffic exchange, and posting on other people's blogs are all ways to bring traffic to your site.

Blogs And Search Engines

Blogs easily attract search engine traffic. The design of the blogs with clearly defined navigation and links make them a natural favorite of search engines. By using some of the following tips you can design your blog to meet the search engine requirements. The bots sent out from search engines look for keywords and new or updated content to a website.

- Design of your blog: Use your keywords for your post titles and category names.
- Have your webmaster or you include keywords in your URL page names.
- Stick with your niche. Use your research to reach your niche with articles, posts and keywords. Having a consistent theme will encourage indexing by the search engines.
- Use keywords as headlines for your post. In search engines, RSS, and XML feeds your headline is shown. Keep it short and relevant and it can help to send traffic.
- Set up your blog to 'ping' the blog tracking sites. Pinging is a way of notifying a number of services that track blogs and their content. It is an important tool for blog promotion. It lets the services know it's time to send those automated crawlers out to check out your site. The crawlers or 'bots' will index your site and publish your content increasing the popularity of your blog.

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◆ Consider Ann DeVere's advice for finding your most profitable customer. Use keywords that deliver traffic and then analyze your traffic using one of the metrics programs available. This will let you find the words bringing in the majority of 'buying' traffic. You want repeat visitors who will turn into customers. Huge numbers are fun, but unless they can be converted into customers, you have just a hobby or platform for your thoughts.

Submit Your Site To Search Engines and Directories

Much like a website is submitted to a search engine, you can submit your blog to a search engine. Follow the directions for each search engine as they vary slightly in their requirements.

Articles

Articles can be used to promote your blog. Have at least 15 to 20 short articles ready to go at all times. Include your keywords as part of the articles. Periodically repeat your keyword search to find new keywords to include in your articles.

Have your blog included as part of the resource box on the article. That way people reading the article in someone else's e-zine or website will know how to find you.

Go to the online resources page for the latest updates for blog tracking.

Traffic Exchange

Together with other bloggers you can build traffic to your blog. This is done through traffic exchanges. Traffic exchanges are communities that use a trading system to build traffic for many people. You earn credits by visiting other community member's blogs or buying credits. These credits are then traded in so other people visit your site. It's trading your time for visitors. Test out how the community works for you before you buy credits.

You may find the visitors you get are not appropriate for the market you are working to reach.

Get Off Your Page and Go Visiting

One way of getting more traffic is to go visit other blogs. Go to a blog directory such as Technorati.com or type 'blog directory' into your browser search box. Look for blogs in your topic or niche area. Visit the blogs. Take a few minutes and read some of the posts. If there is a post where you can add a comment, then post. Avoid the 'Come see mine' type of post. Don't forget to include your name on the post. Have an article or post that might be helpful? Include a link to your article in your post.

Notes

Others will read and potentially visit your blog or website.

Visit and participate in forums. Include your blog in your signature file. People who are interested will come to your site.

What Next?

You've worked on traffic to your blog. Keep the visitors on your site with good content. Personalize your site by including your photo. A photo links the offline and online world. It also says you are a real person and not hiding.

Include some information about you. Let people know how you developed expertise in your topic. Is it formal education, life experience or a journey of self-education?

Tips for Building Readership

- Keep postings short and avoid jargon. The most successful blogs sound like a friend just sat down to talk with you.
- Make it easy to subscribe. Make your signup obvious, such as above the fold so people don't have to look all over to find where to join to post.
- Vary the content and postings. Add photos to increase interest.
- Include short audio and video clips related to your product. You can even use a video as a teaching guide for your product.
- Build content of interest for your visitors. If you write short articles, consider adding them as a post to your blog.
- Build interest and readership with a regular schedule of posts. Once you encourage readers, they will begin to look forward to your posts. Don't disappoint with a lack of posts or they will move on
- Classify your post by category so your visitor can easily skim through many posts quickly.
- Consider letting people post without your having to review or moderate comments. When you moderate, you have to approve each comment before it is officially posted to your site. This saves time on your part and encourages community. You can always delete a posting. Will there be weird or spam postings? Probably. That's part of the joy and the pain of blogs.

It's Up To You

Blogs are a great way of promoting you and your products. You don't have to be a technogeek to have a successful blog. So turn the page and get your blog started today. You can do it!

Notes

First Decision.

The first decision of a blogger is determine which type of blog they want to produce. A personal blog can easily be produced at any one of many free hosting sites.

The free blog hosting sites are great. However, the free blogs are usually limited in the features you can add. Also, the free hosting sites have a habit – if your blog is very successful with many postings and comments, they might shut you down for spamming. Even if you were not spamming. Few people have been able to get their blog restored once the host has shut them down.

So a business blog promoting your information products should be hosted on its own server. Your web hosting company can usually handle this. This allows unlimited expansion of functions for the blog and little threat of shut down. Though if you are spamming, any host will shut you down.

Types of Blog Software

The three most popular blog software programs are Blogger, WordPress and Typepad. There are also many other quite powerful blogging software programs. Here is a list of some of the blogging software sites you can visit. Determine which one best meets your needs.

- Blogger.com
- WordPress.com
- TypePad.com
- B2Evolution.net
- Geeklog.net
- BBlog.com
- MovableType.org

For the individual who has little or no HTML and PHP experience, my suggestion is to stick to WordPress or Typepad. Both are easy to administer and use. And depending upon your host, can be extremely easy to install.

Installing Your Business Blog

To install your blog, you must find a web host. Almost any Linux host will work. Most of them have a control panel with that will easily install one or more of the above blogging programs. Just be sure to ask them before you purchase the hosting account. Ask them if they will install your chosen software, or tell you if it is easy for you to install it.

Notes

I am going to take you through the process of installing my favorite – WordPress. One of the hosting companies I use is eHosting4U. Remember, you can use any Linux hosting package and this process will be similar.

eHosting4U has a control panel with a program called *Fantastico. Fantastico* is designed to automatically install a number of programs for you. In my case, *Fantastico* will install b2evolution, nucleus, pMachine free or WordPress.

Each step will have a separate page for you to look at. (Go to the end of this section and pull out figures 1-17 as you will use them as you go through this section.)

Purchase a hosting package and then log on to your control panel. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2.)

Locate "Fantastico" and click on it. Then click on "WordPress." (See Figure 3.)

In figure 3, I have already installed WordPress for online-acne-guide.com. But we want to install WordPress on a different site. Next click "New Install" under WordPress. (See Figure 4.)

Now you must make some decisions, most of which can be changed later, so don't worry about making a mistake.

The first decision is to decide where to install your blog. Pick the domain you want to use. A domain is the web address you type into a browser so you get to the site you are interested in, such as WordPress.com or in this example Create-Your-Blog.com.

Do you want to install your blog by itself (host a blog only)? Or in a website folder (website and blog combined)?

If you have only purchased hosting, you will have only one choice. I have already created a website called Create-Your-Blog.com. I want to add a blog to that domain, so I will place the blog in a directory called "blog." (See Figure 5.)

First, I must pick an administrative login user name (called administrator login name). I chose "admin," but you can use any word you want. This administrative login user name will be permanent.

Next choose a password. This can be easily changed later.

Third, fill in your "base configuration." Add a nickname for the administrator that can be used as the author of your blog or in your email, contact email address, blog name and description. All of this can be easily changed later.

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Finally, fill in the "e-mail account configuration" section. This will be used later as part of the email posting service. Again, this can be changed later.

Once you have filled in all of the required information, press "Install WordPress." If you have not filled in a required field, it will ask you to go back and fill it in.

But once all of the required information has been filled in, you will see something like figure 6. (See Figure 6.)

If everything looks okay on figure 6, all you have to do is click on the "Finish Installation" button. (See Figure 7.)

Congratulations! You have successfully installed WordPress. Now print the page.

Next, place your email address in the box at the bottom and press "Send E-mail." This will send the information on this page to your email. You do not need to email this information if you have printed it, but I always do. That way you have a reference copy on your computer.

Managing Your Blog

Now log on to your new blog. In my case, the URL was Create-Your-Blog.com/Blog/. (See Figure 8.)

On the right-hand side down towards the bottom of the page, click on the "login" link. You will be asked to type your administrative login name and password. Then press the "login" button. It should look like figure 9 now. (See Figure 9.)

Welcome to the administrative side of your new blog. Take time to look it over each page and sub-page. You have a lot of power to control your new blog. Let's go through some of what you will find here page by page.

Click on "Write." You will go to a screen similar to Figure 10. (See Figure 10.) This is where you write your posts and pages. A post is what you write to share with your visitors.

For each post you will type in a title for the article (or post) and then what you want to say in the article or post. You can use the icons (similar to Microsoft Word) of the post section to change how your words/post looks. Try using bolding, italics, numbering, etc., to see what your post looks like. After you have created your post, click on "save and continue editing."

Once you have done this, notice a preview of your post is available at the bottom of this page. You will have to scroll down to see it. Continue to work on your post and "save and continue editing" until you are satisfied with its appearance in the preview pane. Then just save it (WordPress saves all posts

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and pages in a database on your site) or publish it. Once you publish your post, your visitors can see it.

If you click on the "Write a Page" link, you can write a page. Think of a page as reference information you want to share. One page might be an "About You" page. The process is similar to writing a post.

Now click on the "Manage" link at the top of the page next to "Write." Your screen should look like Figure 11. (See Figure 11.)

"Manage" is where you can add new categories and edit almost everything on your blog. The first subcategory is "Posts." As you can see, the default post (Hello World) is there. You can view, edit or delete it. You can also edit, delete or unapprove the comment associated with this post.

If you want to change one of the "reference" pages such as "About," click on "Pages." This works similar to the "Posts" page – viewing, editing or deleting choices.

Categories are ways to organize your posts. Under the "Categories" submenu, you can edit, delete and add categories.

These will also be used to search for your posts. So try to set up appropriate categories for your blog such as "Business Blogging" if your blog is about business blogging. Remember, you can edit, delete and add new ones at any time.

"Awaiting Moderation" is used when you require comments to be approved before they are visible to the public. This can be a lot of work on your part and probably should only be used after you find a lot of comments you want to delete. You will get spam, so be aware.

The "Files" subcategory allows you to review and edit some of the files used to create this blog. If you want to make any changes, read the files page carefully before making changes.

Now click on "Links" category. Your screen should look like Figure 12. (See Figure 12.) You can manage your links here. Notice the default links are listed here. You can edit or delete these links. Blogroll links are URL's to other blogs you would like your readers to be aware of and potentially view. Think of it as "your favorites" bookmarks.

Under "Add Links" you can add more links.

Under "Link Categories" you can add link categories, which are used to help you organize your links. You set the criteria. Therefore, over time you can add more appropriate link categories to your blog to cover a variety of topics.

Notes

"Import Links" allow you to import links from other sites.

Now click on "Presentation." (See Figure 13.)

Themes are a collection of images and other pages that control the appearance of your blog. Themes, Theme Editor and Header Image and Color are the three powerful pages, which allow you to change the appearance of your blog. WordPress has many different themes you can use. It offers two themes to start with. Just click on the one you want to try.

At the bottom of the "Themes" page is a link to where you can find many more options. Once they have been installed, they will show up on the page. Try them out.

Even if you don't want to add a new theme or edit one, try the "Header Image and Color" page. You can easily make some changes to color and appearance of the blog theme header (top of each page). You can always go back to the original color and image.

Now click on "Plugins." (See Figure 14.)

Plugins are small programs that add functionality to your blog. On these pages you can add new plugins, edit them and activate them.

For example, you can add a calendar or survey poll to your blog. There is a link on the bottom of this page for more plugins and basic instructions for installation.

You do not need to activate or install any plugins to have a perfectly functioning blog. They are just extras to add functionality to your blog as you need or want it.

The number of plugins is increasing every day. Be sure they are compatible with your version of WordPress (Remember that page you printed earlier – Figure 7).

Now click on "Users" in the top tool bar. (See Figure 15.)

Your "Profile and Personal Options" page is where you can change some of the information, including your password you entered originally. If you make changes, be sure to save them. There is an "Update Profile" button on the bottom of the page.

In most blogs, a person who wants to add a comment must register as a user before the comment can be entered. Under "Authors and Users" you can edit, delete or add users. That way, you know their name and email address. You can allow users to self register so you do not need to add them.

Click on "Options" next in the top tool bar. (See Figure 16.)

Notes

Under "General Options" you've already set up most of the basic options for your blog. Much is now pre-filled, as you can see in Figure 16. (See Figure 16.)

You may need to reset the time at the bottom of this page. The defaults are usually okay, but the time zone may be off. Eastern standard time is about "–6" in the hours box. Experiment until the time reflects your current time. Remember to click on the "Update Options" button to save your settings.

The "Writing" subcategory allows you to set the size of the post box (the number of lines seen before you have to scroll), set up posting by email and set your update services.

You can email in a post and have it visible to your readers. To do so, just set up this part of the options. This way you can add posts while traveling.

The "Update Services" are used to announce your new posts to blog directories (search engines). This helps visitors find your blog. The default service announces your post to multiple directories. However, you can add specific update services if you desire.

The "Reading" options page enable you to change some basic options such as how many posts are shown on a page and the syndication feeds properties. The only one I find I need to change is the number of posts to be visible on a page. I usually use 5, but you can use any number you wish.

The "Discussion" page has a number of options, such as when to email me and the usual settings for an article. The default settings will work for most of us.

Permalinks are URLs back to your posts and pages. The "Permalinks" allow you to change how they look.

The "Miscellaneous" page has the uploading options you can change. Try changing some of the options to see how you like them. If you don't like them, change them back.

The last link is "Import." (See Figure 17.)

As you can see, you can import posts you have made on other blogs. This can be helpful if you are moving your blog from one host to another. You will not lose your posts this way. If this is your first blog, you won't use this page right away.

What do you do next?

To blog, all you need is a blogging site or host, software and the desire to blog. Blogging is fun. You can use your blog to promote your products.

Notes

Just like a website, you need to get the attention of the search engines and draw visitors to your blog. Add your blog to any number of the blog directories. Write an article about your blog topic and submit it to the article directories with a link to your blog.

To develop reciprocal links, read other blogs on your topic. Add a link on your blog to the best blogs you find. Add comments to other people's blog posts. Soon you may have reciprocal links.

All of this can add traffic to your blog. Then it's up to you to convert a visitor into a customer.

Notes

Included below are the Figures referred to throughout the Blogs section.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Blogs Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write 7 short articles (200-500 word) about your niche topic or product. Use your keywords for topic suggestions.

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2. Go to Technorati.com and find 3 other blogs talking about related topics. List the blog URLS here.

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3. Write the name for your blog here.

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4. Set up your blog.

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5 Write your first post.

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Next . . . Module 7: Selling And Delivering The Product

Info Product
Blueprint
1st Edition

Designing Your
Website

Module 6

Section 6: Google AdWords For Info Products

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Google AdWords For Info Products

You'll want to read this next section very carefully as our next writer is the former team leader for Google in the AdWords section. Simon Leung of AdWordsOptimization.com shares his insider hints on using AdWords to promote your info product. Don't forget to grab your highlighter.

Welcome to this next section of the Info Product Blueprint!

In this exciting module, we will discuss how to maximize your return when promoting an info product with Google AdWords.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What Google AdWords is

◆ How AdWords can benefit you

◆ High-level keyword and ad text strategies

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What is Google AdWords?

Google AdWords is Google's pay-per-click (PPC) advertising program.

The reason that this is called pay-per-click is that advertisers are only charged when users click on your ads, and not necessarily how many times they are displayed.

When you perform a keyword search on Google, the ads that appear on the top and right side of the search results page, labeled 'Sponsored Links,' are Google AdWords ads.

Currently, thousands of big and small business owners are advertising with Google for the following reasons:

◆ High Traffic – Google.com receives over 200 MILLION search queries in their database per day. In addition, their bots have crawled and indexed over 25 billion webpages, 1.3 billion images and 1 billion usenet messages.

◆ Instant Traffic – Within minutes of signing up for your Google AdWords account and creating your first campaign, your ads can be up and running, and you will start getting traffic to your website!

◆ Targeted Traffic – When you create your campaign, YOU select the most relevant keywords, as well as the most relevant ad text. After that, ONLY users who search on your specified keywords will see your ad, and ONLY those who are interested in what you have to offer will click on them.

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◆ Affordable Traffic – The only thing standing in your way when you set up your account is the low $5 set up fee. After that, you can literally start getting traffic to your site for pennies on the dollar. In many cases, you can even get a decent amount of traffic to your website for as low as $0.01 per click!

Understand the AdWords Product

Before diving full steam ahead into the account preparation and creation process, it is very important that you understand at least the very basics of Google AdWords.

If you haven't already done so, be sure to use the various resources available on Google's website. Everything you need to know regarding the basics and setting up your account is available at AdWords.Google.com.

More importantly, you're going to need to understand Google's policies. There are so many advertisers out there who jump right into creating their accounts, and not only do they not follow the appropriate steps (which I have outlined for you in this workbook), but they also skipped right past all the policy guidelines.

As with most advertising services, Google does have a list of editorial and product policies that you need to follow. Each and every single ad is reviewed by an Editorial Specialist at Google, so you have a violation, they will find out, and they will suspend your account until you make the changes.

To ensure that you get everything started off on the right foot, be sure to review Google's advertising guidelines at: AdWords.Google.com/Select/Guidelines.html

How Can Google AdWords Help You?

By now, you should have a pretty clear understanding of how Google AdWords can benefit a business. But I'm sure you are interested in learning specifically, how can AdWords help YOU?

Well, before we answer that, a better question you must first need to ask is – *How can you help yourself*?

You see, you need to determine what your primary advertising goal is.

For example:

◆ Generate as much traffic as possible to your website
◆ Get visitors to subscribe to your newsletter
◆ Increase exposure of your website to a particular niche

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- ◆ Capture leads that you will follow-up with over the phone
- ◆ Get potential customers to download a free trial version of your product
- ◆ Sell your product or service on your traffic's first visit
- ◆ Brand yourself or your product to the public

Determining your goal will set your strategy for the most effective way to build out your Google AdWords campaign.

Exercise #1: Determine Your Goal

In the space below, write down what your primary advertising goal is:

_____

_____

_____

Set Up Your Landing Page

Now that you have set your goal, you should focus on maximizing your conversion results. While Google AdWords is a powerful advertising medium, it ultimately acts as a traffic generation resource.

At the end of the day, it is the job of your website to convert your traffic into subscribers, buyers or clients. For this reason, it is imperative that you produce an effective and converting website before spending a single dime marketing your URL by any paid marketing means.

Now, keep in mind that the highest converting webpage for your campaign may not necessarily be your homepage. As a matter of fact, I would actually recommend that you have a completely separate page dedicated only to your AdWords account.

For example, you can use the URL YourDomain.com/AdWords as the main landing page for your campaign.

To maximize the quality of your landing page, there are a few things to keep in mind.

- ◆ Make sure you don't have any editorial or product violations on your landing page. For example, if your original page includes a pop-up or a pop-under, remove it on your page, as this is strictly against Google's policies.

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◆ Make sure that the information you are providing is relevant to what the users are searching for. For example, if someone is expecting to find information on how to build a house, don't send them to a page advertising contractors for hire.

◆ Make sure that the resources available on your website are valuable to the user. For example, don't simply refer them to other links or resources. Whenever possible, have the resources available for use or download directly from your landing page.

◆ Make sure that your content is unique. For example, don't simply copy information from articles or other websites. Have distinct and useful content on your site that gives users a reason to come back for more.

At this time, please refer back to Exercise #1: Determine Your Goal.

With your goal in mind, create a new webpage specific to this goal to be used as your landing page.

For example:

◆ To get newsletter subscribers, include an opt-in form
◆ To get trial version users, include the link to the download file
◆ To get a sale, include the actual product or service for sale

Exercise #2: Create an AdWords Specific Landing Page

Based on your advertising goal, create an AdWords specific landing page that you will send users to when they click on your ad. Remember to include relevant, valuable and unique content to maximize your quality.

Find and Build Out Your Keywords

If you haven't already done so, now is as good as ever to conduct your keyword research.

Nowadays, there is no shortage of keyword research tools. If you are unfamiliar with the resources available, check out Overture.com, GoodKeywords.com, Nichebot.com and WordTracker.com, just to name a few.

To start doing your keyword research, simply type in a term or phrase that best describes your info product, and click on the submit button to see what terms might generate.

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For example, let's say you are selling an AdWords e-book. This e-book would contain tips and tricks about maximizing your results with Google AdWords.

The keyword research tool may generate the following terms:

- ◆ adwords e-book
- ◆ free adwords e-book
- ◆ google adwords e-book

Now, one of the most important keys to success with Google AdWords is keyword relevancy. Why? Well, as we discussed earlier, you only want to appeal to users who are searching specifically for your product.

Primarily with an AdWords campaign that focuses on selling info products and converting your visitors to buyers, keyword relevancy is especially important.

So, in the three keywords above, can you identify the term or terms, if any, that are NOT relevant to a campaign in which you are selling an AdWords e-book?

If you say that all three of them are relevant, you are absolutely – WRONG! ;)

Here's why…

You are SELLING an AdWords e-book, right? Therefore, while 'adwords e-book' and 'google adwords e-book' are relevant, 'free adwords e-book' is not.

Let me explain.

If users are searching for 'free adwords e-book,' chances are that they are not looking to buy anything. While what they are searching for is indeed related to the product you are selling, this would not make a difference to someone who is not intending to buy anything in the first place.

While this is a very minor example with just one word that separates its relevancy, you will often run across a lot of terms in your research that are clearly irrelevant to your overall campaign. If the terms are not relevant to your info product, do not add them.

Now, with selling info products specifically, you may even want to add certain qualifier terms in front of your keywords to increase your chances of targeting the right audience.

For example, you may want to add the terms 'buy,' 'order' or 'purchase' to the relevant keywords identified above:

- ◆ buy adwords e-book

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- order adwords e-book
- purchase adwords e-book
- buy google adwords e-book
- order google adwords e-book
- purchase google adwords e-book

With these more targeted terms, not only are you better qualifying who sees your ads, but you also minimize your cost-per-click (CPC) as a result of having fewer competition for the specific keywords.

Exercise #3: Build a List of Relevant Keywords

Using your favorite keyword research tool, generate a list of potential keywords for your AdWords campaign. Be sure to pick out only the relevant terms.

Now, double, triple or even quadruple your keyword terms by adding an additional variation with 'buy,' 'order' or 'purchase' in front of the original keywords.

Write Ad Text That Sells

And now, for the most important aspect of your Google AdWords campaign – writing your ad text.

Why would I say that the ad text is the most important part of your campaign? Well, the answer is relatively simple, and logical.

You see, the ad text is the ONLY component in your account that is visible to the user.

Can a user see your keyword list? No.

Can a user see how much you're bidding? No.

Can a user see the name on your account? No.

Can a user see your billing information? No.

Can a user see how long you've been an advertiser? No.

Can a user see what other campaigns you are running? No.

Well, you get the picture.

As if the pressure of making your ad text sell isn't enough, Google has made it even more challenging by offering only 95 characters of space for your ad: 25 characters for the first line, 35 characters for the second, and 35 characters for the third.

So the real question is – *How do you make these 95 characters sell?*

Fortunately, for the purpose of selling info products with Google AdWords, there are several strategies to keep in mind for maximum performance. Let's say you are using the term 'adwords e-book' in your campaign:

- ◆ Write ad text that is relevant to the product. You can do so by inserting keywords into your ad text. For example, you would want to include the phrase 'AdWords Ebook' in the ad text for maximum relevancy.

- ◆ Use an attention grabbing headline. You can do so by using terms that trigger savings, such as 'low cost' or 'sale.' For example, you can have 'Low Cost AdWords Ebook' or 'AdWords Ebook on Sale' in the ad text.

- ◆ Provide a clear description of your product. You want to make sure that the users understand exactly what you are offering. For example, you might say 'Learn Insider

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Strategies to Beating AdWords' as part of your product description.

- ◆ Use special offers in your ad text. This can usually be done by giving users an incentive for purchasing your product. For example, if you offer bonuses, you can say 'Free Bonuses with Order!' or 'Free Newsletter.'

- ◆ Include a strong call-to-action phrase with a sense of urgency. As with traditional marketing, it is much more powerful if you can communicate to the users what you want them to do. For example, you would want call-to-action phrases that convey a message of purchase, such as 'Buy Today!' or 'Order Online Now!'

- ◆ If you are in a competitive industry, include the price of your product. For example, if you are aware that your product is selling for more than your competitors, state your price in the ad text. While you may receive fewer clicks because your price does not appeal to certain users, you know that the ones who do click are much more likely to buy.

Exercise #4: Write Your Ad Text

Keeping in mind the ad space character limits, write several AdWords ads that utilize relevancy, attention grabbing headlines, clear description, special offers and strong call-to-action phrases:

Line 1 (25 characters): _____

Line 2 (35 characters): _____

Line 3 (35 characters): _____

Line 4 (35 characters): _____

Please note that line 4 is reserved only for your URL link, i.e. YourLink.com/AdWords

You can have as many ads rotating between each other as you like. Please feel free to write a few extra ads so that you can test performance between them.

Line 1 (25 characters): _____

Line 2 (35 characters): _____

Line 3 (35 characters): _____

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Account Management Tips

Many people are under the impression that once you have created your Google AdWords campaign, the flood of traffic will start pouring in like magic.

While Google AdWords does provide a channel for traffic with the potential of immediate results, you need to understand that it is a little more complicated than that.

You see, Google AdWords is indeed pretty easy to set up, but is not a 'set it and forget it' system. And quite honestly, you don't want to put it on auto-pilot.

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There are many factors that you need to consider in order to upkeep a successful campaign – quality, return on investment, conversion rates and costs, just to name a few.

If you don't keep a close eye on your campaign, you may not be performing as well as you could be, or you may be paying more than you need to.

For this reason, use the following tips to manage your AdWords account:

- Tweak your landing pages to increase conversion rates. This is nothing new. If you are a Marketer, you should be familiar with making changes to your website to increase your results and bottom line.

- Test new keywords and delete poor performing ones. Ultimately, you want to make sure that you are profiting from your terms. If certain keywords are costing too much and not performing well for you, delete them and replace them with new ones.

- Test new ad text for increasing performance and clicks. Try a different offer, or a different attention grabbing word, or a different promotional language, or a different call-to-action phrase. You need to find out what your market responds the best to, and you won't know unless you test.

- Adjust maximum cost-per-clicks (CPC) for budgeting and positioning. For example, if you are tight on budget, you may want to decrease your CPC to lower your costs. Alternatively, if you are willing to bid a little bit more in an effort to increase your ad's positioning on the page, you may want to increase your maximum CPC to see if this ultimately pays off for you at the end.

- By all means, stay within your budget. You can do so by adjusting your maximum CPC and daily budget values to the amounts that you are comfortable with. Make sure that you are not spending more than you are making. Obviously, you want to make a profit!

Exercise #5: Manage Your Account

While this is the final exercise of this workbook, it is going to be an ongoing effort on your part.

Do not set up your account and forget it!

Hire someone to manage your account if you have to, but make sure that it is being handled at all times. There is simply too much to lose if you don't!

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Conclusion

Remember, at the end of the day, Google AdWords is a traffic generation to your website. It is ultimately the job of your website to convert these visitors into customers of your info product.

Use the strategies outlined in this workbook to set the appropriate user expectations to your website. This will ensure that you maximize your chances of a successful conversion once the visitors know what to expect.

Throughout the days, weeks and months that follow, be sure to keep a close eye on your account performance, as well as your competition and industry. If you are on top of the latest developments and make the appropriate changes to your account and your website, you will surely increase your bottom line and maximize your return!

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Next . . . Module 7: Selling And Delivering The Product

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Selling and Delivering
the Product

Module 7: Selling And Delivering The Product

Module 7

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Selling and Delivering the Product

Module 7

Section 1: Processing the Order: Making Sure The Order Goes Through

By Dan Giordano

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Processing the Order: Making Sure The Order Goes Through

If you are building an online business, you will need to address the question of taking payments for orders. You can, of course, request that a check payment be sent to you in the mail. Most shopping cart software allows you to select this option when you are setting it up. If you already have an offline, bricks and mortar business, you may simply wish to accept credit card payments over the phone.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What to look for when setting up a merchant account

◆ How to process orders on your website

However, there are some basic problems with these solutions and it all comes down to the way people shop on the Internet. Customers expect to be able to add items to their basket and proceed to the checkout to pay. If they then find they must telephone you or print out and send their order, they may simply abandon their order and hop over to another website. Shopping online is all about convenience. If you are unable to provide this, you may be losing customers without even being aware of it.

So, what are your options and what is it all going to cost? Well, the good news is you can do it all very simply and cheaply. PayPal does not have a set-up charge and is a large and trusted online payment processor servicing 78 million accounts worldwide in 56 countries.

Your only cost is a small percentage on each sale – a transaction charge. Payments from your website go straight into your PayPal account from where you can transfer amounts to your bank account with the click of a button.

Once you sign up with a payment processor, you can either link to their secure server from your shopping basket facility or build 'add to basket' buttons via a simple web query form. The html generated is then pasted next to items on your web page and your customers will be transferred to a secure server when they go to checkout.

Traditional merchant accounts are normally set up through your own bank and will become integral to your business account. Having your own merchant account gives you the choice of many different online payment gateways. Most, however, do charge a set-up fee, monthly fee and transaction charge.

Just as you would offline, make sure you research any company you sign up with on the Internet. Print out and read their terms and conditions. Take particular notice of where they

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are operating from, their fees, when and how you will receive your money into your account.

Another point to consider is the question of chargebacks. This happens when a buyer requests a refund of an amount already paid to you. Reasons include not receiving goods ordered or items arriving faulty, damaged or not as described. Sometimes requests are made if the buyers card was used fraudulently.

If the chargeback request is successful, your merchant payment processor will charge you a processing fee. However, some companies will now provide you with insurance against chargebacks inclusive in your monthly fee. It's certainly worth shopping around for the right solution for you, but knowing you have done your research will give you some peace of mind.

Finding the Best Payment Processors

If you are trying to sell a product or service on your business website, you would need a way of accepting payments. The most popular mode of payment on the web is credit cards. Credit cards can be accepted in two ways on a website. You can have your own merchant account, or you can use a third-party payment processor.

If you are just starting out and operating on a limited budget, it is better to choose a third-party payment processor. This is because merchant accounts require high upfront and regular charges. Before choosing a payment processor, it is important to investigate their terms of service.

Following are some of the terms you should be aware of before choosing a processor:

Set up fee

Some companies require an upfront amount for registration with their service. Others have no set up or registration fee.

Per Transaction fee

Almost all payment processors charge a certain amount for processing each payment that is made through them from your website. This is usually a percentage of the total transaction amount and can range from as low as 2% to as high as 20%.

Other Fees

Some payment processing companies also levy other fees that may not be obvious at first glance. For example, there might be fees for bounced checks or chargebacks from the customer.

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Merchants Accepted

Some payment processing companies accept clients only from the US. Others have list of specific countries from which they accepts customers. Yet others accept clients from all over the world with no restriction on region.

Products Accepted

Some companies only let you sell intangible products, which can be downloaded or emailed and don't need to be shipped. Others have no restriction on what can be sold through them. Some specialize in selling only physical products.

Payment Method

Different payment processing companies have different methods of transferring payments to its clients, and charge varying fees for this service. You can get a check mailed to you, or you can request an ACH transfer to your bank. If you are international client, some companies will also arrange for an international wire transfer.

Payment Frequency

The payment frequency for all companies is also different. Some pay as soon as the customer makes the payment, others may make weekly, bi-monthly or monthly payments to their clients.

Customer Service

It is essential for a payment processing company to respond promptly to inquiries and to be customer friendly and reliable. The company should preferably have a reliable support system in place and respond to inquiries within 24 hours.

Review the service terms of your payment processing company carefully to ensure that you are getting a god deal and would have no problems in the future.

Here is a list of some popular payment processors:

- PayPal.com
- IBill.com
- ClickBank.com
- 2CheckOut.com
- ProPay.com

PayDotCom is a new online marketplace and will catalog thousands of products and services, both digital and physical products.

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Advantages of PayDotCom are:

- Purchases pay instantly to your PayPal account.
- Sell physical products and Digital Goods
- Collect 'subscriptions' (multiple payments) for your service or membership sites
- Get Paid Instantly
- No Pre-Approval
- Stats Tracking
- Promotional tools for your affiliates
- Create a new product line in 60 seconds.

To use PayDotCom you just:

- Be a member of PayPal.
- Signup for a free account.
- Create a new product line in 60 seconds.
- Add a "Buy It At PayDotCom" button on your website.

PayDotCom will then:

- Provide real-time access to your custom "Thank-You" page.
- Enable their affiliates to promote your products.
- Enable you to recruit an army of affiliates to promote your products.
- Provide you and all affiliates with real-time sales reporting.
- Provide you and all affiliates with tools and stats to track all of your campaigns.
- Provide you with a MASS pay file to pay your affiliates using your PayPal account.

PayPal now allows any of their members to use Mass Pay regardless of their country.

If you sell digital products, sites use resources like ClickBank. These will allow you to sit back and relax while they do repetitive work such as taking payments and downloading products to your customers. ClickBank also has its own affiliate program built-in so others can sell your products.

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Finding an effective payment resource is critical for both your customer and you. It makes the difference between money in your bank account or frozen in a locked account. Communication is critical when working with a payment processor. If your account has been running sales volume of $100-200 per day and all of a sudden you start selling $10,000+, the fraud and problem alarms will go off at your payment processor. Your account can then be shut down and frozen while the account is investigated. This means you have no way of taking in money or getting the money into your bank account.

If you are planning a launch, notify your processor in advance. Make sure your credit limit will handle your anticipated sales. Otherwise you will experience difficulties and overage penalties.

Read the fine print. Check out the policies on returns and chargebacks. Make sure you can live with the regulations. Your customer only knows you are the vendor. Make it a good experience for both you and your customer.

Next . . . Product Fulfillment

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Selling and Delivering the Product

Module 7

Section 2: Product Fulfillment

By Bret Ridgway

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Product Fulfillment

Bret Ridgway is co-founder of Speaker Fulfillment Services. SFS is a company specializing in duplication and fulfillment of info products for speakers, authors, and information marketers.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ The ABC's of Product Fulfillment

◆ How to setup fulfillment of a Product Launch

Getting ready to do a new product launch? As with anything, preparation is critical. That includes involving your duplication and fulfillment partner in the loop early in the process.

As you plan your product launch, you'll be lining up your affiliate partners, developing your website, recording audios and/or videos, designing your product graphics and a whole lot more. Bottom line is you'll be juggling a lot of balls and it can be easy to overlook important details if you don't have a detailed game plan on all aspects of your launch.

Fulfillment is a critical aspect of your launch. I know first hand of two fairly recent "Million Dollar Day" product launches that were disasters on the fulfillment end (we were not involved in either launch).

What will your duplication and fulfillment partner will be looking for from you regarding your product launch? Listed below are some of the critical things.

Make sure your CD and DVD masters are A-okay. We do direct disc-to-disc duplication, so the old adage – 'garbage in, garbage out' – applies here. Make sure your product is professionally recorded. We're still learning more about these ourselves, but there are a lot of little things that can bite you in the behind when recording audio and video.

Have all of your disc masters and the artwork for all your packaging done at least 30 days prior to your product launch date. Last-minute jobs raise stress levels for everyone involved, increase the risk of errors, and typically raise your costs.

Test your ordering process completely ahead of time. Make sure the mechanism to transfer order information to your fulfillment house is fully functional prior to your launch.

Have a plan in place to deal with your customers in case your product launch is more successful than you anticipated. If you ask us to produce 100 sets of a product for a launch and then you sell 300, you've created a problem you'll have to deal with to keep your customers happy. Keep in mind typical minimum

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turnaround on a new job order is 10-12 days. So have some digital bonuses or a portion of the main product your customers can download right away to keep them as happy as possible.

For more information on the marketing side of product launches, please check out Jeff Walker's *Product Launch Formula*.

Product launches can be extremely rewarding and lucrative… and frustrating. Minimize the chances of frustration by making sure your fulfillment considerations are including in your planning stages.

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Product launches can be extremely rewarding and lucrative…and frustrating. Minimize the chances of frustration by making sure your fulfillment considerations are including in your planning stages.

Product Fulfillment Self-Assessment Questions

1. Have I given myself enough time to plan for product fulfillment well before my launch date?

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2. Have I verified the qualify of all of my master CDs and DVDs?

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3. Have I properly planned for the amount of product I will need?

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4. Do I have a plan in case things go better than I expect, and I have included my fulfillment house in on that plan?

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Next . . . Module 8: Affiliate Programs And Joint Ventures

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Affiliate Programs
and Joint Ventures

Module 8

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Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Affiliate Programs
and Joint Ventures

Module 8

Section 1: Setting Up An Affiliate Program

By Peter Koning

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Section 1

Setting Up An Affiliate Program

An affiliate program for your information product can increase your sales volume and profits, if done right. Before you jump into purchasing some affiliate tracking software and signing up your affiliates, do a little up-front planning to make sure it's going to be a success.

This chapter covers the key things you need to know before you launch an info product affiliate program and how to go about launching it once you're ready.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ What types of affiliate models are there?

◆ How does affiliate tracking work?

◆ How to know you're ready for an affiliate program?

◆ Your 4-point action plan to get started

Types of Affiliate Programs

Ever since we had products for sale in the offline world, we had sales agents. You know the ones – the multi-product traveling sales "reps" carrying products and business cards from different manufacturers. They made sales without having to carry inventory, handle payments, and sign contracts. Their focus was to make the sale by getting the order, which was then processed by the manufacturer.

In the online world we now have the same model, with a twist. Instead of agents we have affiliates. Affiliates are highly targeted pay-for-performance agents which pre-sell your customer and are paid a commission when the desired event occurs. The most common reward is pay-for-sale, where the merchant pays the affiliate who referred the paying customer.

For merchants having a well tuned e-business, an affiliate channel has been shown to add 20-30% to their existing online sales.

Affiliates are treated as a complementary marketing channel. As a merchant selling your information products, you still receive your own direct traffic and makes your own sales. The twist is that the affiliate doesn't handle the order. This is taken care of by you and you have a tracking system to determine which affiliate sent you the business.

When you are selling an info product, there are two main types of affiliates – JV partners and affiliates. JV partners are other marketers who typically have large lists and can help you with your sales by promoting your info product to their list. Finding, recruiting, motivating, and managing JV partners is typically

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done at the early stage of a product launch. Once your product is launched, you might want to have a regular affiliate program to widen your net further.

Both JV partners and affiliates can use the same tracking system, so if you plan to have a JV partner strategy for your info product launch, then it makes sense to pick one that will also work well for your affiliates later on.

Affiliate Tracking Explained

Affiliate tracking systems typically use what are called affiliate links, which are the links that the affiliate puts on their site or in an email.

What's an affiliate link look like? There are several variations, but most have the affiliate link embedded in the linking URL. If you ever see a link like "www.some_clever_merchant.com/shop/?affid=1232" you can be pretty sure that the affiliate with ID 1232 will receive money from some_clever_merchant when someone buys their information products after clicking that link.

Other affiliate links are more complex, encrypted, or set up so that the referring domain is tracked so no affiliate id is even needed in the link. Some sites will cloak their links so that the curious surfer can't detect that they have clicked or are about to click an affiliate link.

There are other affiliate business models like "Pay-per-click," "Pay-per-lead," and "Pay-per-subscription" – but for selling an information product you are best off paying for the sale. Typical commissions in the info product segment are 40-50%. It may seem high, but your product and delivery costs should be very low and be happy to pay someone 50% to get your sale.

Are you Ready?

Before you jump into having an affiliate program and putting that "Affiliate" button on your website, make sure you are ready. If you answer no to any of the following questions, then you might not be ready:

Have you considered how you will get traffic to your site by

- registering with search engines?
- pay-per-click advertising?
- link exchanges?
- article writing?
- blogging?
- Do you already have an existing website where you have traffic and conversion data, which you can show to potential affiliates to encourage them to send their traffic to you?

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- Are you using some web analytics tool to measure the performance of your site?
- Are you capturing customer email addresses so that you can proactively market your info product to them?
- Do you have other strategic partner sites who might be interested or affected by an affiliate strategy, and you've discussed your plans with them?
- Do you have an affiliate strategy and understand your requirements for platform selection (read on for how to do this)?

If you said "No" to any of the above, it doesn't mean you can't start an affiliate program. It just means you need to consider these other things either before or during your affiliate program launch, as they might bring you more return on investment than an affiliate program.

4-Point Action Plan to Start an Affiliate Program

Here are the 4 main steps you need to take to start your info product affiliate program:

1. Define your strategy.

Some questions and how to answer them:

What are the benefits to your affiliates? Put yourself in their shoes.

What is the competition doing? Check the websites of your competition and look for links like "Affiliates," "Webmasters," "Make money," "Partners." Sign up with a free email account and see what their Terms and Conditions are, what they pay and how often.

What is your pay-for-performance model? Typically, for info products it's 50% of the sale.

What criteria should be used to screen the new affiliates? Usually you want affiliates with either good-sized and quality lists and sites that are generating fresh traffic – e.g. blogs or other info product sites where you can be an affiliate for each other. Also consider less sophisticated sites which are looking for ways to make money, don't know much about affiliate marketing, and could be a great fit for your info product.

Who will manage the affiliates and motivate them? You need to spend some time regularly keeping in touch with your affiliates – they are your extended marketing department and need to know about new products, upsells, promotions, and contests. Allocate some time like 1-2 hours per week to keep those affiliates happy and motivated.

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How are the affiliates to be paid and does your e-commerce system support the accounting required? If you use an affiliate network, they will take care of this for you.

What affiliate management features do I need? Which ones will differentiate me from my competition?

The main question is the tiers – most info products have a two tier affiliate program which means the affiliate is motivated to help you recruit more affiliates. Don't get too worried about all of the features – just focus on the basics like how to contact the affiliates, number of tiers, how to pay them, and link customization options. The vendor should be reliable and give good support – so send them some emails or call them to test their response.

2. Get the Best Tracking Solution for Your Needs

A key part of running a successful affiliate program is being able to manage your affiliates efficiently and cost-effectively. Thankfully, there are software products to help you do this. The trouble is, with dozens of different affiliate software suppliers offering a wide range of features, functionality and pricing, how do you choose the right one?

What affiliate software tracking system or network should be used? You can visit Affiliate-Software-Review.com to compare over 45 systems, but thankfully for the info product space you only need to consider a few options.

For info products, there are two main categories of affiliate software – affiliate networks and shopping carts – each with its strengths and weaknesses. You want access to a large number of affiliates and JV partners who are familiar with the platform. Affiliate networks have the affiliates in place already and are known to be trusted. JV partners might be more familiar with hosted shopping carts.

Affiliate Networks

The software is hosted and provided by a third-party. You also gain access to an established community of people who are actively looking for affiliate opportunities. Examples are ClickBank, PayDotCom, ShareASale.

Pros

- No technical skill or maintenance required.
- Instant access to a large pool of potential affiliates, which can help build your program quickly.

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- Usually the network handles the administration of the entire program, including affiliate payouts and reporting.
- Some networks have advanced fraud detection services that you may not be able to do yourself.
- You do nothing but upload your affiliate offers to the network site.

Cons

- The network takes a relatively high transaction fee on each affiliate sale.
- Minimal options for customizing the program to your specific needs.
- The actual number of useful affiliates may be less, if they cover a wide range of markets.

Shopping Carts

Shopping cart software allows customers on an e-commerce site to select items they wish to purchase and store them in their virtual shopping basket, before paying for their purchase in one electronic transaction. Many e-commerce shopping carts include affiliate management features as either a standard or add-on module. An example of a cart that has an affiliate module is 1shoppingcart.com.

Pros

- E-commerce and affiliate management functions are integrated into one program, making maintenance easier and less expensive.
- The affiliate module is not typically based on volume so fees remain the same as your program grows.
- Some can handle two-tier affiliate programs and are hosted by servers which can handle high loads at launch time.
- Many high-profile JV partners use 1shoppingcart.com to sell their own info products.

Cons

- Affiliate management is not the vendor's primary focus so the software may have less functionality than other software options.

3. Purchase and Setup

Sign up with the network or shopping cart as a merchant and follow their instructions for setting up your affiliate tracking. You will need to:

- configure your own terms and conditions

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- update your website with an Affiliate button/link and an affiliate program sales page.
- walk through the process as if you were an affiliate to make sure everything works cleanly, confirmation emails are being sent, and make a test purchase to ensure commissions are correctly tracked and calculated.
- get familiar with the affiliate control panel – where your affiliate will login – so that you can explain the benefits of the features to them when it's recruitment time.
- have someone else try it out, as if they were an affiliate of yours.

4. Advertise, Recruit, Manage

While the bulk of your advertising should be spent on your info product, you should also point out the affiliate program to the affiliate market, which may not be exposed to your regular product advertising.

As a minimum, you should have a link on your site for Affiliates. Make sure you mention the affiliate program to prospects and customers. Put a link to your affiliate program in your info product itself.

There are services which can announce your affiliate program, but generally you are better off knowing the kinds of sites which would make good affiliates and targeting them directly with a phone call and follow-up email.

Once you have affiliates signed up to your program it is important to communicate with them regularly. One way is to have a blog which is for affiliates only – located at a hidden URL. Another way is to email your affiliates using the tools in the affiliate system you have purchased.

If you are part of an affiliate network, like ClickBank, you may not have much choice in who your affiliates are, as anyone who is a ClickBank affiliate can sell your product if they know your ClickBank vendor code. This makes it easy to explain to existing affiliates, since they know how it works, but also harder to screen the ones which may waste your time.

Another note if you are using ClickBank - you may not be able to easily create a list of your affiliates as anyone could be your affiliate. To solve this situation, you can have an opt-in form on your site where affiliate prospects sign up to get more information on your program. The downside to this is that you are creating one more click in the affiliate signup process, so you will get less affiliates, but at least you have their email address.

Communication with affiliates is important, so among the affiliate networks I would recommend ShareASale, which has

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more tools for affiliate approval and communication than ClickBank.

Once your affiliates are in place and sending you traffic (and hopefully sales!), your job isn't over. You need to keep in touch with them – especially your top performers – to let them know of price changes, upsells (higher-end products), cross-sells (related products), and upcoming promotions. It is generally accepted that only 5% of your affiliates will bring in over 95% of your sales, so make sure you are staying in touch with these super-affiliates, but also looking out for which of the other 95% have the potential to also become super-affiliates.

Affiliate Resources

Here is the complete list of forums that I recommend you follow. Many are ecommerce or merchant focused. You might come across some of my postings in the forums, where I try help answer merchants' questions.

ABestWeb Affiliate Marketing Forum

WikiPedia Article on Affiliate Marketing

ReveNews.com Online Revenue Blog

Digital Point Webmaster Forum – Internet Marketing & Search Engine Forums

NetProfitsToday.com – Index

Affiliate-Software-Review.com Blog (with RSS feed)

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Setting Up An Affiliate Program Self-Assessment Questions

1. What type of affiliate program will I set up (such as single tier, two tier)?

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2. What will the commission structure be for my products and/or services?

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3. What steps will I take to partner up with new affiliate/JV partners?

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Next . . . How to Leverage Your Assets With Joint Ventures

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and Joint Ventures

Module 8

Section 2: How to Leverage Your Assets With Joint Ventures

By Kenneth A. McArthur

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How to Leverage Your Assets With Joint Ventures

The basics of joint ventures are simple – two people get together – share assets – and create something better than what they had when they started.

What you will learn in this Section:

◈ How to leverage what you already have

◈ Use what you may not realize you have to partner/JV with others

In the case of marketing on the Internet, usually those assets take one of two forms – you have products to sell or you have people who want to buy products.

Leverage Your Assets

Whether you are a product developer or a list owner, you can't keep selling your customers the same products all of the time.

That is where the leveraged advantages of joint ventures come in.

Let's say for instance that I have a list and it has 50,000 people on it. Let's say that you have a list and it has another 50,000 people on it.

The people on your list are not the same people on my list.

That is where the advantage of joint ventures becomes very valuable.

If I send my 50,000 people to buy a product that you might have to offer and you send your 50,000 people to buy a product that I might have, then we're doubling our potential for profit with exactly the same number of assets.

What I've just described is really a form of barter. You advertise to your list and I advertise to my list. We don't lose anything and it doesn't cost us anything, but we double our profits.

You can start to see that joint ventures can be powerful when used in the right way.

Okay, we've talked about the theory. Now let's just talk a little bit about how it works in the real world.

Case Study: Affiliate Showcase

Several years ago, I sent a simple email to Jim Daniels. Jim is a world-famous Internet marketer who has been around for a long, long time.

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Over time, he's built up a list of probably 160,000 subscribers that know him and trust him and listen to his opinions about new products and services. During the same period of time that Jim was building his list, I'd been working on the Internet slowly trying to build up my subscribers one at a time, trying to find people who would buy my products and services.

I had built up probably 2,000 people on my lists that I've built up over a period of a year or two. I decided this was not a very fast way to build up subscribers. So I put on my thinking cap and I finally realized that if I wanted to reach people I had to go to where they were. Even better, if I wanted to talk to people and get them to buy my products and services, I needed to get somebody who they trusted to tell them that my products and services were worth what they'd have to pay for them.

Since I'd been reading Jim's newsletter, I decided I'd send him off a simple email.

Here's what I told Jim…

> "I've been working on products. I have some great software that I use to build portal sites and I think that you and I could work together and that we could put together something that would be of benefit to both of us."

Jim and I emailed back and forth – we shared ideas – we talked about possibilities for websites, and eventually we came up with a system that we called AffiliateShowcase.com, which is a search engine and directory for affiliate programs.

Affiliate Showcase has a special twist. You can insert your own affiliate links and your own affiliate programs into Affiliate Showcase, advertise your own version of Affiliate Showcase and earn all of the commissions from all of those programs. So it gives you a place where you can promote multiple programs all from the same location.

After we had done our planning, some programming and put together a beta program to try and encourage people, we launched Affiliate Showcase.

It almost immediately went into the top sites on the Internet! A large part of that was due to the fact that Jim Daniels was promoting this to his lists. Now Affiliate Showcase has done hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of business and has earned thousands of dollars for many individuals that have become Affiliate Showcase members.

All of this started from a simple email, and all I did was approach somebody who already had contacts and who had trust built up already. I convinced them that I had quality services and products that we could work on together, and

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leveraged his people and my products so that we could make something that was even bigger than what Jim or I had separately.

I could go on and on about all of the joint ventures that I've participated in since then, and jvAlert.com itself is the result of a joint venture that Sid Hale and I put together as a result of our relationship that we built up from AffiliateShowcase.com.

How Do I Make It Happen?

Now, I have joint ventures growing out of joint ventures – all of the people that have joined jvAlert.com are becoming partners with me in all kinds of different projects – so it just grows and grows.

So, the next question is how do you get started in this? How do you take what products, services and resources that you have and leverage them to make your business better and to grow with joint ventures?

There are a few things that you want to think about before you even start to go out and approach somebody about a joint venture:

- ◆ You want to know what the short and long-term goals of your venture are.
- ◆ What kinds of deals you want to get involved in.
- ◆ What you should offer and what you should not offer.
- ◆ You want to get a sense of what people will accept and what they won't accept in a joint venture offer.
- ◆ You want to know who is going to have what responsibilities.
- ◆ You want to know who is going to own the product.
- ◆ You want to know who has the copyright or how do the income and expenses get split.

If you know – even before you start – exactly what you want to get out of a joint venture, you'll have a lot better luck convincing somebody else to agree to your terms.

The one thing that we do know is that we want to make this a win-win situation. So let's look at this from the other person's side for a couple of minutes.

What Does a JV Partner Want?

What kinds of deals would people like to get involved in and what do you think will work for them?

Imagine just for a second that you are that high-powered, top-level affiliate or top-level Internet marketer – what types of things would you be looking for?

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Well, I think one thing for sure would be that you would want to have something that is going to generate a reasonable amount of profit for not too much effort on your part.

So ease of use and dollar volume always comes into play on these types of deals. Let's face it, we're all lazy, and the easier that you can make this for somebody the more chance that you have of convincing them of working with you.

Secondly, let's remember that top-level Internet marketers are getting dozens of joint venture proposals probably almost every day. You really need to make yours stand out.

The next question becomes how do you find people to partner with who are going to be top-level and give your products and services the most exposure.

Or, if you sit on the other side of the equation, how do you find products that are quality that you can promote and make the highest possible profits from them?

With thousands and thousands of Internet marketers out there trying to get your attention, how do you know which ones are successful?

One of the places to start is Alexa.com. Alexa is a site that gathers Internet information and has a toolbar that people can download to tell how much traffic a particular site is going to receive, or has received in the past.

This toolbar is not an exact representation of exactly how much traffic people get, but instead is a representation of how many people who have actually downloaded this Alexa toolbar have gone to a particular site.

What Alexa does is rank sites from the most visited sites on the Internet down to people that get almost no traffic at all. They give you a rating for that particular site and you can even get traffic details that will show you over time what a particular site has done.

So, does this mean if the site is rated number 2,000 in terms of traffic ranking that they really are in the top 2,000 sites on the Internet in terms of the traffic?

Not necessarily, but it's an indication of a site that gets at least some traffic to it, and by comparing sites and their Alexa ratings you can tell whether or not people are going to a particular site on a regular basis.

High Alexa rankings, by that I mean the lower numbers, generally indicate that a website has traffic, and traffic is one of the criteria that you want to look for when you're looking for a partner.

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Notice that I say it's only one of the criteria. Many sites have traffic, but haven't really built up a level of trust with the people that go to their site.

Trust: The Essential Key

You can generate a lot of traffic by buying co-registration leads or by buying advertising, but you haven't really built up a relationship with that customer until there is an interaction that's back and forth between you and the potential customer – where you give them some sort of value and they learn to trust you and your opinion on things.

This trust factor is a huge factor in determining whether or not you'll purchase eventually from the person or company that is associated with a particular website. Some people have built up this trust over years and years and years and you can capitalize on that.

So how do you know who's built up trust?

First, look at the people that you trust.

- What newsletters do you subscribe to?
- Who do you know is a reliable source for information?
- What websites do you find that are great resources for the type of people you want to attract
- Where will those people be going and who will they be listening to?

How I Did It

When I started jvAlert.com, I knew that I wanted to reach the top marketers in the world.

The first thing that I did was subscribe to every single newsletter that I could possibly find.

There are a number of quality directories of e-zines and newsletters. If you go to AffiliateShowcase.com and put e-zine in the search engine, you'll get a list of all kinds of resources that you can use to locate publishers of e-zines.

If you subscribe to all kinds of e-zines, what do you get over a period of time?

Well very quickly,

- You get a sense of who you can trust and who you can't trust.
- You get a sense of the people who put out quality work and a sense of the people who don't.
- You know who is just putting out hype.

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I talked to my girls when they were growing up about liars.

I told them, you may not be able to catch somebody in a lie, but over time, you usually know who the liars are.

The same holds true when you're reading somebody's work over a period of time.

My guess is that you're not going to buy from a liar and that you aren't going to buy from somebody who just produces hype and therefore, that's not the type of person that you're going to want to partner with.

You can recognize quality and so can your potential customers.

The main point is to always deal with quality.

So you've gone out and you've identified all kinds of publications and all kinds of Internet marketers.

You can grab even more if you just look for search terms such as Internet Marketing Guru lists. You'll find lists of people that you may or may not want to partner with. Pretty soon, you develop a sense of who has high visibility in the marketplace.

Now does this mean they're the best people to market with?

An Easier Way to Find Partners

Absolutely not. What you need to do is find people that recommend quality products to the types of markets that you want to reach.

There are some products out there that will help you to make this task just a little bit easier. One of the products is a system called *Super Affiliate Generator*. You can find that using the Affiliate Showcase search engine at AffiliateShowcase.com. Just type in the words 'super affiliate' and you'll find a listing for their program.

When you install *Super Affiliate Generator*, you can select from a number of search engines and then search for keywords that are related to your product or services.

Super Affiliate Generator will then go out and search the search engine that you selected and come up with a lot of information for sites that show up under those search terms.

You can find the link popularity, you can find the Alexa ranking, you can find the position in the search engine results. It will also collect information such as email and phone numbers from

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public data. This tool gives you a fast way to collect information about people that have websites that might be in the field that you're interested in.

Make a Plan and Do It Right

One of the things I want to encourage you to do – is to do this right.

You need to take the time that it takes to build relationships with people who will really be effective at marketing your products and services and partnering with you.

Long before you approach somebody with a joint venture offer, subscribe to their newsletter. Spend some time looking at exactly what they're saying and taking it all in.

Build a dialogue with them – don't make the first words out of your mouth be "This is what I can do for you" or "This is what you can do for me."

Every Internet marketer on the face of the earth has seen emails that start out with "Boy, I really enjoyed your article" or "I'm sitting here right now at your website and I really like what you're doing. I think that this is the perfect opportunity for me to help you out."

Guess what? Immediately that first reaction is "What are you trying to sell me?" If you've seen it in a form letter, you know that the Internet marketer has seen the same thing thousands of times.

Build A Relationship

So what can you really do to build a relationship?

Make honest comments on the work that they're doing – ask questions – get a dialogue going. Make this thing two-way and do it without asking for anything.

Then just let some time go by. It's really hard to believe, but there are people on the other side of the email – they're human just like everybody else. They have wants, desires, they have friends, they have wives and children – a lot of things that you can talk about besides just making a buck.

Now I can hear you thinking right now, but I haven't got that kind of time – I don't want to waste time trying to build up relationships with people when I need thousands of people to come to my site and buy my product and I need it to happen right now.

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Case Study: jvAlert

Part of the reason that we put together jvAlert was to help people do exactly that – to build relationships with people that they hadn't had any contact with and to know that you are only dealing with quality people that are serious Internet marketers.

So what Sid Hale and I did when we first started jvAlert was go out to people that we knew and we trusted and we invited them to come in and join us in a very, very select group of people where they would know that they were only working with top-level people.

Then we asked them who do you respect? Who do you like to deal with? Who are the top people that you would recommend,

We opened up the group to people who received invitations from our members. The people who got invitations were the people that top marketers thought were the best in the world.

Next, we started testing the system.

The system really consists of a very, very specialized search engine that puts together resources from top-level marketers and matches them with joint venture offers.

Because the members of jvAlert know that they're only dealing with top quality people, they're willing to give better commissions, better deals then they would ordinarily in the public marketplace.

This data system has run along really well for a long period of time. We built up a very, very tight-knit group of people that were top, top quality and we still hadn't really invited the public at large into jvAlert.

After we worked out all of the kinks and bugs and fine-tuned the system, and made it even more powerful, we decided that we would start the launch off and we allowed our members to invite anybody that they wanted into the membership of jvAlert.

Almost instantly, jvAlert.com went to the top of the charts at Alexa.com for the traffic rankings!

People were moving to jvAlert in record numbers and we were generating all kinds of traffic and suddenly we had new members all over the place.

All of the new members and all of the traffic generated all kinds of joint venture offers, but did that make the resource more useful?

Well, not immediately.

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First, people had to learn how to do joint venture offers that worked. The quality of the joint venture offers at jvAlert was the real drawing card for the members there and suddenly the quality of the offers was slipping.

The first thing that we did was to put in a manual review system of all of the offers to make sure that the quality of the offers was as high as what our members have been experiencing before we let everybody in.

Secondly, we began a process of educating people. We really needed to teach them how to do joint venture offers that would stand out above the crowd, that would be really something special.

So how do you that?

Well, the first thing that you need to realize is that if you're going to go in and just offer the same thing that you offer to everybody else to a top-level marketer, you're not going to get very far.

So, if you go to a top-level marketer and say, "Look, I've got this great product and I'll pay you a 10% commission on it," you're going to get absolutely zero.

The next thing that people wanted to do was to just say, "Okay, well, I'll give more commission. So lets make this a 50% commission or a 75% commission and people will jump all over this."

What a Top Level Partner Wants

Well, most people probably would jump all over a 75% commission, but if you're a top-level marketer, you're looking for something a little different. Sure, you want the high level of commission, but you want something extra in addition to that.

One of the things that you need to realize is that high-level marketers generally only have so many opportunities to promote. You can't keep promoting over and over to the same list with the same products or the same types of products and expect response to continue in the way that you would like it to.

What you have to do is hand pick products that match exactly the type of clients that you're working with and which have extremely high value for them.

Then you have to give them something extra to make it even more enticing to them.

Why not add another product to your offer?

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Don't be satisfied with a single offer – give them some bonus to give away, give their members an extra discount, offer to promote one of their products to your list, give them a related article to publish in their newsletter, or offer to combine your products with some of theirs.

Remember that joint ventures don't have to be just between two people – a lot of people can join in your joint venture and sometimes the more the merrier. Once you get one top-level marketer to join your joint venture, go out looking for some more. You can use the participation of your first marketer to encourage other marketers to join in. It will give you a sense of credibility and a sense of value for other top-level marketers.

In general, top-level marketers are looking for either high levels of commissions, meaning high dollar values, or recurring commissions, which also over time equals high dollar values because they have limited numbers of slots that they can promote in.

One great way to produce a high dollar volume and high quality at the same time is to combine multiple products into the same package. Start with your contribution, then capture your first high-level marketer and ask them to add their product to the list. Then go to a series of other marketers and see if they will add theirs to the package. What you can end up with is a great product, a great value and a large number of people who are all promoting your product.

Email may be the fastest way to get a hold of somebody, but it's not necessarily the best way to build a relationship.

In most cases, you can get a sense of a person much more easily and faster using the telephone. Believe me, I know how you feel about using that telephone, but drop somebody an email and say "What's a good time to call?" Then, when they respond back to your email, you already have an invitation to give them a call – a time and place that's convenient for them and you've started to build a relationship.

Remember, you don't have to make that phone call to say "Buy this, work this deal with me" – just meet the person, ask a few questions about their business, explore some of the possibilities that they have and ask them about their products and services. You know they'll be happy to tell you about that.

Then you can expand from there and look at the possibilities and how they can work with you and your business. You'll get a sense of what they're doing, what types of things they're looking for and how the two of you can work best together.

Throughout this whole process keep in mind that it has to be win-win.

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Both of you have to benefit from a joint venture relationship or it's just not worth it. The key skill that you need when negotiating a joint venture is to actually listen to the other person so that you can make it valuable to them and hear what their potential problems are.

Here are ten easy steps to joint venture success.

1. Define your goals. If you don't know what you want to achieve in the first place, how are you ever going to get there? Don't forget to include both long-term and short-term goals. Make the short-term goals little steps to get towards what you want to get to eventually. Know what kind of a deal you want to make – know what kind of profits you want to make out of that deal – know how much time you're willing to put into it and what results you expect to get out of it. If the deal that you come up with doesn't meet your goals, scrap it and start over again.

2. Make the key ownership decision. Who owns what, is important. And while you're thinking about ownership, remember that with ownership comes liability. Who's going to be responsible when this thing doesn't work out the way that you think it will? In almost every case, the person that has ownership also has the greatest liability. Make sure you're covered for that.

3. Get the responsibilities right. Make sure you know exactly who is going to do what, when they're going to do it, and what happens when they don't.

4. Create deals that people want to participate in. That goes back to the win-win situation that we were talking about before. Make sure that you're offering something of value – and make sure they make money off of it and you'll have repeat joint ventures that will do even more. Be creative. People are looking for deals that are new and different.

5. Find top-level partners. You want to do this right, so take your time. Go out and find people that you trust, find people that you know and respect and that others will, too.

6. Write an irresistible offer. Make this something that's going to stand out in the crowd and then put it down on paper – not so you're locked into it, but so that you have something to work from that clearly expresses what goals you've set up and meets them. Keep it flexible enough to be adapted for any marketer that you might come across.

7. Negotiate a winning deal. That's back to the win-win again, but this time you want to make sure your behind is covered and that your goals are met. There is no need to give away the whole farm. What you need to do is meet the needs of the

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person you're dealing with. Listen to them and find out what goals they want to meet – make sure that you meet those goals and that you meet yours at the same time. Remember that anything that you don't give away is money in your pocket.

8. Make sure it happens. An incredibly high percentage of deals that have been discussed, negotiated, all set up, never happen – and usually the reason is just simple follow-up. People's lives are busy. They get distracted. They do other things. Just make sure that it happens.

Consistently follow-up with your partner. Make sure they're still on the same table. Verify they're meeting the goals and the responsibilities that they've agreed to meet, then do the same thing for yourself. Be certain that you have a list of exactly what you've agreed to do and then step through that list, one step at a time, making sure that everything you agreed to do – you actually do.

9. Double your profits by tracking your results. So many times, we leave out this aspect and it needs to be set up in advance. You need to know where every sale comes from. You need to know what resources you use to get them and how much they cost, both in time and money.

To get your return on investment, do the following:

- ◆ Number one, put a dollar value on your time.
- ◆ Number two, calculate the total investment for each marketing possibility. That's the time, times the value of your time, plus any cash required and that equals your investment.
- ◆ Number three, estimate the number of sales or sign ups from each marketing possibility.
- ◆ Number four, divide the total investment by the estimated sign ups or sales.
- ◆ Number five, rank those by the return on investment and then naturally as you go on, test, test, test and retest to see where you're actually producing the results and then re-rank your list. That way you know which joint ventures are actually working for you, what they are taking up of your time and resources and what the return on investment you're getting actually is.

The bottom line is that you want to invest more time and effort into the techniques that are working for you in actual practice.

Also, you want to identify the areas that might not be worth your hourly rate that may be worth someone's hourly rate. Repetitive tasks may not be your cup of tea, but you may find areas that pay off big time that are just a matter of putting in time. You may not have the time, but if it makes money, you can find resources that may pay off for you when you outsource

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repetitive tasks that generate income. And joint ventures are a great way to find those resources.

Or maybe you are on the opposite side of that – maybe you have a lot of time and not so many resources. Time is a great resource to use in a negotiation for a joint venture. If you have a lot of it, it's a great commodity to bargain with.

10. <u>Do it all again</u>. Once you've gone through the process, you've developed a great set of resources. You already know some of the people – you have partners and you've built relationships. Now all you have to do is leverage those resources over and over.

Tips For Exponential JV Results

Now let's talk about a couple of ways to produce exponential joint venture results.

The first thing to remember is that endorsements always work better than advertising. If someone that people know and trust is recommending a product or service then sales results are going to be exponentially higher.

If endorsements are detailed and enthusiastic, they always work better than short, little blurbs. Endorsements that are made by people who endorse relatively few products work better than people endorsing your product that endorse other products everyday.

Generally, the more endorsements that you have the better they work, but that's not always the case. A very personalized endorsement will always work better than something that reads more like a form letter.

As customers, we want to know that we aren't being ripped off. We want to know that people are offering genuine value for the hard-earned cash that we give them.

That's why personalized endorsements always work better than ordinary advertising.

Now don't get me wrong, advertising works.

The question with advertising is what is the price that we can get that advertising for?

The nice thing about advertising is that you can usually get more of it. So if you can get into a situation in which you can routinely generate the same profits over and over and over again, advertising can make those exponential profits just by increasing the amount of advertising that you do.

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The nice thing about joint ventures is that we can work both advertising angles and product angles and personalized endorsements all at the same time, and the effect will be exponential, too. Why stick with just one thing? The more joint venture possibilities that we combine, the bigger the result.

Another way that we can exponentialize our joint venture profits is to concentrate on the back-end.

Many times, we don't have the time or resources to build products that are complimentary to the ones that we already have.

If you can joint venture with someone who already has those products, you can create exponential profits just by offering their products to an already eager customer who is interested in a particular line of products.

Many times, you can use a low price item to sell an even higher priced item, which creates even more profits.

Mistakes

So what kinds of mistakes can you make?

The sky is the limit. You have to watch out for the potholes – that's for sure – and you need to protect yourself.

Legal and accounting issues can hurt you big time so you need to know what the liabilities are, what the responsibilities are and you have to know who the ownership sits with.

First, you need to know what form your agreement is going to take.

- ◆ Is it just a contract?
- ◆ Is it a partnership?
- ◆ Do you form a new corporation?

A formal corporation may offer the benefit of limited shareholder liability, but many times contracts require personal liability.

A partnership can even be scarier with the prospect of unlimited liability for all of the partners with the result that limited liability can be more of a myth than a reality.

Also with a more formalized joint venture, there is the added cost of setting up and maintaining the accounting expenses for those structures that you've created.

Most often some type of a contract is the form that is most used and it allows the parties to separate their respective contributions, and there is some flexibility to actually sharing

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responsibilities and whether or not you carry out your own part, or what expenses you may be able to write-off in the joint venture.

Also, don't forget the taxman when you set up the form for your joint venture. Eventually, you're going to have to pay on any profits that you may produce.

You also want to take a look at how you dissolve the relationship.

- When is the relationship over?
- How can one person or another get out of the agreement and what consequences come as a result of that?

If you plan right and think about these potential problems before you start, you've ruled out a lot of problems.

OK, So Can I Do This?

Now you've got all of these complexities going on in your mind and you're wondering how you could possibly do something like this and still make it work. Is it really worth all of the effort, the time and the planning and the building of relationships to create a joint venture?

The answer is absolutely!

The next question is can you do it?

- What if you don't have 50,000 people on your list?
- What if you don't have a great product?
- What if you don't have a lot of money?

The truth is that as human beings we all have something to offer.

Usually the first things that pop into your mind when you start a project are that it takes either time or money and usually both.

The "usually both" is where you come in.

If you don't have time, maybe you have money.

It certainly helps to have both and sometimes it's easier to put two people together to get both aspects of this relationship.

Maybe you don't have time and maybe somebody else does.

If you can work with that person, it makes it a lot easier for you to reach your goals.

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If you have a lot of time, but you don't have much money, maybe you can find somebody who has something of value that you can spend time on to produce more profits for both of you.

Don't underestimate creativity.

Ideas may be a dime a dozen, but good ideas are worth something. All that you need to do is put your good ideas together with the assets to make them happen.

The biggest asset that you have is the ability to make something happen – to actually follow through on it and see that something is done.

That particular trait is so rare that true entrepreneurs jump all over it the second that they see it.

If I meet somebody who can actually get something done, who actually follows through on what they're promising and who does what they say that they will do, it's a great value to me as a marketer.

Honesty, reliability, sincerity and the ability to get things done are things that you can develop in yourself and you can sell them as assets. Once you produce for someone, they will come back to you over and over again to joint venture with you again.

I wish that joint venturing was more difficult, more complex, more secret. Just think of all of the things that I could sell you. But the truth is that joint venturing is all about building relationships one little step at a time – person to person – meeting someone in their own backyard.

Building JV: The Short Version

It's getting to know them, building piece-by-piece the little things that make a friendship, and then using those assets that both of you have naturally to come up with ideas, with projects and with exponential results from your efforts.

Here are the basics again.

- ◆ First, put together your ideas.
- ◆ Know what your goals are.
- ◆ Think about what you want to do and how you want to achieve them.
- ◆ Think about what you want to give up and what you don't want to give up.
- ◆ Plan for the future.

Then locate people who can help with your projects. Use the available tools to find out who's trusted. Who has an audience

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that listens to them and who you respect, and who you feel that you can trust?

Build relationships with those people one step at a time – one simple phone call – one idea tossed back and forth between two people.

Don't push. Simply explore the possibilities. Build the relationship before you try to make a deal.

Listen to what people have to say.

Respond to their needs and try to find situations in which both of you can win.

When you find those situations, make sure that you meet your partner's needs and your needs, and when you've done that – stop. There is no need to give away the farm, but you do need to make sure that everybody wins.

Hammer out all of the responsibilities. Find out who has the ownership and who has the liabilities. Then check those situations and find the best form that you possibly can for this joint venture.

Build your joint venture so that it produces exponential profits.

Combine with other joint ventures, work with other partners, make something even bigger.

Don't forget the back-end. Many times profits can be much higher on the back-end then your original sale, and joint venture partners can help you to build bigger and more profitable products by combining resources, by combining promotional attempts and by combining products to make something even better.

The key to joint venture success is finding people to joint venture with who can enhance your products and services and with building relationships with those people.

jvAlert.com is a great resource for building relationships with some really terrific people.

If you're really looking for high quality, if you really want results and if you really want to build relationships, I don't think you can get much better than going with jvAlert.

Notes

But the most important thing is to actually do something. If you don't start – it will never happen. The sky is really the limit. Just go out there and do it!

If I can personally help you in any way, just drop me an email at ken@jvAlert.com. I'd be happy to help you in any way that I can.

I wish you all of the best of success in whatever you do.

Info Product Blueprint

How to Leverage Your Assets With Joint Ventures Self-Assessment Questions

1. Who are 3 to 5 people you would like to JV with? Make an effort to go out of your way to meet and help the potential JV Partners anyway you can. (Go to events to meet them personally. Surround yourself with people who can help you.)

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2. Which seminars do you plan to attend within the next 6 months?

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3. Which marketing forums do you plan to join to meet people and learn more?

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Next . . . Module 9: Launching With Style

![InfoProductBluePrint.com - your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product](logo)

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Module 9: Launching With Style

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
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Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 1: Launch Overview

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
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Launch Overview

Why bother planning?

Launching an info product doesn't require a degree in engineering or business, but you will need to set up a plan. A launch plan will give you:

◆ Faster development time
◆ More effective marketing
◆ Systematic approach to customer service
◆ Ability to time and catch the window of opportunity

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Stages of a product launch

Many people see the product launch as the 'selling' of your product. Your successful launch begins not with the selling of your product, but with the start of your idea. Some of the steps you've completed (hope you have!) will come together when you put together your launch process.

Launching is truly a process with each step being interdependent. Skip a step and you have decreased your opportunity for launch success (lost income, too!). A successful launch doesn't happen by accident – it happens by plan.

Planning For The 'What If'

Be prepared for things to go wrong. Much like you have a spare tire in your car 'in case of,' a good plan will help you anticipate many potential problems and be ready to react and solve. Flexibility, a sense of humor and a willingness to adapt will help you launch and still enjoy the process.

Stages of Product Launch

There are three distinct stages of product launch.

Market and Product Research

This is the discovery stage. You find your market, competitors and what is needed to reach that market. This stage gives you the knowledge to develop and present your product to a specific niche market.

Product and Message Development

This is the 'making' phase where the product is made and your message to sell your product is developed.

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Marketing and Sales Implementation

This is the completion stage for your info product.

You've researched and developed the strategies and your product. Now it's time to plug it all into your implementation timeline.

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What's Next?

Use the checklists to ensure you've completed all of the necessary steps. If you are missing some steps, take the time to complete that step. The saying, "Plan your work and work your plan" is the key to product launch success.

Next . . . Defining Launch Objectives

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Module 9

Section 2: Defining Launch Objectives

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

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Defining Launch Objectives

Defining your launch objectives is part of your overall business strategy. In his "Manifesto," Rich Schefren describes dominating a niche so well with so many products that savvy competitors leave you alone. What does that take? Running a business like a business and doing it well.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ The importance of defining the desired end result

Running A Business Well

Launch objectives need to be part of your overall business strategy. What's your ultimate goal? In real estate investment, it's called developing an exit strategy for a piece of real estate. When smart real estate investors buy a property they have already decided whether it is a long or short-term hold and whether they want to rent or resell quickly. It's no different in Internet marketing. Your desired outcome shapes your launch objectives.

What's your desired end-result?

When I talked with Internet marketers about upcoming launches, most of them mentioned they wanted to sell a large quantity of their product. That's all well and good, but in addition do you want to:

◆ Build a huge list?
◆ Want cash fast?
◆ Want to make a name for yourself?

The strategies you choose will vary depending on the objective you choose. Objectives will let you know your have succeeded as well as giving you objective placemarkers along your development path.

Build A Huge List?

To build a huge list quickly you might want to really incentivize your JV partners and affiliates. Some techniques you might use would be to pay the partners and affiliates 100% of the income. This will motivate many to promote your product.

Another technique would be to immediately pay the partners and affiliates as soon as you are paid.

The downside to this is you will end up absorbing the cost of returns and refunds.

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Want Cash Fast?

If you want to increase your bank account, structure your offer so your JV partners receive 70% and your affiliates receive 50% on a one-time-offer (OTO). You get cash from the offer, your partners and affiliates do as well, and you have a list of 'buyers' to upsell at a later time.

If you want all of the cash for yourself, then use outside publicity and press releases to create a media extravaganza. This one requires media savvy or a friend with media savvy to accomplish.

Make a name for yourself?

You getting visibility means creating buzz for yourself as well as the product. It will influence your choice of photos, graphics, publicity and launch information used. You may choose to use an aggressive public relations campaign or a viral campaign for name and face recognition.

You can develop a viral campaign to get your name out. Viral campaigns will require planning and implementation from the start of your program.

Make sure your name is included in your product packaging, sales and promotional copy. Encourage people giving testimonials to include your name when giving the testimonial.

Have professional photos taken. Make sure your photos reflect who you are. If you are a suit and tie person, then wear the suit. If you are casual and playful in your style, then have the photos reflect the person you are. Find a photographer you can relax with and who brings out the best in you. Check out Mary Mazzullo's section and DVD on how to get the best photos.

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Smooth Progression Through Stages of Launch?

From start to finish you need to have a game plan. A plan allows you to anticipate slowdowns and problems. It forces you to develop alternatives. That way you will know what to do next and won't be scrambling when plan B or C needs to go into effect or you have to postpone your launch date.

Defining Launch Objectives Self-Assessment Questions

1. What do I want as a desired outcome for my product launch?

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2. What steps do I need to take to accomplish this?

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Next . . . Building Buzz

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Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 3: Building Buzz

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

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Building Buzz

Word of mouth has become fashionable. This age old marketing strategy is being promoted now as the hot trend to follow. It's even acquired a new name: BUZZ.

In most circles buzz is a very high level of word of mouth discussion of products, services and people, but for our discussion we'll cover all means of generating buzz. You can decide how much and where you want to start your buzz strategy.

With online and offline connectiveness increasing through cell phones, personal space networks such as MySpace.com, word of mouth has become easier to accomplish than ever before. The days of word of mouth being exclusively through the office grapevine are long gone.

So Why Buzz?

Buzz is the strategy that drives visitors to your website after hearing your story or information about your product, website or you. Buzz implies you are cool, interesting or otherwise worthy of attention. It gives people the reason to visit your website, talk about you in forums and post on your blog.

Your goal when selling an info product is to create buzz on two fronts.

◆ You want buzz to get partners and affiliates interested
◆ You want buzz to get customers (your niche market) to visit your website and eventually buy.

The very best buzz is when you no longer have to 'push' your message out, but it acquires a life of its own. This is when people tell friends and pass the information along. This buzz is viral marketing at its best.

What Does Buzz Do?

Buzz creates an energy and momentum to your product launch. Mike Filsaime credits George Lucas of Star Wars movie fame as the first to use buzz to create interest in movies and other marketing ventures. Today, the legacy of movie marketing buzz lives on with Harry Potter movies and books being announced one to two years before they are released. Now, you may not be a movie promoter, but you can still create buzz in your specific niche and with the partners you want to encourage.

Notes

To create buzz, you need to get your name out in the community. I use the term community, because your market may not being entirely online or it maybe different than the Internet marketing niche.

You want your name to be where and when people talk about the new, the different and the trends. You want to have people saying, "I heard about that," and those that didn't will quickly search for you on Google to find out more.

Getting your name out in the community means doing the usual things like having a signature file, writing articles and more. BUT it means doing it with a plan. The start of buzz is a carefully planned and orchestrated event.

This section of your launch plan needs to be completed a good thirty days in advance to give you adequate time to develop your plan, write the material and then start the buzz. Your goal is to have your buzz get started and then start developing a life of its own.

Buzz generation needs a hook, something special to grab someone's attention. This is important for developing the viral character of buzz. You want to have the information passed along person to person, and to be highly visible.

You want to be discovered or found by the people in your niche market. This is where your market research comes into play. What resources does your market use? What do they read? Where do they lurk? How can you reach them? How do you get people into your message?

The Usual Ways of Getting The Word Out

There are some common strategies which you should build into every launch to develop name recognition. Think of the following as the basics. Use these techniques as the foundation of your plan. Okay, let's list the traditional and then go on.

- ◆ Writing articles
- ◆ Having a blog
- ◆ Posting in forums
- ◆ Having Autoresponder e-courses
- ◆ Offering valuable content as a downloadable report from your site (free of course)
- ◆ Offering valuable content as a downloadable report for a charge
- ◆ Host a teleseminar
- ◆ Use a great signature file for tagline
- ◆ Write a press release
- ◆ Write and promote through ads

Notes

Writing Articles

Writing articles is a good way of getting your name out and the name of your product. Plan for articles to be written and ready to go approximately one to two months prior to launch day. This will vary slightly by the type and size of launch you do. The larger the launch, the more lead time you will need.

You want to write many articles for the two groups you want to target. Use excerpts or clips from your product to develop your articles. If you don't have clips, then write short informational tips. Of course one tip could say that certain products, services or software could be of assistance.

Develop articles to inform your potential partners about your expertise and product. This is not a sales letter. This is a mini-report designed to allow your partners and affiliates to give their subscribers valuable information. Your partners use these articles for content in their blog, newsletter, e-zine or emails.

Having resources for them ready and available to use will be to your benefit. Anytime you make life easier for your partner you will be appreciated. Suggest they personalize or alter the information so you don't have duplicate articles diluting your effect online or offline.

The second group you want to inform is your potential customer. Go back to your research. Where and how can you reach them? Write short articles (300 to 600 words) and post the articles to a variety of directories. Submit articles to the e-zines where your potential customers will be. Use the article directories to share your expertise online. 'How To' articles are quick and easy to write and used by many e-zines. You need to post to several directories and the easiest way to do this is to use article-posting software. (See Resource Guide at www.infoproductblueprint.com/resources/.)

Blog It

Start a blog. Recycle and use the articles as posts. Keep them short and concise. Include keywords from your research to encourage higher ranking in the search engines.

Have your webmaster (or you) get your blog indexed. Indexing is the official way of notifying the search engines your blog is available for viewing. Search engines love the changing information in blogs and you can get noticed very quickly once you are indexed.

Include tip lists that are quick and easy to write about your area of expertise. Again, include the keywords in your writing to encourage the search engine ranking. Invite people to add their own tips.

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Forums

Participate in forums. Hopefully you have already found the forums where your potential partners and/or customers hang out. If you haven't done this, go to FindYourForum.com or type the name of your topic/niche and 'forum' into a search engine. If a forum is listed online, you can find it.

Add comments on relevant threads of conversation. Before you post, please observe the etiquette rules of the forums. Most forum members will react loudly if you just announce or blatantly sell. Get involved, share your expertise, and ask questions. Have a great signature file or tag line when and where allowed. Forums are a building process and a great way to find customers and potential partners.

E-Course

Develop a short e-course to inform your potential customers. Give valuable content, but only have the complete details in your product.

White Paper or Report

Write a content rich report in PDF format to give away in exchange for a person's email address and name. Promote the report as if you would a product. Think of the report as another promotional piece for your product. You definitely want to have great content, but the content is not complete. For the whole story or complete package the person will have to buy your product.

Some Internet marketers have used this basic technique with a particularly effective hook or interest angle. This strategy has been used very effectively by Rich Schefren to promote his coaching program (Marketing Manifesto), Mike Filsaime (Butterfly Marketing the Missing Chapters), Keith Wellman (the first couple of List FX Secrets) and many other marketers. When you do this, you invite your partners and affiliates to promote the special report.

In one launch a marketer paid each partner or affiliate $.50 for each visitor that clicked and signed up for the special report. This incentivized the affiliates and partners and helped increase the potential client list of the marketer.

Signature Files

Signature files are another important way of getting and keeping your name, your product and your website visible. A signature file is free promotion, so use it! It can contain the following information: your name, website, marketing tagline, an offer for a free report and above all of the URL for your website. Make the URL clickable by using the full URL. i.e.

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http://www.yourwebsite.com/specialreport. Test your link to make sure it works and leads people to the correct page for your report or special offer.

Your signature file is used for every email you send out and is allowed to be used by some forums. You can have multiple versions of the signature file for different purposes. You can even test the effectiveness of each tagline by sending people who click on your link to various pages or reports.

Press Releases

Press releases have and remain a great way to get your name and story out in the media. The key is to have a story. You need to find a newsworthy angle to get published. Just announcing a new product will not get much notice. Write your release to the market you want to reach. Local resources can work very well. Find a specific writer who covers your topic or expertise and send the release to that writer with an introduction as to why you sent it to them. It could relate to the topics they cover, a follow-up to a previous story they wrote or a breaking story.

With online press release services you will find it even easier to get the word out about your product and service. Press releases can be targeted for local, regional or international release.

PRWeb.com, Free-Press-Release.com and PRLeads.com are just a few of the services available to get your press release out to the media. Some of these services are free, but some are a paid service. In my experience, you have better distribution when you pay for placement of your release. Take the free class offered by PRWeb.com that will answer many of your questions on the process needed to get a press release out.

Use keywords in your press release as they help for search engine rankings. Don't abuse the use of keywords by repeating one word over and over. This annoys and makes your release a throw-away.

Promote through Ads

Your marketing research gave you some idea of where to find your target market. Place ads in e-zines that your potential customers use. Offer something as an inducement for someone giving you his or her name and email address. Some resources can be found at:

- AffiliateShowcase.com/AdvertisingResources.htm
- Ezinelinks.com/indexu/index.php
- New-List.com/
- Ezine-Dir.com/

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Stand Out From The Crowd

Take it another step and tweak the system. Use some of the personal space communities such as MySpace.com, Friendster.com, and Zanger.com, or less trendy such as Ryze.com or LinkedIn.com to start your networking and build the buzz.

If you are creative and it fits your target group, post a video on YouTube.com. YouTube.com is one of the fastest growing websites today. Displaying videos encourages the sharing of information and experiences. Creativity is the operating word.

Sites such as Flickr.com and del.icio.us are also places using social bookmarking. Social bookmarking sites are those where website users post helpful Internet resources. A user posts links one would usually keep in a browser's bookmark or favorites file on a public site and 'tags' or label the link. This makes the resources easily available for others to see and access.

RSS: Really Simple Syndication

Use RSS feed from your blog to distribute your content to other online publishers, reports and news people can republish. RSS, or really simple syndication, allows people to 'subscribe' to the content on your website or blog. This extends your reach to many other sites and people. With the help of your website programmer you can start providing content to other websites.

For more information, use a browser to search 'How to publish your RSS news feed on your website or blog.' The code is fairly straightforward and easy to use. Again, consider your market. Will an RSS reach the potential partners and customers you want in your market?

Have A Teleseminar

Teleseminars are a great way of getting your name known and the buzz out about your product. The idea is to give valuable content and either offer or sell a valuable content report. Both the free and the paid reports have worked well for driving traffic to a site.

In the words of Gary Ambrose of Email Aces, ' you need to train a list to buy.' Certainly, having a report for a nominal charge such as $1 to $10 will weed out the freebie people. You will need to balance that decision with the niche you are targeting. Some people need to process more information to make a decision and your free report could be the tipping point for them.

Notes

Create A Video

Multimedia is a great way of creating buzz. The idea is to be creative. Take a minute to look at Sterling Valentine's videos he created for *JV Formula* and for Mike Filsaime's *Butterfly Manuscript*. (See the Resources section online at www.infoproductblueprint.com/resources/.) Sterling created a great video to create buzz among potential affiliates and customers.

Some marketers have taken and used video in a similar way to the free report. Instead of using a PDF, they use either a downloadable or streaming video to create buzz and showcase the product. Video is becoming easier and easier to use. On one of the DVD's in this package, Mike Koenigs shows you how easy it is to develop your own video infomercial. In Module 3, Rocket Helstrom writes about the production of videos and equipment needed.

Special Events

Promotional events are an effective way of getting buzz going. Announce or preview your product at an event such as industry seminar and trade show. Bluetooth, the wireless phone technology, effectively stopped a marketing trade show using a take off of the movie, "The Thomas Crown Affair."

Adapting the scene where an art museum is filled with many men in bowler hats carrying brief case, Bluetooth assembled several hundred men in tuxedos and women in black dresses wearing sunglasses to enter a trade show en masse. They then passed out blue cards with the Bluetooth logo and a message. Over the next two days, the Bluetooth group again appeared at the tradeshow. Measuring name-recognition both before and after the appearances showed name-recognition for Bluetooth had dramatically increased.

Now you may not have the budget for a promotion like this, but you can create buzz in the packaging and the presentation of your offer. Graphics can enhance the look and buzz of your offer.

A recent launch started off with a preview report saying, "AdSense is Dead." The graphics on the website showed a skeleton and vultures reinforcing the theme. Yanik Silver effectively promoted with staging his seminar for secret agents. He called the event the Underground Seminar and offered the recordings in a silver briefcase much like secret agents use in movies.

Notes

Your Launch As An Event

In his *Product Launch Formula*, Jeff Walker talks about creating your launch day as the anticipated event. By creating marketing and accompanying creative materials you can create buzz so that people and partners look forward to your product launch.

Butterfly Marketing, *Product Launch Formula*, and many other product launches have used planned marketing launches to position the first day of sales as the event itself. Like any other marketing plan, this requires planning to pull off.

Graphics, packaging, articles, promotional materials, emails; partner development must all be done in advance. Then you turn the focus with creating anticipation among partners and potential customers about the "LAUNCH DAY." Various means are used to countdown to launch day with the hope and expectation of customers lined up, ready to click and buy the product. It can be a very successful approach, but truly requires mapping out to have the correct strategic timeline.

Create Buzz With 'Influentials'

You will want to identify people with influence in your target market. Influentials are those individuals who are experts or first movers for a new trend. This may include industry experts, writers of blogs or newspapers, prominent marketers, government officials or 'creatives' (teens in the know who are 'cool'). Influentials vary by market.

What makes an influential important? The Influentials have the ability, either directly or indirectly, to refer purchasing agents in an organization. Enlisting their help or attracting their attention can give phenomenal momentum to your product and its launch.

So how do you get the Influentials to talk about your product or service?

- ◆ Create an event
- ◆ Create community
- ◆ Joint venture with another marketer who already has the Influentials you want to target
- ◆ Make the influential part of your marketing team through an affiliate or joint venture program

Special Events

Having events such as webinars or promotional parties at seminars or trade shows can also increase your connection with the Influentials of your market.

Notes

Creating Community

Create a community through the use of forums or blogs. You want to encourage interaction and participation. A great example of community is the *Warrior Internet* marketing forum.

Ask for Advice

Target these influential people by letting them know first about your plans and product. Ask their advice for pricing, promotion and improvements. They can act as an informal panel of advisors or just be the first to hear product announcements. Your hope is they will then tell friends, family and business associates about your product or service.

As you pre-sell to the Influentials, enlist them as affiliates or joint venture partners. Their inclusion will give you the 'stamp' of exclusivity, which can lead to more buzz and other people wanting to join.

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Putting Buzz and Word-of-Mouth To Work For You

Buzz and word-of-mouth is not a one-time deal. With the interconnections of the Internet and life as we know it today, it is a commitment to implement strategies to encourage people to talk about our products, our services and our brand. By using the extensive reach of the Internet, you can extend your marketing reach across time and space. By providing material through articles, blogs or teleseminars you can encourage buzz both about you and your products.

Try different strategies for encouraging and feeding word of mouth. By doing so, you may find you have reached the level of having BUZZ.

Building Buzz Self-Assessment Questions

1. What strategies will you use to create buzz for your info product?

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2. Where and how will you use these strategies?

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3. How long will it take you to do each of the strategies you listed?

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4. Take a calendar and count back 30-90 days. Now write your schedule for implementing buzz for your product.

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Next . . . Attracting Partners

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1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 4: Attracting Partners

By Reed Floren

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Attracting Partners

JV Broker Reed Floren talks about maximizing your launch with JV partners. A professional matchmaker for JV's, Reed will share how to find partners and how to make the relationships work.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to hire a JV broker

◆ Types of joint ventures you can form

◆ Where to find JV partners

Why You Must Have JV Partners to Maximize Your Product Launch

Joint Ventures (JV's) are one of the most powerful tools in any marketer's arsenal. When you joint venture with another marketer you essentially are helping each other out, the power of two or more people is always greater than the power of one.

The 3 Main Types of Joint Ventures for Internet Marketers Today:

Promotion of your product

You can joint venture with a partner and have them promote your product for a set commission (this is very similar to an affiliate program). You might also promote one of your partners products at a later date.

Creation of a new product

You can joint venture with someone and create a whole new website or product. Many of the most successful marketers do this since two minds are better than one and they can both work on their strong suits.

List building

Another popular joint venture is helping one another build each other's list. You could both simply send an email out to your lists and cross-promote one another. You'd get new people from your partners list and they'd go new people from your list.

The difference between partners and affiliates

Generally I don't think there is much of a difference between a joint venture partner and an affiliate, however with a joint venture partners I will spend more time with them and help them maximize their sales. Also joint venture partners will

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generally make you more money since they have bigger lists, a better reputation or they will do additional work to make the promotion a success for them. If you are trying to woo an extremely successful joint venture partner you may want to give him a higher commission rate or even a 100% commission if you are certain that you will be following up with your new list of customers.

How to find JV partners

In my opinion, these are the top places to find JV partners:

Events

Although a marketing event can be expensive to attend you will find your best prospects at an event since you will be able to establish a personal one-on-one relationship right off the bat with someone.

ClickBank

ClickBank is a wonderful place to find JV partners and best of all it's free. Simply go to the ClickBank marketplace at http://marketplace.clickbank.net/ and look for your niche. Then write down their contact information, what their site is and a little about their product or site.

Other affiliate networks

You can also look at other affiliate networks or directories. Simply do a search for them and follow the same steps as outlined for ClickBank.

Directories

Directories such as dmoz.org/ and search.yahoo.com/dir list hundreds if not thousands of sites related to your niche market. You can always work on building a relationship with those sites and see what happens.

Testimonials

Is a similar or complementary product on the market? Then go to their sales letter and look for the people who left testimonials. Many big name marketers leave testimonials and this is a great way to start a relationship.

Search

Run a Google search for your niche and you can find thousands of sites that may be interested.

Notes

How to approach a JV partner

There are many ways to approach a JV partner but what I have found to work well is to try and develop a relationship with them first. You could:

Compliment them

Simply compliment your potential JV partners on a job well done. Perhaps they did a teleseminar and you learned something useful or you like how their website looks. Feed the ego and show genuine interest in someone it pays back a thousand times fold.

Buy one of their products

A popular way of building a relationship with someone is to actually buy their product that way you have a perfect reason to contact them and tell them how great you feel it is.

There are several ways of contacting a potential JV partner, you can:

Email

This is one of the easiest and least time consuming ways of contacting JV partners. However, many of them receive offers via email and most will not respond

Call

A lot of successful JV's are lined up via a phone call. I was asked to write this section after a phone conversation.

Instant Message

If you already have a relationship an instant messenger conversation is an easy way to discuss your joint venture.

Snail Mail

Simply mail them a postcard, a letter or a copy of your product and promotional materials. This can add up very quickly but if you are promoting a big-ticket item this is the way most successful marketers go about acquiring JV's.

Notes

How to get noticed by your potential JV Partners

Be professional, courteous and respectful

In today's world people are extremely busy and pressed for time. You must treat people with respect and contact them in a professional manner. Show interest in what they are doing and explain the benefits of working together.

Offer to help them first

When contacting a potential JV partner offer to help them out. Promote their product to your list.

Create high quality products

If your product isn't high quality, then stop right now and start over. No one wants to ruin their reputation promoting something that is crap.

Write killer sales copy

Learn to write sales copy or hire someone else to write it. If your copy doesn't convert to sales then that partner won't be very interested in working with you in the future.

Provide conversion rates

If you've already launched your product to your list or placed advertisements online for it, then provide the conversion rates so your potential JV partners have an idea of how much money they might make per visitor.

Do the work for them

People are lazy. Sign them up for your affiliate program, provide them with all of the marketing tools they need and bend over backwards for them any way possible.

What do JV partners look for?

Joint venture partners look for high quality products that compliment rather then compete with them. For instance say the potential partner sells an e-book on *How To Build Your List* and you sell a product on *How To Promote Affiliate Programs To Your Lists* then you two aren't directly competing with one another.

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I have found that big ticket items, giveaways (with one-time-offers) and membership sites are easier to get marketers on board with since they can produce a significant amount of income for the marketer with a very small amount of work.

Once you have the JV partner…

Once you have a joint venture partner you will want to do everything for them. From writing the emails they send out, to making sure they have the right link to promote your product to reminding them to actually send out the email.

You will need to be clear and upfront on the compensation they will receive from the sales they generate and preferably provide them with a system that they can login to so they can check their stats.

Pay them on time and if they did a really good job you may want to consider boosting their commissions or providing some sort of bonus so they remain loyal to you.

When and how to use a JV broker (like me) to do the work:

Forming successful joint ventures is not always an easy task and you may want to hire a joint venture broker instead. There are many joint venture brokers you will want to look for one with a good reputation, contacts in your niche and experience with your type of product.

When hiring a joint venture broker stay away from people who charge you on an hourly basis or charge you on a per JV partner basis. You are looking to pay someone a commission on the sales the partners they bring in.

Let's say you are selling a $100 product and you offer a 50% commission to your partners. Your joint venture broker might charge an additional 25% on those sales. You'll be paying out $75 to affiliates and keeping $25 for yourself and you will also be building a list of clients that you would not have had. Plus, now you have the time to work on making follow-up products and more promotional materials to maximize your revenue.

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Editor Note:

Finding partners is important for every product launch. Your goals may vary, so choose your partner carefully. A joint venture broker can help you find the right partners and manage them during launch which gives you time to maximize your revenue.

Attracting Partners Self-Assessment Questions

1. What do I want as a desired outcome for my product launch?

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2. What steps do I need to take to accomplish this?

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Next . . . "But Wait There's More…"

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 5: "But Wait There's More…"

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

"But Wait There's More…"

Free gift with purchase is one of the oldest marketing techniques going back to the early 1900's. King Gillette used it to sell razors, giving away razor blades. Cracker Jacks popcorn used toys, trinkets and mini books to promote the sale of their product.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Purpose of bonuses

◆ How to Choose a Bonus

◆ Where to find bonuses

Infomercials continued the trend with products such as the Ginsu knife ("cut through a nail, a tin can and a radiator hose and *still* slice a tomato paper thin"). As absolute salesmen, the Ginsu guys, Ed Valenti and Barry Becher, realized people buy with emotions and defend with logic.

Valenti and Becher popularized "But wait, there's more," and "How much would you pay" in their calls to action. They understood and used selling psychology by adding eight steak knives, a melon ball gadget, and one other specialty knife. Instead of paying $19.95 for just two knives you received twelve! What a deal! Their bonuses were the nudge to push people into buying immediately as one could only get the additional bonuses if they bought in the following half hour.

Online Use of Bonuses

Today selling online bonuses have become an expected part of selling an info product. Very rarely will you ever see an info product offered for sale without some special bonus attached. In fact for some products, the sheer volume of bonuses often obscures the main product.

What Makes A Bonus Effective?

To determine whether a bonus is effective you have to think like a buyer. They read your headline and determined they are interested, skimmed through the sales letter and are saying, "This looks good… wonder how much it costs?"

As your prospective buyer continues to scroll through your sales letter the buyer comes to the price. And stops…the price is higher than they thought it would be.

But they are still interested so they scroll to your PS or bottom of your letter to see 'The BONUS.'

It's All In The Presentation

The presentation of your bonus is for many buyers a defining moment. This is where they make the decision of buy vs. not

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buy. Is your bonus unique? Does it add extra value to the original offer? Is it something they want? (In addition to your product?)

The packaging and promotion of your bonus in your sales letter is as important as the description of your product. So take the time to describe and present your bonus as carefully as you did your product. Using features and benefits statements to add increased value to your original product. (A feature is what the product has. A benefit is what the product does for your customer.)

You want your potential customer to know the value of the bonuses they will receive with purchase. Listing a suggested sales price or value for each of the bonus parts can have your visitor starting to add up the cost of the bonuses vs. the sales price of the product. When value overcomes the mental sticking point of price you have a sale.

Limiting the number of high value bonuses can help buyers who hesitate make an immediate buying decision. This is why you will see 'x' number of special bonuses offered particularly in high-ticket product launches. The number pushes people to make a decision.

One jvAlert member told me she was ready, credit card in hand for an early morning kick-off because she wanted one of the 3 top bonuses. The credit card processor was slow and she nearly didn't get the bonus. She was number 3. She was up for an early am kickoff and was motivated to buy. Your buyers can be encouraged in the same way with high value bonuses.

How Do You Choose A Bonus?

A bonus can actually harm your sales and give less than anticipated results if it fails to appeal to your visitor or is seen as been of low perceived value.

Some guidelines to use:

- ◆ Does it add value?
- ◆ Is it relevant?
- ◆ Is it of equal value of your primary product?
- ◆ Is it a list of 'stuff' no one would want?

Value Is Determined By the Buyer

When building your bonus package you want products, e-books, software that are valuable to the buyer. Offering large numbers of bonuses for a small amount can start the prospective buyer questioning the entire package including your product.

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I've seen offers of an e-book with 50 other e-books and reports for $29.95. The stated value of the e-books was in excess of $500. Well, if that was the case, why was the product selling for $29.95? It makes the buyer question the overall value of your offer. In most cases it will not enhance but actually detract from your sales.

If you offer a bonus that increases the value of your product, then you can increase sales through its promotion. A good offline example of this is Sports Illustrated magazine's Swimsuit Edition. The Swimsuit Edition is an added bonus and for many subscribers may be the primary reason they buy a subscription.

Make it attractive. If you have spent the time, money and effort in graphics and presentation for your product, do the same for your bonuses. It goes back to value. If everything looks good there is a higher perceived value. With a higher value you make it easier for the customer to say, "Yes," and buy.

Is The Bonus Relevant?

When developing your bonus package make sure your bonuses are related to subject or content area of your info product.

With an info product on improving your golf swing, adding a Holiday Cookie Baking e-book would not be a good match. E-books on choosing clubs or golf destination vacations are a much better fit for your product. You don't want people going, "Huh?" when reading your bonus list. The "Huh" reaction makes your reader question if what's inside your product is really what they want. Choose carefully and avoid planting the seed of doubt in your potential buyer's mind.

Is Value Similar?

Similar value is really a quality issue. When people review your sales letter and see what is being offered or open the box with the physical product in it, do the product and bonuses match?

Is the skill and quality of the graphics and presentation of your product similar to your bonuses? You set an expectation of what the value is for your product. People expect the same or close to that same quality level.

For example with a physical product, if you have the CDs in a DVD case with an imprinted graphic cover, bonus CD's should be packaged the same way. I received a physical product recently with the CD's nicely packaged in the DVD case with gorgeous graphics. The bonus CD's? In a padded mail envelope with an Avery file label on the outside. Was I impressed? No, it seemed like the seller was cleaning out their garage and threw this in the box. The bonus CD packaging decreased the overall value in my mind.

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If you are depending on affiliates and partners for your bonuses, then be careful and choosy when adding the bonuses to your package. If the bonus isn't of the same quality as what you are offering, politely decline the bonus. When the buyer downloads the product or opens the box, they see you and your product. The low quality bonus becomes your bonus and a reflection of you, so be careful. It's your reputation and your business on the line.

Is It A List of 'Stuff" No One Wants

Ever seen the bonus list with e-books, software and articles that have been around so long, you just want to yawn and say, "Boring"? Adding bonuses does not mean cleaning your hard drive of all those e-books from three years ago. Some may still be valuable, but the lifespan of many things on the Internet is short. Keep things fresh and appealing to your buyer. Some bonuses have been included in offers so often they have little or no value.

Where Do You Find Bonuses To Offer?

Do It Yourself

There are many resources for bonuses. You can add a special or complimentary report you write for your product. One advantage of do-it-yourself bonuses is that it adds to your brand and your image as the expert. Alex Mandossian suggests adding a guide to teach the buyer how to consume or use your product. You can do an audio presentation and offer as an MP3 download or an e-book. A checklist or teleseminar can also be added.

Fred Gleek suggests offering a free coaching session. He has found a free consultation to be of high-perceived value, but one that few people actually use.

Other Sources

In the module on Content Development we talked about using public domain and private label rights works as ways of developing products. You can also use these techniques when developing bonuses.

Partners and affiliates can also be a good resource for bonuses. Carefully choose the bonus so it enhances not detracts from your product. In addition, approach other Internet marketers with similar products or a slightly different angle than you have used. Ask if they would be willing to add a bonus to your package. It can be a win-win for you both. They get visibility and you get a bonus.

If you are going to use someone else's e-book as a bonus, please get their permission to do so.

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Determining Your Bonuses

Bonuses can provide reassurance of value and nudge your visitor toward buying.

When deciding on your bonus make it attractive, make it relevant and make it valuable.

Bonuses add up to more sales for you, your partners and affiliates. Most of all, you'll have a happy customer who knows they got a great deal.

"But Wait There's More…" Self-Assessment Questions

1. What bonuses will you include with your product?

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2. Who will you ask to contribute bonuses?

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3. Are the bonuses you are considering:
   - Relevant
   - Attractive
   - Similar value to your product

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Next . . . Growing The List

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 6: Growing The List

By Brian Edmondson

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 6

Growing The List

Building a list is critical to having a successful online business. One of the most successful people at developing and maintaining a profitable list is Brian Edmondson of ListProfitAcademy.com. He shares his strategies for not only building but maintaining a profitable list.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to develop a personal relationship with your list.

◆ How initial building strategies define whether your list will be profitable or not

◆ The best techniques for list building

◆ How relationship marketing can build a profitable list

◆ Using email to maintain a relationship with your list

It is very important you know how to build a list and more importantly make a profit from it. You can create the best information product in the world, but if you do not have a list, a profitable list, you'll never sell even one single copy.

Now that may not be entirely true. Yes, you could advertise and you could do the lead generation. You could do all forms of marketing and advertising. However, it's a lot simpler, easier and cheaper to market and sell your product to your existing customer database.

I'm just going to talk about building and profiting from a list in general. But we're actually going to get really specific and go into relationship marketing. The bottom line is you could build a list, a huge list, but if you don't build a relationship it won't work. If you don't have that reason for them to know, like and trust you, then they're probably not going to do business with you. So it's important that you build a personal relationship with your list as well.

The Building of Your List Will Determine Your List Profitability

The first thing I want to talk to you about is how to build a list. Now this is where a lot of people get it wrong because you know the old saying "You've made your bed and now you have to sleep in it"? Well it's kind of the same thing with our lists. You make your list and then you have to profit from it or not profit from it depending upon how you made it.

When you're building your list, begin with the end in mind. Now what do I mean by that? What I mean is that when you're building your list you have to think before you build your list.

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- What kind of prospects do I want on my list?
- What kinds of potential customer or customers do I want on my list?
- Do I want someone that knows me, likes me and trust me?
- Or do I want someone who doesn't know me, doesn't like me and doesn't trust me?
- Do I want someone who is going to spend money with me?
- Or do I want someone who is not going to spend money with me?
- Do I want someone who has a proven buyer and is likely to buy things on the Internet?
- Or do I want someone who is not a proven buyer and is scared to death to make purchases on the Internet?

Now these questions are kind of rhetorical. It's obvious what the answer is. You want a prospect on the list that knows you, likes you and trusts you. You want someone who is a proven buyer. You want someone who is going to spend money. You want someone who has a track record of buying products on the Internet. That's the kind of person you want on your list.

What About Freebie Seekers?

Now it's okay to get freebie seekers on your list. Maybe you give something away free as a lead generation device, and that's fine. But you can control the process of how someone gets on your list and how you bring them through your entire marketing funnel to eventually spend money with you. You want to avoid wasting a lot of time doing things to build lists that aren't going to make any money.

Build An Optimized Opt-In List

The point I'm trying to make here is to begin with the end in mind. We want a list that I refer to as an optimized opt-in list. I want an opt-in list of someone who is potentially going to spend money with me, a proven buyer, not just a freebie seeking tire kicker. I want someone who will eventually through the relationship that I build with them

- know me,
- like me, and
- trust me.

What kind of prospect or customer do you want on your list and what are you doing to attract people onto your list? Are you doing the things that will attract the people that you want on your list or are you just trying to attract as many people as possible onto your list? If you want to do that, that's fine.

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That's not what I do. You'll see that my methods, I think, work a little bit better in terms of having a hyper responsive list. I'll talk to you about some numbers down the road. I typically make five to 15 times the industry average and make more money with a list of about 1500 people than marketers with a list of hundreds of thousands of people make. We'll talk about what I do and what you can do in your marketing to see similar types of results. So began with the end in mind.

Forget What You've Heard: The Money Is Not In Your List

One of the things that I frequently hear is. 'The money is in the list, the money is in the list.' That's not entirely true. I know a lot of people with very large lists that don't make any money so apparently there is no money in their list. I know people who have very large lists that don't make a lot of money and I know people with very small lists that make a lot of money. I know someone who has a 100% opt in list that's generated close to $100,000 in one month. I know some people who have list of millions of people who don't make any money a month. So list size does not matter.

The money is not in the list and list size does not matter. The money is in the relationship with your list. I'm going to talk specifically about relationship marketing and what things you can do starting today to build your list. Also what you can do to build a relationship so that the money can be in your list.

Let me give you some quick numbers. In Internet marketing, the average amount of money most people make per subscriber, per month is $.50 to one dollar.   So what that means is if you have a thousand people on your list, on average you'll make $.50 to a dollar per person per month so you would make $500-$1000 per month for the thousand person opt in list. If you had 10,000 people on your list, then you'd make anywhere from on average $5,000-$10,000 per month.

With the results that I'm about to teach you, I consistently on average make anywhere from $2.50 to five dollars per subscriber per month and I have sometimes made up to over $15 per subscriber per month. So that's on average about five to 15 times the industry average. So once again, that makes the point that the money isn't necessarily in the size of the list and that the money isn't necessarily in the list, *but in your relationship with your list.*

List Building Techniques

Let's talk about building a personal relationship with your list. Here's some of the things I do.

- ◆ Advertise in e-zines,
- ◆ Do lead generation type advertising,
- ◆ Participate in book promotions and giveaways, what I call bonus type of advertising,
- ◆ Work with JV partners, people who are professional competitors. You can become partners with them.

Newsletter Example

Let's take an example of the newsletter. Let's say I was a very staunch Republican and I wrote a newsletter that related a lot to conservative issues. What I would do and what I would want to attract my newsletter were people that were like me or wanted to be like me with similar ideas and similar values. I want people for the most part who would tend to agree with what I said.

What I wouldn't do is advertise in a Democratic or liberal publication to get subscribers. It would be a waste of money and a waste of time for me to do that. I don't want people like that on my list. I want people who will know me, like me and trust me. I want people that will be on the same page as I am, on the same wavelength. I would advertise in publications that were geared towards conservatives and Republicans and attract those kinds of people.

Diet Example

The same thing applies in any industry. Say I'm in the fitness industry and I've developed a diet similar to the South Beach diet. There are people out there who subscribe to all sorts of newsletters and publications and buy products related to the South Beach diet.

Now I have a diet that is similar to that. There might be some variations. I might have a twist, but for the most part it's very similar to the South Beach diet. It's not like, the Zone diet. Say hypothetically the Zone diet is completely different than the South Beach diet. So what I would not do is advertise or develop lead generation and publications that are geared toward the Zone diet because those people, they're already in the mindset that the Zone diet is the way things should be.

I'm not going to waste my time trying to change their minds and convert them over to my variation of the South Beach diet. What I want to do is I want to advertise in publications are geared towards the South Beach diet and attract people who already believe in the South Beach diet to listen to what I have to say. The South Beach diet people are more likely to listen to what I have to say. They are more likely to agree with me because are similar, like-minded, have the same values, and the same beliefs.

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That really applies in any industry. I'm sure that because you are interested in that area or niche, you subscribe to some newsletters, publications, and journals related to your interest. You continue to subscribe because you agree with the publisher, writer, editor or company says. I'm sure there are a lot of other publications that you don't really care for, and what they're saying about your niche. So when you're going to start doing some advertising and lead generation to build your list, it is highly recommended that you advertise in the publications that you already like.

In Relationship Marketing You Are The Product

The important part here is relationship marketing because it's you that they're buying. It's not a separate product you've created that they're buying. I'm sure you've created a great product, but what they are really buying is you and the relationship they have with you. That 'you' is going to come across in all of your emails, all of your marketing materials, and pretty much everything you do.

So isn't it safe to say that if you subscribe to a certain newsletter or a certain e-zine and you like the publisher of that e-zine, isn't it safe to say that all of the other people who subscribe to that same e-zine, that same magazine, that same journal, that they like the publisher, too?

Isn't it also safe to say and take it to the next step, that if you like that particular e-zine and that other people who subscribe to that e-zine like that e-zine, that if they come onto your e-zine that they will like you? Doesn't that make sense?

Don't Market to People You Don't Like

Doesn't it make sense that if there are other publications out there or places where advertising is conducted that you don't like and if you try to market to those people and bring them into your marketing funnel those people won't like you or your information?

Isn't it safe to say that if you don't like that source of traffic, you probably don't like the people who are there? If you pay money to bring them into your e-zine they're not going to like you and they're not going to like what you have to say? So don't waste your money. Don't do try to get those people as subscribers.

My Secret to Successful Advertising

That's the biggest secret to my e-zine advertising, any type of marketing that I do. If I'm doing off-line marketing and magazines, I'll only advertise in magazines that I buy personally at the newsstands on a routine basis that I like.

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If I buy a magazine and I don't like the magazine or it's junk, I'm probably not going to buy it again. I won't advertise in it because I don't like it. There are people out there that like it, well they like it and I don't like it, so we're not probably going to mesh.

Building or list and profiting from it is like making your bed and sleeping in it. You made your list and now you have to either profit from it or not profit from it. If you did things wrong in the beginning:

- You attracted a bunch of junk type freebie seekers onto your list,
- You attracted a bunch of people who don't agree with you on to your list
- And you attracted a bunch of people who are not like you onto your list.

Well, they're probably not going to notice you. They're not going to like you. They're not going to trust you. You're not going to build a relationship with them. And you're **not going to make any money.**

Build to Profit

Build your list with the end in mind. Who do you want on your list?

- people like you,
- or people who want to be like you.

You want to find people who are eventually going to know you, like you and trust you through the relationship that you built with them.

Build Trust

'Be yourself,' that has to come across in your marketing. If you do that, you will attract people who are like you and like you as a person. If they like you they are more likely to make purchases based on your recommendations. They will buy products and service you either create yourself or that you recommend through affiliate marketing.

There are six things that I do to make my emails personal and six things that I do to build a relationship with my list that has allowed me to make five to 15 times what the industry average is with my email marketing and what you can do also. These are things that you can do right away and implement immediately. Then finally I want to talk about the most important part of your emails, and it's not the subject line. With sales letters they say the headlines are the most important part in advertising. A lot of people say in email marketing is that the

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subject line is the most important thing, but it's not. We're going to talk about what is and it's all going to come together.

Three Most Important Things in Email Marketing

Let's talk about the three most important things in email marketing, the three most important things that you can do to build a relationship with your list.

- Make your emails personal.
- Make your emails personal.
- Make your emails personal.

That sounds silly, doesn't it? You know what though, it does, but it's kind of like real estate. What are the three most important things in real estate? Location, location, location. I can't emphasize this enough. The most important thing that you can do you in any marketing, including email marketing, is build a personal relationship with your list.

Remember, the money is not in the list; the money is in your relationship with your list. I said that you could create the best product in the world. You know what? There are a lot of things that you can do. You can create the best product in the world. You can create the fastest product in the world. You can create the cheapest one, you can do it at better quality, and you can do it quicker.

But no matter what, down the road, somebody will always do it cheaper. Somebody will always do it faster. Somebody will always give better quality. Somebody will always give better value, and there's nothing you can do that somebody else can't do.

There's nothing you can do that can't be replaced. Please, don't take that personally. That's not a personal attack on you. It applies to everybody. It applies to me. It applies to you, and it applies to Bill Gates and Microsoft. There's always going to be someone else out there. There's always going to be a competitor out there.

There's one thing that you can have with your prospects and your customers that nobody else can have. That's your personal relationship with them. The relationship that my prospects and my customers have with me, nobody can replace. Yes, they can go and have relationships with other people. But they can't have that same relationship with me because there is only one Brian Edmondson. There is only one Ken McArthur and there is only one you.

That's why it is so important that you build that personal relationship because that's really what it comes down to. You

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can learn all of the techniques out there to build your list, you can learn 101 different ways to build your list, e-zine advertising, joint ventures, podcasting, blogging, search engine optimization, email marketing, Internet marketing, offline marketing, classified ads and television commercials.

You can do a million things to build your list. But once you build that list it doesn't mean you're going to make any money. The most important thing that you're going to do is build that relationship with your list and that's what's going to keep customers coming back and doing business with you. That's why we're going to talk about relationship marketing because that's one thing a lot of people miss and that's why a lot of people don't really make money, especially on the Internet. I hope I made that point clear. The most important thing is making your emails personal.

You're Not Back in English 101

Now were going to talk about six things that I do to make my emails personal and six things that you can do to make your emails personal to build a personal relationship with your list. The first thing I do is make all of my emails informal. Were not trying to be communications experts. We're not taking English classes in college. We're certainly not working for big Fortune 500 companies where we need to send professional memos with a 'To' and 'From.' "This is a note from senior management telling you that..." that's nonsense, that's ridiculous.

We're writing letters and emails like we're writing to our friends, our family, *real personal*. That's the kind of text that I use. When I'm writing an email I've write an email as if I'm writing a letter to my mom or my best friend in college.

How do you usually would start emails that you write to your friends or instant messages when you're talking online? "Hi mom," or "Hi Brian," not "Dear" or "To Whom It May Concern," that's ridiculous. Don't ever start an email that way. Just start off very informally, "Hi first name," whatever the first name of your prospect is or customer is.

Keep It Casual and Informal

Then go in and just talk to them informally. Don't use corporate mumbo-jumbo type of speech, just write casually. Say for instance, I'm writing about a new product that just came out. I just created the info product and I'm ready to write a letter about it. I wouldn't write a letter saying, "Dear Sir, the reason why I'm writing this letter to you is to inform you that I've just created the newest product on XYZ and here are the benefits to you." No, that's crazy.

The letter goes like this. "Hi first name, how are you doing? I know it's been a while since you've heard from me but I've been working really hard behind the scenes to create a really great product. I want to tell you about it. Let me tell you what I put into this." Very informal, very personal.

The Talk Show Model for Promotion

I use what's kind of called a talk show model. Have you ever watched *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno or *Late Night* with Conan O'Brien? What they do is they get up and they do a monologue and then they go into the interview with guests or they are promoting. The guests that come on the show, what are they doing? There are promoting products; they're promoting movies or whatever. But what they do is they come on the talk show and they start out having a nice conversation. "Oh, so what have you been up to? How are things going with your personal life? What are you doing?" Then they go into the pitch for the movie they are promoting or the product that they are promoting.

Increase Your Reach With Personalization

You should do the same with your emails. Every and all you send, update people on your personal life and let them know what's going on. Let them know what you been doing. Let them know what happened last night. Did you do a football game? Did your favorite baseball team lose a game last night or today when? What are your kids doing? Did your two-year-old finally start walking? Was it you and your wife's anniversary? Did you go out to a nice fancy dinner? Let them into your personal life and really start to build a relationship with them. Some make it informal and use that talk show model. First, make a personal and then go into the pitch, go into the product, go into the sales. So always start with a personal touch.

I'll say, "Hi first name, how are you doing? It's been a long week for me. Here's what I've done. I went to a really good concert last night." I'm just kind of thinking of this as I'm going along, and having a conversation with you. It's not all formal. But were having a conversation and it's very informal, but yet I'm still delivering to you great content.

If I were selling something, we'd do the same thing. We'd make it very informal, build a personal relationship, and I go through the offer if I had an offer for you.

Attention: There Is A Real Live Person Behind This Website

The second thing that you want to talk about, which I'm very adamant about, is please take the time to interact with your

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customers and respond to their emails. Please respond to your prospects' and your customers' emails.

One thing that amazes me about email marketing and Internet marketing is that there are a lot of people that get involved with that and think that the rules of the off-line world do not apply in the online world. The fact is that nothing could be further from the truth. That's one of the reasons why I keep emphasizing relationships over and over again. Just because you're behind a computer and your reading an email, doesn't mean that you're not going to have a personal relationship. It's just like going back to how sales for started in the old days, with door-to-door selling. Now were at the age were we're behind computers with email, but you still have to have that personal relationship.

Imagine this scenario. Imagine this for one minute. You are getting ready to buy a high end product, a $1000 camcorder. You go into the local Best Buy or Circuit City. You did your research, you do your homework and you are just about ready to buy that camera, but you just had a couple of questions about it. Maybe you want to be sure that it does feature XYZ or you're getting ready to buy one of two cameras and you're just wanting to see what the differences are. So you walk up to the salesperson and you say, "Excuse me, I'm thinking about buying this camcorder but I just want to make sure it does XYZ. Can you tell me if it does XYZ?" After you ask the question the salesperson just stands there and ignores you, doesn't respond. Will you say, that's strange; maybe he didn't hear me see you ask the question again. "Excuse me, I'm thinking about buying this camcorder but I just want to know, does it do XYZ?" And he just stands there and he ignores you. What would you do? I don't know about you, but I probably would not buy the camcorder and I'd walk out of the store. I think that would be absolutely ridiculous if the salesperson that is trying to sell his product ignored me when I had a question about it. Yet in the online world I see it happening all of the time. Whether I'm buying a $27 product or a $1000 product, I see it happening over and over again and it really baffles my mind. If I'm going to take the time and spend $1000 on a product and I have a small question about it and I said the person and email and they can't take the time to respond to an email and answer a question? Do you think they're going to get the sale? Absolutely not.

How does that make me feel? How confidant am I that this is a legitimate business and there's actually a person behind there? If I'm asking them a question about a sale and they won't answer it, what if I bought the product and I can't download it or what if there's some kind of a problem with it or I need some kind of technical support, or what if in worst case scenario, I want a refund. How confident am I that that is going to happen, that any of that is going to happen if they won't even answer my email to sell me the product?

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Keep The Communication Lines Open

Please take the time to respond to your customers' emails and not just for the fact that they need the confidence to know that somebody's there. Every time you respond to your customers' emails you strengthen that relationship you have with them. Even if they don't have a question about buying your product.

Say you wrote an email and they just wanted to comment on it, "Hey Brian. That was a great email you wrote the other day. I had a similar experience that you did." Take the time to respond and say, "Wow, that's neat." Write back and say, "Thank you. Thank you for sending me a comment about my newsletter and I appreciate the fact that you're reading it. Thank you for sending me a comment about the sales letter for my product. I'm glad you read it and I'm glad you are considering it." Just doing something small like that, that little, can really strengthen that relationship do you have with your customers and your potential customers. Take the time to interact and respond to your customer's emails.

No Time? No Excuse!

One of the biggest excuses I hear people not answering emails is they don't have enough time. They have so many emails and they are just bombarded all day. Well you know what? That just doesn't cut it. If you are so busy that you can't take the time to personally respond to your emails, outsource it.

Well, if your customer likes you and has a question, make sure you respond to it. If you are so busy that you cannot do it yourself that outsource it. It is not that expensive to outsource. As your business grows, maybe you can have interns for free that will do that for you. Make sure that your emails get answered. Take the time to respond to your emails personally

Outsource a help desk. I'm sure there are a lot of emails that you are going to get our very similarly asked questions, or very frequently asked questions, or they might just be emails to say, "Hey, I read your email and thought it was kind of neat" or "I read your latest issue and I don't agree with a word you're saying." Have a standard response from the help desk you outsource. Give guidelines or answer yourself; if it's a one time only asked question. If someone sends you a nice comment about your latest issue, have him or her respond by saying, "Oh, thank you. I appreciate that." Just respond to the emails. If you're so busy that you can do it yourself, take the time to respond to it.

Only Recommend What You Use

The third thing I do is I only promote and recommend things that I personally use myself or that I can personally vouch for.

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Now you're saying, "That makes sense." Why would I do that? Well that's another way that you build a personal relationship with your list because you are going to be communicating with your list and you're going to be leading them into your life and into your business.

So if you actually use something yourself and it affected you positively, well now you have a story that you can tell them. Not just generically speaking about the product, not "Oh, there's a great new product, and if you use it you can increase your sales by two or three times," or "Here's a great new product and if you use it you can lose 10 pounds in 30 days." That's very generic. That's not very personal.

But if you use the product yourself, you can give it a personal recommendation, your personal touch. "There's a product that I have just used and I personally use it in my own business and it has increased my profits by two fold in the last month." That's very personal. "Here is a weight-loss product that I have used for the last month and I have personally lost 7 pounds on it."

Another thing that I see people doing, especially in affiliate marketing agreement if they just copy and paste the same generic email over and over and over. I'll get 20 emails in that day that all say the same thing with the same subject lines. You know the people have not used the product themselves. They probably don't even know what it does. They're just copying and pasting a generic email. Don't do that.

It makes it much more believable, much more credible and people are much more likely to make a purchase decision on a recommendation that comes for me personally. Once again, if you use something yourself and you share your personal story with your list; you're building a personal relationship.

Offer Something Free Not Only Offers For Products

A fourth thing that you can do, and this is what I was going to say earlier on but I didn't so here we are. The fourth thing you can do is that you can offer great value or free value and not always promote your list this is something that I see marketers do all of the time and it really bugs me. I know they don't do as well as others who don't do this.

What am I talking about? What I'm talking about is constantly sending offers down to your list to promote, every single day sending them offer after offer after offer, where it is obvious that you don't use the product yourself. How can you possibly constantly use product after product after product and refer, refer, refer and recommend, recommend, recommend?

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Being Open and Approachable

Also, remember how I talked about building a personal relationship with your list? Let me give you an example of that, and how I don't always send offers to my list. Recently I was out at a marketing seminar with a bunch of other Internet marketers and we went out to dinner that night.

We went out to a sushi bar. It was the first time in my life that I've ever had sushi. So the next day we got back and I wrote an email to my list and I said, "Hey, I'm at the Internet marketing seminar. When I get back from that I'll give you a report of some of the things I learned. I just wanted to use something neat. I went out for sushi last night and it was the strangest thing. I really liked it." Basically I just told them what I did the night before.

So the next day some of the marketers at that seminar said, "Brian, I just got the email that you send out to your list. All you did was tell them about how you went out and had sushi last night. You weren't selling anything, there was no offer. What are you doing? How are you making money?

So I said, "Well there was no offer and in that email. I just wanted to send an email to my list. I just wanted to let them know where I was at and what I was up to. I wanted to share that with them." They couldn't believe that I would do that, that I would send an email out with no offer.

They just don't get it. I explained to them but my sending emails to my list telling them that I ate sushi last night is the reason why I make $5-$15 per subscriber per month and not $.50 to one dollar per subscriber per month. I had a ton of emails from all over the world from my list members who either love sushi or hate sushi and had to comment about it. I wrote them back and we got a little dialogue going. It just strengthened that relationship with my list. It built that relationship because of that personal correspondence. And those people, believe it or not, are more likely to do business with me because of that. So something small, and what might seem small in silly to most people on the outside and a lot of those marketers at the seminar, well, it makes a big difference in the end.

Occasionally send emails to your list. Just make it personal, let them into your life. Symptoms of free information or some free content and don't always send them offers.

Make Choice a Part of Your Hard Sell Strategy

Another quick strategy that I want to talk about is that if I'm going to be doing a hard sell, if I'm really trying to promote

something in an email, what I'll do in the email is I won't write the entire email to sell it. What I'll do is create a sales letter on a webpage and then when I do the email, the email will be short. The email will start, once again, with a personal touch. All emails start with a personal touch. I'll say, "Oh and by the way, there is also this product that you might be interested in. Check it out at this link." Then I direct them to the webpage.

Whether we like it or not, there is going to come a point where sometimes people are in a bad mood or they're having a bad day or they just don't want to be marketed to that day. Or they just for some reason they decide they no longer want to be on your list.

Well, if you send them a long email and the email is doing nothing but promote, promote, promote, then when they get to the end of that email they might hit that unsubscribe button. But if you send them to a webpage, well you're not forcing that marketing message; they voluntarily chose to receive that marketing message by clicking on that link. They go to the link. They see the marketing message. If they're not interested, that's fine; they close the webpage and probably just delete your email. They volunteered to receive that marketing message. It was not forced on them in an email.

Survey Your List to Determine Wanted Products

The fifth thing that I do to build a personal relationship with my list and profit from it is I survey my list. I frequently set my lists surveys to find out what they want to hear about. I asked him what some of the questions they have are and I asked them what types of products they want me to bring to them.

Once again, this is the Info Product Blueprint and we are in the business of creating information products. So what is the best type of information product you can create? That's the question. What is the best type of information product you can create? The answer? The type that your list wants to buy.

What kind of information product is your list want to buy? I don't know, ask them. Seriously, survey your list and ask them what they want. Believe it or not, my current website is ListProfitAcademy.com. It's a website that focuses on how to build and how to profit from a list and since I created a website I went on to speak to a lot of people about building a list and profiting from it. Here I am with Info Product Blueprint doing that with you guys. That wasn't my original plan, believe it or not.

Listen To Your List To Develop Wanted Products

When I was first describing what type of products I wanted to create or what type of websites I wanted to create, I had a completely different idea in mind. I was working on that for quite a while. Then I came to a point where I said, "You know what? Is this something that my list would really want to hear about? Is it something they would want to buy?"

So I did a survey with my list and I asked them, "What do you want to learn about? What do you want to hear about?" It actually turned out that the number one thing that my list to learn about was how to build a list and profit from it. Specifically, they wanted to know how to make big money from a small list, which is something that I've been able to do in the past. That's what they wanted to learn about and that's what I brought to them.

Of course, by serving them and asking them what they want and bringing it to them, it doesn't get any more personal than that. You told me this is what you wanted and here it is. Now buy it, seriously, buy it.

That's a great way to survey your list. Ask them questions and it's a great way to build a relationship with them. It lets them know that you want to hear what their questions are and that you really want to know what they want and you want to bring it to them. If you are the person that can bring people what they want, you're going to do a lot better in information marketing than others who just constantly create products that they want to create that they don't really care whether people want to hear about that or not. Survey your list and ask them questions.

E-zine Your Way to List Success

Another great thing is that's a great way to build content for your e-zine. Remember something that we talked about earlier on was don't always send offers to your list. Send them some free content, send them some valuable information. Some of the best information that you can send your list is information that they want to know about. So ask your list what are some of the most burning questions. A lot of people from your list will send you a question and then you can create content based on that. Here is a question that so-and-so asked and here is my answer. He gets your list involved because they know that you're answering their questions. Especially if you do this on a weekly basis, the one person whose question that to answer, they are going to be really happy because they're getting that kind of highlighted treatment. "Wow, Brian actually wrote about me in his newsletter," and that really strengthens that bond that

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you have with them and they're going to be more likely to read newsletters. The more people that read your newsletter, the more that will act on the recommendations that you make and more money that you will make. Isn't that what we're all here for, to make money? So survey your list and ask them questions to build content and also decide what types of products and services you should be creating.

Using Multimedia To Connect With Your List

The sixth thing that I want to talk about on how to build a personal relationship with your list is to use multimedia. Remember earlier on I mentioned how in the old days things would work to do or and then we went into retail stores and now a lot of us do marketing just behind the computer through email and a lot of people think that because they are behind the computer the rules of the off-line world don't apply to the online world? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Will one of the things that you want to do to build a personal relationship with your list is to use multimedia to reach them in other ways than email. You see, there is a big difference between sending somebody in now versus talking to them and meeting with them in person. Now those are two extreme examples, emailing someone versus meeting them in person. There are a lot of things that you can do in between those two things to really strengthen your relationship with your list and to get them to know you, like you and trust you more and a lot of that you can use multimedia.

What types of multimedia can you use? Instead of always just doing email marketing you can also do teleseminars. Teleseminars are a great way to further your sales process, to get people to know you better, and to add an additional stream of income to your business. With your Info Product Blueprint, you can do a teleseminar and explain to people more about what your product is about and how it is going to benefit than. When people get on a teleseminar they get to hear your voice, they get closer to you instead of just reading an email, which is just black text on a screen, they get to hear your voice. That is another way they can become closer to you and get to really know who you are.

Another way is to use video. In a video your interaction with me is a lot different than if you just signed up for my newsletter and received the email newsletter from me. In a video you get to see me, see what I look like. You get to hear me talk to you and this is really creating a closer bond, almost like we're meeting a person. It does a lot more to strengthen that relationship than the type I would have with you through email only. I've used multimedia teleseminars, audio, mp3's, videos.

So use multimedia, don't just use email, email marketing, don't just use websites. Use audio, put audio on your websites, put

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video on your websites, do teleseminars and if possible, actually meet people in person. That will work very well.

Meet In Person and Connect

The best way, the best form of relationship marketing is to meet people in person. How do you do that? What you do is you go to seminars, trade shows, conventions, events, anything related to your industry or your niche. No matter what you were doing that there is a market for it. There are trade shows, events and seminars related to that niche market.

What is important about that is there are two people, two types of people that you can meet in person. You can meet your potential customers and prospects and you can also meet your competitors and your potential business partners.

In information marketing and Internet marketing, email marketing, the two most important relationships that you'll ever have is one with your customers and one with your partners. Everything that we have talked about tonight in terms of building relationships were prospects for customers, that can apply to your partners, your potential JV partners and your competitors as well. Don't look to your competition as competitors, especially in information marketing. There are a lot of things that you can do to work together with others.

Email Success

Finally, I want to talk about the most important part of your email and it is not the subject line. That don't get me wrong, the subject line is a very important part of your email. Matter of fact, it is the second most important part of your email, but the most important part of your email is not the subject line. It's the 'From' line. From Brian T. Edmondson, From Kenneth McArthur, from your name.

You see, I'm sure that you get emails from your friends, from your family, from your employers, from government agencies. There are important people that you get emails from and I'm sure that no matter what the subject line is those emails get opened. I'm sure that if your mother or your brother or your best friend sent an email, is it safe to say that you're going to open an email matter what? No matter what the subject line says you're going to open an email from a family member or friend.

Now, the subject line could determine the speed at which you open an email. Say you're in a hurry to rush out and you don't have time to read your emails, and you see that yes, there is an email from your mother. You will open that email, but you're probably not going to open it right now. But if the email said in the subject line, 'Brian, your father passed away," you would open that email immediately because that's an important

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subject line.

So the subject line is important. The subject line can control the urgency at which customers and your prospects open an email, but the most important part is the 'From' line. You should develop the relationship with your prospects so that when they get an email from you, that email would be opened no matter what.

I am on an awful lot of email lists and I get a lot of emails every day. There are certain people; there are certain newsletters that I subscribe to that I will always open the email from that person that matter what the subject line says, no matter what, because I love what they write. I love what they say.

They really build that relationship with me where I want to receive emails from them. There are other emails that I will just delete and I will never read unless the subject line is really compelling, because I don't really have that personal relationship with that person. They just really have not done a good job of making sure that I want to open their emails. Maybe I know that every time they send an email they're just selling something and I really just don't want to see what is being sold today.

Then there are other people who I never open their emails and that's not a good thing, no matter what the subject line is. You certainly do not want to be in that category. If you do everything that we talked about and…

- You build that personal relationship with your list,
- You make your emails informal,
- You don't always throw offers down their throat,
- You build your relationship with them through other means than just email marketing such as audio, video and
- You give them free valuable content on occasion.

If you do these things, then you should be able to build a relationship with them so that they will always open an email that comes from you.

But the point is that you should not have to worry about how to trick people and you should not have to worry about how to be cute and clever just to get your emails opened. Your emails should be opened always because they come from you. If you do a good job with relationship marketing, that will happen, that will always happen.

That's why it's so important, and isn't it safe to say, that the more people that open your emails, the more people are going to read your emails, the more people that are going to act on the recommendations, the more people that are going to buy your information products and the more money you going to

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make. That is the importance of relationship marketing and email marketing.

So let's wrap up some of the things that we talked about.

First of all we talked about beginning with the end in mind. What kind of customer do we want on our list? What kind of prospect do we want on our list? We can control the process of bringing that person through our list. Initially yes, it is okay to get a freebie seeker on our list. Through the methods that we use to build our relationship with them and through the process of getting them to know us, like us and trust us they will eventually become a paying customer and they will be more likely to stay on list, because remember we attracted that person from sources that are congruent with the type of person that we are in the type of person that we want on our list. If that person does not like you, they will be quick to unsubscribe and that's fine. We did not want them our list to begin with.

Don't Worry About Unsubscribe Rates

I really don't look at my unsubscribe rates. I know every time I send out an email, people are going to unsubscribe. I know that a lot of times people come on the list may be to get something free that I'm offering and they will unsubscribe. I don't care. I really don't care about the unsubscribes. I don't want those people on my list anyway because they are not a good match for my list.

I just worry about the people who are on my list. I make sure that I'm always building my relationship with them, giving them great value and that I'm referring them to products and services that I know are good. Then I can feel comfortable, and know I'm building a database of customers for long-term profitability and not some short-term thing.

So began building the list with the end in mind. Remember, we want that optimized list, responsive list, people who know us, like us and trust us.

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The three most important things in our email marketing are make it personal, make it personal, and make it personal. If you do that, you can achieve results that are outside industry average, he will have a better relationship with your customers and when it comes time to promote a product, whether you are promoting products as an affiliate or whether you are promoting your own products, whether or not someone out there has a product that is better, faster, cheaper, better quality, no matter what the one thing that they won't have is what you have and that's your personal relationship with your list, who is more likely to do business with you because they know you, they like you and they trust you.

Growing The List Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are three techniques you can use to build your list?

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2. What sources will you use to attract and find your niche market?

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3. How could you add multimedia to enhance communication with your list?

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Next . . . Public Relations

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 7: Public Relations

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Public Relations

Sid Hale, the cofounder of jvAlert, tells you how to write, format and deliver the media release to promote your product. Sid shares tricks and tips he's used successfully over the years to develop buzz and a recognition in the media.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Proper formatting for a press release

◆ Tricks of the trade for 'hooks' to gain interest in your story

◆ How to use sources and statistics for your release

Submitting a media release is a bit like standing behind the red velvet rope, hoping you have what it takes to make it past the doorman and gain admittance into an "A" list event. The competition is fierce, with only the best of the best making it to the editor's desk, much less into the hands of the public.

So how can you rise above all others and make your press release gleam in the eyes of the publisher? All you need is a dash of researching skills, a pinch of creative talent, and a sprinkle of media insight, and you've whipped up a blue ribbon recipe for a results-oriented press release.

The Decision is Theirs

The publishing and broadcast media are very powerful. What filters through the desk of an editor to the eyes of the public is whatever they deem newsworthy.

Scandals. Tragedies. Triumphs. From international terrorism to Cousin Cathy's canine hero, the media hold all of the cards when it comes to what we do and do *not* know.

They also decide, to a degree, how much influence each story has on the public - by the placement and the size of space they assign to it. Readers are obviously going to focus on a half-size, front-page feature article more than they will a 10-line blurb buried in the back of the local section. Placement is crucial because it determines how close your news will get to the reader's eyes.

Fortunately, news sells. So getting attention for your media release will be a little like a sales pitch, without the blatant advertising. Sound impossible? Not when you consider how the media mindset operates.

The power of the media is incredible! One minute, a world leader is an internationally respected figure, and in seconds, CNN or some other 24-hour news circuit has leveled his career with devastating "just released" information

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Editors are faced with a stack of news items every day, but only limited space to position them. The submissions on their desks rank in order of importance, and from that list, they will decide how much column space to give you. In order to have a larger piece of the pie, you need to make sure your release is unique, timely, and important to their audience.

Space is valuable, whether it's in the form of print space, or airtime on the radio or television. If you want to advertise your product or services, you'll have to pay a hefty price, and that's why the ability to create an unbiased media release is so important. Editors will decide if they want to allow your item *free* space, in the form of a news story, or if they'll reject it, and make you purchase an ad block instead.

Learn the Rules

There are certain rules to play by when dealing with your media contacts. Courtesy and common sense both play an important role in how they view your news. And don't forget to take into consideration the local tone and flavor of your own community's press.

Some media giants won't entertain the idea of publishing local news items that do not affect the country as a whole - even if it's the New York Times, and your soon-to-be-launched website or product is based out of New York City. But if the information is relevant enough to achieve national interest, then they *will* consider publishing your press release.

But, if you are gearing your release to a local audience through a community press market, then do all you can to develop and maintain a rapport with the individuals who make the decisions on whether or not to give your item the columns and inches you want. And never, ever address your press release to an editor who no longer works for the company. Take a few seconds to read the latest masthead to find out who the current editor is, and then send it to the right person – making sure to spell their name correctly.

If you're on friendly terms, the editor might give you inside information or direction on why your press item was denied space in the next issue. As a contributing reporter (which is what a press release writer is), you're an extension of the news department. So learn everything you can about how to be a team player with each organization. Request their stylebook, or ask if they adhere to any particular news format.

Make it Easy for Them

If you ignore the style of the paper or other media company, your value diminishes because you've actually *added* work to their already hectic schedules. If you disregard their formatting

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and style functions, then the *paid* staff has to redo the work you send in, whether it's deciphering and typing your handwritten release, or reorganizing the information so that it can easily be edited and cut where necessary.

Many papers have a small staff, leaving extra work for the editor, such as sorting through the news, choosing photographs to accompany the stories, and plenty of time-consuming administrative tasks. The easier you make it on the editor, the more likely you'll see your headlines in print. If you follow the basic rules for the publication, you'll make the process quicker, allowing the editor to utilize their time on other important issues.

On the other hand, if you show little respect for the editor by writing your press release in longhand, or demanding that it be in the next issue, you'll be met with barriers, and probably ruin the chances of any future submissions even being considered.

News departments, chained to strict deadlines, simply do not have the time or manpower to deal with a horde of different contributor styles and formats. So, it's in your best interest to follow the publication's submission guidelines when sending in your news. If you don't, you run the risk of having your submission thrown away without any consideration. Busy editors won't waste time editing for style if they have to rewrite your entire piece, not when another submission might be similar in worthiness, and have the right style for their publication.

Take the time to investigate your target publication. Learn the structure and who makes the decisions on what goes in, and what stays *out* of the publication. When you get this information, use it to your advantage.

Go to the library and research back issues of the publication. Find out what items they've deemed newsworthy in the past, and see what tone, or "voice," the reporters used. If you can tailor your style to something similar to what the existing decision-maker has accepted for publication in the past, chances are you'll be on your way to seeing your item in print.

First Impressions

The media will begin judging your release as soon as they remove it from the envelope, lift it off the fax machine, or click on their email. **First impressions** are of utmost importance, so make sure it's aesthetically pleasing.

Follow proper formatting standards such as typing and font color and size. Don't get too cute and send it in on rainbow paper to make a splash. You'll make a splash all right – deep into the wastebasket! They've seen it all, but what it boils down to is "newsworthy" or "not."

Notes

Your first contact with the media should always accomplish the following:

- Get the editor's attention
- Easily identify your topic
- Showcase your news writing abilities
- Provide verifiable source materials and contacts

Include several easy ways for the editor or reporter to reach you should they have any questions or want a more in-depth article written about your product or services.

If you don't get their attention from the very first sentence, you may have lost them forever. An editor cannot possibly scan each and every press release sent to them to figure out what the writer is trying to say.

Make their job easier by stating the facts, but do it in a way that makes it a headline topic. Instead of titling your release, "New real estate site launched," try something like "HomeBasePlus emerges triumphant in the battle of technology versus service." It's catchy, and the lead sentence can clearly explain what the title hints. Chances are, your headline will be changed anyway, but hook the editor's eye from the beginning.

Don't try to impress the reader with overly expressive adjectives or superlatives. They'll just be edited out, and it gives your press release a phony tone, like that of an advertisement, as opposed to a factual news item.

Resist the urge to boast about your product or services. Offer the vital information about the "who, what, when, where, and why," and let the reader take the initiative in discovering its benefits from that point on.

Using quotes from experts or management personnel within the company or industry offers credibility to your press release. Media contacts love to be able to attribute a name to the concepts or opinions found within the piece, so choose wisely, and pick the most authoritative figure possible. Instead of using a positive quote from one of your customers, have the President of the company say a few words.

If you're sending in a media release about a soon to be launched website, or a newly formed company, be sure to include a direct contact name, phone number, and email address if possible, so that an editor/producer can easily find you if they have any questions about the information.

While the media are constantly competing among themselves to be the first to report (or *scoop)* headline news, contributors are competing to *be* that news. Give yourself a head start by learning the publication's style, and respectfully submit your item to the appropriate contact.

Notes

Before you send anything, ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ Did I follow the proper formatting styles seen in a recent issue? Did I manage to develop a clear and concise document, or will it need to be rewritten by the editorial staff?
- ◆ Is my information timely? Is it news, or advertising?
- ◆ Does it affect the majority of the publication's audience?
- ◆ Are my facts correct, and verifiable?
- ◆ Is it objective, or have I approached the topic in a biased manner?
- ◆ Have I cut out any unnecessary information or boasting, so that it appears like any other news item?
- ◆ Is the release reader-friendly? Did I use the word "embark" where I could have used "go?" Did I use any "hype" words such as "exhilarating," or "thrilling?"
- ◆ Did I include my contact information so that the editor can easily contact me if they have any questions?
- ◆ Does the press release urge readers to contact the company or organization for further information?

Once you understand the media mindset, it's easier to conform to their standards and expectations.

Cooperation – Serve Their Need

The news industry is a rushed and hurried environment, and anything you can do to alleviate the stress of deadlines and tight spaces will be greatly appreciated. The more you work with your local news, the more receptive they'll be when it comes time to consider one of your press releases. If they can rely on you to follow simple procedures, leaving them with minimal follow-up work, then they'll most likely be eager to hear what it is you have to say in the future.

Remember that you and the editor rely on each other for information and coverage. Without press releases, he may not be able to fill up the space in his paper. And without the editor, the news you want to get in front of the readers won't be reaching *anybody*.

You might sometimes feel dejected when your item doesn't make it into print over another similar piece. But the editor looks at it from a newsworthy standpoint. Which press release, out of the hundreds, or thousands received each day, has what it takes to be worthy of their reader's time and attention? Craft your release well, and you'll greatly increase your chances of publication.

Notes

Follow Your Facts

Validate Your Voice with Research

In the news business, facts and figures have to be true. Period. There is no way around it, because the only thing a newspaper hates worse than being scooped is being wrong. Then, a retraction has to be printed, or a "We regret the error" notice in small print on page two, just to legally cover all bases.

If you're the reason the newspaper (or other media venue) printed incorrect information, believe me, they'll remember you every time the phone rings and they have to field a call from an angry reader who isn't happy with them.

Verify Your Facts

The best way to avoid this sticky problem is to verify your facts. One way is to pretend you're a lawyer and that anything that's hearsay is inadmissible. The judge (the editor in this case) will hold you in contempt if you try to sneak in unverified facts before the readers.

Checking your facts could help build your credentials in the business. Making errors that actually make it into print could cost you credibility, if not legal fees for slander - or worse. Editors will appreciate it if they don't have to run all over town, verifying facts that they worry might be inaccurate. If you have a press release that's heavy with complicated information, then provide any contact information for the editor that you can, in case he wants to have a staff member verify your story.

When writing up your release, never assume any of the "facts." Not only will the company or organization be angry if incorrect information is printed, but the newspaper will look on you with discontent for as long as they remember your name.

Then Do It Again!

Double-check even the most credible sources. Even if your source is an expert in their industry - if they give you a number for a specific bit of information, go the extra mile and verify the figures. Experts are not infallible, and your information must be 100% accurate.

If the story is about a specific position or person appointed within the company, go directly to the source for your information. Don't rely on the Vice President's secretary if the story is about the Vice President. Make an effort to contact him or her directly and get firsthand quotes for your story. Then, anything that is misunderstood will come back to haunt the Vice President – not you or the paper.

Notes

Don't be afraid to approach your sources for clarification. If you find out that some of your facts contradict each other, go back to your sources and explain the situation to them. If a company is announcing that it will open up 100 new positions, but another source says it will be 1,000 – go back to the company and find out from the most authoritative source which number is correct.

If the information in your press release is of vital importance, you might want to check with several different sources from within an organization. It couldn't hurt, and one source might end up mentioning a great reference for you to work with on other facts that could be included in your story.

Timeliness plays an important role in the integrity of your piece. If several months, or even days (in some cases) have passed, make a few phone calls to make sure your information is still accurate. It may be that the company has decided to move its new location to another city, and that's a pretty significant detail you'll need to know before it's published.

Consider how embarrassed certain media were when they announced that Al Gore had clinched the 2000 Presidential election. Hours later, they had to retract that error, and became the target of comedy skits for months to come. Never release information before verifying it to the best of your ability.

You can use many different types of sources to gather your information, depending on the reason for your media release. Sometimes everything you need, will be gathered in-house through company contacts, and sources that they provide.

However, if you're doing a piece about the effect your company's new anti-pollution policy will have on the community, it might be wise to do a little investigative research.

Find out what the current problem is, and how it's being dealt with. If the company is introducing a previously unheard of method to contain and dispose of waste products, then it might be wise to let them know that it will actually be solving a problem they might not even know existed. Your company will turn out to be a hero without having to write the media release in the form of a boasting, bragging document.

Where to Research

What's the very first research tool you every used? I'll give you a hint. Think back to primary school.

Public Library

The public library is a wealth of *free* information that is available to everyone. Librarians are very resourceful in helping you find

Notes

the information you need, so don't hesitate to ask if you find yourself stuck. The great thing about libraries is that they keep a great deal of information from a long time ago. So any facts you need are all at your fingertips. While you're there, be sure to study the exact media publications you're going to be targeting so that you have a feel for their style.

Don't forget that libraries often have a link to other libraries in the district. If you have the time to wait, you can request that a source your library doesn't carry, be sent over to that location for your use. There usually isn't any charge for this, and it's a great way to expand your resource center. If there is a nominal charge for this service, weigh the cost of not having the source in your material, and that should tell you if it's worth the price.

Don't limit yourself to the public library, though. There are plenty of other sources you can go to for the information you need. For instance, the company you're writing for, if it's a large corporation, probably has an in-house library, or a records room at the very least. Find out if you're permitted to peruse those files and if so, you might be able to generate a stronger background on your subject matter.

Academic Papers

Any universities that are in the area also probably have a variety of sources for your use, such as studies that have been conducted and reports that have been published. These can serve as a great authority basis for the groundwork of your release.

Almanacs

If you need specific facts and figures, find the best almanac or reference book available to you. These contain almost every known piece of scientific information we have to date. If you use one, be sure to use the most recent edition, as population figures, and number counts can rapidly grow or decline in a short amount of time.

Encyclopedias & Atlases

For geographical information, you'll want to source out the area's atlas or encyclopedia. Don't say the company headquarters are going to move to Arlington, if your national audience doesn't know if you mean Virginia or Texas. I've lived in Midlothian, Virginia for the past 25 years, and only recently realized there is also a Midlothian in Illinois, one in Maryland, and another in Texas.

Notes

If you're in need of statistical data, find out if you can utilize a current abstract. This uses sets of statistics and turns them into reader-friendly information that you can use to add credibility to your news item.

Quotations

If using quotes in your work, you'll have to make sure that you attribute them to the right person. If you're dealing with a celebrity, you can look up their most famous quotes in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (access online at Bartleby.com/100/), or some other book of quotes that might be helpful.

If you're quoting a source from the company you're working with, it might be wise to contact them before the press release goes out, and read their quote back to them to make sure they agree with what it is *you* say they said.

Government Sources

Research doesn't end with library books and phone calls. In the United States, the Freedom of Information Act allows for any citizen to obtain certain government information at their request. Other, democratic governments likely have similar laws. You have the right to use any non-classified documents at your disposal in your press release, and using a government study definitely adds an element of reliability to your piece.

Census data can come in very handy when you want to inform the readers how your product or service will affect the community in a positive manner. You can use census data that is compiled every ten years, or yearly, depending on the source you get it from.

If you have the need to find legal decisions to back up your information, you want to start with a publication such as the *Index to Legal Periodicals*. This will direct you to where you can find the most accurate information and court decisions that relate to your subject matter.

Other government agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issue annual reports that come in handy when you need to find regional information that affects the audience.

The Internet

With the technology available today, it's easy to enter your subject matter into an Internet search engine, and get back thousands of results with the click of a button. But, don't assume everything you see is accurate.

Notes

A website, unless an official state or other government agency site, cannot be considered accurate until you have produced a verifiable source. If "Andy's Website on Pollution" says that half of the country's water source is contaminated with e-coli bacteria, you don't want to consider Andy an accurate source unless you verify that he's the Director of Water and Waste Management for the United States Government. Only then, can he be considered credible.

The Internet is a valuable source of leads, however. It can open up new questions that you hadn't previously thought to consider, and it can also point you in the direction of other lead sources that might be able to provide accuracy and credibility to your piece. If you have a library that has a public online database, it's a great way of using the Internet and the library combined from the comfort of your own office (or home).

Interviewing Sources

Interviews are another important part of researching your topic. Don't go into an interview without first thinking through your questions. The source you're meeting with (or talking to on the phone) doesn't have the time to waste waiting for you to fumble around with your notes and figure out what direction you want to take in your press release.

Sit down before the interview and consider the type of piece you're writing. Then, jot down some notes on important aspects of the topic you wish to discuss with your source. Don't try to ask your source for "off the record" information. It will only make them nervous, and it will feel more like an interrogation than an interview.

Carry a mini-recorder with you to the interview for accuracy, and to make sure the meeting moves along quickly. Before you leave the office, make sure it has fresh batteries, but don't rely on a tape alone for the notes.

Write down as much information as you can, without making the source stop and wait for you. You don't want to have to call him back a day later asking him to repeat everything because your tape failed to record the conversation. It's unprofessional, and will make him leery of dealing with you in the future.

Some things you might want to clarify in your meeting with a source are:

- What exactly do you need to know? This is important because they might not know the reason for your interview, or the topic you'll be writing about.
- Why do you want to know this? Some information is rather sensitive, and sources might not want to divulge certain facts if they don't have to, or if it's not crucial to the topic.

Notes

◆ How are you going to use this information? Your source is going to be fuming if you use this information against him, so be upfront about how it will be used in your media release.

Before you go to the interview, do a bit of background research on your subject and the person you're going to meet with. It will help to know if he left a particular company because of their ethical standards being lower than his expectations, or if he had a dream of building his small entrepreneurial enterprise into a worldwide venture.

If you run across some sensitive information that might be damaging to others, weigh the consequences of its use before you jump in and deliver it to the public's eyes. It's not always best to reveal everything you know without considering how it is going to affect others.

If you present your press release with an authoritative voice, and the editor knows that you've done your research, they will appreciate your effort, and may in turn ask you to write even more on the topic. Once they have worked with you, and verified your facts to be true and accurate, they'll be impressed enough to move your submission to the top of the ranks the next time you have information that needs to get in front of the eyes of the public.

If, however, you disregard journalistic principals, and offer a document full of misleading information, or unreliable sources, the editor won't want to work with you in the future. It would be a waste of his time to have to re-interview, re-verify, and re-write your entire piece to do a factual story he can actually print.

To write a successful press release, takes a minimal amount of time to do the groundwork for your information. The further you go in making sure your piece has a newsworthy, *trustworthy* tone to it, the greater your chances of a successful media release campaign.

Writing From the Consumer's Point of View

Approaching Your Audience

Writing a press release is a tricky combination of advertising and unbiased reporting. You're responsible for getting your company or your client's name accepted by the media and in front of the public's eye.

The position you're in requires you to accomplish two totally opposite tasks: Spin your story so that it projects a positive light on you or your client, and deliver a completely neutral news report to your media contacts.

Notes

All the while, you're expected to do both of these things at the greatest benefit to the intended audience. When people turn on the news on the radio or television, or pick up a paper, they're expecting quality, fair journalism, and pertinent information about the events that are going to somehow affect them directly.

Now everyone's aware that certain editorial staff has their own slant on politics and world issues. But we all expect those opinions to stay on the editorial page, not find their way into the actual news that we're assuming to be true to the best of the publication's knowledge.

A media release is generally coming from a company or organization that has something to gain from the public knowing about its details. The only thing that will get your item into print is the potential worth it has to the target market.

Understand the Interests of Your Audience

The best way to determine the worthiness of your news is to look at it from the outsider's point of view. Try on the shoes of the average citizen in your community, and find what interests them and affects them the most. This is exactly what the publication's editor is concerned with, so do your research.

First you need to consider whom you're targeting. Are you announcing a new industrial plant that will open up 800 new jobs in a small community? Then your audience will be vast, requiring less research and specification on your part on how to approach them.

Are you holding a blood drive to help the local blood bank raise its dangerously low reserve levels? Then your target will be narrower. It will affect community-conscious individuals who are open to volunteering for this type of assistance.

Everything you write should somehow be connected to your audience. In order to accomplish this, you have to show and tell them how each and every detail will affect their lives either now, or in the future.

If you're writing a press release about a recipient of a local award, it will be great for the recipient, but makes little difference to the rest of the community as far as news is concerned.

Next, decide what key issues you want your audience to know and act upon. Do you want them to be aware of an upcoming development in the area? Or is the company trying to bolster its image with those who are already skeptical of them to begin with? Find one or more vital elements and focus on delivering those with a punch.

Notes

Publish Only the Pertinent – the Newsworthy

If the responsibility has landed on you to simply gain coverage of the company, but you have no firm direction to work on, then find out how many different paths your news could take, and then act on the most influential ones, and those with the widest appeal.

If you or your client has many community activities throughout the year, and is launching products on a regular basis, choose which pieces of information are most important, and then write about them, not all of your activities will be guaranteed space in the publication. In fact, keep in mind that editors can't give you your own column each week, so pick and choose wisely on the topics you decide to send in.

The worst problem editor's encounter when sifting through the stack of soon-to-be discarded press releases sitting on top of their desk is that most simply aren't newsworthy. They lack all or most of the qualifications of being *news*: new, local, unique, relevant, and significant.

As the media release coordinator, it is your job to find the most newsworthy items your company is involved in, and build on that topic. Certain items, such as the postal department's clerk being promoted to assistant delivery person, is simply more suitable for a company newsletter or other in-house publication source.

An editor is going to look at that piece of information and wonder, "Why are they sending *that* to *me*?" You've then succeeded in wasting their time, and possibly aggravating them – not something you want to do if you ever come upon a *really* vital tidbit that might actually be important. If they remember your first submission, they might toss it in the trash without even spending a second looking at the title.

Focus

Don't pile more data onto your readers than they can handle. Your company might *want* to express twenty different things that are coming up in the near future, but the fewer items you put before your audience, the more likely they'll be to act on them in the way you hope they will.

Keep it Simple – Be Concise

If the company plans to release upcoming information about a new product or service they are offering, refrain from being too technical in your article. Keep the terminology simple, describing what the product or service will do, and how it will improve the reader's lives in some way.

Don't explain the details about how a statistical study's results led to an overhaul in the way you do business. Save that for your advertisements. Stick with the who, what, when, where and why, divulging the specifics of those questions, so you'll stay within the boundaries of need-to-know information.

Don't talk over your reader's head. There's no need to write using complicated words, such as "erroneous," when you could just say "wrong." Cater to education backgrounds of all levels.

Simplify words, sentences, and paragraphs, but don't feel like you have to "dumb down" your news. Just avoid long, unfamiliar words that may make your reader pause for clarity.

Follow the mindset of Andy Rooney, whose commentaries are heard weekly near the end of each 60 Minutes segment. In his book, "Not That You Asked," Rooney says he's suspicious of writers who use words such as "launder" when they mean "wash," or "inexpensive," when they mean "cheap." He's perplexed at how writers can't just be satisfied with the word "now," insisting upon using "currently," instead.

Avoid flowering your language so that each sentence overfills and drowns your reader. Shorter sentences are more powerful and catchy

Shorter sentences reduce clutter, and relay your message to the audience faster. The more unnecessary words you eliminate, the better your chances of getting the space you're looking for in each publication.

Be Timely

Consider the timeliness of your release to the public. Are you trying to report about your new resume writing services when the unemployment rate is at an all-time high? That could be construed as positive or negative, so spin it accordingly and in the best interest of the public.

Make it Flow

Organize your message. Readers aren't going to be happy if your message jumps around the page without a central theme. You want each audience member to grasp the intended focus of your thoughts, not arrive at a variety of conclusions because you didn't develop your key ideas succinctly.

It's not necessary to force the reader to search for clues about your message. It may seem cute, or stylish to write in a way that hints about several different topics, but keep in mind that your job is to deliver news, not a mystery. Your reader may end up frustrated and leave your article for a more organized one. Get to the point quickly, and add details later on.

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Bear in mind that your average news audience is middle aged, married, and a white-collar worker who normally spends 20-30 minutes a day focusing on the news. If a person reads one form of media news, it's likely that they also pay attention to other forms as well.

But, since everyone's schedule seems to be overloaded these days, the news is normally consumed on the run. So, if your press release is unorganized the reader will quickly move on to another story and skip yours altogether.

Fact vs. Opinion

Opinions are not news – everybody has one. Try to write facts, and avoid stating opinion.

One way to make sure that you are releasing facts is to watch carefully for any adjectives you use in your release. Like any other news item, you're expected to send in an unbiased piece of information. Make sure you avoid writing words like "best," "only," "exciting," or "dull."

Instead of saying:

"The mayor lives in an expensive house."

Say:

"The mayor's house is estimated to be worth $780,000."

If you do have to include an opinion in your press release (i.e. at the request of a client), be sure to attribute it to someone other than the media publishing the story.

It's fine to say:

"This is by far the best product we've released to date," said Corporation X's Vice President, Steven Smith, of his company's soon-to-be-launched software.

Refrain from stating it's the *best* without using a specific quote.

Avoid Stereotypes

The last thing you want is to alienate your audience. Don't use stereotypes, whether sexual, ethnic, or otherwise. Aside from avoiding basic title taboos, such as mail**man**, fire**man**, etc., it's also best to avoid touchy societal subjects.

These include reporting on a woman's marital status or physical appearance. Always ask yourself if the same information would be relevant if you were reporting about a man. You don't want to alienate half of your audience by unintentionally insulting them.

Notes

In a Nutshell

In review, write for your audience by following three basic guidelines:

- ◆ Write Simply
- ◆ Write Clearly
- ◆ Write Fairly

Ask yourself these questions to see if you've written from the consumer's point of view:

- ◆ Is my media release easy to understand?
- ◆ Have I used any adjectives to describe the focus of my content?
- ◆ Are my employment titles gender-neutral?
- ◆ Have I geared the document toward a topic that most of the community will appreciate and want to read?
- ◆ Is my timing good - or bad - for disclosing this information?
- ◆ Have I answered all of the basic questions my audience might have once they finish reading this piece?
- ◆ Is it clear to the reader who the source of this information is – so that if he or she wishes to learn more, they'll easily know whom to contact?
- ◆ Have I written in a succinct manner so that the audience will be able to grasp the message without having to spend too much time deciphering it?
- ◆ Have I focused on the most pertinent information– not wasting editorial time with unimportant events?

If you've worked through all of the complexities above, then your media release should read like a true news story, and not resemble that of a biased, puff piece. If possible, have someone else take a look at the story and see if they notice any instances where it looks as if someone who works for the company or organization has written it.

Following these criteria will endear you to the community as an ethical and unbiased presenter of information. And it just might produce positive results for your press release campaign, too!

Tips of the Trade

Headlines Hook the Reader

There's a fine line between a lead, a headline, and a slug - in the world of submitting your news information. For the purposes of a press release, the three items are basically one and the same, or at least, have the same effect as one another when put before an editor for consideration.

Notes

If you're sending in your work with a stunning headline, be forewarned that the editorial department will probably change it before it hits the newsstands.

You can, however, tempt the editor into giving your press release more consideration if you create a first impression that makes them curious about the rest of your story.

Let's break it down into three ways an editor might initially view your work:

Leading the Pack

A lead is actually the first sentence in the main body of your story. It should be the most powerful sentence on your paper, as it will almost single-handedly make or break your submission.

There are crucial elements your lead must contain for it to achieve maximum effectiveness with your readers. Most editors will look at your lead, and from that, expect to know what your entire press release is about.

To accomplish this, you have to include the *who, what, when, where,* and *why* (or *how*) in that very first sentence - while maintaining the perfect balance between boring, and information overload.

There are two ways to form your lead sentence.

Instead of writing:

> Dallas, TX – Corporation XYZ plans on giving a party for all of their employees to celebrate their recent success in the Greeting Card Industry. On March 11th, employees will be invited to the Hilton Hotel…

Try:

> Dallas, TX – Corporation XYZ will celebrate their recent success in the Greeting Card industry by hosting a party for all 100 employees at the Hilton Hotel on Main Street at 8:00 PM March 11th.

This sentence covers the who (Corporation XYZ), what (a party), when (March 11th), where (Hilton Hotel on Main Street), and why (because of their recent success in the Greeting Card Industry). Don't make the information run into two separate sentences, as the first example showed. Tell the reader all of the main points in the lead sentence, and they will gather additional information in the body of the content.

Editors and readers alike will be able to tell from that one sentence whether or not you're a professional, and if your work

Notes

deserves further time and consideration. If you fail to clarify your topic, then the reader will move on to the next item that interests him.

Some writers prefer to start with their lead, devoting time and energy to polishing its form. But if you're having trouble developing a quality lead, put it aside and move on to complete the rest of your story first. Once you have the main body finished, it will be easier for you to gather the key issues and facts for your opening sentence.

Instead of writing a lengthy, all-inclusive lead sentence, try to include the most interesting facts in a punchy, appealing manner. This is the second method of developing your lead sentence – order of importance.

Once you figure out the *who, what, when, where,* and *why*, arrange that data in order of importance, and start your lead with the one word that stands out the most.

For example, instead of writing:

> "In a party designed to celebrate the long-awaited success of Corporation XYZ, the company will honor its hard working employees with a celebration at the Hilton Hotel on March 11th."

Start with one of the five W's – more specifically, the most important W:

> "Corporation XYZ will host a celebration at the Hilton Hotel on March 11th to honor their newfound success.

If you still feel that your lead sentence is not an item of excellence in your entire press release, but have tried revising it, without success, don't resist sending it in as is, because the editor might give it his attention regardless, assuming he can alter the lead if necessary.

Extra! Extra! Read All About It! Headline Happiness…

A headline is usually an incomplete sentence that tops the story and stands out in bold print for the reader to see. It comes before the lead sentence in print, and normally doesn't give a variety of facts, but instead offers a hint as to what the item is about.

For instance – A headline in a publication might read:

> Example 1:   "Two dead in ten car pile-up." or

> Example 2:   "Boy recognized as local hero."

Notes

Notice the lack of details in a headline format. The first example doesn't tell where, when, or how it all happened. All you know is a basic who (not specific, because that will be divulged in the story itself), and what (a car accident).

The same is true of the second example. We don't know who the boy is, or where he hails from exactly, or why he's being recognized, or even when he became a hero. What we do know is that this is a positive story about a young male child who did something beneficial for his community, and is being awarded for it.

Headlines are what sell newspapers – the editors and other news staff will devise those. Your job is to sell your particular story to the reader. Since you have no control over the headlines, concentrate on working your content to the best possible format.

If you feel you must include a headline with your press release, then specify that it is tentative, showing that you understand that the publication might deem it necessary to alter it as they see fit.

When you send in your press release, your main objective should be to provide newsworthy information that the editor will view as imperative for their readers to know. The news staff will transform your release into a formula they learned when they studied journalism in a formal education setting.

Many press releases gain a voice through the media regardless of the fact that they were sent in with an overtly biased tone, resembling an advertisement. Depending on the worthiness of the news, an editor and his staff might not discard your submission, or mind rewriting it, if the news will benefit the sale of their publication.

However, to increase your chances of acceptance, a strong intro, followed by a basic news format for the main content, will add strength and credibility to your submission.

Slugging to Sell

A slug is a bit of information that allows an editor to easily identify your piece. If the organization you're writing for is holding a fundraiser for needy families in the community, then the slug, which would appear in the upper left-hand corner of your paper, would read: Corporation XYZ Fundraiser. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Editors are bombarded with a barrage of press releases every day. They have to be able to quickly identify and sort through the items in order to rank them in order of importance for possible publication.

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Obviously, a slug reading "Cash Found" will garner more interest than "New Lawn Company." Finding the best possible slug for your story will allow the editor to add your piece to the higher-ranking items, but it's important not to lie in order to trick the editor into spending their time with your piece.

The editor will call you on it if you attempt to make your story into something it's not in your slug, headline, or lead intro. Assuming it does make it into print, past the watchful eye of the publication's staff, the audience won't be too happy when they think they're about to spend time reading one thing, but find out it's actually something completely different.

It might help to think of your lead as a summary of your entire story. Your press release is actually two items – the lead, and the body. The body is a fleshing out of the lead, which states the most important factors of the news piece itself.

As you write your press release, picture a pyramid. Many established reporters would tell you to use the pyramid as a method of developing your content. The lead is the first block on top. Everything after that follows on its way down in order of importance.

When the editor decides to use your press information, but learns that he only has a limited space to devote to your topic, he or she will tell the editorial staff to cut it from the bottom up. Therefore, put any information, which is expendable in the last paragraph of your press release.

Some editors might be wary of your work if your lead does not reflect the most important items in the rest of your press release. Make sure that you include those bits and pieces of greatest value in the lead, followed by a more in-depth explanation in the body of your content.

Things to Avoid

There are a variety of ways to form the intro to your press release.

Besides the guidelines already mentioned, it's best to avoid ever starting your piece with a question. An interrogative lead is never a professional way to write news.

Although you might feel that it piques the reader's curiosity, all it will do is waste the reader's time, and that will cause them to skip your item altogether. Don't say, "Will the PTA raise enough funds to buy new computers for the school" when you can say "The PTA will hold a fundraiser Monday night in an attempt to provide the school with all new computers."

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Don't try to cram everything into one sentence if it seems to overload the information. If the five *W's* won't fit gracefully into the first sentence, then cut out the least important information, and save it for the second sentence. There is no need to practice deliberate overkill just to follow news formatting.

Just as you shouldn't lead with a question, you also should never lead with a negative sentence. If the PTA meeting was rained out, don't write, "The PTA did not have its meeting Monday night due to bad weather." Say, "Rain spoiled the fundraising efforts of the PTA Monday night…" Or, even better, if something is going to replace the thing that did not happen, mention that first: for example – "The PTA will hold a meeting Tuesday night to take the place of Monday night's meeting, which was rained out."

Checklist for Intro

- Have I used, but not forced my five *W's* into my lead?
- Is my lead clear, concise, and positive?
- Is my lead appropriate in length, or have I tried to include too much information?
- Does my lead reflect the most important ideas based on the content of the body of my press release?
- Have I started with the most important information, and methodically mentioned less relevant points as the item progressed?
- Does my lead reflect matters of substance, or have I over-generalized?
- Does my lead answer to the broadest possible audience, or does it cater to one specific group in particular?

Everyone is different when it comes to developing his or her own leads. Some prefer to write the lead first, and then flesh out the story so that it's centered on the lead. And some prefer to write the story first, including all of the relevant facts, followed by writing a lead that is all-inclusive of their prewritten information.

Whichever method you choose, try to follow the basic rules in leads, headlines, and slugs. Include the most important facts, write with clarity and value in mind, and try to target as many people as possible with your intro sentence.

The wider your appeal, the more likely an editor will want to include your work in his publication. The more people you cater to, the more people that will purchase his publication.

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Destination: Information!

Covering the Five *W's* In Your Content

By now you probably have a good idea of what your topic is, and how to write it for the eyes and ears of your audience. Now comes the easiest part of developing your press release – the main content.

It doesn't matter if the goal is press for an event, product, or service – the formula remains the same. As mentioned in a previous chapter, you'll need to sit down and detail the Five *W's* of your subject. *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* (Or *How*, if Why isn't applicable).

Once you know the basic answers to these questions, and arrange them in order of importance in your lead sentence, you'll want to follow that order when fleshing out your story. If *Where* is ultimately more important than *Who*, then start with the *Where* first.

For our example here, let's assume they rank in order as it appears above. Now, we can approach each issue and learn how to make the most out of each answer.

The Who

Normally, this is the most important factor that your audience will be concerned with. If a product is launching, they want to know who's putting it out – Microsoft, or Sam's Software? If a fundraiser is being organized – is it for the Democratic, or Republican Party candidates?

Answering the *Who* is perhaps the easiest item to detail. There are concrete facts and data about the *Who* – their name, location of headquarters, size of the company or organizations – all of the facts that make up who they are as an organization.

More specifically, the *Who* of a company also entails the individual people associated with it. Everyone from the maintenance worker to the CEO has a vested interest in what goes on in, and what happens to, the company.

In a media release, it's important to hear directly from those who initiated the news in the first place. Did the President of the Company sign a deal to add 1,500 jobs to the workforce? Then quote him on the *Why* and *When* the jobs will materialize.

Has a local volunteer for your organization raised an important sum of money, or *trying* to for a specific cause? Highlight her in the story, attributing quotes to her as well - in order to add credibility, and a human element to the piece.

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The What

Conveying the *What* is the primary purpose of a press release, but most people have a tough time deciding if a particular topic is worthy of a press release.

If you're wondering what exactly should be covered in a press release, think along the lines of "newsy" and interesting topics. Examples include: your online presence; important information regarding a change in management or the components of your business; special information that you've published online; any proprietary product, methodology, or white paper that you offer through your consulting services; the announcement of events and appearances; and so on.

If you're not sure about what sort of information you should cover in a press release, consider these ideas to see if any apply to your business:

- Starting a new business
- Opening a new branch office
- A merger or acquisition
- Introducing a new product (or maybe your first)
- Forming a new strategic partnership or alliance
- Celebrating an anniversary
- Announcing a restructuring of the company
- Receiving an award
- Receiving an appointment
- Participating in a charity event
- Introducing a unique strategy/approach
- Announcing a partnership
- Changing the name of the company or of a product
- Offering an article or series of articles for publication
- Recognition of the company, the product, or an executive by almost any publication or organization
- Announcing your willingness to speak on particular subjects of interest
- Issuing a statement of position on a local, regional, or national issue
- Announcing a public appearance on television, radio, or in person
- Launching your Website
- Announcing free information available
- Announcing that you've reached a major milestone
- Obtaining a new, significant customer
- Expanding or renovating the business
- Establishing a unique vendor agreement
- Meeting some kind of unusual challenge or rising above adversity
- Restructuring your business or its business model
- Setting up a customer advisory group
- Announcing the results of research or surveys you have conducted

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- ◆ Announcing that an individual in your business has been named to serve in a leadership position in a community, professional, or charitable organization
- ◆ Sponsoring a workshop or seminar
- ◆ Making public statements on items of general interest (i.e. future business trends or conditions)

What is happening? Is it happening *to* someone? Then the audience needs to know. Is your organization fighting to save a homeless shelter from being destroyed for a new parking lot? Items that affect others are of great interest to all of us – even if we're not directly involved.

When writing about the *What* of a topic, you're usually talking about a verb. Something is happening, will happen, or did happen. Whenever possible, use an active verb instead of a passive one. For example:

Instead of saying:

"XYZ will hold a meeting Monday night."

Say:

"XYZ will meet Monday night."

And always avoid prepositional phrases whenever possible. Don't say, "Mr. Doe, the Vice President of XYZ Corporation, says…" Simplify it by writing "XYZ Vice President Doe says…"

When there are many possible "Whats" coming up, don't try to cram them all into one press release. Try to find a balance between what you think is most important, and what an *editor* would want to see based on audience appeal. Don't lose sight of the fact that, in all likelihood, not everything you send in is going to be published.

You don't want to write a press release telling the public that John Doe was promoted to CEO, **and** the company is opening a new plant soon, **and** they're having a picnic that will be open to the public, **and** it happens to fall right around the time the new product is being introduced.

This isn't Destination: Information – it's information overload! Your readers will walk away dazed and confused about what they just read – unsure of what the intended message was because of its jumbled nature. Focus on the best points, and stick to them!

The *What* in your story is the item you want your reader to act on. Fundraising? You want donations. New product or services? You're looking for a sale. New jobs? Get those applicants in the door, not to mention grabbing some positive public relations as a result of the press.

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For the *What* answer, use the most interesting angle to your audience. If an 89-year old volunteer is devoting sixty hours a week to raise money so that the organization can purchase enough turkeys so that every needy family can celebrate Thanksgiving, center your piece around her, not the organization itself. The press release will still get its message across – that they should help her meet her goals, and you will have used a human-interest angle to do it.

The When

Timeliness is everything (well, almost everything) to the editor you're approaching with your press release. First, he's going to make sure your subject is appealing to his audience. But next, he wants to know if it's relevant at this time.

Always report on events or products as close to the release date or launch date as possible. Give the editor enough time to review the press release, and revise it, so that he can publish it the day before or the day of your event.

Don't send in an announcement that tells his readers that last month, the organization raised enough money to buy a new computer. Timeliness would require you to announce that particular bit of information *as* you're trying to raise funds.

The same is true with products and services. Don't try to have a publication tell its audience that you or your client released two new items *last year*. An editor isn't going to want to announce something that's too far down the road, either. Save your impending news for a time when it's going to actually affect the readers.

Keep in mind the question "What have you done for me lately?" That question identifies the type of information an editor is seeking. While you want to be specific in telling the audience *when* something is going to happen, don't feel you have to go into too much detail. If a meeting will be held Monday night, August 6th, at 8:15 pm, simply write it as: Monday the 6th, at 8:15 pm.

If a product is being launched, stick to the day, month, and year. Unless it's an item that customers are going to line up for at a retailer's door in the wee morning hours, it's not necessary to tell the exact time you plan to put the product on the shelves.

If the When in your story would nicely complement another community event, try to arrange for the two happenings to coincide, if at all possible. For instance, if a highly publicized rodeo is coming to town in November, see if it's feasible to shoot for a launch date of October for your new line of leather apparel.

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Any edge you can use to leverage the power of the press in your favor is worth considering, since the publishing of your press release is like getting free advertising space in the publication.

The Where

Another important aspect the editor is going to look for in your press release is whether it concerns his readers. Localization is an important factor in getting your news out to the public.

If your company is opening a new office, 1,000 miles away, chances are, the readers are going to say, "So what?" But if the current office, located in their town, is *moving* to another city 1,000 miles away, thus increasing the unemployment rate dramatically, it becomes instant news.

It is possible for news to happen elsewhere, and still affect the local community. If your company's headquarters located across the country, held a blood drive and found a match for a rare blood type that is going to save a local girl's life, it's newsworthy.

The closer your news hits home, the greater its chances of being published, and maintaining interest among your audience. Even if the news itself isn't localized, try to attach some sort of local angle to it.

If the event is happening elsewhere, and the event itself is the main news, state that first, but don't bury the fact that it's also going to affect those in the community. Bring that information to the forefront, directly after the *What* of your story. For example:

> "XYZ Corporation (who) has been sold to its sister company in Japan (what), resulting in ten domestic plants shutting their doors, including the one here in X City (where)."

The main news is that the company has been sold and that most of the domestic plants will close. But by adding the fact that their own plant will close as well, you've succeeded in localizing the news for your audience.

Many press releases will not have a specific local angle at all, and that's fine as long as it will still somehow be of interest to the publications' readers. If your client is a household name, and something big is about to happen, they want to know about it just like the rest of the country.

But if you or your client is opening a franchise in another town, hundreds of miles away, and it has no visible effect on your

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immediate community, send your press release to the editor of the primary publication in the *new* location for maximum coverage.

The Why (or How)

Often, the *Why* (or *How*) is the first item to be trimmed from the press release if it isn't relevant to the rest of the story. So how do you know what should and should not be explained?

Look at it from a reader's point of view. If a company is hiring 20,000 new employees, and all you know is it's "because the President of the Company said so," either contact him for a more in-depth explanation, or forgo it altogether.

Most of the time, the press release will offer an explanation as to why an event is occurring.

> "The PTA (who) is accepting donations (what) to raise money for a new library (why)."

<div align="center">**or**</div>

> "The PTA (who) is trying to raise funds for a new library (what) by having a bake sale (how)."

How comes into affect much more prominently when the audience is supposed to act on the information. You want to tell them how they can help, how they can participate to bring about positive change in their community, how they can make a difference.

Once you master the *Who, What, When, Where*, and *Why* of your press release, you can begin to revise it and tighten the wording so that it appears to be reader friendly, while ensuring that all of the questions your readers will want to know have been answered.

As a review, develop your content in this order:

- ◆ Write down the answers to the Five *W's*.
- ◆ Arrange the W's in order of importance.
- ◆ After writing your lead, start to flesh out the answers in more detail.
- ◆ Be as detailed as you need to be without congesting the content.
- ◆ Write your text so that it provides a way the reader can take action.

The editor of each publication will most likely rewrite some or all of your content, so your job is to provide him with the finest story you can, so that you lessen his workload and ensure the most important facts (to you) make it into the publication. Write, Rewrite, and then Review.

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A Lesson in the "Less-Is-More" Theory

Tempting With Teasers

If there's one thing an editor hates to read, it's a dull press release that rambles on about unimportant information. Your primary function as a direct extension of the news staff is to relay significant news to the editor so that they can pass it along to their readers.

However, the content you send should not only be worthy of valuable space in the publication, but should also include an irresistible factor as well. Making your news alluring can be done in two different ways.

- ◆ Either the information alone is something the audience can't live without, or
- ◆ You make it *seem* that way.

News that stands on its own two feet is of paramount concern to the entire community. This includes national coverage of worldwide issues, and major tragedies and triumphs. A lawsuit involving Sam's Software *might* be interesting to the local consumers, but a lawsuit against Microsoft *will* be of great interest.

Why? Because Microsoft produces a product that's used in almost every business in the world. Sam's Software doesn't have the recognition that Microsoft does.

Using a "Teaser"

If your news isn't exactly a top-of-the-hour headline, you'll need to draw your audience into your world, where the news you're presenting *is* of utmost importance. How can you do this?

By **tempting** your readers into learning more.

You don't do this by giving them a "shotgun" lead. A shotgun lead is a method of introducing a story where the writer immediately tries to cram as much information as he can into the very first sentence. Then the reader might as well stop reading after that first sentence, because you've already placed your cards on the table.

While you want to tempt your reader, you also want to avoid delaying relevant information by asking them a question. Unless the publication is a lighthearted, human-interest outlet, then it's best to avoid question leads in a news publication.

To offer your audience a more thrilling read, try using a suspenseful lead to lure them into the rest of the text. But to do

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this, you must maintain an honest approach and a high degree of integrity.

For example:

> "Sheriff Patterson realized Monday morning, that something was amiss, when he answered a call from a two-year old Labrador Retriever."

This lead hints at the events that took place, and makes the reader want to continue to find out *how* a dog called the police station, *why* it called, and what happened *after* Sheriff Patterson answered the phone.

If you were writing it as a shotgun lead, it might read like this:

> "Sheriff Patterson received a call Monday morning from a Labrador Retriever, who was trained to push the automatic 911 button on its owner's phone."

A lead like this tells us that the dog was trained prior to the event, on how to dial the emergency number, so chances are, the owner had an on-going ailment of some sort. A reader *might* continue on to find out what happened, but it's pretty much all summed up in the first sentence. It's just a matter of whether or not you want to read a story about a canine hero.

The "Less-Is-More" theory doesn't necessarily mean fewer words – just less information. Of course, it's always good to keep your verbiage down to a minimum for the editor's sake, and to increase your chances of publication. But less *information* means teasing your audience with good things to come.

Using Shock Value

Another method of luring the reader into devouring your story is by shock value. This doesn't mean offensive, just shocking. There's a difference between the two that is as important as any other factor in developing your press release.

Don't Offend

Offensive would be anything your audience would possibly be angry with you for printing, such as explicit language or graphic details or pictures.

For instance, the "wardrobe malfunction" during the half-time show of Super Bowl XXXVIII was intended to produce "shock" value, but was viewed by many as offensive.

You may notice in your local paper, that a story is written about a crime or particularly gruesome accident, will have a warning preceding the article.

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This warns readers of vivid details, so that if they prefer to skip that information, they can. It's better to forewarn your audience, rather than sneaking the text in, and then hearing about it later.

Some publications and news shows, unintentionally offend their viewers by reporting on a community's dislike for a certain establishment, for instance, while showing graphic scenes directly into the homes of the viewer.

Shocking, on the other hand, heightens the reader's initial reaction, but explains the information throughout the rest of the story. A shocking example might be the following:

"Ten high school students were pulled from the wreckage of an overturned truck Tuesday morning, as firefighters scrambled to bring them to safety."

"I loved it," said Jessica Smith, her head encased in a thick bed of bandages.

The reader is thinking – "She *loved* it?" But the next sentence goes on to say…

"The Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Association sponsored the event, which demonstrates how drinking and driving affects all of those around us."

Ah. Now the reader knows the event was a hoax. No children were really injured, and we can see how Jessica would be enthusiastic about participating in such an impacting display.

You do have to be careful when working with teaser leads, however. Sometimes they can backfire. If your reader is in a hurry, he or she might be irritated that they wasted even a few valuable seconds on a false setup.

Others will be grateful for the deviation from the standard news format, and will appreciate the relief that comes from knowing it wasn't a bad accident after all. Look to your intended media target to find out what lead style the editorial staff prefers, or adheres to.

If you don't see any leeway from the basic factual lead intro, then stay with what works for that particular publication. In the example above, you would rephrase it to read:

"Mothers Against Drunk Drivers sponsored a lifelike wreckage scene at Cross County High School Tuesday morning to demonstrate the ill effects of drinking and driving."

Whatever method you use to entice your audience into reading the rest of your story, do it fairly and honestly. Don't trick a

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reader into thinking a story is about *one* subject, only to have them discover it's really about something totally different.

Don't Mislead

Make your teaser intrigue and attract readers, but stay away from misleading them or giving away too much information from the beginning. Give it an unexpected twist or turn to add a bit of the unexpected to your piece.

Your teaser should prepare the audience for what's to come. Never start your piece in a positive light, only to take a dark tone later on in the body of the press release. An example of this might be:

> "Patterson Industries will open a new location on the East Cost this summer. Unfortunately, this means 15,000 jobs will disappear from our county in late August."

Tell your readers from the start if the news if good or bad – especially if it has a profound impact on the lives of the citizens who are reading it.

Your intro should indicate the tone of the piece following the first sentence. A teaser can be introduced at any point in the story, but the text following it should directly relate back to the teaser.

Don't open with a teaser and then not explain it until three paragraphs later. Your reader will be frustrated trying to find the information, or lost once he stumbles upon it, and can't recall what it's referring to.

This is called a trick lead, and your audience will hate you for it. The premise here is that if you tempt them right away, then they'll be willing to read the rest of the story just to find out three-quarters of the way down the page, what they *thought* they were going to find out in the beginning.

It defers crucial facts, and shouldn't be used to enhance your message. It might end up bringing you a disaster.

"Less is More" is also "Unique"

The "Less-Is-More" theory can best be effectively used if you can find a unique method of enticing your audience, but immediately following, answer the riddle you placed before them. It breaks the monotony of the standard news format, but quenches their desire for the basic facts.

Your intentions in writing a provocative teaser are to try to make the reader choose your story over someone else's, and to

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spend some time in your story before they leave. On average, readers spend only 20-30 minutes per day consuming news.

Break that down to each section they open, and every page, and the chances of them actually reading your entire story are slim to none at best. Make sure you follow the guidelines below to increase the stretch of time readers spend learning more about your article's contents.

- ◆ Do I have a unique angle to offer my readers?
- ◆ Have I given everything away from the beginning, or is there more to tell once they sit down with the bulk of my content?
- ◆ Is my intro offensive to any group of people?
- ◆ Does my intro lead the reader to the next sentence, or halfway down the page?
- ◆ Have I made my intro as interesting as possible, while focusing on the main idea of my story?
- ◆ Did I mislead the readers, or does my intro accurately reflect what it's about?

Teasers in Print vs. Broadcast Media

If your press release allows for a minimal amount of teaser touting, your readership will increase as the audience anxiously awaits your next bit of information. If you overdo it, though, they might view you as someone who doesn't provide them with professional news quickly enough.

Tantalizing teasers have more to do with how you present your information than what your information actually *is*. The bad thing is, you don't really have control over how your ideas are ultimately presented to the audience.

The editor of the publication has full control over that. And he or she will ensure that the publication is uniform in how it delivers its news to the public. Your most valuable source of direction, then, is to get hold of an actual recent publication, and write your intros in the same format.

This development also has a lot to do with what media you choose to send your press release to. If it's the newspaper, chances are, they'll follow the basic Five W format of leading into a story.

However, if the release is being sent to a local television station, the producers will almost definitely lead with a teaser. They'll tempt the audience right before a commercial, hoping they don't change channels in the meantime, and then again once they return from their break, as they dive into the story itself.

One difference between the print media and broadcast media is the way they promote their stories. In a newspaper, the

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headlines are front and center – readily available as the very first thing a reader sees and consumes.

But in a news show on television, the best is saved for last. Time after time, you'll hear the broadcaster say, "Coming up next," but next doesn't happen until 55 minutes into the show. It's a way to make sure you stick with their channel, and they do it because they can.

A newspaper makes its money selling advertisements no matter what. Once the paper is sold, it's a done deal. But a broadcast station has to keep you tuned in for the entire timeslot so that you'll see their advertiser's commercials.

Use your teasers sparingly, but effectively, and you'll find the public has fun with your piece, and might take the action you desire on your product or services. If you feel better sticking with what's safe, then adhere to the Five W's, and allow the editor to come up with a more enticing lead.

Formatting Fundamentals – Following the Rules of Conformity

Each and every day, you follow certain formatting criteria. Whether you're jotting down a note to a family member, or sending an email to your boss, you probably follow some general method of placing and styling your words.

Most media departments require their reporters and freelancers to follow particular guidelines for submissions before they will even consider reviewing your work. In fact, most are so eager to ensure that everything stays within their procedures, that they will send you a copy of their guidelines, or a stylebook, for *free*!

Additionally, most media will send you a sample of their publication for a nominal fee, along with the guidelines. If you look in any Writer's Market, which includes submission rules for almost every print media in existence, you'll find that most *strongly suggest* that you send off for their guidelines, and review a current copy of the publication, before you put your ideas in the mail.

The same holds true for any press release. Even though it is a news item, presumably void of any boasting or advertising

mechanisms, each publication will have its own style and tone of writing the news.

A stylebook will answer any questions you have as to the publication's preferred way of writing. It will tell you if the editor wants the number twelve written in word form, or numbers (12).

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It will inform you as to whether or not possible compound words are to be combined, or hyphenated.

A stylebook also addresses specific word choice questions that will tell you if the targeted media fancies the word Vietnam or the words Viet Nam. It tackles issues such as capitalization, title specifics, time, dates, and names.

Even if a publication doesn't have any required formatting guidelines, be sure to adhere to some type of professional style, so that your submission will project a more qualified appearance.

Here are some indispensable rules of conformity that will ensure you have the basics down before you launch your press release campaign into existence:

Disclose Your Distribution

Whether it's an article or a press release, the media want to be the first to receive and dispense the news. One very important aspect in delivering your release is to state on the cover whether or not you have simultaneously submitted your information to others.

No publication wants to print the same item that another one is printing at the same time, or worse, *before* them. The idea behind the media is to be the first, and be the best. Depending on whom you talk to, you'll find that normally, it's perfectly fine to send your item to more than one publication, *as long as you disclose it.* That way, you're giving ample notice to the recipients that they might want to find out if another source has published it first.

The news industry is highly competitive, and as such, you have a responsibility to adhere to their courtesies as well as their formatting principals. Some may insist on being the sole addressee for your item. If so, weigh the options you have, and decide if it's best to stick to a sole source, or submit it to more than one publication. Whatever you do, do *not* lie to them and sneak off additional copies to their competitors. If word gets back to the original source, you can count yourself (and the company for which you're writing), out of any future publishing credentials with that particular media.

If you find that your news item is one that should be submitted to only one source at a time, then prepare a list, in order of importance, of whom you wish to have first dibs on your publishing rights. Submit to only one at a time, but make it clear that you will submit to other publishers if you don't receive timely notification of their intent to publish. If the publisher declines your press release, or your time limit expires, feel free to submit it to the next in line. Always include a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) to each publication, to make it

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easier for them to respond. Not all editors will waste their own materials in getting back to you.

If this is not practical because the information is of a time-sensitive nature, you probably should submit to multiple publications at the same time. But again, be sure to disclose this to each publication.

Additionally, some media will be perfectly at ease with you submitting the story to two different forms of media outlets. Most print publications will be content if you send one copy to the local newspaper, and another to the top radio station in your area.

Perfect Your Timing

When delivering a press release to the media, it's very important to ensure your timing is perfect. Not only when the paper or other form of media might have the best use for it, but also what works for your news.

If the company that's hired you is launching a new website or product on July 31st, don't wait until that day to send in your press release. Send it in early enough so that the editor has plenty of time to decide if he wants to use the story on the day of, or the day before, the debut. The editor may need time to verify your facts and sources, or simply rewrite certain parts of your press release to conform to their own style and format.

Since you never know what the editor will decide, avoid using terms like "today," or "tomorrow," in your submission. Instead, use specific dates, such as March 3. If you're not sure what the typical lead time is, in other words, how far in advance the editor prefers to have the story in his hands, make a quick call and find out. Most staff members are very familiar with the deadlines and turnaround time the paper needs to develop its stories.

Give Me My Space, Please!

Scientists say that humans need at least three feet of personal space to be at a maximum comfort level. Well, press releases need space, too! It may seem excessive when printed out on paper, but an editor will greatly appreciate it if you format your page so that it allows for double, if not, triple spacing.

When an editor receives your story, reviews it, and decides that he wants to look into it further, he needs to have space on your printed copy to make notes, changes, and additions to your work.   Your paperwork will probably be moving between personnel, so it's a great idea to give them room to work!

Paper quality should be considered as well. Use a standard white 8½ by 11-inch (A4 in Europe or Australasia) high quality

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bond paper. Type your submission in 12-point font, in a style that is easy to read, such as Times New Roman. Print your press release on a desk-jet or laser quality printer for the best appearance.

Position your story a third of the way down the page, after presenting your contact information, headings, and specific dates. Once you begin your main content, make sure you left-justify your work so that the editor has room in the right margin to make further notations, if necessary.

Always maintain at least a one-inch margin on every edge of the paper. If your press release has more than one page, be sure to write "continued," or "more," at the bottom of each previous page.

If you do wind up with more than one page, be sure to identify your work on each additional page by writing your last name, and the title of the story in the upper left-hand corner. If you want to, you can also number the pages, beginning on page two of your submission.

When you have more than one page, *use* more than one page to print on! Never send your work printed on both sides of the paper. And remember, as netiquette rules suggest, never type in all capital letters. It's considered shouting, and for print work, it makes it difficult to read.

When you write your press release, conclude it by typing "-30-" immediately under the text of your press release (not at the bottom of the page). This is not a page number, but standard news protocol to indicate the end of an article, and will show the editor that you are familiar with their procedures, and offer a bit of credibility to your submission.

Stick to the elementary formatting, and you'll keep the editor's eyes happy.

Dot Your "i's" and Cross Your "t's"

You wouldn't believe the quality of content editors receive in the pile of press releases sitting in their in-box every day. Here are some things to double-check before you submit your work for publication:

Proper Addressing

First, is your work addressed to the correct person, and is your own contact information correct? One critical mistake some inexperienced writers make is addressing their work to the wrong person.

Worse, some even send it to a staff member who hasn't worked for the publication in years! An editor can only assume your

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work is sloppy if you fail to make a quick phone call to verify your contact information.

Spelling & Grammar

It's baffling to think that someone actually submits a press release without taking the time to run a quick spell-check on it before presenting it for publication.

Have you used your spell-checker, and then reviewed the document with your own eyes for proper word usage? Be sure to watch out for words that the computerized spell-checker might not catch.

Many spell checkers miss certain errors, so it's ultimately up to you to ensure the proper spelling, word selection, and verbiage are used throughout the piece. For instance, you might have typed:

"The **reign** poured **of** the roof and into the flowerbed below."

When you really meant to say:

"The **rain** poured **off** the roof and into the flowerbed below."

Some other common mistakes are "there" versus "their," "it's" versus "its," "your" versus "you're," and "for" versus "four."   If you mean to say, "*For* the next two years," make sure it doesn't read "*Four* the next two years."

Always check both your spelling and word usage. Then have another person read your press release before sending it in, to catch any errors that you might have missed.

Consistent Tense

Did you use the right tense and keep it uniform throughout the press release? Try to keep your press release in the Active voice. Instead of using the Passive voice, saying: "A meeting will be held on Monday night," try using "The organization will meet on Monday night."

Acronyms & Abbreviations

Are your abbreviations (if used) correct? Many organizations use acronyms, so the media have devised a way to employ the practice in their reporting. The general rule is to completely spell out the name on the initial reference, such as: Federal Bureau of Investigation, followed by the acronym FBI in any following mentions of the organization throughout the story.

Capitalization

Have you capitalized proper nouns and brand names? Always avoid capitalizing any words that do not require it. Use capitals for proper nouns, names, and specific popular areas that the community will generally understand as being a certain region.

Handling Numbers

Are any numbers, lower than 10 spelled out in word form? One rule of thumb for numerical references is that very small and very large numbers are never written in figure format.

Instead of writing "1" you would write "one." And you would refer to fifteen thousand in word form, not as 15,000.

Handling Dates

Have you excluded the use of any time specific words, such as "today" or "tomorrow?" If you accidentally include the use of one of these types of words, it will usually be eliminated from the content.

The only time it is appropriate to use these is when a media sector is speaking of something that has already happened. Normally, this occurs in an afternoon paper, which reports on the happenings that took place earlier in the day.

Courtesy Titles

Are your courtesy titles for each person mentioned in your press release correct? For example, are you correct in assuming it is "Mrs." instead of "Ms."?

Most media currently avoid the use of courtesy titles, preferring instead to simply refer to the person as "Jane Doe," initially, and "Doe" from that point on in the story. But, depending on your target media's guidelines, you'll need to make sure that if you did use courtesy titles, that you've used them properly.

Gender Neutral Terms

Have you omitted any use of sexist language, such as police**man** or fire**man**, and instead, made them gender-neutral?

Traditionally, certain jobs were gender-specific, such as those on the police force or fire fighting staff. Now, a firefighter can be male or female, so the title has evolved to reflect the new change.

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<u>Spare Me the Adjective</u>

Have you succeeded in not using any words of fluff that would make your work appear to be biased to the public, such as "best," or "wonderful?"

One of the biggest mistakes public relations departments make when submitting a press release, in hopes of getting news coverage, is in turning their "news" into an "advertisement." Look at your press release from the public viewpoint, and see if you think they might view any information you've added as being biased rather than objective.

Wrap It Up!

Formatting doesn't end with font styles and page settings. Sending in your submission has a rule of its own, and everyone should follow the basic procedure courtesies.

If your press release is more than one page in length, never ever staple your pages together. Either number your pages with proper identification (in case any page gets separated from the others), or use a paper clip to fasten them to one another. A staple is only going to make the editor either rip the pages apart, or go through the hassle of trying to find a staple remover on his already-cluttered desk of unsolicited submissions.

There is no need to send your work in any fancy method. Unless it's a time-sensitive piece, don't use overnight carriers that will require personnel-specific signatures. Simply use standard sized packaging, and refrain from writing messages on the outside of the envelope – it either won't be read, or it will make an unprofessional impression.

Proper formatting is the easiest way to gain the trust of an editor. If everything looks good from first glance, then you've gotten over the first hurdle.

Press Release Placement

Finding the Perfect Medium

Finding the perfect medium for your press release is as simple as figuring out your target market. The good thing about a media release is that it can take many different forms and be sent to a variety of media outlets.

Here, we'll address the various forms of media, and how they might benefit your ultimate goals and strategies.

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Newspaper

This is the source most people think of when we speak about submitting a press release. It's the oldest form of communication in civilized societies across the world. Some people think the newspaper is a widely outdated form of communication, and that the number of readers diminishing will ultimately be the downfall of the paper entirely.

There are many different forms of newspapers depending on the region you're seeking to publish in. If you or your client is large enough, like IBM or Starbucks, then you have a chance at making national headlines when you have something of importance to say that will affect the country's readership.

If you are able to send press information to one of the national publications, such as USA Today, or possibly a city-specific paper that has a national following, such as the Washington Post or New York Times, chances are, someone on their staff already has their eye on *you*. The sooner you form an amicable relationship with one of the staff, the more smoothly your press release will be processed in the news department.

The Associated Press (AP) is the main conglomerate when it comes to media publication. Almost every paper in the country, from large nationwide papers, to small community setups, has a direct link to the AP for the most prominent news available. If the story you're delivering has local implications, you can look up the AP bureau for your state in the state's capitol.

However, if you have impending information that is suitable for national headlines, you can send your press release to AP's General/National Desk or International Desk at Associated Press, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10020. This news wire feeds 24 hours a day into most news departments around the world, so your item, if applicable to their audience, will be picked up immediately.

Of course, if you only have reason to publish in the local paper, by all means, send it to the correct editor of that publication first. Most larger newspapers are now published free online, in addition to their print counterparts, so don't be disappointed by the statistics that warn of the decline of print journalism. It isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Television

Perhaps the most influential of all of the media, television allows its audience to experience news in the most realistic way. When we turn on the TV, a reporter stands in the midst of the scene, allowing us to hear, see, and feel (emotionally) what is going on around him.

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His description of the events cannot compare to what our own eyes and ears consume. Thankfully, news shows don't *only* have to report on the worst life has to offer. They bring us the news about everything that will directly impact our lives in the timeliest fashion.

Like an editor in the print media, a producer will be the one who decides what is newsworthy to his audience. But for a producer, the value doesn't end there. A producer wants to know if there is live footage he can shoot when the report is brought to the eyes of the public.

Is there any way for him to directly interview one of your contact sources for his show? Even better, can it be an exclusive? News competition is fierce, with some starting their broadcast earlier than others, just to be the first to bring you the information.

Local news is dramatically different from cable news channels. Stations such as CNN, a 24-hour news source headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, have up-to-the-minute coverage of everything from International terrorism to sports and entertainment, and are strong competition for local channels. If your news makes it on CNN, chances are, it'll be on your local channel later that evening.

Like the newspaper outlet, television stations have current, constantly-updated Internet websites devoted to keeping their customers informed at all times. If your media release makes it to the news, then it will also probably be included on their main website as well.

Since the producers are trying to keep their audience tuned in to see their advertisers, the press release introductions they receive will be written in a completely different style than the print form. In a print form, you have to get to the point quickly, in order to maintain your reader's interest, and keep them tuned into your message.

The opposite is true for a television broadcast. It's unlikely that any reporter is going to tell you all of the facts in their very first sentence, when they could string you along for the rest of the broadcast.

The producers are much more concerned with the live feed going into your home than they are the actual content, although that, too, is of great importance. A producer's job is to bring the news to the public in an interesting, aesthetically pleasing method. So he has to concentrate on putting a scene together with your content.

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Internet

The Internet has a tremendous impact on the reach of the media. Not only do traditional media outlets utilize the far-reaching grasp of the Internet to feed their audience on a constant basis, but there are also thousands of other Internet-based organizations that provide the public with information without the means of print or video feed.

PR Web™ (PRWeb.com) is one of the Internet's most popular press release Newswire services and provides free global news distribution services. Besides accepting free submissions of your press release, they ensure that it is listed with the major search engines, and have special agreements in place that make it possible to inject your press release directly into the press releases section of the Yahoo News site. PR Web™ also manages their own syndicated network news feeds and employs third party syndicates to assist in distributing your news release.

As with the design of any web page, it is important to consider keyword density and keyword placement in any press release that you intend to have distributed via the Internet.

Another good place to start is with each Internet Service Provider (ISP) that you can think of. For instance, when a member signs onto America Online (AOL), the first screen to pop up is an interactive news source. Usually, they tend to concentrate on entertainment, but that all depends on which Service Provider you're targeting.

MSN.com, for instance, greets its members with the latest interesting news feature. And from there, members can click on the item of choice that interests them, therefore, customizing their news.

More and more sites now offer a running banner of news for their customers, feeding our insatiable appetite for live feeds into the most fascinating aspects of our world.

The Internet not only provides you with a basic format to spread the word of your news, but it allows you to present that information in a variety of ways. Text is almost always accompanied by another means of communication, such as audio or video stream, graphics, or pictures.

This method of media distribution means your viewers will be able to learn more with the click of a button. You can link them back to your website, where it's a good idea to store a page of recent press release information, or other announcements. Or, provide your viewers a chat or message area so that you can gauge the consumer's reaction to your press release on the spot.

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In order to participate at the maximum capacity in the Internet world of news, it's best if you stay up-to-date on your technology and cater your news to the people who might be viewing it online – educated, white-collar workers who are looking for fast information, with a high-quality feel to it.

If you're technology-impaired, now is the time to sign up for a class and learn the ins and outs of basic Internet communication. The World Wide Web is a vast source of communication outlets that lets you reach an unlimited audience within seconds.

Magazines

Magazines, like any other media outlet, have their own rules and guidelines for submission, and they cringe whenever you embark on a path that deviates from their cause.

If you're a public relations official, you're probably used to creating a basic press release in an effort to notify the editor of your news, and let him take it from there. However, submitting your information to a magazine is more like crafting an article as an outsider.

With a press release, you're probably targeting a trade magazine – some specific publication that caters to a specialized topic of interest. For instance, if you're about to launch a new convertible solar powered car, you'll want to send it to an automobile trade magazine, not Woman's Weekly.

When you make the decision to submit to a magazine of *any* kind, go out and purchase the writer's must-have guide – *Writer's Market*. This book is updated each year to contain almost every listing you can imagine for publishers, agents, and your target – magazines.

Each year, the magazines receive a questionnaire from *Writer's Market*, which they then complete and return to the book's publishers. At press time, the magazines are divided into categories such as Women's, Trade, Romance, Mystery, etc. You simply flip to the genre of your choice, and there it will tell you all of the guidelines to follow when submitting your information.

Since magazines are looking for articles, it's great if you can simply query them with an already-completed article about the new product or service your client is offering. Like newspapers, a magazine won't be interested in an advertisement that reads, "Try the **best** face cream ever invented!" They have an ad department for this type of content, and they charge heavily for it.

Instead, approach it as a consumer information document. Do some research, compare it to the other products, but don't lie

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about the results. The magazine probably has a fact-checking department that will call your bluff if you provide false information, and they may even include you in a negative article if you try anything tricky.

The most important thing to remember when approaching a magazine is *know your target*! Do not write them a stuffy business-like article if they speak in slang and poke fun of society. Request a back issue, or study their current publication to get a feel for their tone and style.

Then, make sure your idea hasn't been done before – or least, recently. If your organization is doing something beneficial for the community, such as building a home for a family who lost everything, angle your story around a person who is organizing the campaign, and send it in as a human-interest piece.

Radio

Radio is a great way for you to get a short mention or blurb in the community. It is not, however, the most effective way to reach your audience. Too many people change the station when the music stops, and the radio DJ's have to keep up a fast pace, so they don't have time to waste on one subject in particular.

Normally, it's easier to purchase radio space as an ad, rather than try to get a quick mention from the producer on your news. However, if it's an event that your company is sponsoring, it *is* a great idea to approach the station in an attempt to have them co-sponsor it.

If your company is having a fundraiser for the needy, and will have live bands and food, with family generated activities, many radio stations would love to be onsite, reporting directly from the event in an effort to interact with the community.

They gain from those situations, too, since their staff will be on hand mingling with the audience and giving away bumper stickers and t-shirts. You'll benefit because their listeners will know of your event prior to it happening, and many will attend just to be a part of the station's activities and giveaways.

Making the Choice

The perfect medium is whatever your target audience enjoys most, and what they spend the most time on. If you're seeking to target affluent individuals who are community-conscious, then the newspaper is a great way to reach them.

If the blue-collar worker might generate a more pro-active approach in benefiting from your piece, then the radio is a perfect way to interact with that sector of the community.

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Everyone has different methods of communicating.

No matter what, investigate the possibility of distributing your news to as many different outlets as you can.

To that end, Dr. Kevin Nunley is a popular copywriter who provides a press release distribution service (at DrNunley.com/release.htm) that will distribute your press release to over 3,500 radio, TV, newspaper and online media sites, including a targeted list of media in your industry and a special distribution to your local media. This is not a free service, but gives you the option of having your release distribution done by a professional, and you can also purchase his copywriting skills to actually create your press release, as well.

The more people you reach, the higher the chances of success for whatever event or product you're touting.

Bear in mind that not every producer or editor will see the significance in delivering your information to his or her audience. So before you present your item to them, develop it with that particular medium in mind.

Manipulating the Media

Channel Your Document to the Right Person

Imagine you're sitting at your editor's desk, wearing your editor's hat, dreading the trip through the onslaught of unsolicited materials, including press releases from all four corners of the world. Now, you know the competition is fierce for a spot in your publication, and you hate the thought of having to pick and choose.

Not hardly. A real editor has the ability to swiftly peruse his stack of incoming mail; rapidly discarding anything that doesn't fit the general criteria he looks for in a newsworthy item.

Eventually, the crumpled papers surrounding the trash bin outnumber the ones on his desk, and he smiles with pleasure at the thought of being *almost* finished, nary a thought in his mind about the poor schmuck who worked day and night on his press release in the hopes that his idea would be printed in today's edition.

Address the Right Contact!

The editor is human, regardless of the rumors that say otherwise, and he appreciates hard work and dedication similar to the ethics he puts into his own work. Therefore, when he opens up your letter and sees it addressed to Joe Smith, the

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editor whose job he took eight months ago, he's not happy with you from the beginning.

His eyes will roll, and he may guffaw at the lack of research you've done in seeing who to address your press release to. But more importantly, he's going to attach a label of "sloppy" to your work, because he's wondering – "If this person can't even get *my name* right, which appears on the masthead of yesterday's edition, how can I trust that he's taken the time to verify his facts and source credentials?"

He can't. So off you fly, crumpled in a ball the size of a small apple, rebounding off the wall of his office, directly into the trash bin.

Newspapers are probably the easiest source to research when sending your press release in for publication. Open up the latest edition, and somewhere in a long, vertical stream, are the most prominent contacts you'll need when you fill out the envelope to send your news.

If the masthead has been ripped from the rest of the paper, a simple phone call to the main number will result in a speedy delivery of the proper name and address to send your press release.

But before you hang up with the paper, get the correct spelling of your contact's name. And if it's Sam, Chris, Alex, or some other gender-neutral name, make sure you know if the person is male or female, in case your cover needs to be addressed to Mr. or Ms.

For a newspaper, you'll either be asked to send your press release to a department (in which case you won't have a specific person to target) or there will be one or more staff members assigned with the duty of receiving and processing your press release.

Once you've sent in your item to the correct person, resist the urge to call them to see if they got your letter, or whether or not they think they might use it in the next edition. If it's a newspaper, chances are, they're busy all of the time, so your call will not endear you to them, but rather, make them intolerant of you. They'll be *more* impressed if you control your urge to contact them and harass them about your document.

When you address your press release to specific personnel, it's important to check for the following:

- Is your letter addressed to the right contact?
- Is the contact name spelled correctly?
- Is the person's title right?
- Is the publication's name spelled correctly?
- Is the address up to date?

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- Are you sending it in the right format – print, disk, or email, and does it appear to be professional, and not too flashy or distracting?
- Is your document spell checked and double-checked by your eyes for word selection?

When you look at the masthead of a publication, don't just pull a name from the top of the list and send your press release to the most important looking person. If you do this, you run the risk of either having your document thrown away immediately, or being sent to the lowest assistant on the staff for further review. That person likely won't have the experience you want to be handling your information.

Find out which person handles those items first. Be specific. Don't just address your letter to "Editor." There are probably several different editors at the publication, so this isn't enough of a distinction.

For example, a publication might have a features editor, health editor, entertainment editor, and several associate editors who field unsolicited submissions. Call the editorial department and ask the person who answers the phone "Which editor handles (x topic)?"

Make sure they know you're not out to speak to that editor, as they've been well trained to screen your call. Instead, let them know you only need it for submission purposes.

Have them spell out the name, no matter how simple it may sound. "Susie" can also be spelled "Suzie," while "Mellisa" can be spelled "Melissa." There are too many variations nowadays for you to take a chance that your preference is the right one. Spelling clarifies this, and keeps you from the fearful trash fate.

Make sure the publication's name and address is correct as well. These are always changing hands, so make sure the office you're sending your submission to is the one that handles your intended target publication. Some companies own more than one major publication, so make sure you specify which publication you want to reach before you send it.

Just Once

Also, don't send in more than one version of your document to the publication. This means two things:

Don't rewrite a "better" version and mail several samples to the paper. And…

Don't send your submission in five different ways, by hand delivering it, emailing it, snail mailing it, faxing it, and calling it in. Pick one method of delivery and stay with it.

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In the Right Format

Find out how they prefer to hear from you. Some publications require a printed copy of your work for consideration. Others, a quick email to the appropriate staff. And still others want it on a disk sent to their office for review. Have your document readily available in all formats, but send it in their preferred format.

Finding the Right Channels for Broadcast Media

In radio and television, there isn't a readily available masthead for you to find where to submit your piece, as there is in a newspaper or magazine. Don't send in your press release to the broadcast journalist who actually sits behind the desk and reads the news.

They will not open your letter on the air and read your information to the public. They have a system you must go through, and if you make the cut, you can watch in amazement as they tell the public all about your news.

In this case, you'll have to phone the station to find out what the proper channels of submission are. You may be able to find out through their website, but a phone call will be more effective.

Where to Submit via the Internet

Determining where to submit to websites is more like the print media in that the Internet outlets will more than likely have an email contact for you to send your news. It may be a specific contact, or a general webmaster, depending on the site, but a quick search on the site should lead you in the right direction.

Some websites, such as InternetNews.com, PRWeb.com, or PRNewswire.com provide up to the minute information with an easy way of finding who to submit your news to. The page is set up so that you can tailor your news around the subjects you're interested in.

Want to know what's going on in the Business World? They have a link to it. International News? Click the link to find out more. And best of all, they have a staff page, brimming with links and titles of the most current members of their team, who are just waiting to hear from you.

Now, the links to each staff member's email don't specify who handles press releases, but it makes it very easy to contact an assistant and request the information. And if you don't hear back in a timely manner, then try contacting another person – just don't email them all at one time with a copy of your press release.

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Remember, they probably work in the same vicinity, and if they compare notes, you might end up blacklisted from further consideration. This doesn't happen often, but if you become a pest, or are over-zealous about your work to the point that you're interfering with their work, you might find yourself the outcast of media contacts.

These PR sites distribute your media releases to journalists who subscribe to their email or RSS syndication feeds as a source of news.

Introduce Yourself

When you send in your press release to the proper personnel, always include a cover letter. Make your proposal brief and clear. Be sure to let the editor or other staff member know when the information is supposed to be used – normally, you should print "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" somewhere on the document itself so that they know it's ready for print.

In your cover letter, quickly sketch out your reason for sending the document to the editor. Tell him why it's new information, timely, and pertinent to his audience. If you have any statistics, keep them simple, but utilize them to your advantage.

The best thing to do when submitting your document for possible publication is to pick up the phone and make a quick call for verification. Yes, it might be a long-distance charge. But isn't it worth it if it gets you a space in the next day's edition?

Most people in the decision-making positions have been exactly where you are now. They've had to do the legwork in order to find the right contacts, the right audience, and the right medium for their work. And having gone through those trials and tribulations, they aren't willing to let you get off easy by ignoring the proper journalistic etiquette.

Show them that you care about the subject matter you're proposing by doing your homework and submitting it, not only to the right personnel, but in the right format as well. Your efforts will not go un-rewarded; especially if you bear in mind all of the other submissions that will be emptied out with the trash at the end of the day for not following proper guidelines.

Nurture the Relationship

Once you establish yourself as a credible writer with your local media contacts, they'll be readily available to you for future newsworthy events.

Make sure they have your business card, and keep them updated frequently on upcoming news you think they might want to cover. If you happen to form an alliance with one

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media contact in particular, offer exclusive coverage to that publication. This will be looked upon as very favorable in their eyes, as you've allowed them access to information no other competitor will have.

In the end, be persistent yet polite while dealing with your media contacts. Don't be put off if someone answers the phone in a grumpy mood. The news business is a very hectic profession, filled with deadlines and trying to outdo one another.

Be understanding and patient when dealing with your contacts, and offer them a friendly shoulder to deal with every chance you get. That way, when they answer the phone and find out it's you; they'll breath a sigh of relief and take the time to address your questions and concerns.

Noteworthy News

Tracking Your Results

Congratulations! You've learned how to write, direct, and distribute your press release for maximum exposure in any medium you see fit. What comes next? Well, in order to see how effective your press release campaign has been, you have to monitor the market for your message.

Don't worry, you won't have to pull out your phone list and dial up every editor or staff member to whom you submitted the document. There are two simple ways for you to oversee your campaign without resorting to bothering your contacts. After all, you may need them again in the very near future, so you want to stay on friendly terms.

The first way you can keep tabs on your news is to do it yourself. Watch every program, pick up every edition of each publication, and listen to the radio at all times. Not very feasible?

Maybe if you only have one or two outlets, but if you distributed your press release to more than one media contact, and even worse, more than one *type* of media, you have a problem if you intend to try to monitor all of those avenues single-handedly.

If your efforts were for a client, they will be checking with you shortly after you distribute the release to see what the results have been. If you want to keep working for them, you'll need to show how effective you've been in getting their company or organization a piece of the media pie.

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If you do have the luxury of only monitoring one target, you'll still have to work hard to make sure you catch any mention of your work in their publication. It might be easy to monitor a written publication, but if you sent your release to a radio or television station, it's virtually impossible to listen 100% of the time.

Therefore, the best option you have in keeping track of your press release is to hire someone to do it for you. There are hundreds of services that do nothing but watch, listen, and read the media reports for any remote mention of your company or organization.

Yes, it costs money. But actually, it's a nominal fee when you compare the cost of tuning in 24 hours a day, or worse, losing a client because you couldn't prove how beneficial you've been in obtaining press space for their needs.

Some clipping services specialize in local area coverage. For instance, Gnusman.com caters to those who want to monitor Santa Barbara subscription-based media publications. They provide their clients with a mailed or faxed clipping packet every Monday and Thursday that contains all of the clips within your target subject matter. Their subjects include:

- ◆ City and/or County Government News
- ◆ Environmental News
- ◆ Marine News
- ◆ Oil & Gas News
- ◆ Water News
- ◆ Court and Crime News
- ◆ Education News
- ◆ Local political races
- ◆ Custom

Many cities around the country have a personalized clipping service (or more) at their disposal. The subject headings may change, but the point is, you have access to local clips regarding your information.

What does something like this cost? Gnusman.com has a monthly fee that ranges from $50 to $85 per month. Not bad for complete coverage of the entire Santa Monica area, including Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo County newspapers.

But what if your news reaches beyond the scope of your local clipping service? Well, there are options for everyone. And they're all as close as your personal computer. Some of the most prominent clipping services are:

- ◆ Newsdesk.com touts itself as "the premier news and information network for the hi-tech, healthcare, entertainment and transport sectors – the

communications bridge between the world's PR professionals and the journalists world-wide who they aim to influence."

The cost is not openly displayed on the site, but usually it will depend on the difficulty they'll have in tracking your message, and the subject matter and publications you're targeting.

◆ DowJones.com allows you to sign up and tailor your news to your specifications. Their counterpart, http://bis.dowjones.com integrates content from the top national newspapers, Dow Jones & Reuters newswires, business journals, market reports, and websites. They charge an annual password fee, plus additional fees for viewing articles from the CustomClips service.

◆ NewsEdge.com caters to "Time-strapped CEOs who need mission critical intelligence to gain the competitive edge." They filter thousands of news stories daily for the most relevant documentation, and then deliver it to your desktop to keep you ahead of your competitors.

◆ BusinessWire.com offers non-journalists a chance to sign up for NewsTrak, a fee-based service that includes personalized Business Wire headlines and additional news sources. NewsTrak is customized to show only the news releases that you need to see based on the profile you complete.

While the releases are segmented into seven industries on the public site, they are not further divided into the news category headings that you are able to select in your profile. NewsTrak stores your news for 30 days.

◆ Bacons.com offers standard clipping services, which cater to the more traditional methods of monitoring your news, NetClips – Internet clipping with e-mail and website delivery, Electronic Clipping – Database retrieval delivered daily by e-mail, ExpressClips, which delivers an email every morning with clipping from the top dailies and magazines, and a Clip Analysis - Clip measurement reports on your standard clipping account coverage.

Almost every clipping service varies when it comes to their rates. No two sites are alike, but be forewarned that it will cost more to monitor major publications than it will to oversee your own backyard media.

Another important reason to use clipping services is because they provide you with any mention of your competitors. Having up-to-date information on your competition is paramount in any

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industry. You need to know if one of their products is about to be launched head-to-head against your own.

Clipping services provide a more thorough account of all of your media coverage than you could ever hope for. They keep a watch on newspapers, magazines, radio, television, Internet, Usenet, Trade Journals, and everything in between.

Paying for the privilege of having targeted news delivered to your in-box every morning, or several times a week, will pay off in the long run, because you'll reap the rewards immediately by seeing how effective your press release campaign was in garnering the attention and coverage you're after.

Another way you'll know if your campaign was successful is when the phone starts ringing off the hook. Reporters will be calling because they saw the information somewhere else, but now *they* want to do a story on your client or company.

It's a pleasure to form a working relationship with the media, once you master their methods of interaction and communication.

It sometimes gets a bad rap, as editors and writers face off as opponents in the writing process. But in reality, the two of you are working together to do one thing – get your message out. You have news that needs to be heard. The editor has an audience that wants to hear some news. Work together to make it happen.

You do your part by developing the idea, the story, and the meaty details of the content. The editor will do his part by spicing it up in a way the public is used to seeing – he'll throw in a splashing headline to turn heads in the audience.

The media is not a one-way production company. They rely on you and your clients to provide them with the very news that sells their papers, and pays their salaries. It's not that they're seeking to deny your submission.

They'd like nothing better than to have a stack piled to the ceiling of news they could run with - without revisions. But that's not the case, and so they suffer burnout when it comes time to review the stack of unsolicited news rising from their desks.

Take pity on your editor and cater to his ego and his mindset. Empathize with him when he growls at you for not following his guidelines. Don't argue with him about the policies of the paper. He has no time to change policies in mid-stream, he's just concerned with making it by his two o'clock deadline later that afternoon.

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Use the Golden Rule when dealing with the hurried news personnel on the other end of the phone. No matter how they treat you when you call to verify a contact name, inquire about the stylebook, or ask a question they've already been asked 2,000 times that day, treat them with respect and kindness, and they *will* appreciate it and return the favor.

Your most important weapon in increasing your chances of being published, is knowing your target.

- Know the facts.
- Know the people.
- Know their audience.
- Know when to submit.
- Know what to say, and how to say it.
- Know when not to say anything.
- Know how to do it right, but know how to do it differently.
- Stand out, but be uniform at the same time.
- Know as much as you possibly can.

Never be intimidated by the prospect of developing and distributing a press release. The worst thing that can happen is you don't get published. If that happens, try your news from another angle.

Revisit your publication target and learn even *more*. Talk to others who have made it, and find out what tactics they use in communicating with the same media contacts. Network your skills, your availability, and your know-how.

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Develop a credible reputation with your media, and you'll have your foot in the door to one of the most powerful communication tools mankind has ever seen. Once there, maximize your message, and keep in tune with the audience and the editors

Info Product Blueprint

Public Relations Self-Assessment Questions

1. Find the names and contact from your local paper information of at least two of the writers most apt to be interested in your press release. Find at least two writers. You want phone, email, and fax numbers. Most writers are listed on the website online.

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2. Go back and search for articles written by those writers in the past 3-6 months. Note down how they approach a topic: personal interest, factual, case study or hard news. Write key quotes from each story.

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3. What are three hooks you could use to promote your info product? Look back at the information you found on the writers. How could you refine that hook?

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4. Using the press release format write a press release for each hook.

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5. Call the newspaper and ask for the assignment desk. Ask how each of the writers you have chosen prefer to be contacted. Be ready to tell your story quickly to the assignment editor if asked. Contact the person the way they prefer to be contacted.

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6. Watch local TV news. Find out the names of the reporters most apt to be interested in your story. Get their contact information. Again the station website will generally have the information.

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7. Think of how your story hook could best be 'seen.' What are three hooks you could use? Does this fit the style of the reporters you have chosen?

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8. Write a press release for each hook and tailor it to the reporters you have targeted.

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9. Send your press release to the reporters you have targeted.

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Next . . . Social Proof

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

**Info Product
Blueprint**
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 8: Social Proof

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Social Proof

You've gone through each step of your Info Product Blueprint to create your product. Your plans are almost complete. But like a developer building a house it's now time for the finishing details and to sell your product.

> **What you will learn in this Section:**
> - The six principles of influence
> - How influence is used in sales and marketing
> - How to stage your info product for sales using the principles of influence.
> - Tips on using each of the six principles for your info product.

Staging to Sell

Ever gone to a new housing development and toured a model home? From the time the salesperson opens the door the home is designed to persuade you to buy. The wall color, furniture and accessories have been carefully chosen. The lighting shows everything to its best advantage. As you wander from room to room you start to see yourself living in this beautiful house. You want to make it your home. In the real estate business it's called staging to sell. In sales it's called persuasion in action.

You can stage your info product to sell; it's all a matter of learning and using persuasive skills. Much as the model home staging led you from room to room, persuasion can led your visitor from step to step in the sale of your info product. These techniques can influence your visitor to buy from you.

Learn The Theory Behind Persuasion

Influence is defined "to move or impel (a person) to some action" (Dictionary.com). Your goal is get your visitor to take action and buy your info product. Learning some theory behind influence can help you in staging your info product. Dr. Robert Cialdini a social psychologist at Arizona State has extensively studied how people influence others.

In addition to the usual lab experiments and interviews, Dr. Cialdini became an employee-trainee in a variety of sales, advertising, fundraising and pr organizations. By actually working with people who use influence for a living he was able to closely observe the techniques of influence in action. This gave him access to training, manuals and observation of influence in action. Dr. Cialdini also interviewed the regulatory people such as police and consumer agencies for the

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organizations that use influence. His book *Influence: Science and Practice* is considered to be the reference standard on influence especially social proof

Increasing Sales Through Influence

During his on-the-job studies, Dr. Cialdini discovered six principles used in one form or another in every organization he observed. This was true whether it was a company selling vacuum cleaners or a fundraiser for a charitable organization. Using these principles can help you stage the sale of your info product. If you overuse them your visitor can see your copy as being manipulative and worse. You become the stereotype of the hype driven pushy salesperson.

Using metrics and testing conversion is very important with influence techniques. Some techniques work better than others in a particular niche market. The only way you will know which techniques work is to test and see which techniques convert more visitors into customers.

A forced squeeze page, where you make the visitor give their email address before receiving anything, can make some visitors click away. Check your competition. What are they doing? Imitation is not only the sincerest form of flattery, but also makes good business sense.

The six principles are as follows:

- Reciprocation
- Commitment and Consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
- Scarcity
- Authority

Reciprocation

When someone gives us something we feel required to return the favor. The free sample or gift creates an obligation in our mind. Charitable organizations use this technique and send us free pads of personalized address labels or note cards. Reciprocation techniques increase donations and overall response when compared with just asking for a donation.

Grocers use this technique all of the time. If you shop for groceries on weekends you will see free samples of food available. This increases sales, because it triggers a feeling of obligation to buy something.

Techniques to Consider

- ◆ Offer a free report in exchange for name and email address
- ◆ Offer a no-obligation 30-day trial.
- ◆ Host a members' only event.
- ◆ Promote a full price physical product for $x, and offer a lower price for a digital version. The contrast in price will also give an incentive to buy.
- ◆ Give a free consultation in your area of expertise.
- ◆ Offer an in-depth report in exchange for a testimonial
- ◆ If you are promoting a seminar to your subscriber list, off to rebate your commission
- ◆ Have a special teleseminar with a known expert for people who refer another subscriber to your site.
- ◆ Offer bonuses with your product to increase the perceived value.

Commitment and Consistency

Consistency is the principle where value behavior that is constant. People whose behavior is inconsistent are seen as incompetent or mentally ill.

The principle of consistency has a second part of commitment. Once we form an image of ourselves in a situation or make a decision we rarely change and even defend our choice. We are committed to that decision.

You see this principle when people make a bad decision and stick with defending their choice. Ever bought a piece of very expensive item on sale that didn't work or was a bad choice? But if someone asked you about your purchase you could only talk about the great deal you got. That's commitment. You made a decision and now you defend it.

In sales, to gain commitment, you start with small decisions first. This is why car dealerships have us try out the car. We get to see ourselves in the car, feel how the car drives and experience what it would be like to own the car. Each step involves increasing commitment.

Techniques to Consider

- ◆ Start your sales process with a subscription request for newsletter
- ◆ Design your order form to have name and address before credit card information. It's less of a commitment to give your name and address than credit card information.
- ◆ Keep the look of the website consistent. Once you have chosen color and design stick with it.
- ◆ Hold a teleseminar to show your customers how to use your product. Get them involved in the process.

- Have a 90-day trial subscription to your membership site.
- Design note taking sheets for free and paid teleseminars. It fosters involvement and commitment.
- Consider charging a minimal amount for a report or teleseminar ($1-$9.95). Once a person has paid for the information they are more committed to follow through on the commitment. If you charge, you must deliver value or you will undermine your credibility.
- If you use telemarketers, have them first say, "Hello," and ask how the person is. If the person answers, this increases sales and/or donations. The response is a commitment to the conversation.
- Hold a contest. People need to say how they would use your product. This will create a group of people who have already decided why they want your product.
- Offer a 3-payment program for your info product. It can be seen as a concession and potentially increase sales.

Social Proof

If you can convince your visitor other people want your product, you can probably convince your visitors, too. When buying we don't want to be by ourselves or make an incorrect decision. Social proof provides that reassurance. It demonstrates 'if other people think it's good, it must be. It provides the buzz of product launch and continued product sales.

Life is busy today with all of us juggling family, career and the rest of life. Time is short and often we take an easy approach. If a friend or reliable source provides information about a product or service we will use the information to buy the product. It's word of mouth marketing. Social proof requires visibility. People must see or hear the proof.

TV directors use social proof when they use laugh tracks for comedy shows. The laugh track persuades us the show is funny (or tries to).

McDonald's Hamburgers displayed the actual number of hamburgers sold on their signs as a way of saying they were popular using it as a means of social proof. McDonald's stopped the updating when they reached 100 billion.

Harry Potter books and movies have used the social proof technique to promote the new releases. Between midnight book parties, the best-seller lists, movie attendance records were all designed to influence and reinforce the social proof of the popularity of the products.

If you have ever bought a book on Amazon then you have seen the use of "other customers who bought this also bought..."

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Amazon uses this social proof technique to cross-sell additional products to you.

Techniques to Consider

- ◆ Hosting a teleseminar? Have people give their name and location especially if you have people calling in from all over the world.
- ◆ Use testimonials from 'regular' 'real' people
- ◆ Have case studies of people who have used your product posted on your site or in a special report.
- ◆ Use audio and video testimonials so people can see and hear from real people
- ◆ If you have a good Alexa rating, post it on your website.
- ◆ Create a blog and encourage participation as comments add social proof.
- ◆ If you have a hot selling product or a limited number available list the number of packages sold.
- ◆ Have a huge number of people on your teleseminar call leave the line open at the beginning so people can hear the other people. Invite people to thank the guest at the end of the call. It validates that other people are interested in your product or service.
- ◆ If people buy during your teleseminar, announce their name and thank them. It reinforces social proof.
- ◆ If the amount or dollar value of your sales could influence a buying decision, then post a screen shot of a check you received or your PayPal account.
- ◆ Name drop when recruiting affiliates and JV partners. If you are able to include someone with a high name recognition use it in promotions. It attracts others who will want to participate.
- ◆ Bonus packages from multiple people imply approval. Be careful with this one as you can end up decreasing the perceived value of your product.
- ◆ Hold sales contests among JV partners. The competition is social proof.
- ◆ Use a quote in your headline from a customer telling of their success when they used your product.
- ◆ If you go to seminars, get pictures of yourself with speakers. Post them on your website or blog.
- ◆ Consider a push for best selling book from Amazon, or best selling product for ClickBank. The independent third party validates the social proof.

Liking

Liking is an important part of influence. Car manufacturers know this and use attractive people as models to influence our buying behavior.

We want to say, "Yes," to someone we know and like. By showing your similarities with your target niche, you can influence the buying decision. People buy from people they

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know like and trust. Brian Edmondson talks about building a list you can connect with, people who share similar opinions, personality and background.

Tupperware has used this strategy for years. A friend invites a friend to the Tupperware party. Because of the friendship the person attends. Cialdini's 'Influence' describes in greater detail the dynamics of the Tupperware party.

Techniques to Consider

- Use a 'tell a friend' script for people to refer other people to your site. Make it easy to use.
- Personalize your emails. Share stories of your life and changes in it.
- Post a picture of yourself smiling on your site. Smiles increase likeability.
- Let your subscriber list know when you are attending seminars so they have an opportunity to meet you.
- Use niche market research to develop your product and website. Custom tailor the product to your market.
- Use keywords in your copy. These are the words people are using to search so include them in your copy.
- Create a blog. Use it to chat about your product, your other subscribers.
- Use polls to involve your subscribers. Then use the information to improve your site or develop the product. Let your subscribers or customers know you used their advice.
- Recognize and reward your subscribers and customers. Report on their successes in your emails or blog.

Scarcity

The principle of scarcity says we value things that are rare or hard to get. We think they are worth more. Ever stand in line to go to the first showing of a new movie? Like the Harry Potter or other big buzz movies? Or get up at 4 am to buy an early bird special the day after Thanksgiving. If you have you have been influenced by the scarcity principle.

Many marketers use scarcity or implied scarcity successfully. The collectibles market has been driven by this principle. Whether it is Beanie Babies, coin collections, art lithographs or limited edition cars, we value what is limited.

Tune to any of the home shopping networks and you will see the scarcity principle shown. The host gives the minute-by-minute update of the number of items left in stock. The countdown timer gives the minutes left for the sale of that

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particular item. You will also see an updated number of the number of items left in certain sizes or styles. In many cases it is implied scarcity, as you can get the products on back order.

Techniques to Consider

- ◆ Offer early mover bonuses on launch day
- ◆ Announce change in price on 'x' date
- ◆ Say the offer maybe withdrawn without notice
- ◆ Tell your visitor that 'x' others have signed up for the prelaunch so it's important to be online at x time.
- ◆ If you have a limited number of packages, countdown the number left. (Only do this if they are moving)
- ◆ Use the one time offers (OTO's) strategy. "Buy now or lose out."
- ◆ Use exclusive pre-launch notification lists
- ◆ Write copy to tell the visitor what they will lose by not buying today/now

Authority

Authority maintains society with rules and laws. Titles, uniforms and symbols all are a big part of the principle of authority. In a chaotic situation, authority maintains consistency and order. Police officers wear uniforms so they are easily recognized as authority figures in emergencies and enforcement situations.

Uniforms and symbols play a big part in our recognition of authority. Empty police cars are used to deter speeding motorists. Patients feel their doctor knows more when wearing a white lab coat and carrying a stethoscope. Symbols such as the Better Business Bureau shield, the iCop logo, and the yellow lock icon for secure pages are all recognized symbols, which confirm authority.

You can demonstrate your authority directly or gain authority by association. Simply either be an expert or associate with experts.

Techniques to Consider

- ◆ Write a book.
- ◆ Use endorsements from celebrities
- ◆ Write articles to get your name out and you will be recognized as an authority.
- ◆ List your credentials if they are related to your niche.
- ◆ If you are in a conservative niche, wear a suit in your photo. The suit says authority and expertise.
- ◆ Get interviewed as a guest on a teleseminar.
- ◆ Give a presentation on your niche at a seminar or meeting.
- ◆ Post pictures of yourself at seminars with speakers.

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Your Use Of The Influence Principles

The principles of influence are powerful tools. They can work very effectively in marketing and selling your products. These are the same tools used in brainwashing and cult programming. Like anything it is your choice in how you use them.

Using the principles of influence needs to be a part of your info product sales and promotion. Take a lesson from successful real estate developers complete the blueprint and stage your info product to sell.

Info Product Blueprint

Social Proof Self-Assessment Questions

1. Print out your sales letter. Using the list of principles here, label each strategy you have chosen to use. Have you covered all of the principles?

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2. What do you need to add to your sales letter and marketing plan to better stage your info product?

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3. Take out your calendar. Write the target dates for getting the other techniques completed and available to use.

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Next . . . What Can Go Wrong

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Launching With Style

Module 9

Section 9: What Can Go Wrong

By Alysan Delaney-Childs

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

Section 9

What Can Go Wrong

"Be prepared, " is the motto of the Boy Scouts, it also needs to be the motto of every product developer. Much like you keep a spare tire in the trunk of your car you need to plan for the 'what ifs' or glitches in your launch strategy.

The way to minimize these glitches is to have a plan you use throughout research, development and implementation stages. Tracking or using a checklist is critical to making sure you actually have implemented your 'what if' prevention plan.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Project and launch strategy tracking mechanisms

◆ Things to include on your prevention plan when implementing your product launch

Whiteboards, Notebooks and Post-Its For Tracking

My husband and friends laugh about my list making, but years of project management have proven to me lists work. In the chaos of a product launch between the adrenaline and tiredness, everyone's memory needs an assist.

Whatever method you use to track your list is great. Some people use computer programs for project management. I've included a list of resources at the end of this section. (Tip: Do not spend the time and energy to learn a new project management system in the middle of a project/product launch.)

Whiteboards are a great way to track what is needed. For those of us who need an in-your-face tracking system whiteboards can't be beat. I am forever indebted to a person on a teleseminar who talked about a low cost whiteboard he used for his list making and mindmapping. His suggestion, "Go to a home supply store and get a sheet of white paneling designed for bathrooms." The sheets come 4' by 8.' The cost is around $12 add some screws and you have a giant whiteboard. All it needs is erasable markers. I have mine mounted above my computer and use it for urgent to do's.

Some Internet marketers I know are great fans of post-it notes. They use either big poster boards or the wall to mount their tracking notes.

Notebooks are good to take notes. If you keep them small enough you can keep them with you at all times. Our design and layout editor Michelle uses separate 3-ring notebooks with colored tab dividers to track projects.

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Areas You Need to Include in Your Plan

A 'what if plan' or contingency plan should be ready to use when needed. If you don't have the expertise, ask. There are forums available where you can get assistance and resources. You can hire a coach or mentor, but plan for problems for they will occur.

Four broad areas seem to recur again and again in problem launch discussions: website, payment, fulfillment and support. Some of the glitches occur infrequently and others a little more often. The ones that occur when you never would have thought of that are those to flag and check and see whether you are covered in your contingency plan.

Website Issues

Domain Name

Hosting companies dislike people who spam and will stop hosting your site with sufficient complaints. Mike Filsaime found out when he launched a product, that it's not only your hosting company that can pull your site, but your domain registrar as well.

Mike Filsaime had bought a domain name from another Internet marketer. The paperwork wasn't immediately transferred. When a complaint of spam by an affiliate was made to the registrar, Mike's domain was pulled. Some days later he was back online. Now not all registrars do this, but it is something to be aware of as it can really put a crunch in your promotion.

Prevention

- If you buy a domain, make sure the domain is completely transferred prior to launch. This way your contact information is readily available if a problem occurs.

- You've heard, "Read the fine print," before you buy? Read the policies of your domain registrar or reseller prior to launch.

- Know the CANSPAM act regulations before you launch and make sure you comply. Ignorance is not a defense. http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/buspubs/canspam. htm

- Train your affiliates in CANSPAM regulations prior to launch.

- Dump affiliates who spam – quickly and decisively.

◆ Monitor email to stay aware of developing issues.

Site Crashes

You get ready for launch, the buzz is out there, and as traffic increases your site crashes. Site crashes can occur for a number of reasons. Software fails to run as expected, your database program isn't able to handle the number of visitors/buyers, the bandwidth (amount of space your site and visitors are using) exceeds what you had agreed to with your host, host servers fail, hurricanes and power outages occur. What it means to you is lost dollars, lost credibility with your partners and affiliates and lost time from you that could be better spent elsewhere.

Prevention

◆ Choose a hosting company with support. When you choose a hosting company you want to make sure you will have support available when you need it. The Internet is a 24/7 world and problems can and do occur at many different hours during launch implementation.

◆ Develop a good relationship with your hosting company. Your first contact should be well before launch day or when problems occur.

◆ Talk with your hosting company about anticipated traffic for your launch. If you have some big hitters for JV partners, let them know. That way they can prepare for a spike in traffic.

◆ Check to see if you have adequate bandwidth (bandwidth is how much information can be used at a time). Each hosting account is given a certain amount of bandwidth for the website. When you have a large amount of traffic using multiple resources that use a lot of bandwidth such as audio or video, your site may slow down dramatically or even stop or crash. This is why communication with your hosting company and sharing your concerns, media and launch plan is so important. Also know how much they will charge you to increase the bandwidth. If you are planning a large launch with lots of traffic, take your video off the site. Replace after your first day of launch. Multiple people playing the video at the same time uses huge amounts of bandwidth and can slow down or even crash your site.

◆ Depending on your launch size, you may need to plan for redundancy. Redundancy means the server has multiple ways of connecting with the Internet. That way if one part goes down, your site is still online and working. Redundancy is an extra expense of hosting

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so you may need to juggle anticipated traffic vs. cost decisions.

- ◆ Either with your existing company or another company have a mirror site ready to go. This way you can be up and running again in a timely manner.
- ◆ Will your program database have the scalability (will it let you handle 100 or more times) your usual number of visitors and buyers?

- ◆ What security measures are in place? Getting hacked is not a fun experience.

Program Communication Issues

When implementing your product launch you want all parts of your site and linking programs to talk and work together. This is why pre-launch testing is so important.

You want your shopping cart to interact with your payment processor and vice versa. You want your shopping cart to send data to your affiliate manager program (otherwise you will have to manually sort what to pay what affiliate and partner, and hope you get it right.)

You want your registration and email connection system to work collecting and displaying the information the way you want. You want your Autoresponder system to pick up the information from your email registration so it will start sending emails to prospects and buyers.

You want links that work and are not broken.

Prevention

- ◆ Have friends and associates act as beta testers for your site.   Have them go through each possible scenario on your website through test affiliate links: visitor that buys, visitor that doesn't buy, visitor who buys the one time offer (OTO), the visitor that doesn't, and a visitor needing customer support. This will give you feedback on your auto responders, your payment processing, your support system and your affiliate tracking system. Adjust your systems accordingly.

- ◆ Test your order page for orders inside and outside the United States. Many countries have custom charges, tariffs and VAT that must be included in product sales.

Conversion

Tracking your metrics is critical for your product launch. You want to track not only how many visitors come, but also how many visitors are converted into buyers. This can give you a

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good idea of how well your site and your sales letter is converting. Poor conversion equals poor sales and disappointed partners and affiliates.

<u>Prevention</u>

- ◆ Track your metrics on an hourly basis. By tracking you can tell where your visitors left your site. This gives you a starting point to adjust your site for better conversion.

- ◆ Plan multiple offers for effectiveness. Use split testing programs to test one offer versus another.

- ◆ Adjust and redo your sales letter to increase conversion. Tracking and tweaking your site and sales letter to increase conversion boosts sales.

- ◆ John Reese noted Internet marketer says, "Keep it simple. Limit your options for choices." Place frequent calls to action and order links/buttons where appropriate. Make it easy for people to do business with you.

Payment

Having a customer easily go through the sales process and pay is a delight. Even better is when the money ends up in your account. Planning and communication are important in getting this step accomplished.

You need to have multiple ways for people to pay. Some people prefer PayPal or another processing company while others prefer to use their credit card. Whatever the choice a merchant account for processing credit cards doesn't happen overnight. Your first visit should be to your bank to see if they will handle Internet credit card payments. Many will not, but it's always worth asking.

Set up your accounts; bring in a copy of your product for them to see. Banks and credit card companies are notoriously conservative. Many are convinced the Internet is a big scary place for people laundering money and other such illegal activities (very broad generalization for dramatic purposes).

No matter what you need to make them comfortable. Talk about your launch and how much you anticipate you will bring in. Realize huge amounts of money to them coming in looks suspicious. This leads to frozen accounts and huge frustration. Accounts have been frozen over six months while the investigation occurs.

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If your bank won't or can't listen to you, find another resource. Some are listed on the Info Product Blueprint customer resource page.

<u>Prevention</u>

- ◆ Plan one to three months in advance if you need to get a merchant account. Depending on your credit history it may take some time to set up.

- ◆ Investigate terms, fees and policies of each credit card processing company before you choose.

- ◆ Find out which credit card processing companies work with your shopping cart.

- ◆ Keep contact numbers, names and emails handy so you can talk, email or contact a representative easily.

- ◆ Talk to your credit card processor. Show them your product. Discuss the anticipated amount of sales. You may need to have your limit increased.

- ◆ Set up your Pay Pal or other processing account.

- ◆ If you have a digital product, consider using ClickBank as your processing company.

- ◆ If you are having outrageous success on launch day, call the credit card company representative and let them know. Better you call and talk before the credit card company's fraud unit shuts you down for 'excessive and unusual sales activity.'

Fulfillment

When someone buys your product there is an expectation they will receive it. Sounds trite, but not really. Depending on your product delivery system whether it's an immediately digital downloadable product or physical product, you need to have a fulfillment system that delivers your product into your customer's hands.

So many new marketers tell themselves, "I'll sleep the day after launch." The day after launch is when you need to be available to answer customer support and implementation issues.

Digital Products

Digital downloads are considered to be one of the easiest and least expensive way to deliver your products into a customer's hands. However, a customer's Internet skill level and excitement can interfere as well as several interrelated steps.

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Prevention

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- Beta test your site prior to launch. Have your great grandmother or someone who is not Internet savvy buy your product. Test for understanding of directions and ability to download. Don't assume anything.

- Make sure your payment processor and your download link are activated. It is very frustrating to pay for something and then not be able to get it.

- If you are using a download passcode, write the code numerous times in your email. Lost passcodes are the most frequent complaint for downloadable products.

- Set up a system for lost passcodes. Whether it is a person in a help desk system or an automatic link with a database, have a system in place.

- Decide whether passcode fraud or link fraud is a potential problem for you. Some people will share their codes with "friends." If this is a potential problem, check into passcode protection or passcode generation programs. These programs either time limit or make it only possible to download a purchase once.

- Answer emails or help tickets promptly.

- People who will rip you off. Realize it will happen. Deal and go on.

Physical Products

Shipping a physical product to a customer can be an easy or nightmare experience. If you plan to ship CD's or DVDs spend the extra money on a DVD case. Using a jewel case (plastic holders) leads to numerous returns. People perceive a cracked or broken case means a defective product. Also they very rarely return the one case, they will ship the entire product back. Point of note whether you choose to use a fulfillment house or your dining room table, your customer perception becomes your reality.

Overall

- If a shipping or transportation strike occurs let your customers know. This is a relationship and you want repeat customers so keep them informed.

- Determine the weight of your product package so you have correct shipping costs. Otherwise you will end up absorbing extra costs and taxes.

◆ Decide whether you are willing to ship to high fraud countries. Your credit card processor will assist with this. Once a product is shipped, with few exceptions, it's gone.

Fulfillment House

Fulfillment houses can handle orders from single copy to thousands of copies. With their experience, they can duplicate, ship and track for you. Choose your fulfillment house carefully because in your customer's eyes the fulfillment house and you are one and the same entity.

Prevention

◆ If you plan to use a fulfillment house ask for references.

◆ Check the company out thoroughly with other marketers. Ask about problems they encountered and solutions they came up with

◆ Don't wait till the last minute to get estimates on costs and time for turn around.

◆ Ask how many other jobs they have scheduled at the same time.

◆ Get a preview copy before you agree to a full product run. Things may not look exactly as you expected. Also check the packing when you receive your copy. Did it protect the product or not?

◆ Get a firm cost including taxes, customs tariffs and other expenses. Build this into your shipping cost.

◆ If a customer has a unique shipping address, build into your order form a place for people to get a shipping quote. Shipping to Antarctica and South Africa can cost more than your product if you are not careful.

◆ Do not send your only master copy to the fulfillment house. Companies do go out of business and you want to be able to continue even if your fulfillment company does not.

◆ Set up a plan for refunds and charge backs.

◆ Specify you want a signature for your delivery. Packages and deliveries wander.

◆ Ask how long it will take if you sell out and have to reorder. Find out their minimum order?

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◆ Get your product copies and information to the fulfillment company in a timely manner. It is a fulfillment house not a magician.

◆ Get the names, phone and email contacts for the team in the fulfillment house you will be working with.

◆ Track sales and affiliate referral sales in addition to and independently of your fulfillment house.

◆ Specify who – you or the fulfillment company – is sending out customer emails. Make sure you specify you want order tracking sent out in customer emails. That's the neat program used by postal services and shipping companies so a customer can figure out where their package is at 4 am on a Tuesday. That visible checkpoint will save you a multitude of emails and help tickets from customers wanting to know when their product will reach them. Remember you did a great job of getting them excited about their purchase.

Shipping It Yourself

There are pros and cons in handling everything yourself. If you have a small launch or are doing a gradual roll-out where you only have to do one or two items, then doing it yourself might work. But make sure whatever you send out products is done in a timely manner. Its your reputation at stake.

Prevention

◆ Inform and get agreement from your partner, spouse or cat that the dining room table and other parts of your home will be slightly chaotic.

◆ Find an inexpensive source for boxes and packing materials. The cost adds up quickly. Pack securely to avoid damage and breakage.

◆ Set up a plan to duplicate or outsource duplication of printed materials, DVDs and CDs.

◆ Inform your customers when the product is shipped to them. You can offer the same package tracking ability depending on the shipping company you use.

◆ Set up a shipping account with some carriers that do shipping overseas.

◆ Know the expense of shipping to 'x' country so you can cover your expenses.

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◆ Investigate shipping requirements for your country and others to conform to shipping requirements for packaging, forms and tariffs, taxes and customs.

Support

After the sale, your customers will have questions and issues that need to be addressed. This area can make or break your reputation. Answer and respond to emails or help tickets quickly. Understand your customers are excited about their purchase you don't need them having buyers' remorse and returning the product.

Problems will occur with any process, but how you handle it will make the difference to your customer.

Prevention

◆ Personalize your thank you page. It requires only a few more lines of code to personalize your message and makes a lasting impression on your customer.

◆ Give a printable page for your customer on how to whitelist, safelist your email address so they will receive your information. Let them know how to get hold of you for help. (It can be a help desk or emails)

◆ Have your Autoresponder set up and ready to go. Repeat your download or thank you page in an email. That way it is in the email box available for reference.

◆ Give your customer information on how to use your product. Encourage your customer to visit a forum if you have one. Help them successfully use your product. Time your messages to arrive every few days or so depending on the type of product offered.

◆ Give them a resource page of FAQs (frequently asked questions) or a prepopulated knowledge base so they can start to feel good about using their new product.

◆ If you are going to use a help desk with other people train them so there is a uniform way of handling issues.

◆ Include new issues in your knowledge base or FAQs.

◆ For physical products include shipping package tracking links in your follow up emails. This saves many emails and tickets.

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◆ Set up a feedback mechanism. Get and solicit comments from your customers. They can help you develop the next or improved version of your product. Your customers can be your evangelists for your product if you give them the opportunity.

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Problems can and will occur during a product launch. Your best solution is to implement a proactive plan of prevention, then go for it. Combine your focus with plan flexibility, then you will be prepared whatever challenges arise.

What Can Go Wrong Self-Assessment Questions

1. What areas do I need to cover in my prevention plan?

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2. What needs to be on my "To Do" list?

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Next . . . Module 10: Follow-up And Customer Support

Info Product
Blueprint
1st Edition

Follow-up and
Customer Support

Module 10

Module 10: Follow-up And Customer Support

Info Product Blueprint was created by
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Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Follow-up and
Customer Support

Module 10

Section 1: Follow-Up

By Dan Giordano

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Follow-Up

One of the best ways to increase sales is to keep in touch with people. From calling on former customers to checking in on new leads, it's critical to stay in touch with people on a regular basis.

What you will learn in this Section:

- Number of contacts needed to make a sale

- Why follow-up is needed to maintain a relationship

I am sure you have heard that the fortune is in the follow up. It is the most important thing you will do if you want to build a long-term profitable business.

One of the reasons for this is that it takes time to develop the trust required for someone to do business with you. Even though they want or need what we offer, studies have shown it typically takes 7 to 15 contacts before a sale is made. The awesome part of an info product launch is through joint ventures and third-party endorsements of you and your product or service, those numbers become a lot less.

Another reason is people have a lot of things going on. What's important one day may drop off their radar screen the next day. Priorities change from day-to-day as life intrudes on people's plans.

Put these two facts together and you can see what happens.

A person decides they're interested in your product or service. They subscribe and you chat and things seem to be going well. Then they leave and you never hear from them again. The fact is they're still interested, but because our business is new to them they might not feel comfortable making the purchase yet. They need to warm up to us. Their trust level still needs to move up the scale.

So they leave without making a purchase. Then reality steps in. Their focus turns to something else and soon their interest in your product or service moves so far down their priority scale they forget about it.

It's not that they have decided not to buy from you. It's not that they have lost interest. They simply need more time to get through the buying cycle, so they feel comfortable doing business with us.

Your job then, is to help them move through the buying cycle and raise their comfort level so they'll decide to work with us.

The key to accomplishing this is with follow-up.

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You need to find ways to re-engage people, to re-connect with them so they remember why they were interested in our product or service in the first place. But we need to do the follow-up in a way that is professional. We need to show them our goal is to help them rather than to just make a sale.

There are many ways to keep in touch like using email, blogs, teleclasses and events.

When you show up with something for them, you are showing them your focus is on them, not you. If every time you contact someone you give the impression you're just looking for a sale, they'll think of you only as a salesperson looking for a commission.

On the other hand, if you always have something for them (a gift, an article, a referral, an invitation to an event, some local news or gossip) then you become someone they enjoy talking with. You become a welcome break in their busy day.

At this point you've made a new friend who should have no hesitation becoming a customer. You've become part of their world, so when they want or need what you offer, they'll think of you first.

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I can not stress enough the importance of follow-up and how important it is to your long-term success. Make sure you make it a priority!

Stay Fired Up, Fine Tuned and Focused,

Follow-up Self-Assessment Questions

1. What ways are you going to use to stay in touch with your customer

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2. Write two series of 12 follow-up emails for your product (a set for a visitor who did not buy and a set for one who did).

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Next . . . Customer Support

Info Product
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Follow-up and
Customer Support

Module 10

Section 2: Customer Support

By John Di Lemme

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Customer Support

Using Email To Develop Relationships With Your Clients

Ninety-eight percent of copywriters don't have a living clue how to create conversation through text email. Everyone thinks you have to get fancy with graphics and html. Copywriting and overview is very simply bringing the human touch to the print.

Let me say that once again…bringing the human communication and human touch to print. Let me tell you, people buy upon relationship and you have to create trust. Inside the word trust is 'us.'

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How to create a personal touch in your emails

◆ Create headlines to get your emails opened and read

◆ How to tell stores to get your ideas across to the reader

◆ Using testimonials in emails to increase credibility

You've got to realize you're creating a conversation between you and your potential client. You have to create enough of a relationship and you have to create a belief structure. You want that person to say, "Hey, I believe in this person enough to pull the trigger to go to the order page, to submit the credit card information and give billing information." Remember, they're giving you their address, their phone number, their fax, because they want to grab a hold of that product knowing that it's going to change their life.

Copywriting

I believe, if you believe you have a product and you believe your product can change someone's life, that person has the *right* to know that from you. That person has the right to be touched by you every day or once or twice a week **minimum** in order for them to build belief.

You see, someone makes a buying decision, someone is going to purchase something based upon them feeling comfortable enough to make a decision to invest in your product, which is to spend their hard earned money. They have a right to believe in you.

How do you create belief? With a personal touch. You see, the personal touch is you creating a relationship. I can tell you, I've been sending emails now online close to five years. I send emails out every single day. Sometimes people go, "Well, how much is too much?" You've got to focus on your client.

So the personal touch is communication, creating a conversation through any kind of copywriting – if it's email, if it's basic mailers in the mail, you're creating a conversation. You're talking to the person as if you're sitting down with them

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face-to-face. Just like you are face-to-face over a cup of white chocolate mocha at Starbucks Coffee, remember you're looking eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart.

Let me say that once again. The personal touch in communication and relationships in business is eye-to-eye and heart-to-heart.

When you create communication, there is communication, there is belief, there is trust, there is a relationship and then they're Ka-ching! Then, and only then, there is the purchase of your product.

The sad fact is 98% of marketers don't have a clue as to what they're doing. They don't know how to write copy. They don't know how to give the personal touch.

But you do *now*.

You **can** now.

The secret? Talk to your potential customer as if they were sitting with you.

Headlines

So let's take it from the top. Let me tell you from my experience sending out emails every day. Headlines should be left at 17 words or less and you have to speak right to the purchaser. I love to use words that trigger the imagination.

Here are some of my favorite words and phrases to use in headlines. Build and join with these phrases to connect with your potential client.

Use '*as a*' to tell your potential customer you're talking to them. Then tie that together with '*must own.*' Why? We all want to belong, to fit in. When you tie these two phrases together you're creating a mental connection. The person says, 'Well yeah, I am a _____, I must own this?' The person is going to read further to see what the product or service is. You've aroused curiosity.

Here are some quick examples:

- If you're selling to carpet cleaners: as a carpet cleaner you must own this.
- As a net marketer you must own this.
- As an online entrepreneur you must own this.
- As a pet storeowner you must own this.
- As a pilot you must own this.
- As a computer techie you must own this.

Notes

One of my all time favorites, we all know is the 'how to.'

- ◆ How to launch an online business in less than 72 hours.
- ◆ How to…
- ◆ How would you like to learn…

Another great phrase to use is: '*Imagine if you could*'

- ◆ Imagine if you could live the life of the rich and not so famous.
- ◆ Imagine flying around the world, being debt free.

Imagination is a very key word. You have to create the imagination.

Now let's go with subheads.

The subhead has to feed the main line. If you said, "As an online entrepreneur you must own this," as soon as they open this up, the sub has got to be "As an online entrepreneur, you'll learn through this program how to increase your profits, how to market products 24 hours a day, how to increase your database, how to build your list, how to find a market specifically focused for your product or how to find a product specific for the market." Do you see how it follows?

The subheads must feed the headline. I experiment. I would test three different headlines because the headlines are so important.

Eighty-five percent of any message is opened in a headline. I can tell you right now, be as emotional as someone yelling at the top of the world.

I am not concerned about the controversy that gets created.

I'm not concerned about the people that say, "Well, I don't like that email."

Who cares? You're not going to please everyone. You want to reach *your* potential customer.

Be concerned about your client. Be concerned about over-delivering. Be concerned about feeding your product.

I'm in the personal development online coaching business. I am the best at what I do. I don't get concerned about people who are upset.

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Here's one subheading I sometimes use.

'Enough is enough, enough is enough. Are you sick and tired about not hearing the truth? The truth shall set you free. The truth about online business shall set you free."

The truth about whatever business… remember subheads feed your headlines.

Format and Layout of Emails

Make sure that in an email it doesn't go more than 30 strokes across.

Remember, allow the power of the computer screen to build your business. The person can start to read and they can finger on the down arrow button and they can read down.

Most people, most writers write left to right because people read left to right. Yes, we're going to write left to right, but we're going to visually consume the concept that the person is reading top to bottom.

You've got to clump it. Never put more than three sentences in one chunk. It's calling 'Millionaire chucking.' Chunk your copy in small chunks because people are multi-tasking, especially entrepreneurs and business people.

Remember, for anyone that is in the home-based business or anybody selling a business opportunity, people are looking, which means they're searching, so subconsciously they're going somewhere.

They may be in a rush. You've got to catch their attention. You've got to be an attention grabber.

The format and layout is the key. It's got to flow from top to bottom, left to right.

Let me get right to the point. Whoever product you're modeling, make sure you're modeling somebody's format that is successful, not someone who says they're successful. Check out their Alexa ranking. See how long they've been on the net. See how long they're in the offline business.

Layout is crucial. You've got to follow very successful, simple, focused systems.

Read left to right, very short, compressed chunk paragraphs. Leave about 1/4" to 1/2" of spacing and let it rip.

Use a lot of different colors. Use black print highlighted with yellow, use red print highlighted with yellow.

Notes

Remember Joe Gold from Gold's Gym? I had the opportunity of having a launch with the great Joe Gold about three years ago. Joe Gold from Gold's Gym said the two things that catapulted his business were the colors red and gold. Obviously gold, we have to use that as a highlight. So use red, gold, and bold.

For fonts, always use Georgia print.

Stories

Always tell a story if you can as soon as you've got your headline. You've got a headline, then a story, and a story/a testimonial.

Understand 'stories sell, facts tell.' Let me give you that million dollar nugget once again…

Stories sell, facts tell. Sell the benefits. Sell the results. Sell how someone's life will be changed. Sell how someone's life will be impacted by implementing and taking advantage and grabbing a hold of your product.

Let me give you some million dollar words right now.

- Don't waste another second.
- Jump on over.
- It gets only even better.
- Follow me to…
- Make sure you visit…
- Before you close this page, take at look at this or you're going to regret it.

Use Description Rich Copy

Rich copy is focused on getting right to the person's heart, getting him to the decisive stages to understand exactly your customer.

Too many people are scattered. They're not focused – they're trying to satisfy everyone. You can become a multi-millionaire in online or offline businesses based on focusing on a customer, providing for that customer and creating a result, which is a satisfied customer.

Testimonials

Let me sum that up: You cannot have enough.

I have a million dollar suggestion. Give away a bonus.

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Email people or mail them a letter and say, "I would love to hear how you've enjoyed my product. I would love to know what you like best about my product. I would love to know how my product changed your life. I would love to know how my product lined your pockets with cash. I would love to know how the product that you invested from me impacted your life.

For doing that, I will give you this special bonus," – a report, maybe a CD, maybe downloading an MP3, but give them something for giving you something, which is a testimonial and get as many as you can.

Literally, one of my top-hitting emails that I run every month or so, all it is is 15 testimonials and 13 links. It's a headline – 15 testimonials – 13 links – and it prints money. That should be an illegal email because it's illegal the amount of income that gets generated. All it is a headline, testimonials and buy links.

Keyword rich copy, based upon where your ad is going to run. If it's online, you've got to put the keywords…obviously if you're generating business from Google or AdWords and all that good stuff on the net, make sure that the keywords are in the copy. Make sure people who are searching for what you can provide, that the keywords will enable them to open up the copy and open up the ad in order for them to get to your business.

Copywriting, let's recap it. It is simply conversing with the person, developing a relationship with that person in order for them to create a decision-mindset to purchase your product.

Let me share another bonus million dollar tip. It takes sometimes months and years to get a customer.

Let me tell you something, where your business comes from going forward is sending bonuses and sending reports and sending testimonials to your existing customers.

Then put yourself in the mindset of that customer. What can I write in this copy that will make that person buy more from me?

Make sure you out-service your competition.

Make sure that you are the best at what you do, because competition creates champions. I believe because you're reading this you are a champion. Go for it.

Create the best copy in the world and test, test, test, test. Results are the secret to success.

Never say, "Well, somebody told me this." I don't care what somebody told you. Tell me, "How is it pulling for you?"

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You've got to tweak it, tweak it, tweak it. Remember, an artist always fine-tunes their pictures. They always fine-tune their model.

Make sure that you fine tune it and go for it and build an absolutely huge business for yourself.

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Customer Support Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write three follow-up emails for your info product. What headlines will you use to get the reader to open your email?

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2. What stories can you use in your emails to best show your message. List two stories that you can use.

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Next . . . How To Keep Building Your Backend For Repeat Sales

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Follow-up and
Customer Support

Module 10

Section 3: How To Keep Building Your Backend For Repeat Sales

By Lisa Preston

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Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

How To Keep Building Your Backend For Repeat Sales

The expert on using personalized emails for developing follow-up sales and a backend is Lisa Preston of InstantNicheEmails.com.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ How you can expand existing products into backend products

You could spend your whole life fishing for more customers… buying bait, researching new fishing poles, talking to others about the top lakes and streams. But that would take up way too much time, effort, and money on your part.

Especially since the fish you already caught are likely willing to buy from you over and over.

First-time, happy customers are like geese that lay golden eggs. Hang on to them. Spend most of your time catering to their needs (instead of constantly fishing for more) and then go buy a fatter wallet. You'll need it!

Scenario – Act 1, Scene 1

Here's Mary Marketer. She's been busy building her list online and has a solid reputation among her 1,000 subscribers. Go Mary!

She's worked on building a relationship with her subscribers, and they like and trust her. Indeed, many of them have purchased her front-end product, an e-book entitled *Miniature Rose Growing Secrets.*

Now she is wondering how to build her back-end marketing system.

"What do I sell?" Mary wonders aloud. "Affiliate products? There are plenty of gardening affiliate programs out there. But I sure wish there was something else I could sell and then keep all of the profits."

Let's come up with some ways Mary can benefit from follow-up marketing with her current customers.

First, Mary's online business will take off like a rocket once she employs the most powerful method of follow-up marketing available. The Survey. She'll use her survey answers to broaden her product base and build on what her customers are looking for.

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Since Mary has developed a strong relationship with her subscribers, and they're opening and reading her emails regularly, she can send out a survey asking what additional topics her readers would like her to cover and get quality responses. Asking what their most pressing questions are about Miniature Rose Growing will give her insight into other products she can create to sell.

Mary can then produce an expanding back-end selection that will bring her in more and more profits.

For instance, Mary finds out that the main question readers have revolves around transplanting indoor roses outdoors – many of the roses die. The question of the hour… "how can indoor miniature roses be successfully replanted outdoors?"

Mary interviews an expert from a garden nursery and creates a CD based on that very topic.

Another question folks are asking is "Which types of miniature rose are most resistant to disease?"

She calls Mrs. Thorn, the lady who won the blue ribbons for her roses at the county fair and schedules another interview based around this question.

As a matter of fact, Mary creates a series of audios revolving around each main question of her list. She then packages them into a Miniature Rose Growing Deluxe Package. Not only does she sell this kit digitally online, she offers it at the local nurseries as well.

Then Mary decides to branch out a little more and offer a report and DVD on 'stretching and back care for flower gardeners.' She also writes an e-book called *Miniature Roses for Beginners*, and one for a similar niche, *Heirloom Roses for Beginners*.

Mary now has a thriving business, not only offering front-end products, but selling new ones to her existing customers.

Act 1, Scene 2

Oliver Entrepreneur, like Mary, has built a successful subscriber base through relationship marketing. He's got 5,000 on his "Relaxation" list.

But he's running out of steam with his front-end product and wants a thriving back-end system as well.

Subniche-ing will be Oliver's ticket to booming business.

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He's got a terrific DVD on Relaxation Techniques. Now he will take that one DVD and create multiple backend products.

Oliver decides his first sub-niche will be elementary schoolteachers. If anyone needs to relax, it's these stressed out folks!

So he interviews three teachers about their favorite stress relieving techniques and makes another DVD – just for teachers! In fact, he creates a 10-minute stretching and breathing DVD for students that the whole class can do together to relax before test taking!

He edits the interview with the teachers and adds it to the package. Then Oliver thinks, "What can I use as a bonus for the teacher package?"

Eureka! How about a series of mini-reports that the teachers can send home with children?

Awesome! Now the teachers have this special deal where if they "order today," they get a series of special reports to send home with parent newsletters – reports on 'how to decrease stress over homework,' 'decreasing test anxiety,' et cetera.

Way to go Oliver! First sub-niche conquered!

Now it's off to another one! This time he's targeting golfers. Then nurses!

Oliver will have several thriving online businesses all based around his big niche – relaxation.

Anytime he comes out with another relaxation product, with just a little tweaking, he can sell it to multiple sub-groups.

If you're stuck, trying to figure out a way to get more sales from your existing customers, survey them. Find out what their top frustrations or interests are. Then create a complete back-end system of products based on those interests.

Then take a hard look at your front-end product and brainstorm additional sub-niches that you could enter. Nothing long and laborious here. You're just taking something you've already created and lasering it to folks who want the same kind of info, only a little more specialized.

Remember, the foundation of Mary and Oliver's success was building a list of subscribers and following up with them to build a relationship of integrity and trust. That's partly why their back-end creations were so successful. They'd paved the way to business success via relationship marketing.

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Build your list on the foundation of trust, and whether you chose to broaden your back-end packages like Mary or sub-niche them like Oliver, you'll zoom to mega-success in your niche.

How To Keep Building Your Backend For Repeat Sales Self-Assessment Questions

1. What affiliate programs can you add to your info product?

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2. How can you expand your program to increase sales?

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3. Is it possible to sub-niche or further narrow the focus of your market? If so, what sub-niche can you expand into?

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Next . . . Promoting by Email

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Follow-up and
Customer Support

Module 10

Section 4: Promoting by Email

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Promoting by Email

Jim Daniels has been showing people how to use emails for promotion for years. His newsletters and e-zines are known as 'the way' to keep in touch. In fact, Ken McArthur 'found' Jim and joint ventured with him (forming Affiliate Showcase). Ken started out as a subscriber on Jim's list.

What you will learn in this Section:

◆ Using email to its best advantage

◆ When to move to an autoresponders

◆ Why talking with your list is important

Welcome to the wonderful world of EMAIL! This section has been written with one goal in mind – to bring you up to speed on all the ins and outs of using email to its fullest capacity.

Once you've learned all there is to know about Internet email, you'll be able to put this knowledge to work for you.

Email is truly one of the Internet's most powerful tools. Never before has it been possible to reach such a large number of people at such a minuscule cost. It is finally possible for the small, home-based business to compete at a level never before dreamed of.

As you know, there are many ways you can market a product or service online. The most conventional way of course, is to set up your own website on the World Wide Web and wait for the money to start pouring in.

Unfortunately, the fact is, it's just not that simple. Don't get me wrong – a web page is a great marketing tool if, and only if, you have the time and/or money to market it. Otherwise, getting prospective customers to find their way to your site is about as easy as finding a needle in a haystack.

That's what brings us to email. Email is a great way to take your message to your prospects, instead of waiting for them to come to you. Once you've learned all the skills required to use email effectively, you'll begin to see it pay off for you.

It's important to remember, no matter how good you get at using email, there is one fact that will never go away. If you aren't offering a product or service that people are interested in, or you're not selling it at the right price, no skill can make up the difference.

However, once you're sure you have a winning product or service, email marketing can do nothing but make your revenues soar!

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Email Basics Reviewed

Before we get beyond the basics, it is important to have a good foundation to build on. It is assumed that everyone reading this section has a basic working knowledge of email.

Therefore, this section will be brief.

In addition to the online services like AOL, there are literally thousands of Internet service providers, or ISP's. These ISP's provide access to the Internet and all of the tools that come with it, including email.

Most of these ISP's allow you to use a "third-party" email program to manage your email. These programs will be discussed in detail later in this section. The reason I've brought these points up is simple.

While everyone uses email a little differently, the basic idea behind email is the same.

Anyone with an email address can reach anyone else with an email address, literally in seconds. In most cases, this incredible feat is absolutely free.

When you stop and really think about this, from an entrepreneur's point of view, it is a dream come true!

Word Wrap and Font

Before you start sending email messages, you need to learn how to compose your messages so that they look good to any recipient.

When done properly, your messages will appear professional no matter what ISP or email program the recipient is using. Properly formatted messages are extremely important when using email for business purposes.

This is often overlooked by many email users. It is a fact that an email's content is diluted if the message itself is "ugly."

Have you ever received an email message that looks something like this?...

"Thank you for requesting more information about our

services! We here at

ABC Company would like to present a special offer to

all of our customers."

There are two main reasons why email messages turn out looking like this. Although the reasons are quite simple, many email users don't understand them.

Reason number one is called line length. When composing email, most people just type and type without using a hard carriage return. If it looks fine when you're done, your email program probably automatically wraps the words in a nice legible format. This word wrap is usually done based on a line length of anywhere from 70 to 80 characters.

For example, let's say I receive your message, but my email program doesn't have the capability of automatically wrapping incoming messages. Since you performed no hard "end of line" carriage returns when typing your message, my email software thinks it's one long sentence.

Now your nice, easy to read message looks like that example above.

So how do you avoid this problem? Simple, when composing email messages, use a hard carriage return before you get to the end of each line.

I have found that a maximum line length of about 65 characters, including spaces, works to alleviate this problem almost completely.

Of course, you'll always run into an instance occasionally, depending on the settings your recipients use, but this should do the trick 95 percent of the time.

Another reason people encounter "funny looking" email messages is called proportional character fonts.

Like I mentioned earlier, all email programs are different. Therefore the fonts used by each program varies widely.

Basically, there are fixed pitch fonts like Courier and there are proportional spaced fonts like Arial (and like AOL email).

With fixed-pitch fonts, all characters in a paragraph will line up directly above each other. With a proportional-spaced font, CAPS, space bars and other keystrokes are wider, so each line is a different length.

The bottom line is this. If you create a message using one type of font and send it to an email recipient using the other, the message will not look the same when they receive it.

Once again, the solution is simple. By using a hard carriage return before the end of the line you can keep problems caused by the difference in email programs to a bare minimum.

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If you plan on sending the same message to multiple recipients, or attempt any text drawings, consider testing the message with a friend on another service.

There is a third way for your email messages to look bad. Although it is far less likely to happen, you should be aware of it.

This problem occurs when moving text between different word processing or text editor programs. This is not recommended if you plan to email the text.

Even if you save the text as a different file format you can run into problems. The text may look great to you, but when sent via the Internet it can become scrambled.

You may have received one of these messages at one time or another. They are easily recognized by the repeated "U," "=0" or other characters in the text.

To avoid this problem, create your outgoing messages directly in your email program or in a basic ASCII text editor, like Windows Notepad or Write.

The last thing you want is an email message with great content, being dismissed simply because it wasn't "good looking" enough.

Cut and Paste Skills

This simple procedure can save you countless hours of typing. If you do not have this skill perfected, read this section and learn it today!

There are many reasons why you need to learn how to "cut and paste," or "copy and paste" text on your computer. Whether you are moving text from one application to another or entering frequently used text at a website, this skill is a basic necessity.

You will find this skill very handy when replying to commonly asked questions via email or sending email to a large number of addresses at once (more on this later.)

The procedure itself is really quite simple. I probably use it 100 times a day and don't know how I would get by without it. Here's how it's done...

Let's say I'm typing a sales letter for a new product or service. When I've finished writing my letter, I highlight all of the text by holding down the left clicker of my mouse and dragging it over the entire letter, then releasing.

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Next, I choose "edit" from my menu bar then choose "copy." I prefer the "copy" feature versus the "cut" because it leaves the text in the document I'm currently working on. "Ctrl C" is the Windows shortcut for this action.

Now I have placed all of this text into temporary memory on my computer. You don't actually see this happen, but trust me, it's there.

Next, I go into my email program and start composing a message. Once I have my cursor in the box where I would normally type the text of my message, I simply click on "edit" and then "paste." Once again, Windows lets you use the keys "Ctrl V" as a shortcut.

Bingo! The text appears exactly where I want it and I've saved a bundle of time.

That's all there is to it. Remember, you can paste this text over and over again. It stays stored in memory until you either exit Windows, or replace it with some new text.

Also keep in mind – you can use this feature from program to program. That is, you can copy text from say, your email program and then paste it into another program, such as Microsoft Word.

Once you master these procedures, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it.

Attaching Files

Nearly all email programs allow users to attach files to email messages. A lot of people have never used this feature and probably never will.

Many companies selling information online offer both a hard copy as well as an electronic version of the information. If you plan to use this method to deliver your any of your own "e-products," you need to be aware of a few things.

First of all, you should never send an attachment to anyone without first notifying them. Many attachments are very large and can fill a users inbox to capacity.

Also, it is unlawful to send any file that is copyrighted or is the property of someone else.

Unless you have received permission or exclusive rights to a file, do not transmit it across the Internet.

If you plan on sending a file that your customer is paying for, be sure to offer it via other distribution methods as well. A few

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examples include downloadable files at a website, or mailed files on a floppy disk. Most users will prefer these methods, however emailing it, as an attachment can be a good backup system.

Also be aware that many email programs automatically encode attachments to ease transmission (especially large ones). Although many people know how to convert the file back to a readable format, there are also many people who do not. Some email programs actually require a separate program to achieve this conversion.

The bottom line on attachments is this. While you should learn how to send and receive them, they should be sent sparingly. They eat up bandwidth and are slow to both send and receive.

Carbon Copy (cc) and Blind Carbon Copy (bcc)

Most email programs come with two extremely handy features – CC and BCC.

Simply put, these features allow you to send copies of any email message to additional recipients. Once you have an email message composed, including one recipient's email address in the "To" field, you simply add any address or addresses desired into the CC or BCC field.

The additional addresses will also receive a copy of the message. Depending on your email program, multiple addresses should appear with commas after each address or one per line, like this:

- ◆ abcd@efgh.com
- ◆ ijklm@nop.com

The difference between the CC and BCC is that by using the CC field the recipient sees all the addresses in their header. If the BCC field is used, the recipient does not see the address or addresses that also received a copy of the message.

This can be handy when sending a sales letter to multiple addresses at once. You can simply compose a message, put your own email address in the "To" field and put all the addresses in the BCC field.

This looks much more professional to the recipient than having their email address transmitted to all the other recipients.

NOTE: Before you use either CC or BCC to mail to multiple recipients, you should contact your ISP and ask them if they have a limit on the number addresses that can be emailed at once.

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Many ISP's have installed maximum limits of 25, 50 or 100 in an effort to thwart unsolicited bulk emailing through their servers.

While these features can come in handy when marketing online, there are far simpler solutions to emailing multiple recipients at once.

Email Programs

As I mentioned earlier, the major online services, like AOL, come with their own built-in email programs. Some are better than others, but they all let you accomplish the basics.

In this part, I'd like to explain the advantages of having a separate program for all of your email needs. For anyone doing business online, I recommend a "third-party email client."

(That's just a fancy name for a separate program.)

NOTE: Many Internet service providers now offer web-based email. Although this is a nice feature for personal email, I do NOT recommend it for business. There are simply not enough features or flexibility. As you'll learn from this part, there are many advantages to having a separate email program. Not only do you get excellent performance, you also get some great features.

Unfortunately, you cannot use either of the two programs I am going to talk about, with some of the major online services (including AOL at the time this section was published). For this reason alone, it may be worthwhile to carry a second Internet access account.

This would allow you to get the increased email features of a separate email program. It all depends what you're planning to do. To find out if you can use a separate email program with the account you have, simply send an email message to your service's technical support department.

Email Freeware

If you don't plan on doing anything other than sending and receiving email, you may not need anything more than what you're currently using.

However, if you want more features, or you plan on doing some extensive marketing online, you should consider trying a separate email program. From a marketing standpoint, there is simply no better way to juggle all of your interests.

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Since you will be involved in so many areas online, it is important that you stay organized. A good email program lets you have many separate mailboxes to help you with this task.

Especially during the early stages of any online venture, you'll need to gather information on multiple subjects. With your email program you can sort your incoming mail into different mailboxes or folders.

For instance, you can store all of your leads in one mailbox, your junk mail in another, and your potential advertising vendors in yet another. You'll realize the importance of this when you start to see just how many messages can accumulate in a short period of time.

In addition to those mailboxes, you may find it helpful to transfer all your messages of a technical nature into your "tech" mailbox and your customers into yet another mailbox.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture. Organization is very important when performing multiple tasks, especially when you're being bombarded with endless amounts of information on the Internet.

A good email program will aid you in gathering and saving all of the information you need in a timely fashion. Additionally, you'll be able to manage all of these files offline. That's important if you're paying for all of your online time.

Email Freeware: The Cream of The Crop

There are two specific email programs that stand head and shoulders above all others. They are called Eudora and Pegasus.

Both have freeware versions that can be downloaded from the Internet. These programs are completely free to use and are not time restricted like most shareware.

Eudora

A company named Qualcomm offers an email program Eudora Pro, which has quickly become the email program of choice for many Internet marketers. It is chock-full of helpful features and is very easy to use. Additionally, it is easier to install and set up than most other programs.

Here are just some of the helpful features you'll gain by using Eudora. (Remember, email is different on every online service. You may be able to do most of these things with the service you have.)

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- Automatic word wrap: Believe it or not, this is not found on many email programs.
- Cut and paste features: Simplifies sending the same messages to multiple addresses.
- Multiple mailboxes: A must feature, so you can save messages pertaining to different subjects such as, advertising vendors, outgoing sales letters, technical info, etc.
- Trash can: This is great when you delete a message that you want to retrieve later. You simply pull it out of the trash.
- Nicknames/Address book: An awesome feature for online marketers. Allows you to paste multiple addresses under one heading and mail to them all at once.
- Global Searching: Using this feature, I can search through years of messages for a client names, email addresses or even the text of an email message. This feature is a must-have for busy Internet marketers who send and receive 100's of emails a day.
- Filtering: A great feature that automatically routes messages into different mailboxes based on the message sender, header or even text.

Pegasus

Pegasus is an excellent email program originally developed in 1990 in New Zealand. Of course, there have been many upgrades since the original version.

This software is also "freeware," available for download from the Internet and it is completely free to use. Pegasus is a full-featured email program for power email users.

However, it is a little more difficult to install and configure. But if you're planning on doing some heavy email marketing, it may be worth checking out. Additionally, advanced Internet users will enjoy the wide range of configuration options in this software.

Here are some of the most popular features found in Pegasus:

- Multiple address manuals with sorting options.
- Distribution lists: Great for emailing multiple addresses at once.
- Mail filtering to automatically place incoming messages into various folders: Great for running a small newsletter or discussion list.
- Multiple folders: This is similar to the multiple mailboxes offered in Eudora. You can simply drag and drop messages to sort by subject or any other parameter.
- Spell checker: Not available in most freeware packages.

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Downloading Email Freeware

As I stated earlier, if you want to try out one of these email programs, you can do it for free. All it takes is Internet access and a little hard drive space.

I won't go into the specifics of the actual installation, since there are so many different computer types out there. (The exact directions are found at each website).

However, I would like to tell you exactly where to find these great programs! Here are the URL's (Uniform Resource Locations) for the two email programs just discussed.

Simply type the address into your browser and follow the detailed directions at each:

Eudora can be found at Eudora.com.

Pegasus can be found at PMail.com.

Free Technical Support

Should you experience problems with whichever email program you decide to use, this section will help. Problems can range from installation, to configuration, to actually sending and receiving messages. All of the extra features can be a bit confusing as well.

Before you raise the white flag, try one of the following avenues:

- ◆ Read the help file that comes with the program.
- ◆ Go to the appropriate website and read the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and support documentation.

The first and most obvious step is checking out the Help file that comes with the program. This file is almost always in the form of a text file and can be opened with any word processing software.

Many programs offer a manual for sale if this help file doesn't do the trick. Before you breakdown and buy the manual, however, you should try the last two steps listed above.

FAQ information is almost always helpful. Since millions of people before you have used the same software, many users have also come across the exact same problems you will encounter. That's why FAQ pages are so popular on the Internet.

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All it takes is a little patience and you will most likely be able to solve any problem with a good FAQ page. To find them, simply go to the appropriate website and follow the links that say FAQ.

Marketing with Email, the World Wide Web, Classifieds and E-zines Email Marketing

The Internet is continually developing into the most powerful marketing medium since television.

So, what's the most powerful marketing tool born on the Internet? That's simple. It is without a doubt, email!

Many predicted websites would be the biggest marketing advantage born on the Internet. Although a great web page can be an effective tool for online marketing, without email the web would be far less effective for business.

From an entrepreneurial standpoint, Internet email is the glue that holds every online marketing aspect together.

Moreover, it accomplishes this feat seamlessly and tirelessly. Can you think of any other way to reach someone on the other side of the globe in seconds, 24 hours a day? All the while doing it for free? Not a chance! Nothing in marketing has ever come close to the power of email.

In this part, I will teach anyone with an email address how to market their service or product effectively. But before starting, let's look at a few very big factors to consider in your decision to market via Internet email.

First of all, you must keep in mind that some products and services are great for the net while others are not.

The bottom line is this – if you have a product or service that could serve a national or global marketplace effectively, you can use email to market it. Keep in mind, however, you must also be able to deliver the goods.

I learned that quickly when orders were received from more than 20 different countries within the first month of starting my business online. On the other hand, if your product or service is geared to local or regional customers (like a small landscaping service for instance) you could be better off sticking with traditional marketing strategies.

So consider all angles, the Internet could enhance a traditional marketing campaign, but it may not help customers in your community find you.

Take a hard look at your product or service and answer this question: "Would interest be more likely found in your specific

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region or location?" If the answer is yes, the Internet may not be the best place to focus your efforts.

With that said, lets move right into the different areas of online marketing.

The World Wide Web

The most traditional form of online advertising is building a site on the World Wide Web. What most people don't realize is that web marketing alone, is not as powerful as email marketing!

Many people are putting up a web page or two and expecting customers to flock to it.

Unfortunately, that's just not the way it works. Why wait for customers to find you when you can take your message to them with email marketing?

Now don't get me wrong here, a website can be a great marketing tool. That's if, and only if, you spend a good amount of time and resources to market it properly.

Even then, the most effective web campaigns occur when you combine web marketing with email marketing. Otherwise, like I mentioned earlier, getting people to your website is like asking them to find a needle in a haystack.

A few quick tips for those of you planning on setting up a web page:

- ◆ Be prepared to include your web address or URL on all of your sales literature, business cards, email correspondence (in the form of a signature - more on this later), and any other business correspondence you use. This is just one of the many steps you must take to start marketing your website properly.

- ◆ Another must when setting up a web page is to register it with all the search engines you can find on the Internet. This will allow net users to search on a subject related to your business and find your web page.

The easiest way to register your web address or URL with search engines is to use a submission program. You'll find links to a few of these programs at the end of this section.

One last important issue when marketing with a website is to find a reliable home for it. Before you choose a web host for your site, read the special report at BizWeb2000.com/virtual.htm. It may save you quite a bit of time and money when setting up a new website.

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Well, that's enough on web marketing. I've said all I needed to on the subject. After all, this section is about email marketing.

Now let's move on and cover some powerful and cost effective methods of email marketing.

Free Classified Advertising

This is one of the most popular forms of advertising on the Internet.

Why? Because it's free!

That's right, you can advertise in hundreds of different online classified locations for free.

Does this sound too good to be true? Well actually, there are about as many down sides to it as there are up. But that's not to say you shouldn't try it.

Here's the scoop... Basically, there are two types of online classified advertising available.

The first one is the classified advertising offered by the major online services such as AOL.

The second type of free classified advertising is on the Internet. (There are now literally thousands of classified areas on the Internet.)

The upside, whether you're placing ads with a major online service, or placing them on the Internet, is that it's free in most areas. You also get your message to your target audience. (If you're advertising a business opportunity, you post it in that specific area.)

These two factors are the best things free classified advertising has going for it.

The downside is that advertising with these free classifieds is very similar to advertising with a website. By that I mean that people have to find your message among thousands of others.

This ultimately means a low response rate. Of course, if you post in enough places, your response rate will increase. However, this can be very time consuming.

For those of you who want to try it, it's simple. If you are a subscriber to any of the major online services, then I'm sure you've visited the classified section. The major online services are all a little different, but they all offer easy access to their free classifieds.

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The other free classified advertising is a little more time consuming. This advertising is done on the Internet. If you can connect to the Internet, you can utilize this free advertising.

Once connected to the Internet, you can find a long list of free classified areas. Simply go to you favorite search engine and type "free classifieds." The top ranked sites will have the most traffic so pick a site and start submitting.

I recommend that before you post an ad, you read through some classifieds that have been posted by other people. Chances are if the section related to what you are selling is fairly large, there must be a good reason.

Most sites will also indicate their number of hits (number of online visitors to this particular site) as well, so you'll know how many customers may see your ad.

It's also a good idea to check into the "guidelines & regulations" area before posting in any area. This is usually where you will find the rates if they do charge. (Don't worry; they are required to tell you exactly how much you will be charged before they post your ad.)

Most sites require you to register with them before you can post your ad. This registration is also free unless otherwise stated. This is where you will usually find detailed directions for posting an ad.

It is actually quite simple and only takes a few seconds. You simply type some information about yourself then type your classified ad. Once all the information has been entered you click on "post" or "submit" and you're done.

Remember, no matter where you're placing your ad, your ads should not try to sell your product.

Classified ads are placed with the intention of getting interested people to respond, so you can send your sales literature to them.

Also remember, when advertising in classifieds, be sure to find the area that specializes in whatever you are trying to sell. Don't waste your time advertising your product in the "general merchandise" or "miscellaneous" sections. Concentrate solely on your target audience.

That's pretty much it. You post your classified and inform anyone who may read the ad that they can request more information by sending you email or visiting your website, if you have one.

As I mentioned, there are a lot more powerful ways to get business online, but if you want to try classified advertising, I

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recommend you start at Yahoo.com where most online marketers see the best results.

Although you shouldn't rely solely on free classifieds, I do recommend trying a few to check out the response rate. If you have a great ad and a great product or service, you can have some limited success. After all, the price is certainly right.

E-zine Advertising

Here's a rapidly expanding Internet marketing tool – an e-zine, which is an online magazine.

The number of e-zines on the net has exploded from a few hundred in 1994 to a number now well into the thousands. (It's growing too fast for an accurate count.) There are e-zines on thousands of different subjects and many offer low-cost advertising.

But before I go into details on e-zine advertising, I must first explain the difference between the two very distinct types of e-zines on the Internet.

The first type of e-zine is basically a website. These are sometimes called "webzines."

Anyone that has the web address can read the e-zine. Some are free and others charge a subscription fee. Although this type of e-zine is very nice to look at (graphics and sometimes audio are included) the marketing value is not nearly as strong as the next type.

The second type of e-zine is delivered directly to your email address. The number of email e-zines has been growing very rapidly, as more and more people jump on the Internet. Most of these are free to subscribe to and run weekly.

Although not as fancy (usually text only) the second type of e-zine is an excellent marketing tool.

Why? That's simple. Since the e-zine is delivered directly to a list of subscribers, there is no action necessary on the part of the prospect. The e-zine is delivered right to their cyber-doorstep.

Many of these email e-zines are now offering low-cost advertising to online marketers. Not only do you reach your target audience, you reach them by the thousands.

Out of all of the online marketing methods available, e-zine advertising could be the most effective.

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E-zine advertising rates are generally determined by the number of subscribers that will see your ad and the number of ads in each issue.

Some of the smaller e-zines reach a few hundred to a few thousand subscribers and charge around $10 to $20 for a classified ad. Usually you'll find anywhere from 5 to 20 classifieds in each issue.

The larger e-zines, with more than 10,000 subscribers usually offer sponsorship ads, with as many as two to four slots per issue.

Depending on the target audience and circulation, these sponsorships can pull great results. Of course you'll pay more though. Email sponsorship ads usually range in the $5 to $20 CPM rate. That is, for every thousand subscribers on the e-zine list, you pay x amount of dollars.

Example: In my *BizWeb eGazette* I offer three sponsorship slots. With a subscriber base of 150,000 the ads range from $300 to $695 per issue, which is about an average CPM for the email advertising industry.

If you think these rates are high, compare them to traditional advertising rates found in major magazines. I think you'll agree that e-zines offer a much better deal.

Interested parties simply visit your site for free details, which takes them all of 10 seconds.

Below is a list of what I consider to be some excellent values in e-zine advertising. These business-related e-zines all hold an excellent educational, as well as marketing/advertising value.

If you're not already receiving all of them, I strongly urge you to start. They are free to subscribe to and are sent directly to your email address. They are all chock-full of business opportunities and services for online marketers.

Jim Daniels/JDD Publishing's Top E-zine Recommendations

Associate Programs Newsletter

Editor/Publisher Name: Allan Gardyne
Email Address: allan@AssociatePrograms.com
Cost of Publication: Free
Description: Whether you are joining an associate program or marketing one, this newsletter is a must. Keep tabs on your favorite program with this well-written e-zine.
Type of Publication: Email newsletter
Frequency of Publication: Weekly

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URL: http://www.associateprograms.com
Advertising Format: Classifieds

The BizWeb E-Gazette

Editor/Publisher Name: Jim Daniels/JDD Publishing
Publisher Email Address: webmaster@bizweb2000.com
Cost Of Publication: Free
Description: Highlights include Internet marketing tips and featured business products and services. With more than 150,000 small business subscribers it's no wonder advertisers flock to this e-zine.
Type of Publication: Email newsletter
Frequency Of Publication: Weekly
URL: http://www.bizweb2000.com/gazette
Advertising Format: Sponsorship Advertising available in each issue.
Subscribe: freegazette@bizweb2000.com

DEMC's E-Magazine

Editor/Publisher Name: Direct Email
Marketing Co. Email Address: mail@demc.com
Cost of Publication: Free
Description: This is currently one of the biggest business-related e-zines on the net, with a very large subscriber base. A professional e-zine with excellent classified sections.
Type of Publication: Email
Newsletter Frequency of Publication: Twice weekly
URL: http://www.demc.com
Advertising Format: Classifieds
Subscribe: Call 800-348-3454 or email mail@demc.com

Web Marketing Today

Editor/Publisher Name: Wilson Internet Services, Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, Editor
Email Address: rfwilson@wilsonweb.com
Cost of Publication: Free
Description: An excellent source for current web marketing trends and strategies. This fine newsletter is one of the first web marketing e-zines on the Internet, and definitely one of the best.
Type of Publication: Email newsletter
Frequency of Publication: Tri-weekly
URL: http://www.wilsonweb.com
Advertising Format: Sponsorship

TIP: In addition to subscribing to the e-zines listed in this publication, you should actively seek out other publications related to your area of expertise. Remember, not only can you use these sites to find e-zines, you can also use them to

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promote your own email list. Below are a few excellent sources on the web to find e-zines:

- Ezinehub.com
- Liszt.com

Direct Email Marketing: Bulk email, Opt-in and Your Own House List.

The next marketing strategy that is extremely effective in the online world is called direct email.

You may have heard of a form of direct email, namely "unsolicited bulk email" referred to as "spamming." (The name comes from the famous comedy skit Spam! Spam! Spam! by Monty Python.)

In the online world, spamming means emailing your offers directly to a list of "unqualified" email addresses, or simply, people who have not asked for your messages.

In this part, you'll learn about direct email and how to do it properly.

First, the good aspects... Sending email is free, saving you hundreds or thousands of dollars in postage.

Secondly, when done properly, a direct email campaign can bring in hundreds or even thousands of dollars in a single day.

These two factors coupled with the high number of people who you can reach in a short amount of time means that every Internet marketer needs to use direct email.

But before you start, you need to know what works, and what will get you into big trouble!

If you go about your direct emailing incorrectly, not only will you receive a large amount of "flaming" and "bombing," it can land you in court!

NOTE: Flaming is another word for rude email replies from unapproving netizens.

Email bombing is the act of sending multiple messages (usually flames) to the same mailbox in an attempt to crash the server.

Why all the negative repercussions?...

The simple fact is, many Internet users look upon unsolicited email as an unacceptable intrusion of their privacy. What's more, people abhor spam because it is an unwelcome interruption in which the recipient bears the cost, if not in dollars then in time. Many people who get spam will complain to

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everyone they can think of. (Most importantly, the webmaster of your service provider.)

So just what happens to someone who has multiple complaints lodged against them for sending unsolicited email? Most Internet access providers will not tolerate this behavior and after a few warnings, they will simply cancel your account.

Although having your account canceled may not be a big deal to you, for some people it is quite a headache. It basically means that you have to set up with another provider. This usually means reconfiguring your email program to work with the new carrier.

Also, recently the courts have handed out many awards to recipients of bulk email. Yes, it is actually illegal in many places to send bulk email. The fact is, you could be opening yourself up for some big lawsuits if you send unsolicited bulk email.

So what's the correct way to run a direct email campaign? Simple.

Set a policy of sending email only to people who ask for your messages. This will allow you to stay out of trouble and concentrate your efforts only on the people who are interested in what you're offering. Besides, as you'll learn a bit later, this strategy is much more effective and profitable than any bulk emailing campaign could ever be.

Now let's move on. Either road you choose, you'll need to learn how to email to a large number of addresses at once. The next section will teach you just that.

Direct Email Techniques

If you've decided you would like to try direct email, here's what you'll need to get started...

First, I recommend you download an email program such as Eudora or Pegasus, mentioned earlier. Both of these programs allow you to set up a type of "distribution list." This allows you to send a message to one address, and have the message go to hundreds or even thousands of addresses.

Next, you'll need to perfect the cut and paste skills we reviewed in the first part.

The next thing you'll need is email addresses. Rather than rent so-called "safe lists" or other people's email lists, I highly recommend you build up your own email lists. There is no substitute for your own list of email addresses.

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There are many ways to start building your own email lists. Here's an example of one of the best ways to do it...

Offer a free newsletter at your website. Anyone interested can simply fill out a quick form and you can add them to your "in-house" list. If you do not have a website you can offer free reports at classified sites and through e-zines. This is a very effective way to grow your own list of targeted addresses.

Once you have a few addresses to contact, you simply highlight their email addresses, and cut and paste them into your email program. (Eudora users would paste them into the "nickname" or "address book" entry. Pegasus users paste them into a distribution list.)

Next, you simply compose a new message and use the BCC feature described in the first part. It's as simple as pasting your address list into the BCC field of the outgoing message.

(NOTE: It is important to use BCC and not CC so all of the recipients on the list won't see every address that received your email message.)

I recommend you practice sending email to yourself until you get it right. If you look unskilled at what you are doing you will undoubtedly hurt the effectiveness of your campaign.

The last step in this technique is respecting any "removal requests" you may get by immediately taking them off your lists.

To find a software that will aid you in your list management visit BizEeb2000.com/contact.htm

NOTE: Most ISP's limit the number of addresses you can mail to, so use 25 maximum. This do-it-yourself strategy is only effective with very tiny lists.

"Opt-In" Direct Email Marketing

For those of you who don't feel up to the rigors of "do-it-yourself" direct email marketing, there is an alternative.

Many companies are now in the business of direct emailing. Of course, this will cost you a little more than doing it yourself, but the time spent is minimized greatly.

The cost of hiring such companies varies widely depending on which company you use.

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Here are a few things to look for when searching for one of these companies...

Seek out direct email companies that send your message ONLY to people who have signed up to receive offers like yours. This is called opt-in direct email.

Here are some excellent companies that offer this type of opt-in direct email:

Htmail – Htmail.com/customer.html – Direct email advertising, without spamming.

PostMaster Direct – PostmasterDirect.com – Choose from three million email addresses in 3,000+ categories.

"Opt-In" email advertising can be very effective, but it all depends on the company you use.

The results will vary widely, since some lists will be far more receptive to your offer than others.

Remember to ask the company if they keep an active list of "remove addresses" which shows that they respect the rights of people who ask not to receive such mailings.

How to Publish Your Own Email Newsletter

Probably the very best way to run an effective direct email campaign is by doing it through your own email newsletter.

An email newsletter or e-zine is simply a regular email message that you send to anyone who asks for it. It delivers free, helpful information to your customers and your best prospects. The "information" can take on the form of industry news, web resources, discount specials or anything your heart desires.

This is definitely one of the best-proven online marketing methods I have used since 1996. And best of all, it's virtually free to publish one.

Why would you want to? That's simple. Here are just a few reasons:

- ◆ Your customers and prospects won't have to find you or your website. They'll constantly be "in touch" and in tune with your business. You can keep them abreast of new products and services as they become available. Whether it's a new product you are introducing or a service you are adding to your existing website, your newsletter is the perfect place to announce it.

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- Publishing an e-newsletter is the cheapest form of promotion you'll ever find. Unlike traditional newsletters, there are no printing or postage costs so you can publish as often as you like. Try sending out a catalog by postage every week without going broke.

- Since the cost of publishing an email newsletter is near zero, you can offer free subscriptions. This ensures a steady flow of new prospects for your products and services.

- Educating potential customers and prospects is an excellent way to market your wares. What better way to educate them through your free electronic newsletter? You'll be proving your expertise in your field and establishing credibility with every issue.

In the next two sections you'll learn how to manage your own house list and deliver to it effectively. If you have not already started building your own house list, today is the best day to start.

If you have a website, put up a small signup form where visitors can enter their email address.

For their effort, give them something free of value. Whether it is a free tip sheet, a frequent discount letter or even a full newsletter, make it worthwhile for them.

How to Manage Your List

The beauty of an email house list is that it takes very little time to manage. Even if you decide to do all of the management tasks yourself, you can do it in a few hours each week.

The key tools you'll need to effectively manage an email list are:

A marketing friendly ISP

Although I've tried plenty of different Internet service providers, I like to use Netcom to mail to my lists. Their SMTP servers are VERY fast and the messages go out to multiple recipients without delays between addresses.

Before you sign up with a new ISP, ask them if they allow you to mail to multiple recipients.

Make sure you do this BEFORE you join. Some ISP's are now blocking transmissions of more than 10 to 25 messages as they try to prevent spamming from their accounts. (What they don't realize is that not ALL group messages are spam.)

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Also make sure your provider provides compatibility with third-party email programs that help with list management. An excellent email program is Eudora Pro by Qualcomm.

With a good email program you can easily send your email messages to multiple recipients. With Eudora, you simply paste a list of email addresses into the Nickname section of the program and click the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) button. Your message will go to every recipient on the list.

Eudora Pro also lets you filter your incoming messages. This is very helpful when managing lists. You can filter every incoming message containing an "unsubscribe" header into a separate mailbox and remove these addresses before each mailing. Similarly, you can filter all new inquiries into an "add to list" mailbox. See how simple this can be?

A good mailing list tool such as MailLoop

This is a big timesaver. You can download the demo version of this program for free. Although it's designed as a bulk email program, it's great for managing email lists.

With this program you can filter email addresses out of text files containing tons of information. This is great if you are an MLM'er and receive downline reports containing lots of information.

You simply click "create email list" and all the email addresses are extracted to a separate text file.

Some other awesome features include list statistics, list splitting, duplicate address elimination, combining lists, and subtracting one list from another (great for unsubscribe requests).

With these three tools at your side, managing an email list is a piece of cake. Remember, if you're serious about online profits, you'll start your list today.

How to Deliver Your Newsletter

There are many options for delivering your e-newsletter. You can use your email client to deliver, use a free service, or utilize a paid service.

Doing it yourself is the cheapest solution, however it is also the most time consuming. I delivered my newsletter this way until it reached about 10,000 subscribers. By then, it would take me a few hours every week just to deliver it. I don't miss those days, but this was a cheap delivery method.

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If you're doing it yourself, all you need is a decent email program like the two mentioned earlier.

Send a copy of your newsletter to yourself and put some addresses from your list in the BCC (blind carbon copy) field.

Remember, it's important to use the BCC field when mailing to a list. This ensures that everyone on the list does not see all of the other email addresses on the list. No one wants their email address publicized all over the net.

There are many companies that will host your email list for free. When you deliver to your list, these companies benefit by placing an ad in your publication, usually at the very top. Although I recommend you pay a small fee so that these ads do not appear, the free list services are a decent option for folks on a limited budget. One such company is CoolList.com.

Although using the services of CoolList means you will be promoting their services for free, it also makes things easier on newbies by handling subscribe and unsubscribe requests for you. A decent trade off – especially for newcomers to e-publishing.

There are now many companies that offer list hosting and delivery services for a fee. This is definitely the easiest way to do it, but it is also the most expensive. Here are a few recommended companies:

SparkList.com

An excellent majordomo list host and the host of my *BizWeb Gazette*.

This company offers a hybrid web interface for simplifying your list management. Competitive pricing, especially for large lists like my own, and very good technical support.

Mail-List.com

A pay-by-size list host that offers an easy to use system for both you and your subscribers.

Also offers hosting of announcement lists and discussion groups.

A few tips to remember when publishing your newsletter by email:

1. Keep your posts UNDER 24k in size. This is a lot of text so it should not be a problem for you. The main reason for this is because of AOL. AOL's email server automatically converts any messages over 24k to an attachment. An attachment will NOT be read by most people because they either do not know how

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to open it or they are afraid of getting a virus, which can be spread by attachments.

2. To get newsletters through more filters and to more subscribers, consider sending only the first few paragraphs via email, with a link to your website for the rest of the newsletter. You'll have fewer words in your email that could trip a spam filter, and more subscribers may read your newsletter.

Your Freebie Strategy…

I'd like to close this part by sharing with you the cheapest and perhaps the most effective way you'll ever market on the Internet.

To put it in the simplest terms, you grow a giant opt-in email list and regularly contact only the people who ask you to! Sounds easy right, but I know what you're thinking, "How the heck do I get people to ask me for my email marketing messages?" Great question. Here's the answer...

"You give away something of value, a freebie, in exchange for their contact information."

That's right, in order to effectively use opt-in email marketing, you really need to offer a freebie.

Of all the ways to grow a potential customer list on the Internet, this one method stands head and shoulders above the rest.

Here's a perfect example of this in action:

Every single day fifty or more people download my *Beginner's Guide to Starting A High-Income Business on the Internet* from my site.

That's why I wrote it. To give it away and grow my opt-in list of potential customers! And it works. As I write this I have some 150,000+ names and email addresses of potential customers. Every one of them asked me to email them on a regular basis, which I do with my newsletter and my pre-programmed follow-up autoresponses.

That means when I have a new product to introduce, I have 150,000+ people who want to hear about it. When I have a joint venture to promote with another marketer (more on the later) I have customers ready to buy. Can you see the power in this strategy?

I'll explain exactly how this strategy is set up and how you can utilize it too in a moment. Right now I want to elaborate a bit on this marketing strategy called the 'freebie.'

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How many times have you tried a free magazine subscription? How about a free month of Internet service? Ever receive a free laundry detergent sample in the mail?

If you didn't answer "Yes" to at least one of the questions above, I'd be very surprised.

You see, these big companies know the power of "free." Do you think they would go around giving their stuff away for free if it didn't pay off in the long run?

Hey, even if you never subscribe to that magazine, sign on with that ISP, or buy that brand of detergent, these companies have accomplished an objective. You have tried their product and heard their name. Perhaps you even were impressed by the fact that they gave you something for free. And more than likely you parted with some valuable information in order to get your freebies – information like your name, address or email address.

In a nutshell, you were added to the marketing database of these companies. It may not yield immediate results for the company. It may take weeks, months or even years to convert that freebie into a sale, but the bottom line is, companies survive on sales and a sales lead is a potential sale. And that's why "free" works in marketing, especially on the Internet.

Now, of course you can't go around giving everything away for free. However you can and should be giving away something! Of course it has to be something of value.

Whether it is a free subscription to your email newsletter, a free software program, or something else of value, if you give it away for free (with no strings!) people will remember you. Heck, I use ALL of those methods at my website.

I give away free demo software, which converts about 8% of the folks that download it into a sale. I offer a free newsletter, the *BizWeb eGazette* that keeps my customers and prospects informed on Internet marketing. I give away books to teach small businesses the basics of how to market on the web. All of these "freebie" strategies pay huge dividends, especially over time.

If you're going to do business online, get used to the idea of giving away freebies. It's the very best way to grow your email marketing campaign.

How you can set this strategy up and utilize it too:

Every single freebie you offer should be in exchange for your prospects name and email address. This data should be saved and treated like gold! You should not only add every address to a "house list" of email contacts, you should seriously consider

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implementing a follow-up autoresponder email sequence with each freebie you offer!

More Marketing Tools

Sig Files and Autoresponders

There are a number of helpful email-related options you should consider using. In this part, I review popular email features for online marketers. Even though all of them are not free, the costs are minimal and can yield huge rewards. I strongly recommend that you consider utilizing most, if not all of the following.

The Signature

A free marketing tool you should know about is signature.

The signature (sig) file is now available on almost all email programs. Simply put, the signature is a short "footer" (usually two to five lines) that you configure yourself. It can be configured to be automatically added to all of your email messages and newsgroup postings.

The signature file is a great online marketing tool. It's an excellent way for potential customers to learn about your products and services. Since it shows up on the end of every

message you send, the signature can constantly advertise what you have to offer.

The typical sig file consists of your name, business name, a brief description of your products or services and web address if you have one. Remember, yours doesn't have to be typical. Use your imagination.

Here's an example of an effective signature file:

JDD Publishing - Smithfield, R.I. USA
FREE Marketing Help! http://www.bizweb2000.com
Subscribe to The BizWeb E-Gazette! It's FREE!
Send any email to: freegazette@bizweb2000.com

The above signature serves a purpose, just as yours should. If your email program allows you to configure a sig file, do it today.

After all, it's free advertising! When used as a footer to every email you send, sig files become even more important.

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Autoresponders

One component of email marketing that I consider an absolute must, no matter how small (or large) your online marketing budget, is called the autoresponder. Even if you're familiar with autoresponders I urge you to read this section, as you're sure to pick up a tip or two.

An autoresponder allows you to have your sales letter (or any other email message) delivered 24 hours a day and within seconds of receiving a request. Anyone who's using the Internet to market their products or services should use autoresponders.

I currently have multiple autoresponders in action. Also known as a "mailbot," there are numerous companies that provide this service on the net.

This is how autoresponders work... Upon reading one of your web pages or advertisements, a prospective customer decides to reply and get more information or your "free report." The email address they are instructed to reply to is not your own, but the address of your autoresponder.

As soon as any message is received by the autoresponder, it automatically emails your preformatted "free report," sales letter or any other message you decide to offer (usually within seconds).

There are a myriad of possible autoresponder uses. Ideas on how you should be utilizing autoresponders include setting up:

- Automated support messages
- "Welcome to our newsletter" messages
- Free articles on your area of expertise
- Sales letters
- "About our company" messages
- "Advertising information"
- "Welcome to our reseller program messages

There are also a few things you need to know when setting up an autoresponder:

1. Be sure to compose your message in a straight "ASCII" word processor such as Windows write or Notepad. This allows you to save a copy of each autoresponder message you compose (you should always keep a backup copy of all your autoresponder messages). And more importantly, the autoresponder messages will be formatted properly so they will look good in all email programs.

If you compose email messages in a non-ASCII word processor, certain characters can change when passing

through Internet gateways that do not understand them. This can make your message look illegible and in turn, scare customers away.

2. When composing an autoresponder message (or any email message for that matter) always use a maximum line length of 64 characters.

When composing email messages most people just type and type without using a hard carriage return. Since many email programs do not utilize automatic "word wrap," the recipient's email software thinks it's one long sentence.

The message then turns out looking all chopped up. You can avoid this problem by using a hard carriage return. You do this by pressing the "enter" or "return" key on your keyboard after a maximum of 64 characters (including spaces).

3. If you plan on doing any unsolicited emailing, do not use your autoresponder address in the mailing. Your autoresponder will be subject to cancellation upon the first sign of sending bulk email to unqualified lists. It won't take long for them to see some flaming (harsh replies) or email bombing (repeated flames).

A Few Final Tips

Virus Protection

Is virus protection really a marketing tool? Well, if you consider something that can save your entire customer base from being wiped out, a tool, then this qualifies!

Until recent virus outbreaks on the Internet, lots of people didn't realize that viruses could be sent via email. Although you can't get a virus from an email message itself, it can be transmitted via an attachment.

Believe me, I know. I've gotten a few myself. Luckily, my virus protection software detected them before I suffered the consequences, which can be very grave indeed.

Even if you don't have the luxury of good virus protection software, you can still stay away from viruses sent via email by remembering these things:

- ◆ If you ever receive an unsolicited email message with an attachment, don't download it.

- ◆ If your email software downloads it to your hard drive automatically, don't open the file.

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◆ If it looks like something of interest, copy it to a disk and bring it to someone with a good virus protection program. (By good, I mean fairly new and preferably not virus specific.)

Once you're sure the file is clean you can open it. Nothing is worth risking your hard drive and all the data on it.

Remember, you may think you're safe because your computer is working fine today. However, this may not be the case.

Many viruses work to destroy files at a progressive pace and you don't realize you have one until it's too late. Do yourself a favor and get some protection before it's too late.

There are a number of good virus protection programs that can be downloaded from the Internet. Most of them are shareware programs that you can try for a month or so. The best I've tried are Symantec's Norton Anti-virus and a program from Kaspersky.com.

Domain Name Registration

Here's an excellent tool that immediately gives your business a professional and "Internet established" presence.
Many people consider this a necessity for only very large companies, but when you look at the benefits you get by doing it, you'll see that it's well worth the small yearly fee of $15 to $30. The first benefit is the obvious one – Identity.

Instead of being seen as merely a user or subscriber (aaa@aol.com or yyyy@compuserve.com) to an Internet access provider, you will have your own identity. When people email you at anything@yourcompany.com they will have the feeling they are contacting one of those "large" companies.

Sounding like an established business certainly goes a long way in marketing. You can also set up email addresses for each of the "departments" of your business. You tell prospects they can email their orders to order@yourcompany.com or to send inquiries to staff@yourcompany.com.

This not only helps organization on your end, it also adds to that "large company" image.

So What Makes A Good Domain Name?

Okay, so now that you know a few reasons why snatching up some additional domain names is a solid and cheap investment, here's a little help in choosing your names wisely.

Keep your domain names as simple and as descriptive as possible. Try and describe site content with the domain name if

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possible. My own domains above are a good example of that.

And contrary to popular belief, the hyphen (-) can be a good component in a domain name.

Recently, I had a little chat with a fellow you may have heard of, Declan Dunn of ActiveMarketplace.com. (He's a leading expert on affiliate marketing and small business growth online.) He recently experimented with hyphenated domain names to be used as headlines in advertising.

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Note from Editor:

Email is a great way of staying in touch with prospects and customers. Get started with your promotion today.

InfoProductBluePrint.com
your blueprint for creating and launching
a profitable info product

Info Product Blueprint
1st Edition

Appendices

Appendices

Info Product Blueprint was created by
Kenneth A. McArthur

Alysan Delaney-Childs, Project Manager and Editor
Dan Giordano, Workbook Manager and Editor
Michelle Alvarez, Design, Layout, Copy Editor
Ben Blakesley, Audio Editor

APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHIES

Michelle Alvarez

Michelle has spent more than 20 years working as a transcriptionist, word processor, secretary and executive assistant, with much of that time spent in the legal arena. She is a former word processing supervisor and has provided software training in programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel. She is also a published author and has served as Editor on a large corporate newsletter.

Variety in the workplace is something Michelle enjoys, so she made the transition from working for others to working for herself more than six years ago. She even tackled a one-year temporary job as an Assistant Property Manager at a ten-building office park. Her transcription work has included a lot of interviews and teleconferences, but also larger groups such as focus groups and City Council meetings.

Michelle is still fairly new to the world of Internet marketing. Most of her clients over the past six years have been attorneys and municipal financial advisors, but she has found she truly likes the excitement and variety Internet marketing offers. She says it's also much more interesting!

Some of her Internet experience includes offering virtual assistance, project management, as well as previous work on product launches for Sterling Valentine and Ken McArthur. You can find Michelle's website at AudioTranscribers.com.

Mike Ambrosio

Mike has been on line for several years, starting out as a web host and a script installer. Although he has had some moderate success, it wasn't until he attended his first event – a simple breakfast – that changed his focus to internet marketing. It was there he made contact with other on line marketers and subsequently went on to form several JV's, and watched his business take off. His latest site, MrOverDeliver.com, was the result of the many contacts he has made since. Mike was able to build a list of over 6,000 from scratch in just 60 days and continues to grow! His income has also seen a jump from several hundred per month to more than 5,000 a month.

Mike has also created several products, including three e-books, three software products and several membership sites. Mike has also been a featured contributor to several products as an expert in relationship building and list building.

Michael Angier

Michael E. Angier is the founder and CIO (Chief Inspiration Officer) of Success Networks International.

He's a father, husband, writer, speaker, entrepreneur, coach and student. He's also the creator of *The World Class Business™ Conference*.

Michael is the publisher and editor of *Success Strategies*™ as well as *Success Digest*™ and *World Class Business Ideas*™ – publications of ideas, information and inspiration.

He is also the author of *Strategies for Success*, and his forthcoming book, *The Ten Pillars of a World-Class Business*.

Michael's work has been featured in numerous publications such as *USA Today, Selling Power, Home Business Magazine, Opportunity World, Personal Excellence* and *Sales & Marketing Excellence* as well as dozens of electronic publications. He's been interviewed on both TV and radio.

Mr. Angier has experienced personal and professional success, but he's also suffered bitter defeat. Although certainly preferring the former, he feels that he's learned the most from his struggles and disappointments. He feels that life's greatest lessons are learned by overcoming the obstacles in the path of a challenging and worthwhile objective.

Michael's passion is human potential. He believes fervently in the indomitable human spirit and revels in helping people succeed in all aspects of their lives.

Ben Blakesley

Ben Blakesley began his career behind the mic, performing acoustic singer/songwriter sets in the campus town of Durham, New Hampshire before making the switch to working 'behind the glass' in 2000. Since then, he has worked in various recording studios in the Philadelphia area, including the famed Sigma Sound, on a variety of projects ranging from hip hop and rap, to jazz fusion, rock, classical, and just about everything in-between.

In 2004, Ben struck out on his own founding the audio services company, Javboy Records, which he currently operates. Javboy's slogan is "All Things Sound" and they certainly don't disappoint, providing services like custom music composition, multi-track digital recording, digital audio editing, digital audio mastering, audio creation, and much more. Visit *JavboyRecords.com* for more info.

Ben's work can be heard on various websites throughout the internet, on many independent record releases, as well as on the Fox Network, MTV, HGTV, and the DIY Network. Ben lives in the Philadelphia suburbs with his wife, Lauryn, a registered nurse. The couple are expecting their first child shortly.

JoAnna Brandi

JoAnna Brandi is the publisher of the *Customer Care Coach*®, a weekly training program in the "The Art and Science of Exquisite Customer Care." She has been the President of JoAnna Brandi & Company for the last 16 years helping clients create Customer-Caring companies that Thrive! – Where the employees are motivated, the customers are loyal and the competitors are nervous.

She is the author of three books: *Winning at Customer Retention, 101 Ways to Keep 'em Happy, Keep 'em Loyal, and Keep 'em Coming Back*, *Building Customer Loyalty – 21 Essential Elements in ACTION*, and *54 Ways to Stay Positive in a Changing, Challenging and Sometimes Negative World*.

Ms. Brandi began her career in relationship marketing over 28 years ago at CMP Media, a major trade publisher, in New York. There she developed the multi-million dollar *Direct Marketing Services* profit center where she built the first CMP database and the company's first on-line customer care system. She was instrumental in the founding of the on-site day care center. In 1989, she left CMP to form her own company. Her websites are CustomerCareCoach.com and CustomerRetention.com.

Amie Brooks

In 1993 Amie R. Brooks founded Acom Creative, a full-service design firm in Atlanta . Her firm has led the way in defining the industry of creative communication by providing unique design and marketing solutions for a growing clientele in the US and abroad.

With award-winning artists, Acom, whose work is professional as it is creative, and sole mission is clients' consistent progress, has passionately committed to delivering a consistent experience of quality design

and encompassing service. They offer graphic design, creative project management, brand management, copywriting and editing, marketing consulting, and customized training.

Gail Buckley

When I worked for a salary I did every kind of job from waitressing and hostessing to receptionist to sales, to graphic design, to advertising and accounting work – you name it – I tried it! But I couldn't find something that I could really sink my teeth into until I began spending time online after finishing up my first book, *Funny Wiring*. You can find the online version of this book at AboutAutism.com.

In the year 2001, I launched the entrepreneurial "HUB" site: WebSuccessMaker.com, an online business planning & resource coordination service and the ebookstore: Ebiz-Ebooks-ToGo.com.

In 2002, I published *Plan To Succeed Online,* a comprehensive online business planning master course. Plan-to-Succeed-Online.com. In March 2004, I launched an innovative viral solution to affiliate marketing with my *Perpetual Profit Portfolios: The Only eBusiness Solution that Makes Multi-Stream Earning Effortless*! WebSuccessMastery.com

However, the culmination of all my work online is my WOW line of Content based Membership sites – WOW: Where Vision and Value Go Hand in Hand with Information and Opportunity. At WOW, We specialize in Over-delivery! Wow-Content-Club.com, The-Wow-Empire.com, NicheReportsResource.com, FreeNicheReports.com

Bob Chambers

Bob Chambers, *The Multimedia Guy*™, is an ex-aerospace engineer and program manager who started his special interests video production business in 1992 after studying with Leonard S. Smith, Jr., an Emmy award winning member of the Directors Guild of America, and Barb Besteni, a professional videographer and trainer.

In 1997, he founded the first ever digital video editing newsletter, *DVEreview*. In it he taught guerilla videographers how to build a low-cost digital video editing suite for under $3,000 (including a new computer). At that time, most were paying upwards to $50,000 to do the same thing. He proved his point by actually building an entire computer based digital video editing suite for $2,967 and documented it in both his newsletter and the video, *How To Easily Build Your Own Low Cost/High Quality DVE Suite*.

Two years later, he moved his hard copy newsletter to the Internet as a membership site, which is now known as Flash Publishers Online. In 2002, he posted one of the first ever Flash screen capture videos on the Internet and has been using screen capture videos every since as an easy and effective way of putting video on the Web.

Bob continues to teach people how to easily create multimedia products through his own products, articles, newsletters, videos, seminars, workshops and webinars. He also creates training videos for software developers and joint venture partners. MultimediaProfitsRevealed.com.

Craig Childs

Craig Childs has worked behind the scenes on many Internet sites as the programming and instructional development guy. Teaching people, including small business owners, how to use the power of the Internet for business and information has been a passion of Craig's for many years. Representative client businesses have included real estate, healthcare, finance and collectibles. Craig can be reached at info@compuknow.com.

Tim Cleaveland

Tim Cleaveland is a systems analyst, having worked for various Fortune 500 companies such as Fidelity Investments and Electronic Data Systems (EDS) over the past 19 years. Over the past two years, he has been studying and helping several veteran internet marketers behind the scenes. He is now branching out with his own projects dealing with Internet realities as well as school safety. You can learn more about Tim at TimCleaveland.com and TheWebSkeptic.com.

Willie Crawford

Willie Crawford is a corporate president, published author, seminar speaker and host, teleseminar speaker and host, retired military officer, karate black belt, network marketing trainer, and lifetime student of marketing. I've been in business, earning good money on the Internet since late 1996. In addition to having written and published a best-selling cookbook, *Soul Food Recipes Learned on a North Carolina Tobacco Farm*, and a best-selling inspirational biography, *Git Off The Porch,* Willie has written over 250 articles on building a successful Internet-based or home-based business. Active in the Warrior forum, Willie's websites include WillieCrawford.com, Chitterlings.com, InternetMarketingHowToWorkshop.com and BlueprintToInternetMarketingSuccess.com.

Jim Daniels

Jim Daniels started his online business with just $300. Six months later he was earning enough to quit his day job and his "web income" is now well into six figures a year. Jim's BizWeb2000.com site shows others how to spin serious profits from the web, right from the comfort of their own homes.

Internet marketing consultant Jim Daniels wasn't always an expert on making money on the web. "I didn't even have a computer," says Daniels. "In early 1996, I used my $300 tax refund to buy a used 386 computer." For the next few months he spent evenings online searching for the best ways to start and market an online business.

"By the time I'd found my way around the Internet, I had 40 pages of great tips, a kind of road map to starting your own business online." That became the basis for Daniels' first publication, *Internet E-mail! Beyond the Basics!*, now converted into a hot-selling e-book.

Sales of his manual were so hot that he quickly saw his career changing. "I woke up one morning to realize I was making more from the Internet than I was with my regular job." Jim's website is BizWeb2000.com.

Alysan Delaney-Childs

After too many frequent flyer miles and yet another delayed plane, Alysan moved her business online. Focused on organizational effectiveness, (consultant speak for showing people how to make money using what they have), Alysan has used her marketing, teaching and organizational skills in coaching newbies and intermediate Internet users to promote themselves and their products online.

Wanting to learn more about the inner and behind-the-scenes workings of large subscription sites, Alysan apprenticed with Ken McArthur covering customer service and other back-end functions. Her website is BuzzForBusiness.com.

Ann DeVere

Ann DeVere, author, speaker and *Marketing Blueprint* developer, is a senior partner with NOR CONCEPTS, a San Diego-based marketing firm catering to small businesses with big goals. Starting out

in the highly competitive New York City real estate market, Ann moved into the apparel industry and opened her own retail store featuring in-house designer originals.

That experience evolved into an executive position in the International fashion manufacturing industry. After starting her own full service international consulting firm serving apparel manufacturers, Ann saw a need for marketing assistance for small business owners such as herself.

Ann has driven *NOR CONCEPTS* onto the cutting edge of customized small business marketing, helping other entrepreneurial business owners learn to put their marketing and advertising dollars to the best use and realize their full potential.

John Di Lemme

As a young child, John Di Lemme was clinically diagnosed as a stutterer and told that he would never speak fluently.

Today, John has achieved great success as an international motivational speaker, accomplished author and multi-million dollar entrepreneur.

Just recently John was on CNBC *Power Lunch* as a real estate investor.

John shocks millions globally by exposing the truth about how to achieve monumental life success despite the labels that society has placed on you.

Through his award-winning live seminars, power-packed training programs, live teleclasses, and weekly e-zine, John Di Lemme has made success a reality for thousands worldwide.

As an Author, speaker, entrepreneur this Million Dollar producer now teaches others the inside secrets on how to truly build a million dollar business.

Brian Edmondson

Brian T. Edmondson is an email and relationship marketing expert. In a recent multi-million dollar product launch, Brian outsold and outperformed many well-known marketers with list sizes of 10x, 20x, and over 100x his small, responsive list of only 1,286 subscribers – generating over $15,000 in 7 days. Using the methods that Brian teaches can increase the profitability of your business as much as 500% or more.

Mike Enos

He has sold over $809,000 on eBay, shipping over 15,000 packages all FROM HOME!

- Received eBay's prestigious Platinum Powerseller award for achieving over $25,000 in MONTHLY sales.
- Invited to give three presentations on finding product to sell at eBay LIVE 2003 in Orlando, Florida
- Has been written up in the Washington Post twice
- Been a guest on multiple business radio shows
- Been interviewed twice along with eBay's own Dean of Education, Jim "Griff" Griffith on business talk radio
- Has helped thousands of people to start their own successful eBay selling business
- Writes the world's best and amazing FREE eBay selling newsletter
- Based on the 50+ (5 Star) feedbacks left at Alexa.com, Mike's PlatinumPowerSeller.com is the top-rated eBay Seller's website in the world.

Mike Filsaime

A former automobile General Manager from Long Island, New York, Mike left the business in 2004 when he was making more money in one month online than he did in one year working at one of the largest auto dealers in the U.S.

Mike developed an unique viral marketing program known as *Butterfly Marketing*. He has many domains and specializes in developing and delivering quality products to help Internet marketers become more effective and profitable.

Reed Floren

Reed Floren is a professional joint venture broker; his connections can make your business a success. Reed has worked along side great marketers such as Mark Joyner, Henry Gold, David Riklan and Russell Brunson, among many others. Reed takes great pride in being able to massively build your opt-in list, accelerate your affiliate program and bring a fire hose of traffic and sales to your site. Grab Reed for your free joint venture consultation (a $197 value) at JVBroker.info.

Carl Galletti

Carl Galletti rose to the very top of the direct-response advertising world and is one of the best freelance copywriters and marketing experts in the world.

Many of the top people in direct-response advertising turn to Carl to write copy for them.

One of them is direct-marketing expert Gary Halbert, author of *The Gary Halbert Letter*, a newsletter on copywriting and marketing.

During his past two marketing seminars in which sixty people paid $6,950 each to attend, Gary selected Carl to be a part of a handful of the best copywriters in the country who would write ads for the people attending.

Rosalind Gardner

In late 1997, Rosalind Gardner was working as a civil servant (air traffic controller) without one shred of business experience. However, with a single click on a banner ad that read "Webmasters Make Money," Rosalind's life changed completely… for the better.

Now she helps others do the same.

Author of *The Super Affiliate Handbook: How I Made $436,797 Last Year Selling Other People's Stuff Online* and co-author of *The Affiliate Business Blueprint*, Rosalind is recognized worldwide as a leading authority on the topic of affiliate marketing.

As a speaker, author and consultant, Rosalind teaches her students how to create online businesses without having products of their own. She also teaches merchants how to use affiliate marketing to promote their products online for free. With her help, many of her clients are now earning their own hefty six-figure incomes.

Dan Giordano

Long marketed as one of those 'mystery guys,' Dan's online marketing and coaching expertise is no longer a mystery. As online manager for John Di Lemme and other sites, Dan has created over $5 million dollars in online sales over a six-month period.

Building on his expertise in real estate investing and Victorian house rehabs, Dan used online promotion and marketing skills to build FreeRealEstateDeals.com and FindYourWhy.com to reach the clients who want to make best use of the power of the Internet today.

Sid Hale

Sid is a skilled programmer working for many national companies redoing old 'legacy' programs, installing new programs and making it all work for the companies. In addition to his passion for sailing, Sid is an avid Internet marketer who co-partnered with Ken McArthur to develop jvAlert by invitation only joint venture partner network.

A published author, Sid is also a teacher showing individuals and small business owners how to make money online through effective advertising and promotion. His primary website ad-Clix.com (affectionately called 'Internet marketing on steroids') founded in early 2002, focuses on researching, developing, and testing cost-effective e-business marketing strategies that small and home-based business owners can immediately apply to their businesses and profit from.

Rocket Helstrom

Robert 'Rocket' Helstrom has earned advanced degrees in TV, film and communication theory, written ten screenplays and marketed online and offline for major companies like Polaroid, 20th Century Fox and Andersen Windows. Along with Michael Koenigs, he created the *Internet Infomercial Toolkit* and the *Internet Video Starter Kit*.

Gary Knuckles

Gary is the previous owner of the five-year old *AudioWhiz.com* website business which features AudioWhiz study cassettes and audio CDs. In Gary's words, "I'm learning as you help others, you receive so much more in return as well, and I'm not just meaning from a profit standpoint."

In 1999, with only $500, he successfully built that online business, which generated over a million dollars in 3 years time, selling self-produced audio CDs and cassettes to a niche computer training info market. When he sold the business, he had more than 28 products he had developed and marketed through his affiliate program and online promotions.

He sold that business. His current company, BudgetWare, Inc., now develops software and digital info products. This includes MP3s, PDF files, CDs and writing e-books. His company also provides consulting, recording services for teleseminar events, and they host and coordinate teleseminars, including PDF file creation and conversion services. His company also provides teleconferencing services to those needing easy and affordable conference lines for their business. You can read more at e-Teleconferencing.com. His company's flagship product is a software program called *Internet Information Manager,* designed for managing your marketing, business contacts, projects, e-books and online information. It is also being used for study and research projects by students to manage their many online and study projects.

Mike Koenigs

Michael "MAK" Koenigs has mastered the art of making things work. Part programmer, producer, artist, inventor, musician, filmmaker and engineer, he's been taking things apart just to figure out how they work since he was three.

His motto is "Breaking the Rules Without Breaking the Law" and his clients love him for it. For over 20 years, Mike has consulted with Fortune 500 companies, millionaires, billionaires, entrepreneurs, start-ups, authors, musicians, artists and movie stars. Using technology, the Internet, video, animation, music,

games and "out of the box" thinking, he creates and markets profitable products and services for virtually anyone.

He teaches people how to produce effective video at InfomercialToolkit.com.

Peter Koning

Peter is the founder of Affiliate-Software-Review.com, the Internet's most comprehensive interactive database of over 45 affiliate tracking systems. In just over one year, Affiliate-Software-Review.com has become a top-ranking resource site for merchants involved in affiliate marketing and provides powerful affiliate technology and product updates to its newsletter subscribers.

Peter Koning has been active in the international IT, telecom and Internet industries for over 20 years. Key functional areas Peter has worked in are: software development, project management, new product introduction, marketing and sales and affiliate tracking software.

With a Computer Science degree and an International MBA, Peter uses advanced techniques to research the important features and various sources of affiliate tracking software and management solutions for his merchant clients.

As a founding member of Affiliate-Software-Review.com, Peter is responsible for vendor and merchant relationships, business development, operations management, and arranging the extensive reviews of affiliate tracking systems. He also makes the cappuccinos in the morning.

Peter focuses his time helping his clients grow their business via affiliate and other internet marketing strategies, and the remainder launching his own affiliate-related ventures and developing new viral marketing systems for merchants.

Gary Knuckles

In 1999, with only $500 he successfully built that online business, which generated over a million dollars in 3 years time, selling self-produced audio CDs, and cassettes to a niche computer training info market. When he sold the business he had more than 28 products that he had developed and marketed through his affiliate program and online promotions.

He sold that business. His current company BudgetWare, Inc. now develops software and digital info products. This includes MP3s, PDF files, CDs and writing e-books. His company also provides consulting; recording services for teleseminar events, and they host and coordinate teleseminars, including PDF file creation and conversion services. His company also provides teleconference services through e-Teleconferencing.com to those needing easy and affordable conference lines for their business.

His company's flagship product is a software program called *Internet Information Manager* designed for managing your marketing, business contacts, projects, e-books and online information. It is also being used for study and research projects by students to manage their many online and study projects.

Simon Leung

Simon Leung began working in Google's AdWords Department in April of 2002, starting as an ad reviewer, going through thousands of ads a day to make sure that they complied with Google's editorial policies.

He then moved on to servicing advertisers and in May of 2003, Simon was selected as one of two people to start the AdWords Optimization Team, and instantly became a leading member, contributor, trainer and quality reviewer of one of the highest performing groups in AdWords ever since.

Recognized as a resource both externally and internally, Simon worked with hundreds of advertisers with all kinds of problems and successfully helped them achieve their advertising goals.

For more than three years after that, Simon continued to improve upon the performance of thousands of accounts and even created tons of new campaigns for clients from scratch.

He tested and developed countless strategies with his own team and knows the insides as to what techniques produce results. He has also brought thousands of new, targeted visitors to his clients' websites and cut their advertising costs in half literally overnight.

Simon attended the June 2006 jvAlert Live in Philadelphia.

In a giant leap of faith just six weeks later, Simon actually retired from his Google position early – leaving the stability of a promising career and over $100,000 worth of stock options on the table – to bring to the Internet marketing world what has never been brought before.

Within two weeks of his transition into a full-time Internet marketer, Simon jumpstarted his way at light speed into expert status, already had his live speaking debut at Joel Christopher's MasterListBuilder FUN Shop, contributed to Ken McArthur's Info Product Blueprint and has several more ground-breaking products in the works – and you can personally pick his brain for your own projects at jvAlert Live!

Hal Macomber

A skilled project manager in the fields of construction and capital facilities management, Hal takes those skills and shows people how to get better results online and offline with effective project management. Hal gives useful information in his blog ReformingProjectManagement.com on current projects and offers a free mini-course on how to work with others at LetsPlayCatch.com.

Fabio Marciano

I worked with a stockbroker one summer and a financial planner for two years. I really didn't understand the importance of what my boss was doing for his clients until almost a decade later. At the time, I just viewed it as a sales job because most of the new financial planner's just cold-called people all day and all night long. After reading way too many books on finance and investing, I've come to understand the importance of having a good certified financial planner in your corner.

As for what I do, I'm a brand manager at a food company. The pay is good and I love what I'm doing, which is why I'm holding off getting into financial planning, which may be in "the cards" at some point. For now, I'm content with the path I've chosen.

In addition to coaching my wonderful clients, I offer a marketing consulting company helping online entrepreneurs with marketing and promoting their products better. I'll offer a full-range of services, but mainly focus on ghostwriting for people, packaging their products, marketing and promoting them, as well about anything I can do to help them CASH MORE CHECKS!

It's a lot, but you've got to live some time, right?

I've written two books:
- *The Secrets of Wealth: The Beginner's Guide to Financial Freedom*
- *The Wealthy Pauper*

Both books will help you gain control of your financial and personal life and help get you on the fast track to that new life you've imagined for yourself. Visit me at FabManSecrets.com.

Most people have come to my site looking for the infamous *Cash Flow Calculator*, which will help you figure out if you've got a positive or negative cash flow. Others have read some of my articles in my newsletter or someone else's newsletter and wanted to see what I'm all about.

Mary Mazzullo

Mary Mazzullo is an amazing photographer who has done photography sessions for Kendra Todd (only female to ever win The Apprentice), Bill Romanowski (football player for 49ers and Broncos – just in case you did not know) and Joe Polish, not to mention almost every Internet marketer worth mentioning.

Ken McArthur

Ken was the official mentor for Sterling Valentine as he took his launch from ZERO to over $100,000 in less than 4 days. Ken and Sterling documented the process as a "proof of concept" for *Info Product Blueprint*.

Ken McArthur met Sterling Valentine at jvAlert Live in Philadelphia in November of 2005. They stayed up half the night talking about the "ultimate info product" in the lobby of the Renaissance Philadelphia Airport Hotel.

Ken had a mission, too. Having been on the Internet since the "dark ages," he was the mover behind a number of successful launches. More importantly, he's in a unique position as the owner of jvAlert – a joint venture powerhouse that counts of some of the top marketers in the world as members. Ken has seen more huge joint ventures and launches than most people see in ten lifetimes and has had a few successes on his own, too.

But more than anything, Ken has a mission, and that mission is to help as many people as possible earn a decent living on the Internet. In order to prove that he could mentor someone to the top-ranks of info product success, Ken needed a test case. That was Sterling Valentine.

Ken's websites include: jvAlert.com, KenMcarthur.com, AffiliateShowcase.com, InfoProductBlueprint.com, MBSInternet.com and PortalCube.com. Ken can be reached at ken@jvalert.com.

Curlan Moore

Described as one of the 'baddest drummers out there,' Curlan Moore has taken his love of music and sound to teach people how to use audio online. Curlan simplifies technical terms and finds inexpensive ways to achieve results for your website conversion. He can be found at MassMediaWeb.com and WebsiteVocalizer.com.

Xavier Nelson

Xavier Nelson is an Internet Marketer, e-zine Publisher, Article Marketing Specialist and Work-at-Home Business Coach. Together with his wife Brandy, he has dedicated himself to helping aspiring and seasoned marketers achieve their goals.

His sites include XavierNelson.com, BusinessInformationConnection.com and JointVentureInfo.com.

Michael Port

Michael Port is the author of *Book Yourself Solid, The Fastest, Easiest and Most Reliable System For Getting More Clients Than You Can Handle* (John Wiley & Sons). He's also contributing author to *Success Secrets of the Online Marketing Superstars* and *Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters*.

Michael is a unique and memorable professional speaker on business development topics for the small business owner and professional service provider. He leaves his audiences with a skip in their step, feeling a little smarter, much more alive and thinking a heck of a lot bigger about who they are and what they offer the world.

In fact, you may recognize Michael, as he was once a slightly famous actor starring in TV and film projects like *Sex and the City, Third Watch, All My Children, Guiding Light, Central Park West, 100 Centre Street, The Pelican Brief, Down to Earth, Last Call, The Believer* and many more.

Today, Michael runs Book Yourself Solid, the premier training and coaching company dedicated to helping small business owners book their business solid and make their name in the world. Visit him at BookYourselfSolid.com.

Lisa Preston

Lisa Preston, ex-school teacher turned software creator, is the author of best-selling software *Instant Niche Emails*, *Complete Brainstorm Lab*, as well as numerous other niche info products. Known best as a 'Relationship Marketer,' Lisa focuses on helping others establish a trusting connection online with their clients and potential customers.

Rick Raddatz

Have you read those stories about entrepreneurs who make millions... only to LOSE EVERYTHING... and then make it right back?

How do they do that?

You're about to find out. Rick Raddatz was a multi-millionaire at age 28. By age 32 (many people don't know this) he had LOST EVERYTHING in a single year through the PERFECT FINANCIAL STORM of a divorce, the tech-stock crash and a $200,000 tax error (not in his favor).

Rick found himself not only broke, but over $100,000 in debt. Now, at age 38, he has a thriving Internet company, a net worth over $10 Million, and a million-dollar vacation home in Breckenridge, Colorado where he now spends most of his time.

Adam Rays

You would never know by looking at him that this zestfully realistic Half Moon Bay, California native is the owner of PageOneRealEstate.com, a dynamic Santa Barbara-based progressive marketing company. Ray proudly boasts, PageOne offers a "breath of fresh air to the real estate industry" as an all-in-one marketing and technology solution currently available for real estate agents.

Ray is not stopping there. With a background in marketing and sales, and roots tied to trading on the NYSE, Ray is no fledgling when it comes to expanding and realizing a company's full potential. It seems as though PageOne is trying to revolutionize the way real estate agents approach their marketing in the 21st century. Ray states, "This is only the beginning."

Bret Ridgeway

Bret Ridgway is the founder of Speaker Fulfillment Services, a company that provides event promoters with back-of-the-room order processing services and information marketers with product duplication and fulfillment services.

Bret has been coordinating back-of-the-room sales activities since 1999 with his partner Bryan Hane. For more information, go to SpeakerFulfillmentServices.com.

Bob Silber

Bob Silber is a practicing lawyer and member of the Florida Bar since 1977. D. Robert Silber, P.A. is a professional association registered in Florida, with law offices in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Areas of practice include Internet Law, Intellectual Property, Trademark & Copyright Law. He can be reached through AttorneyBobSilber.com.

Yanik Silver

Yanik Silver is a 'results-only' direct-response copywriter and marketing consultant who specializes in creating powerful tools and resources for entrepreneurs to enhance their businesses. Before learning about direct-response marketing, Yanik pounded the pavement selling medical equipment starting at the tender age of 16 when he first received his driver's license.

He is the author of several marketing and practice building books including *Instant Internet Profits*, *Surefire Sales Letter Secrets*, *The Ultimate Sales Letter Toolbox* and *How to Cash in on More Cosmetic Patients.* Yanik's websites include: Morepatients.com, InstantSalesLetters.com, InstantInternetProfits.com and SurefireMarketing.com.

Anik Singal

Anik Singal started off as an Internet marketer and an affiliate in 2001. Using his experience, he began consulting companies about online marketing in 2002.

Having developed his own affiliate system that helped him earn well over $10,466 in just 60 days, he used his experience and started *The Affiliate Classroom*, a premium virtual training center for affiliate marketers of all experience levels. *The Affiliate Classroom* provides up-to-date training materials for affiliate marketers to help them attract more traffic and convert higher.

Anik has continued his specialization in the affiliate marketing arena. In 2006, he launched *The Affiliate Manager* program to train people to effectively promote and recruit affiliate programs.

Frank Sousa

Frank Sousa is a software developer, affiliate marketer and mentor.

Frank's list of products developed includes: *Secret Money Generator*, *Secret Spider Generator*, *Secret Link Cloaker Secret Traffic Generator*, *DIY Web Hosting*, and a few proprietary programs that he won't tell us about.

Frank formed one of the first SEO companies on the Internet, which became part of a joint venture that generated over a million dollars in revenue in the first year.

One of his biggest joys is working with his two sons, Joe and Tim. They also have a full-time programmer working with them.

About three years ago, Frank dropped the SEO business model (and the 12 employee overhead) for a far less stressful and more profitable model of building his own affiliate web sites.

Frank's reasoning was, "Why work hard for a one-time infusion of money from a customer, when for the same amount of effort you can build a website that generates money over and over again?"

Lori Steffen and Jeff Wark

Lori Steffen and Jeff Wark are partners in business and in life. They're an awesome team!

Their story is amazing in that not only did they both quit their full-time jobs in the first year of doing Internet marketing, but also because of where they came from. Jeff is a high school drop-out who struggles with reading and writing. When they started their business, Lori was busy learning the technical side – domain names, hosting and websites. She told Jeff that everyone says you need to create a blog and write posts and to write articles for promotion.

Jeff's response was one of sheer fear! "And what the heck is a blog anyway?" If a guy who jumps out of airplanes for fun has his palms sweating in fear, you know he's scared.

Lori helped him and step-by-step. Jeff learned how to do keyword research and how to blog. Jeff approached each step with fear and trepidation, but also with a strong desire to overcome his challenges and to contribute to their business. Without Jeff knowing it, Lori took his blog posts and combined them to create articles and submitted them to the article directories.

The night that Lori showed him that his articles had been accepted and he was now a published author was a life-changing night for Jeff. At first he was convinced that Lori had re-written everything. After reading the articles, he knew they were his. Jeff took what he had accomplished and with the addition of other tools and techniques, now loves to create original content. He has gone on to create e-books and other info products.

Fueled by a deep desire to share this eye-opening experience and life-changing accomplishment with others, Jeff and Lori have taken their step-by-step process, techniques and tools and created a program to help others create content quickly and easily.

Since that time they have helped people they met at seminars and other events to overcome obstacles, generate ideas and to create content. Their e-book and teleseminar course are getting rave reviews, not only from the people they have helped, but also from recognized Internet marketers.

You can find out more about their *Quick Content Secrets* at QuickContentSecrets.com. Claim your free membership with free recorded teleseminars and other benefits at eCorePreneur.com.

Case Stevens

Case Stevens has operated on the Internet since 1998. He developed many sites for others and made several ones for himself. Doing so, he studied direct-marketing and tested many marketing strategies. He used lots of tools, many of which he was able to install and improve himself, thanks to his background.

Now he's here to share his experiences and know-how with you. You can find some of Case's sites at: Affordable-Online-Strategies.com, AnOwnSite.com, CaseStevens.com, Simple-Business-Site.com and Affordable-Internet-Marketing.com.

Sterling Valentine

Sterling Valentine is the amazing creator of *Joint Venture Formula* and the founder of the *Infopreneur's Think Tank*.

Sterling is a member of Mensa, which means that he has some serious brain power, which he clearly put to use compiling over 50 brain-tingling interviews with the best of the best in the field of joint ventures.

Sterling used those interviews as the core materials to create an amazing best practices resource for joint ventures, which received rave reviews from people like Dr. Joe Vitale, Alex Mandossian, Mike Filsaime, Brad Fallon and Mark Joyner.

He was the winner of The State of New Jersey's 2002 Entrepreneurial Achievement Award and is a graduate of The New Jersey Economic Development Authority's Entrepreneurial Training Institute. He's also got a great talent for producing production-quality audios and videos.

Eddie Zimbardi

Ed started his own business over 17 years ago. In addition to exploring business ownership, Ed developed an interest in the ever-changing field of computer technology. He enjoyed the challenge of keeping up with new software and hardware. As his goals and dreams continued to flourish, Ed was introduced to the field of network marketing. Merging the knowledge he had acquired in the computer industry with network marketing was inevitable. Ed finally found his niche! Now, Ed helps people reach their goals through the power of the Internet and modern computer technology. He can be contacted at Ed@FindYourWhy.com.

Brenda Zimbardi

Brenda graduated from college with a degree in Business and Marketing. She has worked in the field of marketing for almost 20 years. One of her greatest strengths is promoting dreams. Seeing those dreams come alive greater than expected is what has driven her to the top of her field. Brenda consistently adds value to the team of Di Lemme Development Group through her persistence and creativity, which are two major keys to successful marketing.

Brenda manages DDG's website, fulfillment center, and media center.

APPENDIX B

RESOURCES

For a current list of resources, please visit our website at www.infoproductblueprint.com/resources/.