

**DIY MARKETING FOR
CONSULTANTS
AND SPEAKERS**

**The NonGuru Guide To
Getting it Right**

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Dedications

To my wonderful wife, Deb Crawford, who actually let me quit a job to start my own business when there were small kids and a house to take care of.

To those kids, Liam, Julia, Izzie and Abby - mostly because they'll enjoy seeing their names in a book.

To all my clients. I've learned so much working with experts that I sometimes thought I should be paying you...sadly, there are no refunds.

To my mom and dad - amazing people who made me who I am.

And lastly, The Doctor. You may be a fictional character on a British TV show, but you've been a constant inspiration to me all through life.

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Preface

My dad used to joke that I was semi-retired. I wasn't even 40.

He was a man who spent most of his life in a factory doing shift work.

When he retired, he and my mom would occasionally come over to the house to visit my wife and newborn son. I sometimes snickered that it was because he didn't trust that I was responsible enough to take care of a real human child.

Whenever my folks arrived, I would stop whatever I was doing and offer to make coffees for everyone.

As a guy who spent his work days going buzzer to buzzer for breaks and lunches, it must have looked like a rather novel way to make a living.

Being a consultant, trainer or speaker is a great life. I'm one of the only men I know who has had the blessing of being home with all 4 of my kids from the day they were born to their first day of school.

As an independent marketing consultant (definitely not a guru), I make my own hours - most of the time - and

experience a greater degree of autonomy and freedom than most.

When I'm not doing marketing for clients, I'm looking for new and interesting ways to get my own business noticed.

This book is for all those who want to market their business better. And do it without breaking the bank. It's also for my dad, who went to his grave still not quite sure how I managed to pay the mortgage every month.

To find out more information, visit
www.ShortCircuitMedia.com

Introduction

For the sake of argument, I'm going to assume for a moment that you know your stuff. I'm also going to assume that what you know is valuable enough to someone that they should be willing to pay for your knowledge and expertise. So the trick is to communicate your knowledge and expertise to the world in a way that attracts clients. And that's marketing.

Ask yourself a question: does my marketing reflect the level of my professionalism and expertise?

Unless your expertise happens to be marketing, the answer is probably "no." Even if you've built your business solely on referrals, a solid online marketing presence is well worth the investment.

But what kind of investment are you willing to make?

You can spend thousands of dollars and pay somebody to take care of everything for you.

Or you can do it yourself.

I wrote this book for those who need to up their marketing game, but aren't prepared to mortgage the house to get it done.

But if you're willing to invest a little in yourself and your business, this book will help you to stop spinning your wheels and become the success your expertise deserves. Even if you have no prior experience, it's entirely possible to take care of your marketing without any help. You just have to take the time and effort to do it right.

Of course, this is all based on a simple calculation - how much is your time and effort worth? If you get paid between \$5000 and \$20000 a day for an engagement, then you have to consider the cost of each day you personally spend doing your own marketing in those terms. If you're in this group, it probably makes more sense to hire someone.

But if you're like most consultants and those are numbers you can only dream of, there are things you can do to market yourself more effectively without having to spend a lot of money.

Enjoy the book, and if you have any questions, you can visit my website www.shortcircuitmedia.com for more tips and tools.

Defining your audience

Let's talk about your audience. As a working consultant myself, specializing in other consultants, trainers and professional speakers - I tend to go to a lot of conventions as an exhibitor. Most of the time, attendees try to sneak by unnoticed, while simultaneously attempting to grab a piece of cheap candy from my "free candy" bowl while studiously avoiding eye contact. But sometimes, I get a curious "so what do you do?"

After I go through my very brief elevator pitch, I ask them three questions:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- And why should I pay you \$10,000?

Now, a lot of faces go blank at this point because many speakers and consultants never really take the time to think about their audience.

The answer I mostly get is, "I'm an expert in A, B, C."

It's great that you're an expert in A, B, C. But that's not really all that important. When a potential client asks what you do,

you need to be able to articulate quickly your own value proposition. Why is this person, corporation, association, or even a school going to bring you in, and pay you money to consult on your topic of expertise? What's in it for them?

I was holding up my booth at a National Speakers Association convention a few years back when an attendee came up to say hello. I casually asked, "So, what do you speak on?"

"Well, I'm an expert on President xxx."

"Oh, that's great. So who's your audience?"

"Everybody is my audience."

I'd be a terrible poker player because I think my eyes rolled to the back of my head.

Holding back my natural snark, I politely said, "Everybody is not an audience. But okay, I'll let you go on. Let's say everybody is your audience, who's going to hire you to speak about President xxx?"

And he said to me, "Well, everybody should know about this president."

I'm no history scholar. But even if he's right, isn't this something they teach you in civics class?

What are the odds of someone in charge of a multimillion or a multibillion dollar corporation giving away 45 minutes of his company's time to someone whose only promise is to talk about a long-dead president?

Understand this: my mom is not your audience, my dad is not your audience. There are people that are going to be receptive to your message and some of them will even pay you. Those are the people you need to find. Once you know who they are, reach out to them.

In order for expertise to be valued, it has to be presented in the context of what the market needs or wants. What is the value proposition for a client to hire you?

After making this point, my new speaker friend was able to talk about how the leadership qualities this president had, provides valuable lessons to business leaders today.

So we talked a little bit more and flushed out a better description of what he does:

“I use the philosophies and leadership skills of President xxx, and show organizations how to apply them internally and externally for success.”

By simply shifting his mindset from focusing on his own expertise to the value he can bring to his clients, we changed his business model completely.

I had another consultant come up to me at the same convention who'd spent 20 years in construction. He hated construction. So he'd quit his job and was now a Leadership Speaker/Consultant.

The problem was that he was having a hard time finding anyone to hire him. When I asked him whether he'd tried to leverage his construction contacts, he simply re-stated how much he hated construction. Then I pointed out that he

wouldn't be going back to construction, he was going to be a consultant who works with construction companies.

Completely different industry.

This was a ready-made audience where the knowledge accrued from decades of real work experience gave him instant credibility.

He understood the pain points of that specific industry well. He could drop numbers and statistics about cost overruns and project failures and actually connect what he knows to a very good value proposition where anyone who hired him would be very likely to see a significant return on their investment.

By choosing a niche, and defining an audience that finds you credible, you're better positioned to leverage your expertise and connect with more qualified clients.

So that's the first big take away. Think about who your ideal clients really are, understand their pain points and articulate why your expertise is worth paying for. If you can figure this out, you will never be short of work because your clients will understand that you're not really a cost, but an investment in future earnings or savings.

You need a business model that works

If you've ever seen the movie, *Field of Dreams*, then you'll be familiar with the mantra, "Build it and they will come."

It's a great line. But it's terrible business advice if you happen to be a consultant or professional speaker.

You can have the flashiest website on the planet, but if your business model is flawed then it won't make a lick of difference to your bottom line. I've seen some very smart people who spent a lot of money on websites that just tell others that they happen to be very smart people.

And if you've found a way to monetize people thinking you're a very smart person – that's awesome. But most prospects hire based on the added value or skills a consultant brings to the table – not how smart they are.

I've worked with clients who have terrible websites and have no trouble finding work. I've also worked with clients with amazing websites and struggle to make their businesses work at all. So what's the difference? It's a business model that matches expertise to a highly defined pool of prospects who are willing to pay for it.

When somebody goes into consulting or speaking as a profession, it's usually because they have knowledge or skills that are marketable. So they go about building out a website like it's a fancy resume. This means prospects have to look really deeply into the listed skillsets to figure out if they fill the holes they need plugged.

Of course, nobody tells you this when you're just starting out. So when business isn't coming in as fast as you expect, you begin to doubt the value of your offering. But really it's just a case of broken messaging.

What successful consultants and speakers do is, think of themselves not as very smart people, but really smart investments for their clients. They suppress the urge to self-promote and use every element of their website to sell their value proposition to the people most likely to hire them.

So before you drop big bucks on a new website, take some time to understand who it is that will pay for your expertise and then develop your new site based on writing for them.

Are you chasing somebody else's business model?

I was talking to a small business owner recently who told me a story about a competitor who was copying every move she makes in order to poach some of her clients.

She seemed worried, but I didn't think she needed to be. Her business model is her own, and it's been working for years. From where I'm standing the competitor is either jealous or desperate. And a competitor planning a business strategy from either position isn't a threat.

McDonalds and Subway are competitors in the fast food space. They serve the same market, but they certainly don't serve the same food. Both are successful because they've figured out their own niches and developed business models to service them well.

As a small business owner or consultant, it's up to you to find your own niche and develop a business model of your own that works. That doesn't mean you have to ignore competition and best practices. You can certainly learn from the people who are doing things right. Take a look at the strategies that are working for those in your space and apply them to what you're offering. But I can tell you that a simple "cut and paste" of someone else's service offerings isn't going to help you.

Even if your expertise is similar to what someone else is offering, you need to be able to differentiate yourself. Find an angle that is unique to you and appeals to an under-serviced part of the marketplace. Define your clients and then create offerings that appeal to them. Don't let your competitors drive your thinking.

Copying anyone else's business model and targeting the exact same clients is not a recipe for sustained success.

In the case of the small business owner I was speaking to, the competitor's efforts were actually driving traffic her way, because a quick Google search brought up her site and all the services her competitor was trying to copy.

Define your audience before you create your message

As I mentioned earlier, I attend a lot of conventions as an exhibitor. I'm not cheap and most folks at these events either don't have budget for me or they already have staff to do the work. So my ideal clients are somewhere in between those two points.

This means I tend to spend a lot of my time chatting with folks who are not my ideal clients. But that doesn't mean I'm not helping people.

For days on end I hold court, dispensing business and career advice to consultants, professional speakers and trainers who have expertise and valuable content to share – but haven't thought out how to monetize that know-how. The biggest issue I've found is professionals who craft a message or service and launch a business before ever figuring out who would actually pay for it.

If you create a program and then start looking for an audience to match it, you're choosing a very difficult path. Instead, consider your experience and where that gives you credibility. If you have experience in IT sales, then you will have much more luck with IT resellers, than if you create a general sales program and pitch it to realtors.

As I've said before, "everyone" is not an ideal client profile. And that is still one of the best bits of advice I've ever given out.

Before you create any program or service, clearly define the intended audience. This will allow you to avoid generic presentations and help you differentiate yourself in the speaking or consulting markets.

An example of this was a discussion I had with a fitness trainer who had a specialty in seniors and wanted to consult. When I asked who would pay for that, the answer was any individuals AND companies that want employees to be fitter. The conversation then shifted to how gyms do such a terrible job of accommodating older individuals.

So I suggested that a more specific and profitable program might include speaking to gyms and fitness facilities on how to market effectively to this group – with an emphasis on the amount of money they are leaving on the table by ignoring a huge segment of the population. Once that audience was defined there was suddenly clarity of message and a business model.

So before you focus on the expertise you bring to the table think about the marketplace and where your expertise is likely to resonate. It will make it a lot easier to make a business case for your services going forward.

Your business has to be adaptable

“I have to use it or lose it.” That’s what he told me.

There was still a bit of money left for marketing. And if it wasn’t spent, next year’s budget was going to be reduced. I’d spoken to this person before about doing some work and nothing had come of it. Now, there was some money and they didn’t want to waste it.

In this instance, my full pop marketing retainer package was not going to work. Not for one month. It wouldn’t be worth it. But they wanted a pitch. So I thought about a package that would meet the budget and not undercut my own value proposition.

I presented two options. The first was a marketing webinar to show the team how to align marketing content with sales. The second was what I called a “social media makeover” where I would come in and connect all the content pipes to LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to automate distribution across multiple channels.

Both options would take about the same amount of time and would come in at the right price point. Neither option is a service I advertise or promote on my website. But I certainly do both on a regular basis for my clients.

When you have a set business model, it’s easy to state what it is you do. In my case, it’s marketing for consultants, trainers and professional speakers. But that’s not all I CAN do. Every day, I work across multiple marketing channels using skills that are transferable between most industries.

So if someone asks me to do something – even if it doesn't fall neatly into the niche where I spend most of my time – I say yes. That's because I'm adaptable to what my clients want. Unless it's something I absolutely can't do, you won't ever hear me say, "I don't do that."

These smaller projects are rarely very lucrative in the short term. But they demonstrate value and a willingness to work within a client's budget. So you never know if they are going to become something more in the future.

Are you an investment or an expense?

When trainers and consultants go into client meetings with the wrong mindset, it costs them opportunities.

You may know a prospect's pain points and have a solution ready to go. But when the money conversation starts, if you focus on the cost of your services rather than the savings the prospect will experience, in time or money, you're setting yourself up for failure.

People hate spending money. But they don't mind investing in a solution that will help them increase revenue.

In my own situation, I provide an all-in-one marketing solution for speakers, trainers and consultants. I develop marketing strategies, build and maintain websites, write eblasts and blog posts, produce newsletters and manage social media.

It's the type of stuff most know they need to do, and do it grudgingly. And that's fine. But how much time is this taking away from real prospecting? How much more work could they do if the marketing was wiped off their plate? A lot.

So I don't position my monthly retainer as an expense, but rather an investment that frees up my clients to spend more time on revenue generating activities. But enough about my job. How does this work with you?

If you're a speaker or a consultant, you need to frame what you do as an investment. If you're a sales speaker or trainer, the conversation isn't about how much it will cost to bring you in, but how much money a sales team will make if management invests in your service.

Do you increase communications effectiveness? Then find a way to quantify that. Improve leadership? Does poor leadership contribute to employee turnover? How much does it cost to recruit a replacement when someone leaves? Does your leadership program save money?

If you can properly position your service as an investment then you can have the money conversation from a position of strength because you're not just pulling some random figure out of your butt. You're demonstrating your value and the return on investment to your client.

Know your value

One of the biggest obstacles to success in any industry is not understanding your real value and undercharging for your services.

Being a consultant is not a job where you need to start at the bottom and work your way up. If you know your value and can articulate it to clients then there is no reason why you can't start off charging the big bucks. What you get paid is not based on seniority. It's what people believe you're worth.

I once attended a conference, where after a long day behind a booth, I found the inner strength to head down to the lobby bar for a drink

As often is the case, I met a few attendees.

As one does in the instant communities that pop up at conferences where everyone has only one thing in common, we started chatting about our jobs. One fellow was just starting out. But his resume in education, politics and industry was so impressive that I was immediately able to pick out a niche, and could visualize specific companies that would be a great fit for his topic and expertise.

So what was he charging? Let's just say it wasn't enough.

After flushing out a quick business and marketing plan, I told him that he could be charging at least 10x more than he was. And he'd get it too. Trust me. There was real value in his topic. And even the thickest manager would see it.

So why was he charging so little? Because he was new.

Professional speaking and consulting is a meritocracy. It's not how long you've done it, it's how much value you bring to clients. This guy could easily save a company millions of dollars, so charging next to nothing only demonstrated that he didn't have confidence in his own skills.

I don't know about you, but I prefer to have a few high value clients, so I'm not constantly looking for folks who are only willing to pay bare minimum for what I do. So if you value what you offer - don't be afraid to charge for it. Trust me, you'll feel better getting rejected 19 times at \$10000, and getting a single great gig, than working your ass off for 20 cheapskates.

How to land the \$10,000+ gig

Here's the short answer: You'll earn \$10,000 when you convince someone you're worth \$10,000.

“So what do you do?”

As I stated earlier, that might be the most common question I ask prospective clients.

Generally, after listening to some lame elevator pitch filled with hot air and punctuated with industry jargon, I get down to business.

“I like what you're saying,” I'll start. “It makes sense to me. I would really love to pay you \$10,000 to come and speak at my conference or consult with my sales team. But I need to know what the return on investment is going to be so I can justify the cost to my CFO.”

See what I did there? I immediately asked the tough question. What is the ROI?

It's doesn't matter where I go. Whenever I mention \$10000, a lot of folks' eyes glaze over. Some people's eyes might even glaze over at much lower numbers. And that's because they don't properly value their expertise and can't see why other people might see a tremendous benefit from engaging them.

The point I always want to make right out of the gate is that it doesn't matter how much you believe in the value of your content, you need to be able to prove that value to the people who hire you.

Here's the thing, this discussion is exactly the same if the number is \$1000 or \$40,000. People want to know the money they invest will show some sort of return.

Shockingly, the ROI conversation is one that very few people can answer. What every consultant and speaker needs to have is a strong statement; something that backs up the business case for bringing them in (and paying that \$10,000 fee).

Give yourself a minute before going down through the next couple of paragraphs. Think about what the specific ROI will be for a company or conference to hire you. I don't want to pick on anyone in particular. So I'm just going to make up a general persona to run through one discussion I had.

Me: So what do you do?

Speaker: I'm "The Communicator."

Me: Okay. What do you speak about?

Speaker: I teach sales teams how to communicate effectively with clients.

Me: Hmmm? So who hires you? And why would they pay you \$10,000?

Speaker: I make salespeople more effective in communications. That makes them better salespeople.

I knew what he was trying to say. But I didn't really think he was making a good case. So I suggested the following:

Every team has that one salesperson. He or she is able to have great conversations with anyone in a room.

What I do is turn every member of your sales team into that person. Now, think about how much more revenue your company would generate if every person on your sales team was producing at that level.

Sounds a lot better than “I’m the communicator.”

What speakers and consultants really need is to not only find their value proposition; they also need to be able to articulate it in a way that fires up the client’s imagination.

Figure out how to do that and you’ll never be short of work.

What’s your elevator pitch

If you’re not familiar with the elevator pitch, it’s a metaphor for selling your big idea to a client in the time it takes for an elevator to get from the ground floor to its destination.

The idea is simple. You’re forced to cut all the fat from your presentation and distill it down to its most important elements.

So what is your elevator pitch? More importantly, why isn’t it the first thing people see when they go to your website?

True story. Last year, I was contacted by a management consulting company about doing some work. Being a diligent self-starter, I went over to the prospective client’s site to see what they were all about.

After 5 minutes of going from page to page, I’d learned a lot about the company’s philosophy, and team members, but I still didn’t have a clue what it was they did.

Now, I was a guy who they were looking to hire – so I had to spend the time looking through the site. But what if I was a prospective client who stumbled across the site via a Google search and landed on a home page, heavy on sizzle and completely lacking in steak?

This is where we get to the elevator pitch. When somebody comes to your site, you'd better serve up an answer to the question they are searching for quickly. Because they aren't going to waste their time looking through multiple pages, when they can easily go back to the original search and try someone else.

Here's what to include right at the top of your homepage content.

- What it is you do.
- What's your benefit to the client.
- What makes you different.
- Why they need you.

Here is the elevator pitch on the home page of my site:

Short Circuit Media helps small business, consultants and professional speakers make more money, by using social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) to create brand awareness, while streamlining online marketing efforts to attract more visitors and convert more sales.

We don't just tell you what needs to be done. We do it.

Now, if a visitor lands on my site, the first thing they see is what I do, and how it can help them grow their business.

Build your website

I'm just going to come out and say it. If you don't have a website, you're not going to make it.

You don't need a million dollar site. But you need something. And then you need to have a proper email address with your domain in it. A Gmail address on your business card does not scream success or professionalism.

As a consultant, you need to maximize your professional brand everywhere. It builds trust, credibility and makes you look serious to potential clients.

Your email address is often the very first piece of personal branding anyone sees. Your email address says a lot about you and your business. Well, before somebody goes to your website or reads your message, they will see your email address.

I interact with potential clients frequently over email. And so I'm always shocked when an otherwise professional email comes from an address like BigDaddy89678@hotmail.com. It's worse if that's the address on the business card.

Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, etc. are all fine and dandy for communicating with friends and family. But in a professional setting they hurt your credibility. And if your business relies on you being a credible person, you can't have that be the case.

I understand that setting up an email address that comes from your domain can seem a bit overwhelming if you're not a techie. But it is a necessity if you want to be taken seriously in the marketplace.

My recommendation is to create a business account through **Google's G-Suite** and run your emails through it. This will allow you to send and receive emails natively through Gmail and its apps on any device.

For example, my email address is **Aidan@ShortCircuitMedia.com**. For me to access email, I simply log into Gmail with my password. I've got it on my phone, my tablet and my computer. I also use this account to manage Google Docs, Slides and Sheets related to my business.

So in addition to looking more professional to my prospective clients, I also enjoy the added benefit of better organization of my content in a centralized location.

Remember, building a successful business requires making yourself look like a credible partner to prospective clients. So dump the personal email and make every outreach you take more professional with an email address that ties back your business brand.

Web Design vs. Marketing

Web design and marketing are two different jobs. Just because you're excellent at one doesn't mean you're automatically good at the other.

One job involves creating a unique branded experience that makes the client look great online. While the other is responsible for taking that wonderful looking site and making it work as a marketing tool.

I've seen some amazing sites that do absolutely nothing to further the site owner's business. The sizzle of a sexy site has an instant appeal to folks who don't know any better.

An analogy I often make is that if you put a lawnmower engine in a Ferrari, it may look good, but it just won't cut it - literally and metaphorically.

Let me be clear - a great web designer is an amazing resource, and everyone should be lucky enough to have access to at least one.

But problems arise when a business, assumes that a web designer is also a great marketing resource.

If you're looking to save money on your site by hiring a designer - without a marketing person to assist with the functionality - find out:

- What they know about basic search engine optimization.
- Will they take the time to understand your business and the clients you're trying to attract?

- Will they set up and configure your Google Analytics and other Google properties?
- Are they including privacy statements and copyrights?
- Are they blocking your content with a flash/splash pages?
- Will they create a mobile version that works with iOS and Android devices?
- Will they help you connect your RSS feeds to automatically update your various social media accounts?

All of these are important factors in building a successful online brand. Don't get suckered into fancy, when functionality is what you really need to market yourself more effectively and drive sales.

You can save yourself a lot of time and money, if you arrange for your own hosting and domain name. The good news is that you don't have to be a tech-head to do this yourself. A quick search for cheap hosting will bring up thousands of choices. To save you a bit of time, I'm going to recommend Siteground.com because that's the one I use. And I think they do a fine job.

But feel free to do some research for yourself. Like I said, there are literally thousands of hosting companies out there to choose from. And just before you make your decision, do one more piece of research. Type "domaincompany.com sucks" into Google and see what complaints show up.

Who's buying what you're selling?

It doesn't matter what you have to offer. There is only a specific segment of the population that will ever buy what you're selling. So why are you marketing to everyone?

It's the difference between fishing and hunting.

With fishing, you put some bait on a hook, toss it into the water and wait for something – anything – to bite.

You could sit there all day with tiny fish stealing your worms and go home with nothing more than a boatload of excuses. In essence, those worms are your marketing efforts.

If you spend your valuable marketing dollars trying to get a very specific product or service in front of people who will never buy, they will just nibble away until you're broke. Learn to target the right people by figuring out who they are and where they spend their time.

With hunting, you actually have the prey in your scope before you pull the trigger. It's efficient and the results depend 100% on your targeting.

In real life, I'm not a hunter. I've never even held a gun. But I have spent a lot of time sitting on the banks of rivers and lakes with a fishing rod in my hand. So I know the frustration of losing the last worm and heading back to the car without anything to show for it.

I've had clients who moan about having 50 people a day come to their site. But I always say that if those are the right 50 people and 5 of them convert they'd have more

work than they would ever be able to handle. At the same time, if somebody is happy to have 500 people a day and none of them convert, they are wasting time looking at the wrong metric.

As a marketing guy, my job is to help clients understand who their ideal clients are and get their message, product or service in front of the decision-makers who are most likely to buy.

The very core of this is knowing who the client is and where they are likely to be. If you're a speaker, trainer or consultant, don't go looking for a c-suite exec on Instagram.

Instead, look to professional networking sites like LinkedIn or even Twitter. Speak at events where your clients are likely to be. Make that your focus and forget about the small fish who are not likely to buy, but will happily eat up your budget and waste your time.

In the end, a bit of focus helps a lot when it comes to building any business. So stop drowning worms and learn how to target your ideal clients.

Building an online brand will take time

Because you're competing against every other website on the internet, and some of your direct competitors are likely to have well-established sites already you're going to have to fight for every single eyeball. There are people that have been doing what you're doing now for a long time and they will have more

credibility and rank better on search engines. That's just the reality.

It's hard to compete when you only have a small site and a few blog posts. But don't give up. Even if you're only getting 10 people coming to your site on any given day, it's probably because they are searching for your name. But if they are prospective clients who found you through Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook, it's important to present your site like you're getting 1000 visits a day and treat every piece of content the same way.

Obviously, your end goal is to get people who aren't looking for you by your name - but finding you because they are looking for what you do. By creating and nurturing content on your blog, that will eventually happen and your organic search traffic will increase. But at the beginning your blog content will help you build professional credibility with the people who know who you're and are likely to hire you from within your community.

Make it Scalable

One of the biggest mistakes folks make is building a static site that is virtually impossible to scale upwards. If your goal is to be successful, then a little planning now could save you thousands of dollars in the future.

For this reason alone, I recommend using a Wordpress. It's a free platform that is easy enough for just about anyone to manage.

It comes with thousands of free and paid extensions that make it simple to integrate the latest and greatest tools from around the internet.

The next step is to define your marketing position from the viewpoint of a visitor. Too many consultants are victims of their own cult of personality. They believe people care way more about them than they actually do. Assume that each visitor to your site is someone who doesn't know you, but has found you through some research or a referral.

What is it you're offering them? That's the reason they came to your site and that's the only reason they are going to hire you. If you have a site that is all about how awesome you're, nobody will care. Offer real solutions to real problems and you won't have to look very hard for clients.

If you're reading this, I have some good news for you. When it comes to web marketing, most of your competitors' sites are probably terrible. They might look shiny, sharp and cutting edge, but if you peak under the hood, they aren't search engine friendly or they don't give potential clients what they need to make a decision to hire.

If your name is Johnny Speaksalot and your site comes up number one, when someone searches for you specifically, great. But it's far more important to reach those who are looking for a keyword or phrase that relates to what you do. Johnny would be much better served if the content on his site attracted folks typing "conference speaker for widget conventions."

There are a number of ways to do this, but I'll just give you two quick ways to bring in more qualified leads through

search. Use the words you want to be found for in the actual content of your pages and have a proper site map so that Google and other search engines can easily find and index your content.

Web marketing isn't rocket science. But it does take a bit of time and effort. Do it yourself or hire someone else. But don't underestimate the power of the web to help you find clients from around the world.

Set up your Google accounts

The internet is a big place. And it's getting bigger all the time. As of January 2018, there were 1.3 billion websites on the internet. Google does a great job of indexing them. But you shouldn't take it for granted that your website will get any attention or Google-love when it launches.

For a small business or consultancy, 1000 visits a month is pretty good. But when you start out, you'll be lucky to get a tenth of that number.

So it's important that you do your best to let Google know your site is online and active. Other than aggressive link-building, the first place to start is to set up your Google accounts and have your business listed locally.

Start by creating a Gmail account for your company.

Don't make the mistake many small business owners make and tie your business to your personal Gmail account. Instead, create an account that you will not be afraid to share

with your marketing partners in the future. Try something like this:

companynamemarketing@gmail.com

Once you have that, set up Google Analytics, Console (webmasters) and Business accounts:

[Google.com/Analytics](https://www.google.com/analytics)

[Google.com/Webmasters](https://www.google.com/webmasters)

[Google.com/Business](https://www.google.com/business)

Properly configuring these is your first step to earning some Google juice and getting some traffic.

Just listen to Google and you'll be fine

I like to describe search engine optimization or SEO as digital snake oil. There are no quick fixes or shortcuts to get you to the front page of Google. And anyone who tells you so is blowing smoke up your ass. But that doesn't mean there aren't best practices to help you get there.

Google is always changing its algorithms to keep smart guys and gals from gaming the system to their advantage. But Google is also quite open about what you need to do to rank highly. So pay attention to what they tell you to do and your site will find its audience.

Over the years, an entire industry has evolved around Search Engine Optimization. And as the web has grown in importance, many small and medium size businesses have sent a lot of money to firms that specialize in getting their sites onto the homepage for specific keyword results.

It's been a constant game of cat and mouse as tactics evolved to outsmart the Big G and game the results. Some of these tactics have been effective and some of them less so. If someone ever tells you to start spamming directories and forums to get backlinks – just don't.

Google's Matt Cutts, Head of Google's Webspam Team, has been very clear – content is king. If you create fresh, interesting, and engaging content that people want to read, you will eventually find success on Google.

Just as important as Google is social media sharing. If you create content that your target audience wants to share because THEY find it valuable and worth sharing, you can build credibility and drive traffic without having to resort to SEO trickery.

Getting great results on Google is a long game. You won't find success overnight, and anyone who promises you results is telling you a story. The truth is, you can do everything right and you still might not see a bump in your Google positioning. Of course, there are things you can do. The first thing is, make sure your site is properly set up so that Google knows you're there and has a reason to come back and view your content. Using Google Console and Analytics (Google.com/console, Google.com/Analytics) make sure you have a proper XML site map that is automatically updated and uploaded to your Google accounts.

The next thing to do is to stop thinking about your site as something that strictly promotes your services and start thinking of it as tool that promotes your brand by giving your target audience what they need.

Why do I need to blog

If you read the last part, you should know why you need to blog. It helps you in search results because Google loves fresh content. When you blog, you add valuable content to your site that will show up in search results – months and years after you've created it.

Secondly, it makes you seem more credible to potential clients, as it clearly demonstrates that you know what you're talking about.

Before you write anything, you need to develop a strategy based on the audience you need to reach. It's that simple.

Start by creating a couple of personas.

If you're not a marketing dude or dudette, personas are profiles of your ideal clients. This exercise will help put you in their shoes and get you thinking about what content they want to see. It will also stop you churning out countless articles that are "you-focused."

Life is too short to be reading blatantly promotional blogs, tweets or updates. If all you can write about is your services and products, nobody - not even Google will care.

To get around this, you need to connect the interests of your ideal client to what it is you need to communicate. If you want to reach managers and executives, and you happen to be a sales consultant or trainer, then you should create blog content that your ideal clients will want to read, share and subscribe to. But you also have to consider how that content will get them to see you as a potential business partner.

In a perfect world, you should be trying to write some daily. But that's a lot easier to say than do. Let's face it, you're busy. And coming up with something new and interesting to write about is hard work. Some consultants make up for this by falling into a trap where they start putting out all sorts of crap just so they can publish 3 times a week. If this is a strategy, it's a bad one. The problem is that, readers get so sick of filtering through the crap, that they stop paying attention all together.

It's better to create a single amazing piece of content each week that will get shared to LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, than three space fillers that your ideal clients don't care about. They aren't going to sort through a lot of bland posts just to find the rare nugget of gold.

Keep your prospects interested

How do you attract more visitors to your site once it's up and running? There are a few ingredients that go into that mix. Consider the following tips when crafting your next blog post or web content.

The idea that you can simply post poor quality content constantly to your blog and keep clients and prospects interested is out the window. People are not looking for quantity. They seek quality – something they have never read before or something that otherwise stands out.

Being the same as your competitors is not the way to differentiate yourself in the marketplace. There are people who do the same thing as you. And if you're honest, some of them do it better. So creating content that is bland and uninteresting is not the way to win new business.

The best way to reach people is to create content that nobody else has. Search engines tend to punish websites that simply just copy and paste from other people's articles. So be original.

You can create new content by:

- publishing original research you have done
- interviewing other experts and by using their quotes
- talking about news that is trending and connecting it to what you're doing with your website

You will also need to have a great hook that attracts users' attention from the very first line of text. Some simple ways to do this include starting with something humorous, rile people up with a point of view they may not have considered, use an interesting fact or begin with a question they will want to get an answer to.

When you do this, you make your users hungry for what is coming next. Don't be afraid to be a bit of a tease. With this strategy, when readers finally do get to your point, they will feel like they have uncovered a mystery and they will be incredibly satisfied to now know what they know.

Creating blog posts is not the only way to engage your readers. In fact, you need to mix things up so that your content strategy doesn't become too boring.

Consider an "Ask the Experts" post where you answer questions. Host a webinar and post the video and transcription. Create whitepapers and reports. You can even have guest bloggers who are also experts in their own fields.

Once you have your content, punch up your headlines so they are interesting. Remember your headlines are often the only thing that appears in search engines, email and social media. So even if you've written something truly brilliant, it may never get the attention it deserves if the headlines falls flat.

The best headlines address a user's problem, have numbers in them or are personalized with the words "you" or "your" in them. Remember that 80 percent of people will read your headline. Only 20 percent of those people will read your article or post. So the punchier the headline, the more likely it is people will read your article.

Another way to attract more visitors is when you link out to more articles. People love to click links. If you want to provide visitors with deeper insight into a topic, have a link. It can be older content on your website if you want people to stick around longer or link to an external site that pops up in a new window. The latter shows a level of confidence and maturity that will only give you more credibility in the eyes of the reader.

There is no guarantee that if you write something anyone will read it. That's why it's important to share your completed posts on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook multiple times. If you're using a Wordpress site there are plugins that will automatically share and reshare posts to social media over and over again - extending their shelf life and bringing you new audiences weeks and even years after your initial publication.

Content Content Content

Let's talk about content and how important it is to growing your brand and building credibility with your ideal clients. One of the first things a lot of consultants do when they decide to start up a new business is say, "I need a website."

From there, it's not that difficult to find a designer on sites like upwork.com or Fiverr.com who will be willing to build something that looks great.

But a designer isn't a marketing person. They don't understand your business. It's not their job. What you really need to do before you build your site is think about its purpose. Is it going to simply be an online brochure that you're rarely going to revisit or are you going to make it something that will adapt and grow with your business?

I've worked with clients who sweat over the details of a website and then never look at it again. I check back a year or so later and nothing has changed or it's offline. That's just negligence. Along with a proper email address, your website is how people are first introduced to your brand. And you need to at least put a little bit of effort into keeping it fresh.

New content is the best way to not only get and keep Google interested, it's also a great way to show visitors that you're still in business. Have you ever visited a website and wondered if the company is still operational? The copyright says 2014, and nothing looks like it's changed in years?

A little fresh content goes a long way. So before you start building your website, think about the actual content that's going to populate all the pages. Building a website is easy. Creating compelling content that's going to make people want to hire you is something else.

When I build a website, one of the first things I tell my clients is that I am not going to start any development until I have the content ready to go. I learned very early that it's much easier to build than write content, and there are few things more frustrating than a "coming soon" page.

To get your head around this, create a sitemap of what content needs to be on the site.

Earlier, I talked about how important it is to identify your audience. Well, it's equally important that your ideal clients immediately can tell they are in the right place when they land on your site. So the homepage should really identify who you're, what you do, who your clients are and what benefits you're going to bring them.

A few years back, a client called me out of the blue. They'd been to my site and wanted to talk about how I might be able to help them. We chatted for a few minutes before arranging a second call AFTER I looked at their website.

According to a report by the Nelson Norman Group, users spend an average of between 10 and 20 seconds on a website. So you have about that amount of time to make your case to a prospective client.

In this instance, I was on the client's site for over ten minutes and I couldn't figure out what they actually did. As far as I could tell, they were business consultants. That's all they said. "We are business consultants."

They talked about how prospective clients could engage them as consultants a lot. But they didn't identify who they did consulting for or what kind of consulting they did - they were just business consultants. Of course, this tells a visitor absolutely nothing about their area of expertise or helps to make a case for going any further - especially when there are competitors who will articulate this much better. But do you know what they did have? A very slick-looking website.

So before you build your website, write your content. Figure out your ideal clients and make your case on the homepage why they should be talking to you first.

This means you need to put a lot of effort into what you say on your homepage. A "Welcome to my site" is not a compelling reason for anyone to stick around. Your homepage copy has to clearly state

- who you're
- what you do
- who your clients are
- what benefits they are going to get when they engage you.

When you go to my website, shortcircuitmedia.com, it says “I’m the one stop marketing shop for speakers, trainers and consultants.” So I’ve identified what I do - marketing, I’ve identified my audience - speakers, trainers and consultants. Visitors immediately know when they land on my homepage whether they are in the right spot or not.

My content then briefly describes how I can help.

Either visitors to my site are looking for somebody who does marketing for speakers, trainers and consultants, or they’re not. And if they’re not, they’ll bounce away and that’s fine, they’re not my ideal clients anyway.

Before we go any further, take some time to identify who your online audience is.

Create a statement that speaks directly to them. It has to include:

- Who your client is
- Who you're
- What is your area of expertise
- How will you help your client become more successful

The next step is to strip away the consultant’s natural instinct to overcomplicate things by eliminating buzzwords and flowery language.

If you can get this statement down to 3 sentences, great. But if you can get it down to one or two sentences, then you’ve got a very strong statement.

So what other kinds of content should you be thinking about? Well, the best practice is to go to successful competitors in your space and look at what they're doing. Don't copy them. But see what they are doing. Most of the time, the structure for a B2B site is the same whether you're a consultant, speaker or trainer.

You'll likely have the following pages to think about:

- About us
- Services
- Testimonials
- Blog/insights/articles/videos/podcasts
- Contact

About us

It's very easy to underestimate the importance of your About us page. But, other than your blog, it's the most humanizing part of your site. It's an opportunity to tell your story in a compelling way that also adds credibility and makes people want to work with you.

Potential clients want to know who you're. This is your chance to make that personal connection. Think of this as your professional profile plus. Prospective clients want to know what experience you bring to the table. Is that experience worth paying for?

If you were in sales for 20 years, or you were in HR for 20 years, or you were in a leadership position for 20 years, this is where you let people know that you know what you're talking about and make a case for why it's important to bring you in

and pay for your services. Your About us page lets you add some colour to your value statement.

This is also another place to clearly state what you do and why you're the right person for the job. What kind of consulting, speaking or training do you do? Do you do leadership consulting? Do you work with management teams? Do you do motivational stuff? Connecting your service to your experience is an important part of why someone will choose you over another vendor.

Services

Can you articulate your services in a way that is interesting enough that someone is going to want to hire you? That's the challenge when it comes to setting up your Service pages.

I used the plural on purpose. If you offer different services then you should have a separate page on your site for each one. Furthermore, you need to again identify who that service is for and why it's worth paying for.

Let's say that you're a consultant who speaks to managers about the connection between a healthy lifestyle and productivity. What do you think your biggest benefit is? If you said productivity, go make yourself a coffee.

As much as managers don't want their staff to get sick, if you can weave a tale about how a healthy staff results in reduced absenteeism and higher productivity then you've caught their attention.

It doesn't matter what you consult or speak on. If you can make the connection to some sort of bottom line result then it will be easier to make the case to hire you.

Here is a template that I recommend for all your service pages:

Audience: Quickly identify your audience. Provide specific job titles. For example, in the above example, you would have “managers, directors, human resource professionals at companies with 20 or more staff members.”

Summary: Describe what you're going to do in a paragraph or two.

Results: Provide 4 or 5 points that you will deliver. Again, with the above example, you might say

- Demonstrate the connection between employee health and business outcomes
- Provide guidance on specific strategies to improve employee health
- Show managers available resources to encourage better health outcomes
- Work with HR to put in place employee health programs

Here is a real client example.

Audience

Exclusive training for sales managers and sales executives

Overview

Your company is using social selling tools whether you know it or not.

Social selling has grown, as smart young salespeople have learned to leverage their vast online networks to promote sales and reach the decision makers who are becoming increasingly difficult to find through traditional cold calling techniques.

However, this “bottom-up” approach is not sustainable. “Social sellers” are viewed by many companies as prized employees. And unless you learn to create a culture that fosters growth and develops these skills, you run the risk of losing your top sellers to your competition.

LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are the new marketplace. And without standards, guidance or training – your organization and brand is whatever your connected employees decide it is.

This is why it’s essential to create a top-down Social Selling strategy, and manage it to achieve higher sales productivity by showing your sales force how to correctly leverage their networks for your business.

Attendees will learn:

- The Phases of Corporate Social Selling
- 3 Steps to Building a Social Selling Culture
- Emerging Tools and Techniques for Managing Social Selling

This approach works for consulting, training or speaking. Instead of focusing on your expertise, you make a case for your services based on client need.

Testimonials

Do you have testimonials? Maybe. But maybe not. It's easy to cruise through your career without collecting official kudos from clients along the way. I do this myself. A lot of the time I do my job and accept a simple thank you along with my fee.

But testimonials are important. And you should do your best to collect as many as you can. If you can gather five or six great testimonials from good size clients that say you're a great person to work with and delivered superior results then you're miles ahead of your competitors. But you have to ask and you have to provide some direction.

Bad testimonial

“Great to work with, I highly recommend.”

Why is that bad? Well, basically, it can be applied to just about any vendor. It's generic and sounds lazy.

Good testimonial

“The program was excellent! There were some great takeaways and we were able to implement them almost immediately. Within 3 months, we saw a marked improvement in the team’s performance.”

This testimonial is specific and it talks about outcomes. Don’t be afraid to tell your client what you’re looking for in a testimonial - you can even send them a sample of what you’re looking for. They might even just send the sample back and tell you to use that!

If you don’t have any testimonials, take a look at your LinkedIn profile. You might be surprised how many testimonials people have given you over the years. Cut and paste those testimonials to your website.

Blogging

One of the big questions I get when people are creating a website and developing content is what to do about a blog. Obviously for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) purposes, it’s great to blog two or three times a week. Beyond that, it’s also great for building yourself up as an expert in the community that you want to be referred to and hired by.

I’m a big fan of the terms reuse and recycle when it comes to content. When you write a blog post, don’t just think of it as something that will live on your site. Make sure that it is also shared across all your social media channels.

Most people on the planet do not know about your website. That includes most of your best prospects. But they do know about Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. So when you create any content, whether it be a blog or a video, make sure you're sending it out to Twitter, you're posting it to LinkedIn Publisher and you're sending it to Facebook. This exponentially increases the chances of a prospective client seeing content and tracking it back to your website.

Finding topics to write about in your area of expertise can be a challenge for most people.

I'm the first to admit that I don't have the capacity to write two or three blogs a week from scratch. So the trick is to find ways to create that content without causing yourself too much stress. I've found a couple of ways to do this over the last few years. The first way, and the simplest, is if you've already written a book.

I'm a big fan of the reduce, reuse and recycle approach to content. If you have one book or a few books, you can become a content scavenger of your own back catalog.

This doesn't mean that you cut and paste pages from your book - that's just serializing. What you need to do is "blogify" your best ideas. You do this by taking a few pages and then rewriting them as stand-alone think pieces for an online audience.

The trick is to make the writing a little less formal and include some clear calls to action. Remember you're addressing the people you want to hire you.

Remember most people haven't read your books and are never going to buy them. Those that have are already your fans and know who you're. Once your book has been out for a couple of months, start hacking it up for blogs and articles. You can even quote from the book and add some additional thoughts.

From a single book, you've probably got a year or so worth of blog posts - just from taking single ideas and expounding on them. But most of us don't have a book sitting around waiting to be butchered. What are your options if you don't already have a book? Well, the easiest option is to set up some Google Alerts.

If you're not familiar, stop reading now and go to Google.com/alerts

This is a great FREE service from Google that sends you news articles on any topic or keyword. If you've gone through and identified your ideal client, then you probably have a good idea of the topics they are interested in.

If you're a leadership speaker or consultant, you can set up Google Alerts for terms like "leadership development" or "breaking news in leadership" or even create alerts for specific types of leadership. What Google Alerts will then do is send you articles based on those keywords daily.

How does this help with your blogging? You can use these articles for inspiration or as sources for your own posts. A specific strategy would be to read an article, quote from it (always linking back to the original) and use those quotes as the foundation for your own blog. In essence, you're taking

information and making it better - with proper attribution. Not only will clients see that you're keeping up with the latest developments in your field, but you're also contributing to the conversation.

Whether you take a contrarian view or you agree with a source article, you're saying, "I read this article and I find it very important and I think people in the community need to know about this."

I'm going to stick with my leadership example. If an article talks about a certain style of leadership, you can talk about your experience and how it compares with the original author's conclusions.

When you do this the original poster is most likely going to receive a notification that you have referred to their article because you've linked back. And they may be inclined to link back to you and even tweet out your article. So there's an amplification there that's also important.

Creating great content doesn't have to be difficult. But it is important. So make the time each week to sit down and pull those posts together. This will help you get your name in front of more prospects and build your credibility so that when it comes to decision time your expertise sets you apart from competitors.

The big takeaway is that by creating blog content you demonstrate that you're not only an expert, but you're also engaged in constant research around the topic that you're an expert in. So whether it's leadership, dentistry, sales or something else you're using articles from reputable sources and curating content in a way that makes it your own.

The third way is the most difficult way, and that's to make stuff up on your own. There is an old saying that the most frightening sight for writers is a blank page. It's even worse if you're not a writer and you've committed to pumping out a blog on a regular basis. Staring at a blank computer screen and trying to figure out 300 – 500 words of engaging content that actually resonates with your ideal clients can be the stuff of nightmares.

If you already have great content it's not that hard to repurpose it into blogs, articles or whitepapers.

I generally work with consultants, professional speakers and trainers. In each instance, it's unique knowledge and insight that drives these businesses to profitability.

This expertise is usually demonstrated in presentations, webinars, seminars, interviews or keynotes. Sometimes, there's even a book.

If you're mining for blog content, all of that is gold.

Stop writing like a robot

The biggest problem for content creators, who also happen to be experts, is that when it comes to blogging they aren't writers.

Blogging platforms like WordPress have opened up the world of publishing to anyone with an internet connection. One result of this revolution is everyone who can, now thinks they should. And that, my dear friends, is a terrible assumption.

A few years back, I wrote a little piece called *Just Because You can, Doesn't Mean You Should*. That particular little charmer was about not giving in to the pressure to use all existing technologies just because they happen to be available.

Blogging is exactly the same. Even if you're a great writer, trying to capture your thoughts can be a tough slog through a muddy valley.

Writing is a lot harder than it looks. Creating an engaging narrative is not something that comes naturally to most folks. And even those who've spent the better part of their lives pumping out a prodigious amount of great work will tell you that it isn't always easy. So when I read a post from an expert I can generally tell within a few seconds if I'm going to get to the end.

It's not meant to be a slag. Just a reflection of different skill sets. The biggest giveaway is formality. Nobody should write a blog to impress their 11th Grade English teacher – unless that happens to be your assignment. If so – go at it.

Save your formal writing for essays and business proposals. Blogs are not deserts. They shouldn't be dry. If your expertise is in business development, add some colour. A story. Anything to make what you're trying to get across come to life.

Robots do read your blog. They just don't buy your stuff. Search engines are very smart robots. They index and sort everything on the web. But if you write for them – stuffing keywords and awkward phrases filled with even more keywords into your content – you'll turn off the real people who are going to be your clients.

So take a step back and work on the craft of writing before you jump into blogging. It will save you countless hours creating articles nobody wants to read.

Mistakes experts make when creating content

Nobody is perfect, and even marketing experts are bound to get a strikeout from time to time when creating online content. However, there are common pratfalls to avoid and learn from, and doing so will increase your web content's effectiveness.

Here are some content mistakes that experts routinely make:

Don't overthink your content

If you're writing a blog, remember that you're writing it, first and foremost, for people. A lot of folks get it ass backwards and write their content for Google instead of their ideal clients.

This leads to content that is stuffed with keyword after keyword in the hopes that search engines will pick it up and stick it on the front page for a search term.

At the end of the day, what's posted is something that doesn't focus on the end-user. In other words, it becomes sub-par content. Writing naturally is better, as it allows people who view the content to actually understand what you're actually trying to say. While it is important to be found, it is far better to be understood.

Don't give up. Anyone creating an online platform can often wait years for it to take off - whether it's a blog, podcast or website. You have to be smart and play the long game.

If you're too focused on immediate returns, when something fails to catch fire right away, you'll likely get discouraged and give up. It takes time to build something successful online. And when that success comes, it only looks to others like it happened overnight. So, patience, grasshopper.

A lack of focus

With web content, you need to follow the 20/80 rule. Chances are that 20 percent of your pages will drive 80 percent of your sales. Spend more time focusing on the pages that generate sales, and less time on pages that aren't fueling your sales cycle.

Your website isn't a coffee table book

Everything has to have context. Some people I've worked with in the past have come to me with a blog that is little more than embedded videos, memes or random images. Your blog isn't Facebook or Twitter.

Anything you post needs to be contextualized. A lone video says nothing. A video with a few paragraphs explaining why it's there and what the visitor will get from watching it increases the chances that it will get watched and maybe even shared.

Your website is not a tome

Posting videos and images without context is bad. Posting vast tracts of text without any visual breaks is also bad. Content is king. But images and videos keep people engaged and reading.

It's all about you

Any content you create needs to focus squarely on the end user. For some reason, a lot of experts tend to use their blog to constantly reinforce how amazing their products and services are.

People generally don't visit blogs to experience the hard sell. Use your blog to explore issues and news that is going to be compelling to your ideal clients. You should certainly slip in a call to action when appropriate. Just do it in a way that is natural.

Speaking of calls to action

If you're going to spend time writing excellent content, make sure it works for you. A well written piece builds up your credibility with the reader. Don't squander the opportunity.

What is the next phase of your sales cycle? Should they email you a question? Give you a call? Join your email list? Figure out what you want people to do next and then push them towards it.

Stop being bland

Many experts are actually afraid to have any sort of opinion to avoid angering readers. Just as not everyone is your ideal client, not everyone is going to like your content or style. So embrace your voice and express it so that it speaks to the people you want to work with.

If you "blandify" your output and pump out non-gutsy content – you aren't going to be very interesting. And if a piece is boring, people aren't likely to link to it or share it with friends or colleagues.

Engage your audience more

Don't forget to engage your audience by commenting, replying to questions, and participating in discussions. It doesn't even have to be on your blog. You can go to the LinkedIn and Facebook groups where your ideal clients are and answer questions. If you're creating content that just goes in just one direction, your audience will simply go somewhere else to get the engagement level they are looking for. Remember that to be effective your online communication has to go in both directions.

Create content people care about

Somebody is bound to care about your content. The real question is, "Are you creating content your clients care about?"

When you commit to writing a blog, you're making a commitment to content, not a calendar. It would be great if all of us were fascinating day in and day out, with a limitless supply of inspiration to feed the machine. But that's not generally how things work.

I've had speaking and training clients who simply post for the sake of posting on schedule. It makes them prolific. But it also dilutes the effect of what it is they are trying to say.

When you create content it should be because you have something to say, not because you feel you have to say something. Think about your potential clients. What is it they want from you? What specific knowledge or advice makes you the destination?

I'm always surprised when someone can't tell me who their ideal client is. It's probably the most fundamental aspect of your business. And when you figure it out, creating compelling content will become a lot easier.

Let's say you're a sales trainer. Who is your client? Is it the individual sales person? Their manager? The VP of operations? Maybe all of them are your client to some degree.

If that's the case, build a strategy around creating content that is targeted to each segment instead of creating a lot of generalist sales posts that appeal to nobody.

If you've committed to three posts a week, create a post for individuals, another post for managers and yet another for the VPs – all with separate calls to action. That sounds like a lot of content, but you can save a lot of time if you simply approach the same content from different perspectives.

Let's think about a sales tip. Here's how to present it to your 3 audiences:

- Sales tip for individual sales people
- How the specific sales tip can help improve team results for managers
- The reasoning behind your sales tip for VPs

Each of these posts is targeted and meaningful to a specific segment of your audience. So stop boring people with generic content they don't want to read. Learn who your audience is and write for them.

Now that we've worked through the content process, let's look at some of the ways you can use your existing content as the basis for blogs and articles.

Transcribe everything

Whenever you deliver a presentation, webinar, seminar or anything else to an audience, make sure it's recorded. Then use a service like [Upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) to have it transcribed. Even if you're fully scripted, you will be surprised by the off-the-cuff knowledge you toss out as asides as you "perform."

I've found that a simple 45-minute presentation can help you create four or five 350-word blog posts.

Start a Podcast

There was an article in Canadian news satire site, The Beaverton, not so long ago that said more people make podcasts than actually listen to them. It's hard to argue the point – even if it is satirical. Podcasts aren't generally going to do much more than help you build a brand and help position you as an expert. But they have a secondary role and that is to provide more content for you to transcribe which can easily be turned into blogs.

This is a strategy I've used for multiple clients. It's the same content repackaged for two different mediums.

Create an online course

This is a good strategy for trainers. Simply break down your topics into a simple-to-follow syllabus and record some videos to accompany it. I've done this strategy myself. You can find my course at courses.shortcircuitmedia.com. In fact, you can have it for free. Just use **DIYbookpromo** as your coupon in the shopping cart. You're welcome.

As you can see, it's broken down logically. I also had each of the videos transcribed. I've used the transcriptions for blog posts. I'm also using some of these very same transcriptions for this book! Of course, as I write I'm adding in even more thoughts and details which will then allow me to recycle this content into more blogs later. It's the cycle of (content) life.

If you don't have a book, you can do some of this in reverse. Plan out how you want your book to go and then tag your original posts appropriately so you can use those blogs as the skeleton source for writing your book.

As you can see, a little bit of knowledge and expertise can go a long way. Every piece of content you create needs to be properly leveraged to maximize its impact across multiple media channels so that it keeps Google happy and helps you reach more of your ideal clients.

If you've got a load of webinars or other presentations that you've done over the last couple of years, or you've done a lot of speaking engagements that you've recorded, this is a great way to repurpose that material. Because really what you don't

want to do is work too hard on this stuff. You want to repurpose what you've already got.

It's your own content, your own thinking. All you're doing is making it work for you in different ways.

So that is how I would recommend that you tackle blogging. Now, just remember to update it fairly consistently. You don't have to do it three times a week. But do try for once or twice a week. If you can do that, then you're doing a great job.

Keep your content working for you

Blogs are generally the low-hanging fruit recommendation from marketing folks like myself when we speak to clients who are knowledge experts.

Blogs are a great way to show off your expertise while demonstrating insights and value to prospective clients. In addition, they are also very easy to do. So everyone has a blog these days.

If your site doesn't rank well on Google, then every new blog you write tends to bury the older ones deeper and deeper into the content graveyard. And when you spend a lot of time creating great posts that nobody sees, it can feel like you're simply spinning your wheels and wasting your time.

If you're using Wordpress for your website, you can configure it to automatically share your new posts to various social media channels.

But then what?

There are actually programs and plugins that will re-circulate your existing evergreen content back into Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook on a regular basis. I recently set up an online newspaper with a plugin called "Revive Old Posts." This very powerful plugin from revive.social sends older evergreen articles to Facebook and Twitter every 4 hours. Within a month, traffic to the site had spiked by 15%, and Facebook business page Likes had increased by 10%.

It took zero additional effort and was showing big returns.

I did the same thing for a consultant who had over 1100 articles on his site. Sending them out every 4 hours to LinkedIn and Twitter greatly increased his traffic of qualified prospects and it was taking over a month to cycle through them all!

Newsletters

Newsletters. Everybody loves them. But everybody hates them as well. They jam up your inbox, and most of the time you don't even read them. So what's the point of sending out a newsletter? Well, the purpose of your newsletter is, like most marketing, to keep you top of mind for your clients.

So the first thing you want to do is start building a newsletter list. There are loads of platforms out there. The most popular

of these are MailChimp and Constant Contact. And they come with simple-to-configure form builders that allow you to drop a piece of code onto virtually any webpage so visitors to your website can sign up for your digital flyer wrap.

Committing to a newsletter when you have no subscribers makes the process a misery. I'm not going to lie to you. If you build a new website, you're not going to be getting 100 people to your website every day. If you're really lucky, you may start between 5 and 10.

I used to work for a well-known speaker who would write his blog three times a week and then when it came time to put together his newsletter he would spend another two days working on it. Two full days.

That's a lot of time if you're a consultant or a speaker. That's two full days he wasn't able to search for prospects or bill existing clients.

Why was it taking him so long? He was actually creating new content specific to his newsletter that was separate from the stuff he was developing throughout the month for his blog. That was a waste of his time and it would be a waste of yours.

To think that everyone in your network is dropping by your site every morning to see what you've written is crazy. Even the people who sign up for your newsletter have better things to do. There's a million other sites, a billion other sites out there that are more interesting than your site. Once you realize that, you'll understand that the majority of the people on your list have not read the articles you're posting throughout the month. So what you do is turn those articles into the substance for your newsletter.

What I encourage my clients to do is have an introduction that's unique every month, then I start adding teasers to articles with "Read More" links going back to the full article. You do this because your website is your best-selling tool - hopefully filled with enough calls to action that visitors don't just read the articles, but go a bit deeper and explore your service offerings.

I actually have a formula for creating an e-newsletter that's based on the free local newspapers many homeowners get each week on Thursday or Friday. The newspaper itself is simply "flyer-wrap." It doesn't really matter what's in it as long as all the week's flyers also land on your kitchen table.

So here goes:

- Unique introduction
- Article 1
- Promotion for a service
- Article 2

This formula works if you have 2 articles or 10 articles.

In essence, your newsletter is just a vehicle for marketing your services or products. So if you've got a product or a book or online training program, make sure that it's in there. Because if you're just sending out the articles, you're missing an important opportunity to connect.

So that's the way I would tackle doing your newsletters. It's the easiest way to do it. You can cut down from spending a full day doing a newsletter to half an hour because all you're doing is cut-paste, cut-paste, cut-paste, with a slight introduction before sending it off.

Here's how you get fresh content ideas

Creating interesting, relevant content on a consistent basis is a big part of your job. It reminds people that the lights are still on and it says you still have something to say.

If you've got writer's block, these tips will get your creative juices flowing.

What are you trying to say?

It all comes down to purpose. What do you want your content to do? Educate? Inform? Maybe you want to explain a procedure? Start out broad, then narrow down your options.

Let's say you're a sales trainer or consultant for large corporations. If your focus is on confidence, maybe your content could include a weekly "how-to increase sales confidence in the marketplace" tip. Remember, your content must work within your strategy. You shouldn't create content willy-nilly (i.e. without any purpose or clear direction).

Use some keywords

Keywords are like thoughts turned into action— actions you can use to your advantage. Knowing which keywords your searchers are typing is the closest thing to mind-reading as... well, mind-reading.

One way you can find out what terms your audience uses is through a simple search. Pick a topic (for ex.: "professional speakers") and browse through the results. In this case, your search may reveal many results associated with audio speakers. If so, be more specific in your search, leading to more long-tail keywords. (For ex.: "professional guest speakers.") Check the results, paying special attention to the

“related terms” section. There, you can see what other topics associate with your keywords. The deeper you search, the more you’ll discover what content your audience is looking for.

As I said earlier, think about Google, but write for people. Knowing what keywords to use is important. But don’t let your keywords drive your writing style. If you do then you’ll turn off potential clients and Google will ignore you as well. If you think it’s lonely at the top, just imagine how discouraging it is to check your website analytics and discover zero daily visitors!

Social Media

I love social media. I'm on it all the time, and I understand how people get excited about the value of social media. But it's not the panacea for all your business issues. Unfortunately, that's the way it's been pushed over the last number of years.

Free access to millions or billions of customers! What's not to love about that? If only it was as easy as setting up a Facebook page and connecting it to your bank account. It's not. Social Media is a channel - but it can't be your only channel.

Like virtually every marketing channel, Social Media will cost you time and money. And the results are far from guaranteed. I'm going to give you a scenario that might sound very familiar.

A consultant, trainer or speaker pays money to attend a conference or seminar with a social media expert.

The expert drops a lot of statistics about various social media channels. Here are the latest ones I found for 2018:

2.2 billion monthly Facebook Users
800 million people are on Instagram

330 million monthly users on Twitter
467 million members on LinkedIn
158 million people use Snapchat daily
1 billion active users on YouTube each month

That's a lot of users. And that's exciting.

What happens next is that the attendee leaves the conference or seminar very excited about all these potential clients that are just waiting to be tapped. So they race home and set up accounts on every one of these platforms.

Can you predict what happens next? Not much.

Most of these accounts are set up and left to die on the vine. There is no real understanding of who the users of these channels are and there is definitely no real strategy on how to engage them. So these accounts just lie dormant.

Going back to what I said at the beginning, I love social media. I am on Facebook all the time. Do you know what I don't use Facebook for? I don't use Facebook for business for the simple reason that Facebook, for me, is about personal connections with people I know and like.

It's also a great venue for Business to Consumer marketing. If you sell to consumers and you want your brand to get out there, Facebook is awesome. But if you're a consultant and your audience is other businesses, Facebook is not where you really need to invest a lot of your time.

The bottom line is, my mom doesn't care about your speaking, training or consulting business. My mom doesn't even care

about my business. All she cares about is that I'm not hitting her up for money every time she hears her phone ring.

And because she doesn't care about your business, she's probably not going to like your Facebook page. There's no point. My high school friends, my university buddies, they also don't care about my business. I'm going to share updates about indie and punk bands I like. I'm going to share jokes. If I were to start sharing business related stuff on my personal feed, they'd all tune me out very quickly.

There was a guy from my high school who sent me a connection request on Facebook. I accepted the request despite the fact we weren't very close back in the day. But I have a soft spot for folks who remember me from a time when I had hair.

Within ten minutes of accepting his request, I started getting updates about his restaurant. He wasn't interested in me; he was interested in promoting his restaurant and catering services. I felt used and a little disrespected because that's not what Facebook is for. Facebook is a personal thing where I'm supposed to connect with people, find out how their kids are doing and what they've done with their lives. Needless to say, that connection didn't last very long.

Don't be that guy.

It was an interesting experience that led me to re-examine what I was posting. As much as I didn't care about his business, I was equally sure that folks were not interested in mine. On Facebook, people want a little window into your life, not a trap door into a sales funnel.

Before posting anything on your personal page, ask yourself "Does my mom (dad, girlfriend, boyfriend, etc.) care?" If the answer is no, head over to LinkedIn and post your update there.

That's not to say you can't use Facebook. That's why there are Facebook Business Pages. Using a proper Business Page, you can talk about your business and engage in "shop talk" without annoying those you actually care about personally.

Be strategic with your social media

A lot of small business owners are wasting their time on social media. Instead of concentrating on where they're most likely to connect with real clients, they are filling up the Hootsuite queue with quotes and inane pictures that have nothing to do with their business and will never resonate with their prospects.

I recently had a client who was signed up for everything by her social media consultant; Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. So instead of working on growing her business and prospecting new clients, she was spending all her time trying to grow her social media followers. If you have great content and a sellable message, you should be booking clients, not posting pictures.

That's not to say social media in itself is a waste. But you do have to focus on the channels that are most likely to get you in front of the folks who will write you checks for \$10,000 or more. And those folks are probably not on Instagram.

What I tell my clients – who are primarily speakers, attorneys, sales trainers and consultants – is that they should play in the same social media sandbox their clients are playing in. And for the most part that means LinkedIn and Twitter.

Social media is not a waste of time. But it's very easy to make it very unproductive. Tackle it with a strategy geared toward results and the time you save can be spent following up on real leads for proper jobs.

If you are using your social media to spam friends and family - stop. That's why we have Facebook Business pages.

I do have a Facebook Business Page -
[Facebook.com/ShortCircuitMedia](https://www.facebook.com/ShortCircuitMedia).

I use it as a hub for some content marketing. I have my blog and my social recycling plugins tied to it to distribute content automatically. I don't pay too much attention to it. But it at least looks very active if a prospective client drops by when researching my credentials. I also use it for targeted advertising.

There was once a time when a business page could drive a lot of organic traffic back to your website as all your followers would be likely to see your posts in their feed. But that changed with an algorithm update that deprecated business content distribution.

Now, if you want to get a piece of content noticed, you need to boost the post with an ad targeting your ideal client profile. That is the trend as social media companies increasingly monetize their data. It's a pay to play world. So just get used to it.

As I've said to many clients, if you are going to invest hours creating a well-crafted piece of content then it makes sense to spend \$5 or \$10 so people see it.

Set up your profiles correctly

After deciding which social media channels are going to be most effective for your business, take the time to make sure they are configured correctly. It may even be worth your while to reach out to a freelancer on Upwork.com or Fiverr.com to do it for you. These are going to be important channels and you want to take advantage of every benefit they offer. Also make sure they are kept up to date.

These channels are unfortunately not self-repairing. And as your business model and brand evolves, you'll need to make sure that what you have posted on your profiles is up to date.

Let me share an example from my own personal experience with LinkedIn. You could say that I'm fairly active on the platform. I'm usually on it at least once or twice a day.

I use LinkedIn as a prospecting tool. Which sounds very clinical, but it's really not. I like to search for people who might be good clients or look like they might have something interesting to offer my own company.

I've even used it to find quality folks who now contribute content and other services to make Short Circuit Media work like it's more than a one-person operation. The point is, I use it a lot.

So imagine my horror when I recently happened to notice the summary on my LinkedIn profile was at least 3 years out of date.

A part of my job is helping clients optimize their LinkedIn profiles. I read them over and sometimes re-write them to reflect what it is they do in the real world. So how did mine get so out of date?

Well, how does anything get out of date? I set it up and forgot all about it. Then I tweaked it and forgot all about it again.

Why is this a big deal? When I request to connect with somebody and they click through to my profile the first thing they see is my headline. If that's strong then they may go to my summary. And if that summary doesn't align with what I do for clients, they may be left scratching their heads as to why I'm reaching out in the first place.

Your LinkedIn headline gets attention, but your summary has to make a case. And mine made a great case – for something I didn't do anymore.

A quick look at other connections revealed that I'm not alone. Click after click sent me to profiles of people I knew to be active on the platform but hadn't updated their summaries in a long time.

Stop reading this now and open your LinkedIn profile.

I'll wait.

Whistle *Check Twitter* *Update Facebook*>

Welcome back. That took a bit longer than I expected. If you haven't looked at your summary in the last year or so, you probably made some changes to reflect how

things have evolved for you, your job or with your business.

That's where I found myself. Once I realized how awkwardly out-of-date my profile had become, I had to fix it right away.

So how am I going to stop this from happening again? I set a recurring appointment in my calendar every six months to remind me to make sure that what I have in my summary is still relevant.

How often do you review your summary? How often do you update the other elements in your profile? LinkedIn is important for building B2B relationships. Make sure you pay attention to it and it will help your business grow.

You need to think about LinkedIn

With over 2.2 billion monthly users, Facebook gets a lot of attention. But what do you share on Facebook? I know for me, I'm likely to share newspaper articles, pictures and videos from YouTube that amuse or entertain me.

What I'm not likely to share is a link to help you market your business website. Don't get offended. My friends and family just don't care about professional speakers, consultants, or widget factories. So why would I pass your site along to them?

Now, I might be inclined to share your site on Twitter, if there is something interesting, that my followers might

also find worth looking at. But LinkedIn is a much more practical way to promote your business in the social media world. Simply by placing a LinkedIn button on each page of your site, you are inviting visitors to share your content with professional associates and groups.

If you are a small business having your blog post or product end up on a group, or shared to a number of professional contacts by a visitor, has the potential to be a very profitable endorsement.

LinkedIn is where your clients are

I'm on LinkedIn because that's where my clients are. Chances are your clients are there as well. So what Groups do you belong to and what information do you post to them?

I'm a marketing guy, who happens to work with professional speakers, consultants and other knowledge experts. This is my audience and these are the people I need to reach. So while I belong to a number of marketing Groups, I spend most of my time on Groups with speakers, consultants and entrepreneurs in them.

Where are you spending your LinkedIn time? I always find it curious when I see a speaker posting about a seminar or public engagement on a speaker Group. Why would they even bother? Folks in these Groups are generally not the folks they need to reach and are unlikely to sign up for the workshop, seminar or webcast.

If your audience is managers, executives, non-profits – whatever – then you need to be active in groups where

those people are members. And by active, I don't mean just plugging your services. You need to contribute to the conversation.

For example, each morning as I have my coffee, I do a quick scan of my top Groups to see if anyone has started a new discussion, where I can quickly add a bit of my expertise.

In order for social media to work, you have to participate

Over and over again, I hear it from clients and prospective clients. "I don't see the value in LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc."

"I'm on all of them and I've never got any business from them."

Here's the thing. The big difference between social media and advertising is that you have to be social and add value to the conversations if you want to build relationships and make some sales.

It's not enough to build a LinkedIn profile, create a Facebook Fan page or start a Twitter account. It requires a bit of work – not a lot – but some. So if you only use LinkedIn and all these other great tools to broadcast announcements about your amazing products or services, even the crickets will soon tune you out.

Here is your simplified LinkedIn strategy.

Set your account to get a daily digest from each of your groups where prospective clients hang out. And then

each morning, browse the topics. If something is interesting or you can help someone out – do it. The trick is to establish credibility and not come across like you're always trying to sell something.

If you have something worth buying, and folks recognize that you can add some value to their business, then LinkedIn can actually become one of your biggest lead generators.

The best part is, you can do this in as little as 5 minutes each day.

Don't forget about Twitter

When I'm putting together a marketing program for a client, I tend to focus heavily on LinkedIn and Twitter - because they are places to share business content without annoying your friends and family.

Unlike Facebook, I use my Twitter feed exclusively as a business channel for content marketing.

Here's a little secret to make sure -- because what you're thinking now is, "I don't have the time. I can't be on LinkedIn and Twitter all day, I've got a real job, I've got to work at finding clients and growing my business."

Owning and operating a small business is usually a pretty tight little operation. You do and / or oversee every single detail. Few know that behind that impressive logo and website is a small but mighty operation fueled as much by caffeine as cash.

That's the benefit of small businesses in the age of the internet; low overhead fronted by an impressive facade.

Twitter has increasingly become a valuable tool for small businesses to extend their reach, profile and yes, facade in the marketplace.

The point is that you can become a Twitter maven equal to the big companies by using your imagination, business knowledge and small-but-mighty charm to build an audience.

With that in mind, I've come up with Five Twitter Tips to Advance Your Small Business

This Ain't Mad Men: sell soft, not hard

The quickest way to lose followers is to mistake Twitter for an advertising billboard. It's not. If they're following you, they're interested in your product, certainly, and will likely greet info about your sales events with interest. But if you're just a rotating sales drone, then you'll lose their interest and their follows. So send links to content they can use.

Create a brand voice for your tweets

Friendly, offhand and casual is easy to do in conversation, but pulling that off in written form is harder than it sounds. So work at it, slowly and very carefully. Don't mistake casual or offhand for offensive. Sound obvious? Ask the many tweeters with pink slips in their hands, stunned that no-one understood that their comment was supposed to be sarcastic / ironic / funny.

Sure, it can create a buzz moment of sorts, but only in a car crash way. Your brand is well-known for a moment, and after all and sundry, have hung you in effigy, you're a new case study in how not to tweet.

Frequency

Twitter patterns are fascinating to watch. Most retweets take place late in the afternoon and picture / link views around the same time. The average engaged Twitter user sends out about 20 tweets daily. You should aim for about six good tweets, one every few hours.

Retweets

When you come across content of interest to your followers, be it industry, business trends, social media trends, academic or entertainment, pass it along. Remember: they need value for following you, and if the info you put out under your brand is interesting, they will read, retweet and your audience will grow.

Engage your followers

If someone responds to one of your tweets with an interesting comment, retweet that. It flatters them as they're probably / possibly an advocate of your product or area of business; it creates community and reinforces your brand as a rallying point for interaction.

It's also the ultimate social media compliment: they're paying attention.

If you check out my Twitter handle @AidanCrawford, it's very active. But the truth is I don't spend a lot of time on it. I have a three-point strategy that makes it look like I'm always posting - even when I'm not.

Reshare Content

I've mentioned Revive Old Posts plugins earlier in the book. Using this WordPress plugin from revive.social I'm able to randomly share my evergreen blog posts to LinkedIn, Twitter and my Facebook Business page at whatever interval I choose. Currently, I have it set to share a post every 4 hours using specific business hashtags.

Scheduled tweets

This is something I like to call a "tweet sheet." I set a spreadsheet with 28 tweets connected to my different offerings and then schedule them to go out once a day over the course of the month. I have a client who also uses this strategy to distribute videos from his YouTube channel.

If you are a speaker or you happen to be working at a conference, you can also create event-specific tweet sheets to target people who are also attending or following a hashtag. This is particularly effective if you are presenting yourself. Then you can actually "Live Tweet" your presentation.

To do all of this, all you need is a basic subscription to Hootsuite.

Bufferapp.com

It can't all be self-promotional. You should always try to share content from different sources on a regular basis to establish

your credibility with prospects. This is where BufferApp.com comes into play.

Using BufferApp along with Google Alerts will help you keep the social media content calendar full - even when you don't have much to say yourself.

My trick is, I set up a bunch of Google Alerts around the topics my clients would be interested in along with news about marketing. Google then sends me articles around these topics on a daily basis.

Here's where the social sharing magic comes into play. Each morning as I sit down with my first cup of coffee, I look through all the articles Google sent me the day before and add them to the BufferApp queue - which then sends them out throughout the day. I've connected my BufferApp to automatically send these articles to LinkedIn, Twitter and my Facebook business page.

Using these three simple tactics, you can also dominate social media and build credibility with more prospects! So don't stress out too much about social media, just have a strategy that gets you in front of your ideal clients and don't try and friend my mom.

Online advertising

Advertising sucks. More specifically, it sucks all your money away if you aren't targeting it properly. So if you're doing your own marketing and spending money on Google ads to reach a vaguely defined, general audience – stop.

Before I go any further, let me state that I'm not an online advertising "expert." So what I'm about to say comes from my own experience as a frugal self-starter.

I've seen dozens of small businesses make the same mistakes with their advertising - and I've made some on my own. But if you want to do online ads, here's what I've found: The closer you get to targeting your ideal client, the more success you'll have.

Social media is great because you can speak directly to your customer. So advertising your business on social media is the way to go. And there is no better place to target an audience with specific interests at (relatively) low cost.

And there lies the rub...your audience. Before you even think about an ad, you must first define who you are advertising to. Be as specific as you can.

All of the big players allow you to use their massive data piles to target your ads. While I've said over and over again I don't use my personal Facebook page for business (and will gleefully ignore your friend request). But I do have a business page on Facebook. For the most part, it's set up to repost articles from my website using all of the tools I've mentioned in previous chapters.

So why do I even bother with the page? I use the page to run occasional ads for my business. And while my business is international, I do spend a couple of bucks each day to target potential clients locally.

I also pay to "Boost" new posts I write to a very targeted audience of defined prospects in the USA, Canada, UK and Ireland. I'd go further - but I only speak English and anytime I've tried to work with anyone in Australasia the time difference has been too much of an obstacle. What can I say? I enjoy going to my kids' hockey and soccer games. And I suppose I still love my wife enough that I'd rather not spend my evenings preparing for 10pm meetings.

My experience with both LinkedIn and Twitter ads has also been very good.

Twitter advertising

Let's say you're a sales consultant who works in the big pharma space. Your target audience is made up of

managers who are interested in training as well as the director-level folks who will sign off on your program and approve the expenditure.

How do you reach these folks on Twitter? You could certainly research the industry hashtags and create a tweet sheet that pumps out marketing messaging at regular intervals using a tool like Hootsuite.

But that's really playing the lottery as your ideal prospect would have to be searching for those hashtags. And if they are popular hashtags and your update doesn't have enough likes to move it to the top of the most popular, it just drowns in the feed.

With Twitter ads you can target an audience based on the people or organisations they follow.

Going back to our big pharma example.

Assuming you are looking to get your message in front of the decision-makers, you could target only the people who follow Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (@PhRMA).

As of this writing, @PhRMA has almost 58K followers. How many of these would fall into the category of ideal client? You can even go deeper and find pharma sales associations or pharma executive associations.

Then you can set up a specific landing page for the audience on your site for this traffic. And because you are being specific in your audience you can be very specific in how you write that page.

The first time I tried Twitter ads, I targeted people who follow #nsaspeaker and #speakermag. These handles are for the National Speakers Association and its magazine.

I work with professional speakers (many of whom are also consultants and trainers) and that's who I wanted to see reach. But even I was shocked when within 24 hours of starting my campaign, and with less than \$100 invested, I'd landed two new clients.

I've never had that kind of success again. One of those clients engaged me to build a website while the other hired me on a monthly marketing retainer. So the math on that investment is very simple for me to do. It was an ROI that was off the charts.

Another consideration is targeting specific conference hashtags. That's because in addition to handles you can also create ads targeting hashtags. So if there is conference for an association that you are attending (of even if you're not) you can create an ad and have it seen by only those people at the conference who are following that specific hashtag.

LinkedIn advertising

A quick word on LinkedIn ads. Wait...there are ads on LinkedIn? Yes. And you don't have to have a paid LinkedIn account to set them up!

The three ways that most consultants will consider are:

Sponsored content

Sponsored InMails

Text ads

Sponsored content

Sponsored content is a great way to get your updates in front of as many of your ideal clients as possible - even if they aren't connected to you on LinkedIn.

Similar to a Facebook post "Boost" this is a something to think about if you've created a great piece of content that you want people to see. This is especially true if Google doesn't love your site and your posts tend to vanish into obscurity once you've released them to the world.

LinkedIn has a very good filter system to help you target you Sponsored Content to just the right people. Using filters such as Industry, Job Title, Geography or even Years of Experience, a Sponsor Content post will at least get you in front of your ideal clients. Whether they click on it or not is completely dependent on how "click worthy" you've made the post. Remember to make it interesting enough that people feel compelled to read more.

Even if you do everything right the click-through rate ranges from between .35%-.45% CTR

Sponsored InMails

If creating boosts for your content doesn't sound very exciting then you should look at Sponsored InMails.

A Sponsored InMail is a custom message that you can send directly to your ideal clients using the same filters I just mentioned. But unlike a piece of Sponsored Content, this

takes the form of an email and is delivered through LinkedIn's internal messaging platform.

I know what you're thinking - another email nobody is going to read. But this is different.

According to Constant Contact the open rates for general email marketing, across all industries, averages out at about 24%. With LinkedIn Sponsored InMails, the open rate ranges from 25-45%. Depending on your targeting, it could even be higher. I had a campaign where my open rate was about 70%!

And remember these are not necessarily the same people who've signed up for your list. This is you sending a message to your ideal clients based on strict filtering.

Because you are so micro-targeted, it makes a lot of sense to create a dedicated landing page on your site for each campaign - addressing the particular pain points of the targeted audience and providing a specific solution to make it better - whether that be speaking, training or a detailed consulting package.

Text ads

I've spent thousands of dollars on LinkedIn text ads before they introduced sponsored content and InMails. And most of it was wasted.

When someone mentions online advertising, Text Ads are what quickly come to mind because that's what Google mostly

serves up on its search pages. But can you remember ever even seeing a text ad on LinkedIn? If you can't, you're not alone. The Text Ads are generally buried on the right column of the LinkedIn pages - the part of the page where you are least likely to look!

This probably explains the dismal click through range of between .012%-.030%. Compare that with Google where the expected click through rate on a text ad is about 2%. And they aren't cheap. Those clicks are expensive compared to other forms of advertising

That's all I'm going to say about advertising. It can be great, but it can also bleed you dry if you aren't choosing the right vehicle for your business and you aren't always doing your best to target the prospects who are most likely to hire you.

Create Some Product

If you're a professional speaker, trainer or consultant, you can sell products. If you're really lucky, they'll make you some money. But even if they don't just having them gives you more credibility when you speak to potential clients.

Amazon makes it incredibly easy to create and sell products internationally. And if you want to sell directly from your website, it's never been simpler to configure an eCommerce solution.

Today, all you need to set up a shop is a PayPal account and the free WooCommerce Wordpress plugin.

If you're a speaker, back-of-the-room sales can be a nice little bonus when you present to large crowds. And even in a situation where you're pitching a client handing over a book can be a very sexy business card.

For speakers who are paid to deliver breakout sessions and keynotes – being in front of an audience is a great opportunity to promote your products and services even if you're delivering a strictly non-promotional program.

If you do your job well, people will want more. And if you have books, CDs, online courses or offer professional services alongside your speaking, then every attendee is an opportunity to increase your income.

For most speakers and authors, the answer is selling a book or CD at the back of the room and mentioning their website at the end of the presentation. The thing is that it's a pain in the ass to hump around the country with a box of books, set up sales stations and actually process payments. Especially if you're doing it all yourself.

And who wants to wait in line to buy a book when they can get it instantly through Amazon anyway?

Nobody. That's who. And even if they mean to order it later, they probably won't.

If you have 10 people willing to line up and buy your book, you can bet there's a bunch of folks who see the line and decide to move on. And even if you're using Square or some other processing service, dodgy wi-fi connections can give you more headaches than actual money.

So how do you make those sales? How do you promote your services? QR codes to the rescue

It's often said that QR codes are a technology that was invented before there was actually a good reason to use them. But if you have products to sell, QR codes are a natural extension of sales and marketing.

QR codes are free, simple to create and can link to anything – even an Amazon sales page. They can also link to pages on

your own site. So if you have a service page or survey with a call to action that you want people to see - link to it using a QR code.

If you create a postcard with a couple of QR codes and drop them on the chairs before you speak, everyone in the room will have something to take home with them. Better yet they can quickly order your product, sign up for your newsletter, connect with you on LinkedIn, take a survey....you get the point. Basically, as they are playing with their smartphones, you can get some benefits.

So next time you're booked to speak in front of a large audience, make sure you take advantage of the opportunity to market your products and services more effectively using QR codes.

Some Final Thoughts

In order to market your business successfully, you need to commit to doing it properly. There are few shortcuts. And hopefully you've learned a few of them from this book.

But remember this, even if you pay someone to take care of all your marketing needs, closing a deal and signing a contract will always come down to you.

Marketing isn't the closer. It's the opener.

Marketing is about taking your expertise and presenting it in a professional manner to the people who are most likely to hire you. If you do it properly, you'll easily make the case for prospects to believe in you and what you're selling.

It's easy to get caught up and distracted by new technologies that promise unlimited returns with no money down. That's a fantasy your business can't afford.

Look at your marketing as an investment. Whether your investment is time or money - you will only get back what you're willing to put in.

Being an independent consultant, speaker or trainer is an amazing opportunity. It isn't easy. But if you can make it work, it's a fantastic life.

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