

How To

DOUBLE

YOUR

BUSINESS

In The Next

90 Days!

**11 Key Concepts To Boosting Your Sales, Cash Flow
and Profits NOW By Turning Your Business Into A
Customer-Focused Marketing Machine!**

Robert Boduch

How to DOUBLE YOUR BUSINESS in The Next 90 Days!

11 Key Concepts To Boosting Your Sales And Profits NOW By Turning Your Business Into A Customer-Directed Marketing Machine!

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1 Understand This Truth: Marketing is Everything

To succeed in business, you need to attract customers. Not just first-time customers, but those who continue to buy from you on a regular basis.

It's "customers" that put you in business in the first place... and allow you keep your enterprise operating. Just the same, a lack of customers will force you out of business — in short order.

You can never actually claim to be "in business" until you first have customers. Sure, you can register a company, lease space, buy equipment, develop or acquire a product to sell, and hang out your shingle. But until the first sale... all you have are expenses.

Few businesses fail when they have a steady stream of customers willing to spend money in exchange for their product or service. Companies that establish workable systems to consistently attract customers are those most likely to succeed in the long term.

Customers are the greatest asset of any business. It's the customer list that adds significantly to the value of a business.

Customers mean revenues and profits. They're the very lifeblood of every business — large and small. Therefore... your focus as a business owner should be the continuous building and nurturing of your own customer list. This is what sustains your enterprise, gives you an income and enables you to consistently expand and earn even greater sales and profits.

Acquiring new customers and then keeping them for life is what it's all about. Ideally, it should be a matter of delivering superior products and service, then renewing the sales relationship with each new customer, so they buy over and over again and... are happy to do so. With this kind of customer satisfaction, you'll not only turn one-time buyers into lifetime customers, you'll also automatically gain many more first-time customers by word-of-mouth referrals.

Business success begins with the first-time customer. Unless you already have a large list of customers... your primary focus should be in the area of attracting more and more first-timers, on an ongoing basis.

So where do you begin when attracting more customers is your goal?

In a word...*marketing*.

Effective marketing is what brings customers to you. A dependable, consistent marketing

plan and implementation system delivers customers efficiently, on a regular basis, and for a much lower investment than the hit-and-miss methods many business owners attempt.

No business can achieve optimum success without solid and consistent marketing. Without an effective marketing program in action, your growth and success in any business is unnecessarily handicapped.

What is marketing?

A simple definition of marketing would be anything that you do to get customers or to keep customers. Your display ads, newsletters, web sites, sales letters, direct mail packages, brochures, Yellow Pages ads, classifieds, etc., all represent part of the marketing picture. The same goes for your sales people, service staff, letterhead, business cards, as well as the sign on your office or shop.

Every representation of your company...every contact you have with prospects or customers... every perception a prospect or customer gathers... is in effect, *marketing*. Marketing is a never-ending function of business – you're always marketing whether you realize it or not. And every facet of marketing either helps your business prosper, or it hinders growth and profitability.

Everything is marketing and... marketing is everything to your success!

If you want to expand in the most expedient, cost-efficient and proven way, you need to take a good look at your overall marketing strategy. When you realize that "*everything is marketing*"... you begin to look at your business operation in a whole new light. You'll see obvious mistakes when you consider how your customer or prospect might view a particular situation, event, or marketing document.

There are 4 fundamental elements of successful marketing to consider:

1. **Product** – You must have a quality product or service with widespread appeal and you need to be either competitively priced, or offer something that's superior to what anybody else offers.
2. **Prospects** – You need to have a market to sell to. Who are your prospects? Is the market large enough to serve your continual growth?
3. **Media** – You also have to have a way to get your message across to your market. What methods provide the best, most reliable access to your market?
4. **Message** – The message is your communication with your market. It's everything you put into your advertising and marketing materials to convince prospects and customers to buy.

All 4 elements are essential to marketing success.

Think of your business as a bridge that has 4 main columns supporting the entire weight of the bridge. The 4 columns are named: Product, Prospects, Media and Message.

These 4 columns are the supporting structures that provide the rock-solid foundation of your business. A deficiency in any one area throws the whole bridge into peril. In your business, any weakness severely hampers your profit opportunities. When all 4 areas are strong, your chances of success are multiplied exponentially.

The best place to start is to spot the market first. Identify a market with “wants”...then figure out which of those desires your product can fulfill. Next...decide on the media that will enable you to access this market segment and then prepare a strong sales message.

In order to attract first-time customers economically, you’ll need to develop an appealing marketing message —one that gives you a clear competitive advantage— and deliver it to the best prospects in the most effective and cost-efficient way.

2 The Real Value Of Lifetime Customers

Customers mean everything to your business. The degree of success you enjoy in business is directly related to your ability to continually attract new customers and to keep existing customers buying from you, again and again.

In a perfect world, you might be able to just sit back and serve only existing customers. But to do so inhibits growth because every business has only a finite number of customers it can reasonably expect to serve. Whether you have 10 or 1,000 customers, in order to cultivate the maximum value from your greatest asset, you need to market to these customers again and again.

The best strategy is to continue efforts to attract first-time buyers...and to constantly stimulate sales from those who have purchased before.

Marketing is not just about finding new customers, but keeping those you've already won over and encouraging them to buy from you repeatedly, for years. That's where the real profits can be harvested.

According to world-famous marketer *Jay Abraham*, there are only 3 ways to grow any business:

1. Increase the number of customers...
2. Increase the unit value of each purchase transaction...
3. Increase the number of purchases each customer makes...

The easiest and least-costly sale you'll ever make is to an existing customer. These folks have already trusted you to deliver a product or service. You don't have to *sell* them again on the merits of doing business with you, instead of your competitor down the street.

Existing customers are *high-probability prospects* for your next related product or service. Trust has already been established. When customers are satisfied with their purchases, they're more likely to buy again and with much less scrutiny than the first time around.

To capitalize on the true value of your customer list, you need to be aware of product life cycles, individual buying frequency patterns and the value of typical purchases.

To fully illustrate the value of your customer list, let's look at an example:

Let's suppose that an average single purchase is \$100. If that's all "customer A" ever spends with you, the actual value of "customer A", in terms of revenue, is just that — \$100.

Now, let's say that this \$100 dollar purchase is a consumable product and it lasts about a year's time. Therefore, our customer needs to replace this product every year, in order to continually experience the same kind of benefit. If this customer purchases from you regularly over a period of say, ten years, that customer is now worth \$1000... or *ten times* as much as the single-item buyer!

Taking this one step further...since customer A is very satisfied with her purchases, she tells 3 of her friends about your superb products and outstanding service. As a result, these 3 friends also become 10-year customers. Now our original \$100 dollar customer is actually worth \$4,000... over the same ten-year period! If those 3 newly acquired customers also referred others, the cash-generation picture gets even brighter. And it all started with a single, \$100 purchase.

This is how a fitness club can offer 30 days of complete services for \$10, or how book clubs promise "5 books for just \$5". They don't make any money on the first transaction. In fact, they often lose money on the front end. But they also know that the value of a customer who purchases repeatedly is well worth the comparatively small up-front costs.

These companies are banking on building long-term relationships with customers. That's the key! Successful marketing is about building positive, long-term relationships with people. Never forget that simple fact and it will serve you well in any business.

Repeat business is where the true fortune lies. That's why honesty and integrity are so important to the business that wants to grow and flourish. Real profit is generated from subsequent sales, beyond the initial purchase.

The first sale often absorbs most of the costs associated with customer acquisition. Therefore, each subsequent sale has a higher percentage of built-in profit, than the one before. It doesn't take long before it's all profit, less of course, the cost of goods sold and any overhead.

Take a close look at your own customer list.

How many of your past customers have come back on their own to purchase again? How many have made purchases on numerous occasions? What dollar value has each customer been worth to date? Then, start to think about ways to enhance that value by renewing the buying relationship.

Seeing the potential value of cared-for customers can help you determine how much you're willing to spend to acquire each new customer. Newer businesses who don't yet have a sizable customer list, may need to spend more initially, in order to establish a

customer base of some kind.

Once you have customers, it's always in your best interest to continually serve... communicate with... make offers to... and generally delight those who have already bought from you.

Keep in mind that satisfied customers usually welcome frequent contact from businesses that have delivered superior overall satisfaction in the recent past. Often, your frequent communications simply renew good feelings — something everyone likes to experience.

Following are a few ideas for maintaining contact with your customers:

- Put in place a system of regular contact where you can mention additional products and services that might be of interest to your customers
- Consider using tools of communication like invitations, postcards, newsletters, thank-you cards and sales letters
- Keep customers and prospects informed and up-to-date with any changes in your business
- Let them know first about new products and services, as well as new applications for existing products
- Keep the lines of communication open so customers can easily have their problems solved – regular contact makes you more seem more accessible to customers
- Do whatever it takes to make customers happy without undue delay
- Ask them to direct other people to you or if someone they know would like to receive your free newsletter, sample, catalogue, etc.
- Inform customers first about all upcoming events, new product releases, publicity excerpts, changes in product selection, etc.
- Remind customers before it's time to renew or replenish their supply
- Provide helpful tips or pass along related information customers may find useful

The quality of your on-going relationships with customers is the primary underlying value of your business. Customers *are* your business and should be treated as good friends.

Do whatever is necessary to stay in your customer's thoughts. The ultimate pinnacle is to be "top of mind"... that is to be the first (and perhaps only) source your customer thinks of, whenever she needs what you provide. This gives you a tremendous competitive edge over others and adds considerably to the true value of your business.

Your task is to maximize the value of your customer list by continually renewing the sales relationship with those people who have already purchased from you.

You've already invested capital and energy to win over customers the first time. Once you have a customer, it's up to you to keep them.

3 Marketing Systems For Autopilot Success

The ultimate formula for business success is really quite simple. All you have to do to ensure long-term success is:

1. Generate quality leads consistently and economically.
2. Convert as many of those leads as possible into sales.
3. Ensure that you delight your customers so they'll be pre-disposed to buy from you again and to recommend your company to others.
4. Repeatedly sell refills, replacements and other products to your family of existing customers.
5. Ask customers to refer you to others who may want the same benefits.
6. Keep going back to step #1 and repeat the pattern again.

Follow these six steps and your success is virtually assured. Of course you'll need a good product or service and a readily accessible, "hungry" market to begin with.

A marketing system is a process to continually attract new business and to continue serving existing customers. A *system* automates the process, making it easier to consistently and reliably attract qualified prospects. It saves you time because everything is prepared and planned in advance. It doesn't make sense to waste your time and financial resources on those who for whatever reason, are not likely to buy from you now, or in the foreseeable future.

It's about boosting your business in the most cost-efficient and productive way. Essentially, you want to establish a formula for acquiring customers regularly. You want something that can work over a period of time... something that is affordable... something that efficiently delivers plenty of quality prospects and customers. In addition, you want a system that can be implemented at any time, whenever your business needs a fresh new crop of prospective buyers.

The best systems are those that you control, 100%. When you surrender control, or a portion of it, you lose your ability to directly monitor and adapt the system as you choose. A proven system lets you automate your marketing, so your time is freed up for the daily challenges and obligations of running a business like yours.

A marketing system can include any method of reaching your target market. Any kind of proven advertising or promotional material can be worked into a system that can bring you a steady stream of high-quality prospects, whenever you want.

As an example, let's take a closer look at a viable marketing system.

For this example, we'll use as our product, a manual for retailers titled, *How To Sell More From Your Retail Store*. This manual was written for the independent store owner who wants to increase sales, without adding to their overhead costs.

- A. This particular marketing system begins with classified ads and small display ads placed in specialty trade magazines and newsletters. The ad is designed to get interested retailers to request additional details about the manual. This is step one.
- B. As inquiries come in, the direct sales package is sent out. It includes a sales letter, order form, brochure and some kind of free sample or premium. (this is the offer that was promised in the ads)
- C. A certain percentage of these packages should come back as product orders. Those who ordered, are sent their shipments immediately. Along with the product purchased goes another advertising piece for a related product. This is known as a "ride along" since there's no additional cost to mail out the ad itself.
- D. Those who didn't buy, are sent subsequent follow-up letters, postcards, invitations, and the like... in an attempt to convert as many as possible into buyers.
- E. Again, a percentage of follow-ups should result in additional sales. You determine how many times you want to reach individual groups of prospects, before moving on. The point is...if you only contact them only once, you'll probably miss a lot of new customers who for unknown reasons, failed to respond favorably the first time around.

There you have it: a simple — yet very effective — marketing system. There are several advantages to implementing such a basic system:

1. It's generally a less-expensive and more direct alternative.
2. It allows you to test different offers and appeals.
3. It gets prospects to COME TO YOU rather than you sending your material to them, without a previous request for it.

4. You can approach these prospects repeatedly, in an effort to convert them into customers, something you usually aren't able to do with rented mailing lists.
5. You can start small and expand your efforts as you gain experience.
6. Once your system is producing consistently profitable results, you put it on autopilot and continue to reap the rewards.

A strong marketing system allows you to predict with some degree of accuracy, how many new prospects or new customers are gained daily, weekly or monthly. It helps you predict the number of new leads or new sales you get, based on the amount of advertising you place.

Systems allow you to test your ideas on a small scale, before rolling out with a major campaign. This is marketing with intelligence. Test small and smart and adapt accordingly... based on results. Once you have your own system working, you can then multiply your returns by expanding your advertising efforts to larger markets that also appear to be good target markets for your products and services.

There are 4 keys to creating a winning marketing system:

1. You need to create advertising that gets attention and stimulates desire.
2. You need to create compelling marketing messages that interested, qualified prospects find difficult to resist.
3. You need a method of accessing the best possible prospective customers in order to make your offer available to them.
4. You need to find the most effective and most relevant form of marketing, or the most effective way to get your compelling messages in front of those most likely to buy.

Whatever your business... whatever products or services you sell... your ability to consistently and affordably attract a steady stream of new customers, particularly in the early stages, will prove to be the most critical factor in your ultimate success.

A marketing system, as simple, or as complex as you want it to be, is the most effective strategy for business growth because it's always geared towards maximum, measurable results, at the least possible expense.

4 Creating Winning Advertising

Your business could be “number one”. You could be the best in town...with the most appealing, useful, money-saving, health-inducing, miracle product in the world! But... if you can’t communicate all those advantages in an enticing way that gets people to respond in droves, your profits will be minimal and your success unnecessarily restricted.

It’s true that most people are simply overloaded with marketing messages of all kinds. With the explosive growth of the Internet, the problem is only growing in scope each year. It seems as though we’re bombarded with commercial messages, almost from the moment we awaken until we fall asleep.

Mass marketing is not the way to go for an entrepreneurial company. It may be acceptable for a *Coca-Cola* or *IBM* to advertise this way, but no small enterprise can survive and thrive by throwing money into massive, widespread advertising that reaches a “general” audience. Companies with huge advertising budgets often use “image” advertising as a means of brand-building and keeping their names in public view.

Fortunately, there is a better way for entrepreneurs and small business owners. The intelligent approach is to use targeted marketing that persuasively communicates your unique advantages in a compelling way and encourages immediate action. This strategy produces the highest rate of sales at the lowest possible cost... provided it’s done the right way.

Having a superior system for effective low-cost advertising always wins out over high-budget campaigns that attempt to reach everyone. “Everyone” is not a good target group for whatever it is that you’re offering. It’s always best to narrow your approach to specific groups – individual market segments that hold greater promise as potential buyers.

Where do most of your existing customers come from? If your business is new, you don’t have the advantage of a track record to draw upon. Try to project the best possible sources of new business. What specific areas or market segments should you put most of your efforts into?

When you know who the best prospects are for your product or service, developing advertising that captures attention and generates response from that specific group, is much easier. Identifying the best candidates for your advertising is always a preliminary step to designing and writing ads that pull in customers.

Here’s a simple 6-step formula for creating advertising that works:

1. **Message** — Get your message delivered to the *right prospects*.
2. **Attention & Interest** — Command the *attention* of those prospects so your

message doesn't get overlooked.

3. **Self-Interest** — Appeal to the “*wants*” of your target prospects before their needs. Wants are emotional...needs are logical and the heart often overrules the head. What are your prospects interested in? What do they deeply desire? Put yourself in their shoes and speak to each reader one-on-one as though you were sharing advice with a close personal friend.
4. **Advantages** — Communicate the *unique advantages* of your product or service. What can you convey to your audience that will make them want to do business with you, or at least take the next step towards buying?
5. **Proof** — It's not enough to simply make a claim. You also need to provide evidence of the advantages that you present. Proof makes your statements much more *believable* and *credible*.
6. **Action** — Move your prospects to *act on your offer immediately* by promising an additional incentive such as a free sample, related report, or premium.

Your front-end advertising should focus on lead-generation. Never try to sell directly from a small classified, display, or ezine ad. Unless you plan to run large, full-page ads that give you adequate space to present compelling sales copy, you're further ahead sticking to “lead-generation” type ads. You can always work towards the sale with your follow-up copy. This is known as two-step advertising. Step One is to attract interested prospects with a small ad or mailing piece. Step Two is to “sell” them with a convincing sales letter or dynamic presentation.

Persuasive, results-oriented advertising copy gives you an affordable, dependable and efficient means of attracting qualified buyers. Subsequent sales material can then help convert prospects into customers.

Each ad you place should be part of your continuous testing. All results should be recorded and carefully monitored. Slight, seemingly insignificant alterations in the wording of ads and particularly headlines, have been known to cause dramatic improvements in response.

Carefully monitor your ads and sales material. With every change made, results should be tabulated and compared to the original. This is the way breakthrough advertising often evolves. It's usually the result of a little tweaking, constant testing and accurate analysis.

Here are 6 points to keep in mind as you develop your advertising:

- Make each ad as compelling and irresistible as possible.
- Use meaningful specifics rather than vague generalities – tests indicate that

using actual numbers, amounts, results achieved, etc. produces better results than a general statement or rounded-off number.

- Include a huge promise – state what the prospect stands to gain by taking action NOW.
- Make it believable. Perception equals reality — as far as prospects are concerned.
- Include a special offer to encourage action. Make it limited in some way. Your mission is to light a fire under the prospect to move them from a state of inertia into action.
- Be very clear in your instructions — indicate the response you want prospects to take. A confused prospect never buys.

The most effective way to launch a new advertising campaign is to start small and test. Test every element of your ads – publications, headlines, offers, benefits, special inducements, points of contact. Starting with lead-generation advertising can help you determine the strongest possible appeal for your market. The best lead-generation ads get prospects interested by offering appealing, free information. The information should relate in some way to your product or service. By requesting the information, the prospect positions herself as an ideal target for your offer.

5 Leverage: Using Limited Resources To Produce Big Results

The principle of leverage is about gaining the most in terms of sales, cash flow and profits for the least amount of time, effort and money invested. It's about effectively using small amounts of energy and capital resources to produce huge results.

Leverage is about multiplying the power of your advertising and marketing so you gain a far greater yield for your investment. It's about using your time, energy and marketing firepower, to get ten or twenty times the result in less time and for one quarter the effort.

Your costs are the same to run any ad, whether it brings you 10 new prospects, 50 new prospects, or 550 new prospects. It requires the same amount of creative effort, time and money to close 1 in 200 prospects, as it does to close 1 in 50, or even 1 in 10.

But acquiring 50 new prospects instead of just 10 gives you five times the leverage. Gaining 550 new prospects instead of 10 delivers 55 times the result, for exactly the same investment of time, energy, and financial resources. Similarly, closing 1 in 50, rather than 1 in 200, gives you 400% upside leverage, and closing 1 in 10 delivers a whopping 2000% increase!

Using leverage to your advantage is a matter of increasing your success quotient through intelligence. Employing proven strategies is one method to boost your odds and give you a greater probability for success. Leverage is a way of hedging your chances to position yourself for better results without spending a fortune.

Leverage is really a strategy for establishing superior “field positioning”, before the game even begins.

Essentially, *leverage* is about:

- Creating the highest likelihood for successful results...
- Providing the lowest possibility of failure...
- Utilizing the least amount of resources (time, energy, money)...

...In order to gain the greatest possible return on your investment.

So how do you use leverage so you can improve upon your current results?

Here are 7 ways to get more for less in your marketing efforts:

- Use smaller, well-designed ads that pack a punch, as opposed to costly, larger ads. Always test small, first.
- Choose better publications or mailing lists, ones that better reflect the target market you've identified as ideal for your product.
- Take advantage of low-cost marketing options such as classified ads, co-op advertising, Internet and publicity.
- Renew the sales relationship with inactive or past customers.
- Create superior advertising that gets more people to respond.
- Rework your follow-up material so recipients are literally compelled to buy from you because not doing so would actually cost them dearly due to all the benefits they'll miss out on.
- Once your system is working, expand your marketing reach and put it on autopilot so you can free up more of your time for other activities.

Successful marketing really boils down to this:

1. Find your best source of new prospects and customers...
2. Determine the most viable, cost effective, productive, and expedient way to reach as many targeted prospects as possible...
3. Convert as many prospects into *customers for life* – delighted customers who happily tell others all about your products and services.

Leveraging your marketing efforts helps you find more first-time customers. You can then turn that one-shot sale into a continued relationship that can last for many years and bring you thousands upon thousands of dollars.

Using the principle of leveraging allows you to exponentially grow your business by multiplying the effectiveness of every marketing initiative. It's like profiting from the results of 60 salespeople instead of 3, and it's like having a full-page ad instead of a one-line directory listing. Leverage allows you to duplicate your efforts and produce many times greater results – at a much lower expense.

6 Targeting Your Prospects – The Benefits Of Niche Marketing

The more closely you can define and pinpoint your target market, the more success you're likely to enjoy. Many businesses make the mistake of trying to be "all things to all people". You're better off choosing the markets you want to target and then focus exclusively on serving these segments better than anyone else.

Specialize — don't generalize. Choose niche markets that are both easily identifiable and accessible.

Carefully examine the results you've achieved up to this point. Chances are the 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle comes into play here. This concept states that 80% of your business comes from just 20% of your customers. Run the numbers and see if this idea is accurate in your experience. In most cases, it is.

The next obvious step is to review those 20% of customers who account for 80% of your business. Do they fit into a particular niche that's identifiable and accessible? Perhaps the top 20% of your customers live in the same neighborhood, a characteristic not shared by the other 80%. Or, it could be that the top 20% fit into specific occupational or special-interest groups.

It may be your top 20% consists of a variation of professional occupations like Architects, Dentists and Chiropractors. In this case, each group could represent a specific niche, and each niche may require a separate marketing approach – one that "speaks" to them as special members of their peer group.

In seeking a niche in which to focus your marketing effort, select a target group with an already established "want" for what you offer. Success is much faster and more of a sure thing wherever there's the likelihood of a strong desire for the benefits and advantages your product or service offers.

Don't try to create a desire for your product, find where that desire and demand already exist, then offer your superior solution in the most advantageous and appealing way.

As Marketing consultant, Anthony Blake says... *"There are people walking around with money to spend... money that's burning holes in their pockets... all you have to do is follow the smoke."*

You'll achieve greater success by concentrating on specific market niches that are currently under-served or not served at all. In these markets, your products and services are wanted, appreciated and placed in high esteem. You're often seen as a "savior" of sorts, for providing much-wanted, helpful solutions.

Look at what others are doing and do something different. Avoid the niches that most companies in your field cater to. Go after the markets that others consider “too small” or “too insignificant” to worry about. Just make sure that it’s a large enough market to make your efforts profitable.

You also need to target market segments that can be easily reached through your advertising and marketing strategies. Groups that don’t have affordable and comfortable accessibility probably aren’t the best niches to approach. To try and market successfully to a market that’s difficult to reach can be a frustrating, draining and costly experience.

Be adaptable and flexible. Markets and opportunities are constantly changing. Nothing remains the same, indefinitely. Change is happening all around you, whether you choose to accept it or not. Be prepared to refocus your target markets, whenever it becomes necessary. Your flexibility and adaptability is what enables you to expand and grow with a changing and constantly evolving marketplace.

When seeking target niches, look for markets that:

- Share common problems and have similar “wants” so that you can, in effect, “package” solutions that serve many, rather than customizing solutions to individual, specific requirements.
- You know and understand, or those you can gather relevant information about, that will help you to understand the best marketing appeals to use.
- You can reach easily and affordably.
- Are easily identifiable as those who are under-served by others in the market.
- Can easily pay for your products or services.
- Show a past history of buying related products or services in the recent past, where the dollar volume of each purchase is close to or more than the cost of your product.

Using these ideas will help you determine the most lucrative and productive areas in which to concentrate your marketing operations.

7 Capitalize On Your Unique Competitive Advantages

Why should prospects do business with you? How are they greater advantaged in doing business with you vs. any other competitor? The answer to these questions should be carefully and consistently communicated to your market at every opportunity.

Your most unique and relevant advantage is your strongest ally in attracting first-time buyers. This is what gives you an original perspective and a strong competitive edge in the marketplace. Your *Unique Selling Advantage* (USA) or *Unique Selling Proposition* (USP) as it is also known, is what sets you apart from everyone else — *even if they happen to be marketing the exact same products to the exact same people.*

A *Unique Selling Advantage* gives your business a distinction in any competitive marketplace. Your unique advantage helps to position you favorably, in the eyes of your market.

But just having a *Unique Selling Advantage* isn't enough; it should be part of every communication you have with your market. In fact, it should also be a part of your business on a daily basis. In other words, you've got to *live* it. It can't just be some dreamed-up concept that sounds interesting and appealing. Your *Unique Selling Advantage* needs to be something original... something that gives you a special advantage over others, thereby minimizing the appeal of competing products and businesses.

The key to having distinctive advantages is to make those advantages clearly and unmistakably evident to your prospects.

You simply must make it easy for people to understand your advantages. That's why free samples, test drives, and trial offers work so well; they give the prospect a "hands-on" experience, essentially providing an actual demonstration of the advantages of your product.

Think of your *Unique Selling Advantage* as a ten-second advertisement for your business. What can you say in ten seconds that gives you superior positioning in the eyes of your target prospects?

Communicate your advantages everywhere. It's your most compelling sales statement because it separates you favorably from everyone else. Make your unique advantages known by placing them everywhere, including business cards, brochures, Yellow Pages ads, signs, name tags, direct mail packages, company vehicles, web sites, advertising specialties, packaging, etc.

Actively promoting your distinct advantages gives you the most valuable exposure of all.

Most simply push their own company name in their ads, unknowingly committing one of the biggest entrepreneurial blunders of all time.

Your USA actually *means* something to prospects and gives them a reason to contact you, first. Prospects relate and respond because a good *Unique Selling Advantage* is created to appeal specifically to the innermost “wants” of those prospects.

Your unique advantages tell the marketplace what you offer that others don’t. It’s about being different from everyone else and clearly and succinctly communicating what you do for your customers. It’s what they get that makes you the decisive choice over and above all other options — including doing nothing.

Developing a strong Unique Selling Advantage requires a thorough understanding of the kinds of things your competitors offer, as well as superior inside knowledge as to what your market really wants. Taking the time to fully understand what your prospects desire is fundamental to supplying the “magic” solution.

8 Help People To Buy With An Appealing First-Time Offer

Try to make it real easy for first-time customers to buy from you. You don't have to sell new customers on the whole package or deluxe version of your product or service. Instead, offer something as an introductory level purchase. Allow these new customers an easy, lower-cost way to become your customers.

Your mission is to facilitate the buying process by eliminating all possible obstacles that could interfere with the sale.

Some businesses make the mistake of going for the biggest sale at the first opportunity. The problem is... prospects are leery in the beginning — you need to earn their trust first. A better choice is to make a small, initial sale to a customer, and develop a customer/supplier relationship – one that hopefully blossoms into a life-long partnership.

Since the first sale to a customer is the most difficult (and costly) one to close, it makes good sense to ease them into the buying experience, until they are totally comfortable and anxious to spend money, again and again.

The key is to get them on board as customers. Make it easy. Give them a “baby step” to let them experience the total benefits of your product, without fear and without risking a lot of money. Give people the opportunity to put your products and services to the test. Let them experience your customer service first-hand. Do all you can to ensure their satisfaction on this small purchase. Take good care of these people — they're the essence of your business.

Do whatever it takes to make the initial sale. Additional sales can come repeatedly, even automatically, but only after you've earned your customer's complete trust, confidence and satisfaction.

Most people have a set figure that they're willing to spend without hesitation, on something of interest. Anything above that figure and prospects could take days, or even weeks to make a buying decision. Make it easy for new customers to try your products and services with some sort of introductory offer.

Since it's easier to ease people into a buying relationship with lower-cost items, you can welcome more folks into the fold that way. Grow your customer list secure in the knowledge that each customer can become a lifelong revenue stream for your business. When you keep in mind the potential value of a long-term customer, the initial sales value pales in comparison.

The more appealing the initial offer, the easier it is to acquire first-time customers. The secret to building a large list in a short period of time is to create a tremendous offer that is simply irresistible to your target market.

9 Added Value Makes It Easy To Choose You

Whether it's a first purchase or the thirty-first, the key to gaining an advantage in any market is to offer *superior value*. Added value is about giving more in perceived *use-value* to your customers, than they get anywhere else. It's not the actual price of your product or service that matters most, it's the *value* buyers feel they get in return that makes it worthy of the price.

Give more in actual use value, than you ask for in cash value. Offer more than competitors do and the perceived value of your product increases accordingly. You could be selling identical name-brand products as others. What makes you different and gives you a clear and distinct advantage over competitors is the added value that you include.

Added value could mean free delivery or installation. It could be the bonus manual that you supply with a software product, or a full year guarantee, instead of the industry standard of three months. Perhaps it's the monthly call to remind the customer to reorder another 30-day supply. There are plenty of ways to add value to whatever you sell.

Here are a few value-added ideas to illustrate the concept further:

- Free gift-wrapping
- Helpful, informative articles or reports
- Exclusive multiple-use packaging
- Information sheets
- Maintenance or set-up tips provided for each model offered
- Offering a greater quantity than is considered standard practice
- 24-hour help line for technical support
- Accessibility to private, information-based web sites
- Premiums or small bonus gifts
- Free consultations

It's important to offer extras that customers want and place a high value upon. It doesn't do much good to offer something that isn't desired by your prospects, or to offer something that is readily available elsewhere. But it doesn't have to cost a lot to create an

offer that's highly desired. Often these value-added premiums can be acquired at an extremely low cost, but the perceived value they add to the purchase can be worth a hundred times the cost or more.

10 Reversing The Risk Removes The Final Barrier

There's always an element of fear people have in doing business with a company or individual they don't really know. The degree of fear usually increases with the amount of money involved in the potential transaction.

Most of us have had an unfortunate experience or two in the past with products or services that didn't quite measure up to our expectations. We've been ripped-off by unscrupulous scam operators, or businesses of dubious character. Those painful memories have taught us all to be more cautious of unknown vendors and to make sure we have adequate recourse, should we be unhappy with our purchases.

Your prospects are in this mode right now. They fear being "taken" in some way. Unfortunately, this fear often paralyzes them from making a buying decision. If the fear is too intense, they run for cover to avoid the potential pain of loss, like the ones from previous encounters that are forever etched into their memory banks.

Reversing the risk is about assuming total responsibility for your customer's satisfaction. It's about taking the risk away from the customer and shouldering it yourself — as any reputable company would.

Your job as a marketer is to eliminate, or at least, significantly reduce this risk wherever possible. When you do this effectively, you've removed the final obstacle to closing the sale. You've safely removed the last possible objection to the sale your prospect could have.

Many true prospects want to buy. They want to say "Yes, I'll take it". They desire all the benefits and advantages your product or service can give them. But an overwhelming fear can suppress even a powerful impulse to buy.

You can overcome this problem and improve your sales dramatically by removing the risk from your prospect and assuming the risk yourself. In taking the risk away from your prospects and customers you make it easier for them to buy. It's one less reason not to buy. The less your prospects and customers feel they have to lose, the more likely they are to go ahead with the purchase.

Here are 8 ways you can reverse the buying risk for your prospective customers:

- Provide a no-hassle, money back guarantee. Offer bonus items as a gift, simply for taking the time to try the product. This makes your guarantee, "better than risk free".

- Increase the length of your guarantee to double or triple what the competition offers (90 days vs. 30 days)
- Offer payment plans (3 easy payments of \$33 monthly, rather than one payment of \$99)
- Offer introductory version of your product or service (5 CD's for \$5)
- Give free samples of actual products
- Give free trial packages for a limited time
- Accept post-dated checks as payment
- Pay only on approval (negative-option programs used by book and CD clubs)

Your prospects want to feel totally comfortable in doing business with you. Yes, they want the promised benefits, but they also want to know that they're not "on the hook", should your products or services disappoint in any way.

The more complete and all-encompassing your risk-reversal strategy is, the more prospects will be willing to take a chance on you and paradoxically, the less you'll have to deliver in terms of recourse.

11 Continuous Marketing Accelerates Success

A system of continuous marketing enables you to routinely convey your message to your best prospects. The obvious goal is to convince prospects to become buyers and the sooner they come around, the lower the cost to you in acquiring that customer.

Some prospects will buy the first time you contact them, provided your offer and ad copy does an adequate job and you've targeted the best possible prospects. Unfortunately, many people don't even see your message, or pay any attention to it the first time around. That's why it's so important to repeatedly contact your best prospects with your most convincing and appealing offer.

A marketing system is designed to deliver your message several times to prospects who haven't yet made a purchase. Many experts claim that you should approach a prospect no less than seven times before giving up on her and moving on.

The actual number of pieces in your marketing system may vary, according to the business type and your budget. It usually takes more than one contact to close sales that involve more than prospects would spend without thinking twice about it. You may be short-changing yourself if you only approach prospects a single time. I advocate a system of multiple exposures, which is any number over one.

Most of us are exposed to a barrage of commercial messages every day. It's impossible to pay attention to them all. So what do we do? We focus on only those that reach us where we "live", that hot zone that encompasses only areas of primary self-interest.

With the kind of widespread advertising going on, it's no surprise that your first message to your market doesn't always get through... let alone acted upon. For this reason, it's important to "work" a highly qualified and interested prospect repeatedly, so they can at least try out your products and services. To deprive them of this opportunity is to cheat them out of what could very well be in their best interest; buying your product NOW. Not only that, but you're cheating yourself in that you'll produce far less sales than you could through an effective system of repeated contacts.

With advertising messages everywhere, it's fair to say that many people are oblivious to most of them. Deleting 99.5% of the regular onslaught is the only way most people could function effectively in their daily lives. To pay attention to every message would leave little time for anything else.

So the best means of getting through to prospects is with spaced repetition. You want to send your marketing communications to prospects repeatedly, over time. I suggest spacing messages apart by two weeks in the initial stages, with a gradual spreading out of any subsequent contacts.

I'd also suggest that you don't simply mail the same piece over and over again. Promote the same benefits and use similar offers, if you wish. But don't just send the same sales letter or brochure. This quickly becomes boring to the prospect – even though she may in fact be mulling over your offer. Remember, bored prospects don't buy.

Some of the pieces you may want to use in your prospect marketing system, include:

- Sales Letters
- Brochures
- Ezine Ads
- Postcards
- Card Decks
- Lift Letters
- Coupons
- Press Releases
- Websites
- Invitations
- Greeting Cards
- Testimonial Letters
- Complete Direct Mail Packages

You'll want to have systems in place for both your prospect list and your customer list. Often, established customer buy again and again, automatically, without the need to be "sold" each time. The best way to keep customers active is to maintain a system of consistent communication.

Your customer list marketing system may include some of the following elements:

- Newsletters (electronic or print versions)
- Catalogs
- Invitations
- Special Letters
- Greeting Cards
- Thank-you Cards or Gifts
- New Product Announcements
- Product Updates or Upgrades
- Helpful Information