

CARDELL MEDIA

21

SUCCESS

PRINCIPLES

**of The Millionaire
Entrepreneurs**

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21 Success Principles of The Millionaire Entrepreneurs

Principle One - Focus on Customers

Customers. Most businesses treat them as if they were a necessary evil... but in reality, they are the *raison d'être* of your whole business.

Because if you didn't have customers to serve, you wouldn't *have* a business.

So here are some simple tips to getting more of them and keeping the ones you already have.

Where to find lists of customers for 3p each

While it's true your most powerful and effective list is the one you build yourself using the direct-response strategies I share with you, there's no doubt it is also possible to generate a substantial amount of business using so-called "cold" lists so long as you're very selective and careful about the criteria you choose to filter them by.

Most magazines and publications will rent you access to their lists, and clearly the readership is very highly qualified in respect of the publication's main theme – meaning, a magazine on vintage cars will have a certain demographic for its readers.

There's a publication in the UK called Lists and Data Services (LADS) which is a directory of these publications. It gives you full contact details for the list owner and prices for rental.

Or, if your demographic is a little broader and perhaps even geographical, it's worthwhile looking at the many different lists brokered by MarketingFile at www.MarketWingFile.com. Two great things about Marketing File are, first, there's no minimum order (some list owners will sell you lists only in numbers of 1,000+) and, second, they frequently have sales – often half price – which brings the cost down to about 3p per address.

Some words of caution:

1. List brokers are like advertising reps. The latter want to sell you as much space as they can, and the former want to sell you as many names as they can. But YOU want to buy as few as you need to make a meaningful test. Don't be drawn in by hype and excitement.
2. Don't test a list just because it's cheap. Think about your criteria. The more closely and narrowly you specify your criteria, the better the response you're likely to get. For example, if you're selling dog-training videos, a list based on "dog owners who have bought a puppy in the last six weeks" is going to be better than "pet owners".

How to make your customers loyal

The more cynical of us say there's no such thing as customer loyalty anymore. This is not true. Loyalty is a fundamental human trait and it's not disappeared at all.

No, the real problem is businesses don't give customers and clients a *reason* to be loyal. After all, loyalty, like respect, needs to be earned rather than assumed.

Here are three powerful ways to make your customers and clients loyal to you:

1. Frequent, interesting, and informative communication, which has a ratio of selling to education of about 3:1. That is, for every email you send to get them to buy something, you should send three which contain something of inter-est or value to them.
2. A monthly newsletter. A paper one, too. A sheet of A3 folded to A4 and printed on all four pages is cheap and easy. It costs less than £20 a year per customer and goes a long way to growing and nurturing the relationship you have with them. If they have a relationship with you, then they are bound to feel more loyal. You're someone they feel they know, not just someone who takes their money.
3. Position yourself as an authority. A great way to do this is to get a regular column in the local media. This is much easier than you think. The local free papers are crying out for good material – they won't pay you for it, but you won't have to pay silly advertising rates, either. Best of all you become the local expert in your field. That immediately makes people want to deal with you – and keeps them loyal.

How to get competitors to introduce you to their customers

You have a prospect list.

At least I hope you do. And I hope you're emailing, calling, and direct-mailing them relentlessly and without cease,

and increasing your sales beyond anything you believed possible.

But there comes that point when you have to conclude that no matter what you do, some people just are not going to buy from you.

Now, we call these people your “non buyers”. And you *should* be able to tell who they are. At the moment, they are worth nothing to you, yet they cost you money to acquire. That means unless you can sell them something, you’ve made a loss.

Here’s where we can be clever – we offer to trade *our* non-buyers’ list with our competitors’ non-buyers’ list – and you try to sell your products and services to their non-buyers, and they try and sell their products and services to yours.

The immediate reaction to this is shock and horror – giving your competitors your prospect list is surely madness?!

But no, it makes sense. Your non-buyers represent sunk-cost you have no chance of recovering by your own efforts – bluntly, if they haven’t bought from you in, say, a year of relentless marketing... they’re never going to.

So from that perspective you’ve already lost them. They are, in effect, no longer a prospect for you.

But by swapping non-buyers’ lists with your competitors, you at least stand a chance of getting some trade-value out of them.

Principle Two - Understand Your Website is a Fundamental Part of Your Business

Most business owners make the mistake of seeing their website as being an add-on to their business, something to be “bolted on” and even sidelined as a necessary evil. This kind of thinking is going to cost you a lot of money!

The first thing is to be clear that your website is an integral part of your business and you need to invest time and effort into making it a seamless fit.

In the early days of the internet, technological limitations meant that it was hard for a website to be anything more than an online brochure.

But technology has moved on and matured to the point where it's possible and often desirable to make your website the core of your business and sales process.

It's now possible to use the Internet to automate most or every part of your business. That might not be your goal, and it might not always be desirable, but it's certainly possible for many businesses.

How to make your website more profitable

So that's the first thing: get your thinking about your website clear in your mind. It's a fundamental part of your business and must form part of your total marketing strategy.

It's not something to be shoved off on one side and left to “the web guy”. Your web guy is unlikely to be a marketing expert – and don't make the mistake of thinking web-design *firms* are marketers, either. They almost never are.

Your website is potentially a massive income-generator for you, and like any valuable precision-machine, it's got to be put together right, maintained right, and used right.

Two vital elements in your Internet Marketing Strategy

You can break your Internet marketing down into two distinct steps:

1. Getting visitors to your website
2. Converting them into paying customers and clients

Now, this might appear too simple to be important, but it's not. It's absolutely vital. And let me show you how important it is.

Imagine you have 100 visitors a day to your website and you have a conversion rate of 1%, meaning out of these 100 visitors, 1 of them actually buys something, and you make a £100 profit.

Now, imagine by using the simple strategies in this report, you increase your visitors by 50% and increase your conversion rate by 50%, too. And bear in mind these numbers are *conservative* – the real increases you'll get will almost certainly be many multiples of these.

OK, so with this increase, you're now getting 150 visitors each day, and selling something to 1.5% of them – which is now 2.25 sales a day, on average. So now, even with these modest increases, your daily profits have gone from £100 to £225.

That's 125% more business you're doing now, just from two 50% increases in your visitors and conversions.

So the next question is...

How do you increase Traffic to your Website and increase Conversions?

There are probably as many ways to increase traffic to your website as there are individuals out there on the net to drive to it; and the science of sales has filled many a book and is the focus of entire multi-day seminars.

But here I have identified four specific and very simple strategies you can start using TODAY to increase your online profits.

Any one of these would be very valuable by itself, but you have all four here to benefit from and put to work for you in your business.

Here they are:

- 1. Use multiple marketing approaches to attract visitors to your website.** There are many products and courses out there promising you a “flood of traffic” with just a few simple tricks. They’re all bogus.

For one thing, it’s *not* just a case of getting lots of traffic: we want *qualified* traffic, traffic comprising people who are looking for what we’re selling. So it will pay you to do your research and ensure the traffic you’re getting *is* qualified. Believe me, it will make your job of converting them to paying customers *much* easier.

One great way to drive *highly qualified* online traffic to your website is using “Pay Per Click” Advertising (most often Google AdWords).

You literally pay to have your ad featured on Google’s search-result pages when people type in the search terms. People click these ads and are taken to your website – and you pay Google an amount of money if, and only if, they click on your ad. Never before has it been possible to get your ad in front of 100 million people within 10 minutes, and not a penny to pay until they respond to it.

I’m a great fan of AdWords, and it’s helped me build a multi-million-pound business... but you have to get it right. As with all marketing, start small and test every step of the way.

In the coming months, I’ll share some highly effective AdWords strategies with you.
- 2. Combine online and offline marketing.** One of the biggest mistakes I see business owners making when they jump on the Internet marketing bandwagon is they let all their other marketing activities wither and die.

And by doing this, they miss out on a lot of potential traffic they could capture details from and convert into sales. Now, I am a huge fan of Internet marketing, and there’s no reason for you not to use your website as the core of your business, but to *only* rely on online methods of driving traffic to your website is an error you can *not* afford to make.

Apart from anything else, relying on *any one* source of traffic puts you in a dangerous position because if it dries up for any reason, you’re all at sea with no sail and no paddle.

Another advantage with using offline media to drive traffic to your website is your visitors are not so much *surfers* as *seekers*. Your offline ad or letter or postcard has driven them online to seek more information about *you*, specifically. They’re not just nosing around the ‘net flicking from site to site like a typical online visitor is.

Finally, in the current economic downturn, offline marketing is becoming cheaper (ad space is no longer in such demand, so magazines and newspapers have been forced to drop their prices), and direct mail is getting less competitive (people are – mistakenly – cutting back on their marketing to “save money”). All this means you’re likely to be one of the only games in town as far as your prospects are concerned.
- 3. Use the lead generation model.** Too many business owners look at the Internet as nothing more than a virtual shopping mall. But we’ve already seen how your average visitor hits your website and is gone again within just 8 seconds.

Do you really think you can persuade your visitors to give you money in 8 seconds?

The trick is to switch from a *sales model* to a *lead generation model*. When someone hits your site, your sole intention should be to get them to give you their name and an email address.

Getting a postal address, phone number and fax number is the Holy Grail, and I will share some advanced techniques for doing this in subsequent reports, but for now a name and email address is fine.

Then...
- 4. Make email marketing personal and frequent.** Once you have their name and email address, you can put them into an “evergreen” email sequence.

The emails are friendly, informative and *useful*. Modern email delivery systems are cheap and easy to use, and they contain templated functionality to allow you to personalise emails with the receiver’s name and other information. Remember, the ultimate purpose is to sell your products and services, but you’ll find you can do a better job of this by building a relationship with them.

It might take a little longer and a little effort, but you’ll reap the rewards in higher-value sales and longer-term customer relationships.

Another thing to be aware of is, even if you are emailing your prospects, you are almost certainly not doing it enough. It is possible to email them too often, but the breaking point is usually much higher than you think.

If they really do get fed up with you, they'll tell you (and in truth, those who do this are probably not the kind of customers or clients you want anyway).

Your job, once you have their contact details, is to keep on sending them stuff until they either buy, die, or tell you to stop!

Principle Three - Build Relationships with Words and Actions

If you look after your customers... they'll look after your profits.

Despite the popular myths, business isn't based on "price" – it's based on trust and relationships.

You don't have to cut prices to increase your sales, and you don't have to "buy" your customers' loyalty with discounts.

Here's how it's all done.

How to boost sales by 80% or more and increase sales without reducing prices

Give to receive

Instead of running your ads and other marketing pieces with the intention of making an immediate sale, turn your philosophy around 180° and offer something free to begin the relationship.

Business is built on relationships, and since you're the one who wants prospects to give their money to you instead of to your competitors, it makes sense to take responsibility for starting the relationship onto your own shoulders.

So, offer something for free with no pressure or obligation for your prospects to complete the sale.

But be warned: whilst you don't want to be giving away too much, at least make sure what you *are* giving away has a high perceived value to your prospects.

That's why information in the form of Free Reports is always a good thing to try.

Learn how to write strong, persuasive sales copy

Sales copy – and that means *all* your copy – should be strong, bold, conversational, heavy on benefits to the reader, and usually *long*. Copy can't be too long, only too boring.

Long, interesting copy is crucial in building relationships, too. Relationships are fundamental to your business -- people like to buy from people they like and trust. The more they like you and trust you, the more they'll be inclined to buy from you, and the more often they'll buy it.

Don't be afraid of writing sales copy and think you have to clam up and be prim and proper. You can safely forget virtually everything you've been taught about writing in the past, whether at school or at college.

Most business owners think they should write "professionally", but they don't really know what that means. They *think* it means you have to write stilted, formal prose with big, fancy words and complicated phrases (look at the letters most lawyers send out!).

It doesn't. Write like you're having a conversation with someone, like a letter to a favourite Aunt.

I promise, your customers and clients will like it more and your sales will reflect that.

Also remember human beings are naturally selfish. It's OK, we're not broken -- it's just the way we are. We are permanently tuned to the world's favourite radio station: WIIFM. That's Radio What's In It For ME?

Consequently, if your marketing consists of brochures, letters, ads, and a website which comprise your logo and company name, a list of things you do, and a phone number, don't be surprised when no one cares and no one responds to it.

They don't want your products: they want the product of your products. They don't care what you can *do*; they want to know what you can do for *them*.

So change your mindset: start thinking not in terms of sales of "stuff", but in terms of service and benefits to your customers and clients. Put yourself in their shoes, see their problems, understand their fears, learn their wants and needs, and then cater to them.

Take some time to understand your customers, and *show* them you understand... and your sales will skyrocket.

Finally...

Forget about you and your “brand” and think about your customers’ and clients’ wants and needs.

Unless you have the deep pockets of Richard Branson, you probably can’t afford to be spending a fortune on building your “brand” for the sake of having one. The Virgin brand was built by his giving great quality and service. That came first. Now the brand is valuable and there is perhaps some value in promoting it as it is.

But the overwhelming probability is you can’t afford to throw money away on just getting your name and logo out there.

So every marketing campaign you put out there *must* give people a reason to respond. You must be offering one specific thing, something they want or need, something that’s going to interest them enough to haul themselves out of a chair and respond to you.

Indulging in so-called “institutional marketing” where you essentially say “*This is us, here’s what we do, give us a call if we do anything that interests you*” is a great way to empty the contents of your wallet into the wallets of the ad agency and graphic designer with no appreciable return for you.

Principle Four - Get The Right People

In my experience there's nothing quite so expensive and demoralising for *everyone* as having a bad employee... or even just the wrong person for the job.

Unfortunately, we tend to hire people for a *position* rather than a *role*. To make matters worse, we often hire people we *like* regardless of whether or not they're actually suited for the job we want them to do. This is purely human nature and while you might think you're perfectly able to be objective and unbiased in your choices, the odds are overwhelmingly against this actually being true.

And the world being what it is with the Draconian employment laws we have in this country, hiring the wrong person can be expensive; and getting rid of them catastrophic if they take you to a tribunal and you lose.

So, two strategies I recommend to avoid both of these problems.

1. First, think in terms of *roles* – actual measurable and quantifiable work that needs doing – rather than *positions*, which is really just another word for a “title”. Yes, it's true. Often we hire people because there's a title hanging around and because it's been there since day one, we assume the title means there's a position that has to be filled.
2. Secondly, invest in getting properly trained outside agencies to sift through and evaluate potential employees for you. They will be far more experienced than you are and, because they have less emotional involvement in your business, are much more likely to be objective and unbiased. It might sound strange, but you don't *have* to like the people who work for you. It's nice if you do, but if you don't, so long as you can both be civil and professional, where's the harm? It's far better to have someone on the team you don't like much but is brilliant at his or her job, than a completely useless, lazy freeloader whom you employed just because he's your mate from down the pub.

Principle Five - Sell Effectively And With Integrity

Sales are the lifeblood of any business. Without sales you don't have any income. Without income, you don't have a business. And no matter what position you occupy in the company you work in -- from the MD to the person on the reception desk -- you're part of the sales team.

Sales is *not* just a function of one or two people in the "sales department".

There's no escaping it. Anything we do, say, or appear to be to our customers and clients affects the way they feel about us, and that affects our sales.

Bottom line: effective sales training and an understanding of the principles involved in selling can *massively* increase our business's profits.

Yet most of us probably rail at the idea of being called sales people. Much maligned because of the image of the pushy, silver-tongued shyster, the noble sales professional gets a raw deal.

Because the truth of it is a good sales professional has his or her prospects' best interests at heart and would no more stick a foot in the door than they would stick their thumb under a mallet!

So here are 7 Sales strategies you can put to work in your business starting right *now* to massively increase your income:

Your entire business needs to be a sales machine

I know it might sound a bit obvious saying this, but the purpose of your business is to sell your products and services and make money. That's the whole point of it.

For that reason, the sales process is fundamental to the whole endeavor, as I pointed out above.

And because sales are so important to the continued existence of your financial life support system, your sales should *never* be left to chance. If you don't have a system for selling, then any sales you make depend on your prospects', customers', and clients' system for buying, and it's unlikely they have the same desire to buy from you that you have to sell to them.

But you can relax. Creating an effective sales system is not as hard as it looks.

You see, the art and science of selling is just that: an art and a science. And while it's true some people have a natural tendency to be more adept at it than others, just as they are in all other walks of life, so much of sales is a science it can be learned by almost anyone.

Moreover, your sales should be a system, pure and simple (how else do you think McDonald's makes so much money? It's not the grumpy teenagers behind the counter, it's not the "experience" and it certainly isn't the *food*. It's the *system*).

Just as your marketing should be systematic and *always tested*, so should your sales.

While I don't necessarily think you should work slavishly from a script or follow any procedure blindly if it's obvious it's not working in a certain situation (I am reminded of the airline pilot who nearly lost his plane because he was unable to break out of a "recovery procedure" when it was obvious it was dumping all the aircraft's fuel into the air because of a leak. While you don't want airline pilots making things up as they go along, they do need to be aware of things which are not working the way they should be).

There is no doubt at all there are some standard approaches and methods which have shown themselves to be effective for well over 100 years. So learn them and use them... and document them so you can share what works and what doesn't work with the rest of your team.

It's also going to pay you to see your sales as being a constant process, like a production line. Too many sales professionals see it as a single event -- the actual sale, or the close.

It's not. Effective sales is about creating a constantly flowing sequence of leads, cultivating those leads, finding out what they need and making sure they get it.

Sales is about service, not just selling

Zig Ziglar is famous for saying "*You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want.*" And he's right. Salesmanship is about giving your customers and clients what they want and need, and in so doing giving yourself the income you want and need.

But with that said, remember we humans are fickle and won't always act in our own best interests. Even when presented with the (seemingly obvious) solutions to our problems we won't take action.

Yet there is no point in trying to bully and browbeat your customers into buying. At best you'll make a single sale and your customer will resent you; at worst, the whole thing goes belly up as your customer walks away.

So remember you have two ears, two eyes, and one mouth -- and then remember when dealing with customers and clients you should use them in that proportion. Ask questions and then listen to their answers and watch what they do. Don't just start talking to them about your products and services.

Because until you know what's important to them about your product or service you can't even begin to have a meaningful conversation with them about it.

For example, if you're a car salesman... what's important to your prospect about a new car?

Is it the top speed? The colour? The sound of the engine as you accelerate?

You have to know the answer to these kinds of questions before you can start to give them what they want. And you can't possibly know that unless you've actually asked the questions and listened to the answers.

Bring up objections and overcome them before your prospect thinks of them

Most sale professionals fear objections. But I love them.

And you should love them too -- because it means your prospect is engaged in thinking about your product or service rather than looking for an excuse to slip out of the door.

But they're still an obstacle to the sale... or are they?

My view is you need to know what all the possible objections are to your products and service and then think of ways to overcome them. It's no good hiding from them and hoping your prospect won't notice. She will.

So seeing as they're going to come up anyway, you might as well be the one to bring them up and demonstrate your own thoroughness and candour -- truly show you're not trying to hide anything, by bringing out all the possible objections into the open and then showing how they are either invalid or not relevant.

More: if your product has limitations or flaws, then it's your *duty* to show them. A lie of omission is a lie nonetheless, and will harm your business in the long term. Your prospects will respect and trust you more if you decline to sell them something today because you tell them it's not right for them. Next time they're in the market for a similar product, YOU are the person they'll think of (and you'll be the person they tell all their friends about, too).

One objection you should *never* fear is the price objection. If you hear it, it's good news because it means your prospect wants what you're offering, but just needs a little help understanding the *value* it presents.

Don't give up too soon.

Just in case you haven't convinced yourself of this fact, yet, allow me to share with you some statistics which *should* scare the living daylights out of you.

48% of sales people never follow up with a prospect

25% of sales people make a second contact and stop

12% of sales people only make three contacts and stop

It's a staggering discovery, but only 10 % of businesses make more than three contacts. OK, so what does this mean, then? Well, it means they're losing a small fortune.

Because...

2% of sales are made on the first contact

3% of sales are made on the second contact

5% of sales are made on the third contact

10% of sales are made on the fourth contact

80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact

So if you're like almost half of all businesses and make no more than one follow-up to your prospects... you're leaving 98% of your income on the table for someone else to come along and pick up.

If that wasn't bad enough, here's why it's even worse than you think. Look at these eye-opening statistics about why people stop buying from businesses:

1% die.

3% move away.

5% follow a friend's or relative's recommendation.

9% find an alternative they perceive to be better quality or value.

14% are dissatisfied with the products or services.

And a massive 68% of people leave a business because of... indifference.

They take their business elsewhere simply because they do not feel valued.

Since you spend a lot of time, money, and effort to get a visitor to your business, if you let them leave because of indifference, you might as well be flushing £10 notes away.

Not every prospect is equal

It sounds very politically incorrect, but it's true. The guy coming into the plumber's to buy a 10p tap washer is not as important as the guy who's weighing up the pros and cons of splashing out £10,000 on a central heating system for the stables in the back yard of his country home.

As human beings, perhaps they're of equal value; but as customers they simply are not. And while they are equally deserving of your respect, they are not equally deserving of your time and efforts as a sales professional.

So it's going to serve you very well to go over your customer records and find out who these "best" customers are... and then focus your time and effort on them. Pick up the phone and ask them how they are and what do they need -- don't even try to sell them stuff. Just work on the relationship.

Find out about them and cultivate them. Clip out interesting articles you find on subjects you know they are interested in, and send them with a short handwritten note. Take an interest in them and their lives, and it will reward you.

Use your time wisely

In your efforts to sell, time is your most valuable asset. If you took the extra time to make just 2 extra sales calls a day before you went home... that's around an extra 480 calls you'd be making each year.

What would that do for your bottom line?

So as a sales professional, you need schedule. And you need to stick to it.

Here are some tips on scheduling:

1. At the end of every day, make a list of the 6 most important things you have to do the *next* day in the order of their importance.
2. Next morning, start working on number 1 and stick at it until it's done or you can't go any further. Then start on number 2, and so on.
3. Don't allow interruptions to interfere with your scheduled activities. Emergencies will arise, and you probably need to deal with these, but make sure they *are* emergencies. Good sales people break their working time down into hours where they're making money, and hours where they're not. You need to be focusing your time on the hours where you're making money.
4. Missed and delayed appointments go with the territory of selling. But since time is money, if a scheduled appointment goes over 15 minutes late, leave a note or voicemail saying you'll reschedule and move on to the next item on your list.
5. Schedule ALL your telephone calls en-bloc, and if possible by appointment. Certainly, answering incoming calls willy-nilly is a great way to waste several hours every day.

Principle Six - Embrace New Technology

One of the most effective ways to increase traffic to your website is to increase your ranking in the *natural* search results in the search engines – and Google is without doubt the most important of these.

It's true PPC is extremely powerful and very fast in terms of response time, meaning you can be making money from your strategy literally within minutes. Long-term, it's always going to serve you well to get well placed in natural search, too. It's estimated a high listing in natural search gets around eight times the click-through-rate of comparably placed Adwords.

So how do you do this?

The process is called *Search Engine Optimisation* and despite all the myth and mystery around it, it's actually very easy.

Here are some simple guidelines you can use to get your site ranked highly:

1. First, ensure your domain contains your main keyword. So, if you were selling plastic widgets, you might have plastic-widgets.com (note: the hyphen is no obstacle or deterrent to readers, so don't worry if you use one in the domain name). It doesn't matter if your own site is different – you can use this site as a “portal” to drive traffic your way easily enough.
2. Then install Wordpress, the free blogging platform. You can use Wordpress as a fully-fledged Content Management System (CMS), and Google *loves* Wordpress.
3. Begin blogging on your chosen area. You'll need to do your research and find those “long tail” keywords and keyphrases. You can use the free keyword research tool Google provide. Your keyword or keyphrase should appear once:
 - In the title of your blog post (as well as in the HTML “title” attribute of the page – you can set this in Wordpress);
 - In the first sentence of your blog post, and within the first 90 characters;
 - In every block of 125 words.
 - In the “keywords” HTML meta tag
4. **Remember:** make your blog posts interesting, informative and useful. Don't overly promote yourself – that's *not* the purpose of the exercise.
 - This makes your site both relevant and interesting to humans – and that means it's going to be relevant and interesting to Google, too.
 - Then you can begin building links back to your website from other sites. The number and quality of links back to your site, as well as the relevance of your content are what cause Google to rank you highly. You can get links back by:
 - Writing informative and interesting articles and posting them to article sites with links back to your site in the resource box.
 - Videos with links back to your site in the description posted on free sites like YouTube.
 - By joining in the conversation on relevant and popular forums and other blogs. Don't spam! Make relevant and worthwhile contributions and have the link back to your site in your “signature”.

This all does take time, but it *does* work. Within three or four months with perhaps two blog posts and articles a week, and a few well-chosen forum comments, you can get to page one on Google for even a quite competitive keyword.

Principle Seven - Take Control

One of the biggest difficulties I find in getting business owners to take action on the strategies I share with them is their need for certainty.

And other than death and taxes, certainty is a myth, a pipe-dream. Neither I nor anyone else can tell you with absolute certainty how a given mailing or ad is going to perform.

The fact is we can't ever know the results in advance, even with testing because the unpredictable does crop up even amid the most careful plans and derails us. Testing gives us rational confidence, but never any guarantees.

I can tell you with confidence that the strategy works long-term, and much of your marketing activity is going to comprise figuring out the detailed tactics to implement the strategies successfully.

But, even so, that still doesn't help us in deciding what to test first. Obviously you want to manage your risk and exposure in the worst case, and you can do that by asking yourself these three questions when considering a specific test:

1. How likely am I to succeed?
2. What is the maximum cost of failure?
3. Am I prepared to pay this cost?

Clearly, if the answer to No. 3 is "no", then you probably don't want to conduct the test. You see, it's not "negative thinking" to plan for the worst, in just the same way it's not negative thinking to wear a seat-belt. You're not expecting an accident, but you want to be prepared just in case you end up in one anyway.

Finally, what do you do if you can't make your mind up about whether to test one thing or another, each of which promises a similar reward for a similar risk?

Well, there are two ways to play this. First, a simple method for choosing is simply to toss a coin. If you have no other data to go on, it's perfectly valid since any choice you make is going to be arbitrary anyway (plus coin-tossing is free from any irrational bias you might have lurking in your psyche).

Or secondly, and perhaps my personal favourite, do them both together. If you can afford and are prepared to pay the price of both of them failing, you have no reason for not doing them both at the same time.

Occasionally I'll hear the objection that testing more than one thing at a time is "too expensive", especially in economically challenging times. Perhaps. But if things are tough then you might not have the luxury of testing several things sequentially: by the time you find one that actually works, it might already be too late.

Unlock the hidden wealth inside your business

There are huge untapped profits sitting around in your business you don't even know you have – and most of it is in the form of your list of customers and prospects.

It's highly unlikely you've sold everything you can to everyone on your lists who's prepared to buy from you... if you give them the opportunity and a reason to.

So the first thing to do is increase your marketing. Email them, direct mail them, call them, do whatever it takes to get them to buy from you. So long as what you're selling meets their needs and solves a problem, then you are doing them a valuable service.

Then, go out and actually meet your top 20% of customers (the ones responsible for 80% of your profits!).

Take them to lunch, or even just a coffee at Starbucks.

This is a powerful strategy simply because in this modern and hectic world, no one seems to want to do it anymore. If other people aren't doing something, that's a good enough reason for you to test it.

Now, when you're there just ask them what they need - don't try and sell them anything. Just ask them what the biggest problem is in their business and what they're doing about it.

Then, go back to your office and think of how to solve their problem. And once you've done that, call them back and say, "Look, remember you told me... well, I've thought of three ways to help you fix that problem".

Or, with a bit more lateral thinking... look around you and you'll see dozens of non-competing businesses whose customers are just like yours.

Here's the simple premise: if your customers have bought from you, then the chances are high they're in the market to buy related or coincident products from other businesses.

Let's look at an example. If someone buys a house, in almost all cases they buy it through an estate agent.

And in almost all cases once the estate agent has taken their 1.5% fee or whatever it is, that's usually when the tale ends. The estate agent then moves on to finding more new house sellers.

But wait a moment. What *else* do people who've just bought a house buy? What else might they be interested in?

Let's make a quick list:

- Carpets
- Carpet cleaning
- Curtains
- Burglar alarms
- Soft furnishings
- Electrical appliances
- Gardening services
- Painting and decorating
- Building work & "handyman" services
- Interior design
- Fences
- Sheds
- Conservatories
- Double glazing
- And so on...

Now imagine the people have just moved into the area from more than a few miles away and think what *else* they might be interested in:

- Car repairs and servicing
- Car sales
- Bike shops for the kids
- Music shops
- Shoe shops
- A family solicitor
- An accountant (if they're running a business)
- Gyms
- Hairdressers
- Beauty salons
- Swimming pools
- All manner of retailers (clothes, flowers, toyshops, food, books, etc.)
- Health services (doctors, chiropractors, dentists, opticians, physiotherapists, etc.).
- Social stuff (pubs, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, martial arts clubs, etc.).
- And so on...

As you can see, the list is long -- and this is for just one type of business.

In fact, this list took me less than 5 minutes to write without thinking about it, and it's thrown up enough opportunities and possibilities to keep me busy for a month or two.

Now, you might be thinking "but, Chris, I'm not an estate agent!".

It doesn't matter.

Two things:

1. **If you were**, for instance, engaged in *any* of the businesses above your business is synergistic with all the others on the list; and...
2. **Even if you're in a completely different business altogether** the point I was illustrating is *there are products and services people buy before, at the same time as, or after they buy yours*.

I don't care what business you're in, you have businesses synergistic with yours. Even an undertaker has this synergy

(with stonemasons, florists, clothing retailers, caterers, and businesses renting out function rooms!).

So, here's the very first thing for you to do.

Take a piece of paper and a pencil, grab a copy of the Yellow Pages and then go through the list of categories at the front and make a note of all the business categories synergistic with yours -- meaning *businesses offering products and services people buy before, at the same time as, or after they buy yours*.

Because now you're going to contact some of these businesses and propose one of three things:

1. **You're** going to sell to *their* customers; or
2. **They're** going to sell to *your* customers; or
3. **You're both** going to sell to *each other's* customers.

We sometimes call these kinds of relationships *host-beneficiary* relationships, where the list-owner is called the *host* and the person benefiting from using it (you in this case) is the *beneficiary*.

Principle Eight - Be Persuasive

44 words that sell

The words you use when you communicate to your customers (online or in letters, brochures, conversations etc.) will directly impact your Sales. There are certain words that dramatically increase persuasion and response.

Here are some of them.

1. **You.** Aren't you more interested in you than me? All human beings are naturally self-interested. We want to know how we can survive, improve our well-being, get rich, solve problems etc.. The more you use the word "you" in your copy, the better it is for you. As a rough guide "You's" need to outnumber "I's" and "We's" by two or three to one.
2. **Free, At No Charge, At No Cost, Without Charge, Complimentary.** Doesn't everyone want something for free? Most people are naturally drawn to advertising offering something for FREE. I remember speaking to a famous advertising creative who would tell me, with frustration, how he would spend hours crafting an ad which would be beaten by something much simpler with the word "FREE" in the headline.
3. **New, Now.** In conversation people often talk about the latest thing. This is because people want to know what is new. You can often start a headline with "New:..." And even if your product isn't particularly new you can always substitute NOW. It implies newness and recency in the same way.
4. **Revealed, Exposed, Secret, Hidden, Uncovered, Discovered, Unveiled, Released, Revolutionary.** Every-one likes to know a secret... and your prospects are no exception. Tell them you're giving them access to something very few people have... and they'll be hooked.
5. **Because.** We do things for a reason. And we want a reason for things. If you make a claim in your copy and say "because...", then the reason will be accepted, whether it makes sense or not.
6. **Naturally, Easily, Effortlessly, Smoothly, Quietly, Readily.** No one wants something that entails a lot of work... all these words make it all seem so easy.
7. **Guarantee, Money-Back, Risk-Free.** The biggest barrier to business is trust. These words help build trust by removing the risk from the buyer and putting it on the shoulders of the seller.
8. **Unique, Exclusive, Limited, Special, Select, Elite, Matchless, Unrivalled, Unparalleled, Unmatched, Unequaled.** Your prospects want to think they're getting the best.
9. **Who, What, Which, When, How.** These are great standby words to create headlines when you are hard-pushed to think of something. They are also a great way to plan out longer copy for something like a brochure or leaflet. Basically, when you answer these questions, you tell people what they want to know in a clear, concise way.
10. **Finally... avoid a lot of adjectives, especially unreal superlatives.** Haven't you read an awful lot of brochures which talk about the best XYZ or the very finest ABC? Everyone is telling you they are the best. Everyone simply cannot be the best so consumers naturally tend to disbelieve you when you tell them you are the best. (Unless you are and can prove it). I actually advise business owners to establish pre-eminence in their field. But you have to go for it 100%. Just modestly claiming to be the best, without it dominating your Marketing, will not work.

Principle Nine - Don't Reinvent the Wheel

The late Gary Halbert said if you want to sell something, first find a starving crowd.

This is important for us to understand because most business owners create the products they want to sell rather than the products people actually want to buy. It's great for the ego, but terrible for the balance sheet.

But how do we find out what they want to buy. Well, here are two simple ways:

1. Ask them. Survey your customers and clients and ask them what they want that you don't offer and they'll tell you. It's that easy. And selling the product to them is easy, too, because they already have a relationship with you.
2. Look at your competitors' highest-priced products and services and create your own version. It's easy and effective because if they have a high-priced version... someone's buying it. That means there's a market there.

Principle Ten - Love Your Competitors

Most business owners I know are afraid of their competitors.

If a client or customer mentions them, the most common reaction is to ignore it; the second most common reaction is to criticise or make some negative comment about them (which is never a good idea, because the person whose reputation really suffers when this kind of talking goes on is the one saying it all).

But you can actually make money from your competitors... by sending them business.

This is sneaky, but fun... you can send them the people you don't want to do business with. If you're serious about being astonishingly successful in your business, you'll have embraced the fact you need to be discerning about the people you do business with.

And one thing you can do is send the people you don't want to do business with your competitors.

The fact is if you look at your business you're going to find 80% of your profits from just 20% of your customers and clients. These are the ones you want to be putting all your time and energy into serving, because every unit of effort you put into selling to them is *sixteen times as profitable* as every unit of effort you put into selling to the remaining 80%.

So, find out who the 80% of the deadwood are and cut them out of your business.

When you do this, everyone is happy: your prospect or client is happy because you've helped them find a solution to their problem; your competitors love you because you've sent them business; and you make more money because you're not having to deal with the people you didn't want to do business with.

7 advantages you have over big competitors

Many business owners complain and blame that their big competitors are the reason they fail to succeed as entrepreneurs.

This could be true *only* if price were the principal criterion when it comes to your customers and clients making the final buying decision.

The truth is, you, as a small business owner have a several big advantages you can use to make your business outrageously successful. Yes it means a bit of thought, imagination and good old-fashioned hard work, but it's not difficult and is surprisingly formulaic.

Here are just 7 of the advantages you have and how to put them to work for you:

1. **You can work faster.** Big business almost always has massive inertia and momentum. They do things the way they do them and changing that takes Words From On High. Everything is done by committee and it can take weeks just to approve a change on the front page of a website. You can make as many changes as you like whenever you want to make them.
2. **Similar to the above you are more flexible.** Big business tends to have reams of "policy" documents and procedures to follow. You can take short cuts and take risks because YOU make the decisions. You are the only one responsible and accountable to the boss, because you *are* the boss.
3. **You can specialise.** The money is to be made in the niches. In the town of Ipswich there are two huge Sainsbury's plus a smaller one in the town itself, one huge Tesco and at least three other large ones, an ASDA and a Morrison's. Yet in the town centre itself, almost opposite each other, nestle a speciality cheese shop and a speciality sausage shop. They are thriving – because they are specialising in a niche.
4. **You can be more personal.** One of the keys to successful marketing is giving your business a "personality". Yours. A big business really does struggle to do this well. Some manage it – like the *Virgin* group, but most don't (for example, do *you* feel any kind of relationship with or warmth for Tesco, Sainsbury's and ASDA?).
5. **You are close to your market.** You can give your clients and customers that personal service and attention from the top man or woman in the business a big business can't. Your customers and clients get to deal with the boss who has the power to make any decision he or she needs to make to solve any problem.
6. **Automation is easier.** Because you can be niched, and because you have a relatively small and narrow customer and client base, it's much easier for you to implement systems and strategies to automate the hard, repetitive boring work. An email to your "customer service" department comes to you immediately – it doesn't get lost in some nebulous "system" no one cares about.

- 7. New Skills are Proportionately More Profitable.** As a business owner, if you learn a new marketing strategy, not only can you test it immediately but any profits you make come right back to you and they come back immediately. This gives you a bigger incentive to learn and become focused on your business.

How to make your competitors vanish

The late Earl Nightingale used to say, “*Don’t compete... create!*”.

What did he mean by this?

Well, it’s simple. The moment you try to compete with your competitors... you set yourself up for a “price war”. And you’re immediately susceptible to your products and services being “commoditised”, like a pint of milk or a packet of generic aspirin.

Instead you need to create a powerful product or service offering which is incomparable to your competitors’. Here are three ways to achieve this:

- 1. Create a powerful Unique Selling Proposition (USP).** Your USP embodies the answer to this all-important question: “*Why would anyone want to do business with me rather than my competitors?*”. If you can answer this question, it means you’ve got inside the minds of your target market and your competitors will “vanish” because you’ll be able to aim your message so precisely and accurately they won’t listen to anyone else.
- 2. Throw a “fence” around your market.** Most businesses don’t have any kind of relationship with their customers be-yond taking money off them! If you involve them in your life and personality by sharing information not only about your products and services but also *yourself* you begin to cultivate a “cult of personality”. You can use regular and frequent emails to your list to do this (see below).
- 3. Package and “bundle” your products into offerings that change the perceived nature of what you’re offering.** This isn’t to deceive people but rather to offer something unique they can’t get anywhere else, even if the core product or service is commonplace. For example, taking the humble pint of milk again... isn’t it true the pint from your milk-man is the same as any other pint of milk? But you pay a premium for it because of the extra something you get: early morning delivery.

How to get your competitors to pay you to sell their products

Imagine you sell, say, Ford Motor cars.

And you get a prospect who wants a Vauxhall. There’s no way you’ll sell them a Ford because they simply don’t want one; and if you let them go, they’ll go and buy a Vauxhall anyway.

But now imagine you had an agreement with your local Vauxhall dealer wherein you could sell *his* cars (and at a good discount because the sale hasn’t cost the Vauxhall dealer anything to make – it’s all incremental profits to him).

Your prospect is going to *love* you (and tell all his friends how great you are); your competitor is going to love you (and perhaps sell some of your Fords, if he understands how it all works); and YOU make some money you otherwise would not have had.

Don’t make the mistake of thinking this applies only to motor cars – it works in any industry.

All you have to do is get creative and put a little work into it – get on the phone TODAY and call some of your competitors and work out a way of getting revenue from business you refer to them (and make it reciprocal, so they send you business, too). Not all of them are going to agree (they might think you’re acting suspiciously, or are just plain mad)... but some will.

Small businesses become big businesses by a process of growth – lots of small, incremental revenue streams soon add up to a huge cataract of income. And, let’s face it... in the current economy, we need to be doing *everything* that works to make us money.

Principle Eleven – Cut Business Risk

The biggest mistake business owners make with their marketing is they simply don't *test*. They expect to put an ad or sales piece out there and to enjoy instant success. And while it *can* work that way, it often doesn't. Successful marketing systems are built piece by piece, by trying something and then getting the results... and then trying something else to see how results compare. For that reason, we take the view there is *no such thing as failure, only feedback*.

Golden rules for testing:

Test big enough to be meaningful, and small enough to be affordable. A typical example for direct mail would be 500 to 1000 pieces. Any fewer than this and your results are unlikely to be statistically significant; any more than this and it can cost you a lot of money if you don't get a good response. Don't be like the entrepreneur who sent 15,000 untested direct-mail pieces to an untested list and lost £10,000. He got 433 responses – and not a single sale. Every response was either “don't send me this kind of stuff” or “no longer at this address”.

If you're sending emails, most autoresponders allow you to “split test” emails. So you can test the email with, say, 1000 subscribers and another email with another 1000, and then roll out the full email blast to the rest of your list using the most successful of the two emails you tested.

Don't make any judgements until you have 20 to 25 responses back. It's not a statistically large enough response to make a judgement on.

Finally, once you have a piece that's making you money continue to test it but change only ONE thing at a time. If you change more, then you cannot know what's making the difference (this is basic high-school science!).

And don't underestimate the power of small changes. A simple change in the colour of an envelope increased response by 70%; the addition of a single letter in a headline increased response by 300%; using a live stamp as opposed to a franking-mark increased response by 50%. Remember also these increases are *incremental* so after a few times around testing loop, the effectiveness of your marketing has increased *geometrically*.

Here are 12 simple things you can test and cut your business risk by 80 to 90% or more:

1. Headlines
2. Body copy
3. Personalisation (“Dear Fred” instead of “Dear Home Owner”, say)
4. Colour of the paper your direct mail is printed on
5. Colour of the envelope you use
6. HTML or plain text (for emails)
7. Colour of the fonts you use
8. The fonts themselves (this makes a bigger difference than you might think).
9. Live stamp or franking
10. Letter or postcard (same copy, just a different format)
11. Emphasise words with underline or italic (in one test the *only* difference between two online sales letters was one had underline for emphasis and the other used **bold** and the underlined version outpulled the bold version by 100%. Double the profits from one tiny change!
12. Telephone responses versus email/online responses

Warning: do NOT assume and allow your own personal preferences and beliefs to prejudice your testing. Be objective and follow the numbers. You are not your customer and you cannot possibly know the results until you actually test these things!

Principle Twelve - Don't Discount

Discounting your prices is a quick way to bankruptcy.

But there's no doubt it can be useful and even necessary at times.

The key to making it work without it tarnishing your reputation as a high-end provider of products and services (which really is what you should be aiming to be seen as), is not to present it as a price reduction *per se*.

Instead, present it as a special offer that's rewarding people for being in a specific group or for a specific behaviour.

Examples might be:

- Being a frequent buyer
- Being a long-time client
- Being in the first 37 to respond to an offer
- Responding before a deadline
- Being a resident of a particular town or place

The list is really endless – and limited only by your imagination.

Principle Thirteen - Use Direct Response Marketing

Why you must pass the 8-second test

Research shows that you have just 8 seconds to grab your site-visitors' interest.

They don't call it "web-surfing" for nothing: people flit from website to website, and if you don't do something pretty amazing to grab their attention and break this pattern of behaviour, then your visitors will hit your site, stay for a few seconds... and then they're gone. Usually forever.

So when they hit your website, you need to present them with a clear and pressing reason to stay.

And that means a *headline*. Don't let your website designer or your graphic designer sell you on the idea of logos, pretty pictures and whitespace.

No one cares about your logo, the picture of the anonymous businessman in a suit at the top of the page, or empty space devoid of any meaning.

A headline is text, usually bold and big which gives your visitor an exciting and compelling promise that if he or she continues reading, you're going to give them some HUGE reward for doing so.

Structure your web page copy according to the **AIDA** formula and make it into a proper sales letter – *this applies to every page!*

Follow this classic rule and you can't go too wrong.

AIDA stands for **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, **A**ction.

All of your copy, whether it's a letter, brochure or email, should follow this simple formula. You get their attention with a strong, compelling headline offering them a clear benefit to reading further.

Then you get their interest with strong opening paragraphs which spell out the problems they face and the benefits your product or service offers.

You then fan the flames of their desire by "twisting the knife" of their pain and really showing them how you can ease it and make their lives better.

Finally, you get them to take action on your offer with a strong call to action.

Every single page on your website should have a single purpose to justify its existence, and should therefore follow the AIDA formula.

How to make direct mail work for you

Direct Mail is one of the most profitable marketing activities you can ever do. But to get it right and be successful (and that means make it PROFITABLE), you must stick to some fairly simple but very important fundamentals.

For a direct mail campaign to be successful you have to get three things exactly right.

1. You must select exactly the right people...
2. To send a compelling offer...
3. Presented in exactly the right way...

Get any one of these wrong, and you have a disaster on your hands, which means it's going to pay you to attend closely to the subtleties you need to understand to make your direct mail fit these three criteria.

So, let's get right into the detail of the 4 things you can do to make it almost a done-deal that your direct mail is going to be a success.

To whom are you writing?

OK. So you want to send some direct mail, because you've heard it's a great way to grow your business (and it is).

Have you thought about to whom you're sending it?

This is one area many business owners – and marketers, if truth be known – get 100% wrong.

Although I've put this section at the start, it's really something you need to consider along with the offer – because the people you're making the offer to will, by and large, decide if it's a good offer or not. Figuring out your list and your offer is something of an iterative process.

Because whether an offer is “compelling” or not is entirely in the mind of your reader. If you doubt this, just imagine how “compelling” *any* offer of top-quality pork sausages will be to a list of vegetarians. I'm sure you see my point.

So the people you're sending it to, *the list*, as we marketers call it, is all important (a good offer to a bad list will bomb, but a mediocre offer to a good list will make you some money).

Now, the best place to start is with your existing clients and customers, because they've bought from you before and presumably had a good experience. So they already trust you, at least to some degree.

Some words of caution, though: don't take chances. Whilst direct mail is a fantastic way to grow your business, it's also fraught with peril if you dive in headlong without thinking.

Here are 5 tips to help you get the most from *the list* and minimise your chances of getting stung:

1. Slice and dice your list carefully. Keep meticulous records of who bought what and target your mailings accordingly. Even within your business you'll have some definite demographic splits, so watch out for them. Don't try to be all things to all men and women, because you'll end up being nothing to anyone.
2. Start small and test. Begin by sending a small number of letters to a random cross-section of your list and check the results. A test of 500 is usually plenty. Ideally, you'll make a profit, but even breaking-even or going slightly under break-even is good, *if* you can turn the responses into repeat purchases.
3. When you find a mailing which works, repeat it with a larger list, and keep repeating it until it stops working so well. Don't take the line some people do of “*well, that worked... so now let's do something completely different*”.
4. Mail more often. Most business owners write to their list once in a blue moon, leaving so long between letters, their customers have already forgotten about them. Don't be afraid to push it a little – people will soon tell you if they're fed up with your letters (but if you stick to the tips I've shared with you, they *won't* be).
5. Create your campaigns as a sequence. You'll statistically get better results if you, say, send a second letter referencing the first one, and then a third one referencing the second, and so on. Combinations of letters and postcards can often stretch out for 7 or more follow-ons. This will also help you keep up the frequency of your mailings.

Finally, be *very* wary of using purchased lists. List brokers are sometimes rather unscrupulous and are interested in selling you names, not results. If you *do* want to use a list other than your in-house list, then consider some lead-generation activities.

Why are you writing to them?

So, now you know whom you're writing to... but even before you think about writing the letter, never mind stuffing and sealing the envelopes and posting your direct mail, the *first* thing you have to have for sending it to *anyone* is a reason.

What do you want them to do when they've read the letter or postcard or whatever? What action do you want them to take?

Seems obvious, I know, but you'd be amazed at the number of business owners who send out direct mail with nothing more than a “*we sell widgets... give us a call if there's anything we can help you with*”. That's not a call to action. It's a whimper to be ignored!

ALL of your direct mail pieces should have a clear offer you're making to the reader. Some concrete reason you've written to them.

And then, when they've read the letter and decided to take you up on the offer, you have to tell them what to do next!

Do you want them to call you for a specific reason? Drop by your business to pick up a free gift? Go online and visit a website? Return a coupon to you with a cheque?

And not only should you be making an offer, but you must give them a means to respond to it (I have actually seen a postcard with a great offer on it which had no response mechanism at all. The company didn't even have their *name* on the card, so you wouldn't even be able to track them down).

In general, the more ways you give them to respond, the more responses you'll get.

Finally, you must give them a reason to respond *now*. You can do this in several ways, including limiting the quantities of

whatever you're selling, or limiting the time for which they'll be available, but the point is to make them take action sooner rather than later – because by the time “later” comes, the letter has been put down and forgotten.

Get your letter delivered to and opened by the right person!

So, you've got your offer figured out and you've written it (I'll show you how in a second)... but... your letter can't do its job unless it gets delivered to and opened by the right person.

And obviously, it has to get delivered *first*.

While it's not such a big problem in the UK as elsewhere in the world, it would be a mistake to believe that just because you posted a letter to someone, they received it. There are several reasons it might not get delivered, and some of them you really can't do anything about.

But there *are* some simple steps we can take to give our direct mail the best chance of being delivered to and opened by the right person:

1. First, always hand-address your envelopes (or use a realistic handwriting-font if you have them printed) and use the person's full name. Don't use labels, and don't address it to “the manager” unless you really have no other option! A handwritten address label is personal... someone has troubled themselves to write to you as an individual. Nothing marks a letter as “junk” mail faster than a printed label.
2. Secondly, in the upper left-hand corner of the front of your envelope, (where your name and address goes), don't put your company's name. Just a return address is usually fine. We are programmed so as soon as we see the name of a company, then the letter's either trying to sell us something, or collect money from us. We are all inherently resistant to salesmen AND debt collectors!
3. Don't use a company envelope with your company logo on it. More to the point, don't use those horrible shiny envelopes with the pre-printed postage frank on. Don't use *anything* but a real-live honest-to-goodness postage stamp. A postage stamp on a hand-addressed envelope without a company name on it is almost certain to get delivered.
4. Consider “teaser copy” on the outside of the envelope. Teaser copy is just something on the outside of the envelope which entices them to open it. It can be as simple as a one word “Private” or “Secret”.
5. Send “bulky” mail – literally put something in the envelope with the letter to make it bigger and bulkier than an ordinary letter. This is virtually guaranteed to get opened. It also gives you a “hook” to use in your copy, something to mention in the letter to draw them in. Short of ideas? How about a packet of party-poppers and a “theme” in the letter of some kind of celebration when they experience the benefits of your great product or service?

Get it read!

Getting your letter delivered and opened is only the first part of the battle... and probably the *easiest* part, to boot.

Now you've really got your work cut out for you – you've got to get the letter not only *read* but also acted upon!

The key to getting your letter read is the copy. This report isn't on copywriting, so I don't want to go into too much detail here, but it's a fact: all other things being equal, strong, persuasive copy makes a *huge* difference to the responses you'll get from direct mail.

Here are 5 quick tips:

1. Structure your sales pieces according to the AIDA formula. Follow this classic rule of copywriting and you can't go too wrong. AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. All of your copy, whether it's a letter, brochure or email, should follow this simple formula. You get their **attention** with a strong, compelling headline offering them a clear benefit to reading further. Then you get their **interest** with strong opening paragraphs which spell out the problems they face and the benefits your product or service offers. You then fan the flames of their **desire** by “twisting the knife” of their pain and really showing them how you can ease it and make their lives better. Finally, you get them to take action on your offer with a strong call to action, just as I described in the first section of this report.
2. Write for your audience, not yourself. If you're selling yachts to affluent professionals, you'll use different language in your copy from the language you'd use to sell 4-point seatbelt harnesses to boy-racers. Too many businesses write for themselves. Don't. You're not the one you need to persuade to buy your products.
3. Use simple, everyday language. The purpose of your copy is to communicate and persuade your readers, not to

impress them with the size of your vocabulary.

4. Remember the magic word – YOU. By continuing to use the word ‘you’ in your copy, you are forcing yourself to have a personal conversation with the person reading it. In the same vein, write as an individual whenever you can. Refer to yourself as “me” and “I”; if you must write as the company, write “us” and “we”. Don’t be afraid to use contractions like “it’s”, “I’ll” and similar. You don’t need to be formal to be “professional”!
5. Forget what you learned in school. Grammar and spelling can be important, especially with some audiences, but in the main style is less important than substance. No one cares if you split the odd infinitive, or start a sentence with “and” (and teachers who tell you it’s wrong are themselves wrong – it’s been done for over 1000 years, and if it was good enough for Shakespeare, I think it’s good enough for us!). The purpose of your letter is to make you money. Nothing else counts.

Principle Fourteen - Make The Easy Sales

How to double the amount customers spend with you

So you've made the sale, you've made the profit and all is well with the world, yes?

No. Because if you leave it there the chances are you've left money in your customer's pocket which could easily have now been in yours, IF you'd made the effort to find out what *else* you sell them.

I want to be clear about this: it's NOT a recommendation to go out and start pushing the hard-sell on your prospects and customers. That's a recipe for disaster – you might make a few first-time sales, but you'll annoy a lot of people and fail to benefit from the real goldmine of repeat business.

So, first let's see why upsells are so valuable; and then we'll see why they're easy to make.

Every sale you make has a cost of sale attached to it – it comprises your marketing, your fixed costs (buildings, staff, cost of manufacture or provision, etc.). Your profit is your selling price less your cost of sale.

Now, if you have made the sale, you've just covered your cost of sale. If you can increase the value of that sale, aside from the cost of manufacture or provision, it's all profit – your marketing costs and your other overheads are already covered. This isn't immediately obvious, but it's true – and it's why even a small increase in your average sale has a disproportionate effect in increasing your profits.

That's why upsells are so valuable. Now let's see why they're so easy.

First, once your customer or client has said “yes” to the sale, you've got them in the right frame of mind for giving you money. Sounds cynical, but it's not: the fact is you've met their needs and they're happy and confident and they trust you. The chances of them trusting you enough to spend more with you is very high (research shows us overwhelmingly that once we've made a decision, we're irrationally surer it was the right one – this is a classic example of Cialdini's principle of “commitment and consistency”).

Secondly... you've met their needs... but have you met ALL their needs? It's highly likely their needs don't just stop where your product or sales end, so to speak. If you're a tailor, for example, your customer might need a suit, and that implies he might also need a shirt, tie, and a pair of shoes to go with it. And if YOU don't offer them to him, he'll go elsewhere.

So... upsells are important and profitable.

And here's exactly how to make them.

The first and most obvious way to do it is to make the upsell at the point of the first sale. Depending how skilled you are at sales this can be very powerful and relatively easy because the buyer has already made the buying decision – and the actual *amount* he or she is prepared to spend is often negotiable. That's just simple psychology.

Now, we saw how upsells are nearly all profit, so you can offer a substantial discount on the upsold items and *still* be making a lot of money.

There are some potential drawbacks, though.

First, some people don't like to be “sold”. If you're not careful by continually seeming to “push” them to spend more with you, you can push them away and lose the sale entirely. I see this happening a lot online where you go to page after page of upsells. There's no reason not to test this, but be subtle.

The second drawback is if you're not careful you can confuse your prospect and get them to back-pedal from a “yes” to a “hmm... you've given us something we need to think about”.

However, there's another way you can make upsells – and even before you've made the main sale. And if you do it well, you'll avoid the two drawbacks I mention above.

Let me explain.

If you “bundle” your products and services you're effectively upselling – because your customer or clients might come to you for a Widget, but he or she walks away with a Widget+.

And the extra profit you'll make is exactly the same as you'd make if you were to do the upsell in the more traditional manner.

There's also another, more subtle benefit – you can more easily “disguise” your prices *and* more easily charge more than your competitors.

You see, if you're "bundling" your Widgets, then your prospects can no longer make a direct comparison with your competitors' Widgets.

That means it's easier for you to increase the amount of your average sale and thus dramatically increase your profits (because your *cost* of sale is going to stay the same).

Principle Fifteen - Sell With Pride

Sales success is really much easier than you perhaps think, because it all really boils down to some very simple fundamentals.

So here are my 6 guiding principles for making sure you are using effective Sales strategies in your business. I'll be coming back to each of these in detail in the weeks and months ahead:

- 1. Always make sure you're talking to the right prospect.** It's no good trying to sell anything to anyone who's not interested, can't make the necessary financial commitment, or doesn't have authority to make the buying decision. Not everyone is an ideal prospect for you, so you need to do some "legwork" to make sure you're talking only to the ones who are.
- 2. Get the prospect's permission to sell.** It's hard to sell to someone who's turned their back to you and is running away. Chasing them won't help. So the first thing you must do when talking to a prospect is establish rapport and then secure their permission to tell them about your product, by saying something like "If I can show you 7 different ways to market your business and increase your profits at no cost, you'd want to know more, wouldn't you?". If you get a "yes", you have permission to "sell" to them.
- 3. Always make sure you have rapport.** Rapport is that thing which happens when you get into a conversation with someone and it just... flows. One of the best ways to establish rapport is to speak in the same way they speak. Use the same kinds of words they do, speak at the same volume and speed. And if you want to have some real fun, breathe at the same rate they're breathing and adopt a similar, but mirrored, posture. Sounds weird? That's why most people don't do it and just get average results. Try it. It works.
- 4. Make sure you're making an offer.** Much as it's nice for you to enjoy meeting people and talking to them, remember always your JOB is to sell. So whenever you get into conversation with a prospect, always have an offer, a definite intention in mind. There is a point to the conversation: reach it, then gently and politely disengage and move on to the next prospect. It's obvious your sales presentation is going to go better if you have a structure to it. It's not a random process which you hope is going to get you to a sale. Sales professionals who take this random approach have skinny kids and big overdrafts. Know always where you are in your presentation and what comes next.
- 5. Use emotion to sell.** Science has shown us with fMRI scans what sales professionals have known for a long time: we decide emotionally and justify logically after the fact. So when you're selling, use emotion. Your prospects have wants, needs, fears and pain. They look at you as their "lucky rabbit's foot", so don't disappoint them. If you have rapport (which you SHOULD have), then you'll be able to lead their emotions with your own. If you are excited and enthusiastic about your products, they will become so too. It's called "emotional contagion" and it works.
- 6. Ask for the sale.** Many sales professionals end their presentations like they end their sales letters: "well, if there's anything I can do, just call me". This is pointless -- you've gone to the trouble of presenting the benefits of what you're selling, you have your prospect all worked up... and you let them go. No. Ask for the sale. It takes some courage because our culture seems to make us averse to asking for money, but it has to be done.

Principle Sixteen - Run a Happy Team

Staff can be a big problem. Unmotivated staff are a disaster. But how can we motivate them to give us their best? Believe me, it's much better to have an average performer who's motivated than a genius who just can't be bothered.

The obvious and incorrect answer is simply to offer them more money. This works up to a point, but, the truth is people prefer to feel valued in themselves. Often they'll accept lower remuneration for more recognition.

Here are some simple ways to get your staff motivated and working harder for you (because they're also working for themselves).

1. A bonus scheme that's transparent and directly related to their performance. It doesn't have to be huge. In fact, if you make it too generous you'll actually make things worse, because they'll be focused more on the bonus itself rather than giving the excellent service to you and your customers that makes them eligible for it. Similarly, don't make it so inconsequential it's not worth their while.
2. Tell them what you want them to achieve and then let them achieve it their own way, within obvious limits.
3. Praise them for what they do well and for what they do not so well. In the second case, point out the good bits before saying words to the effect, "*Let's see what we can do to make the rest of it just as good*". It's highly unlikely they're going to mess things up deliberately, so criticising them for something they already know was a dumb thing to do is counterproductive.
4. Give them some responsibility to make decisions and then don't complain when they make the one you wouldn't have made. For example, give them the authority to spend, say, £50 per day per customer to solve any problem that comes up (at the Ritz, they allow *any* member of staff spend up to \$2000 a day per guest to solve problems – the staff feel empowered and valued and the Guests amazed at the service). And even if one or two cheat...? Well in the grand scheme of things, considering your increased profits, it's a drop in the ocean.

Principle Seventeen - Sell To The High End of Your Market

Raising your prices is the fastest and cheapest way to increase your profits, bar none. Yet it can feel like one of the hardest ones to do, although for no better reason than *fear*.

The fact is, almost no one ever buys on price all the time. Some do, but you don't want them as customers and clients anyway. The vast majority of us buy on price *only* when we've not been given a good reason *not* to.

Now, if you doubt me on this at all, I suggest you stop reading this for a moment and go and look up and down your street.

I guarantee no one in your street is driving around in the cheapest possible car they could find. Moreover, they're not living in the cheapest houses they could get, either (and I bet you're not wearing the cheapest clothes you could get at the charity shops, and you didn't eat the cheapest slop you could find for breakfast).

Price is *only* an issue when you haven't given your prospects, customers, and clients a **reason** to pay what you're asking. That's huge. If you understand this, you understand one of the key principles of charging higher prices.

7 strategies you can use right NOW to start increasing your prices.

Test.

That's the simplest thing in the world to do. Simply put your prices up right now and see what happens. It's not like jumping out of a plane with no parachute: you can always drop them again if the results aren't favourable. So, today, right now in fact, increase your prices.

Here's why: broadly speaking most businesses operate with something like a 35% margin. I won't show you the maths now, but on that kind of margin, a price increase of just 10% gives you almost a 37% hike in profits (or another way of looking at it is to say you can afford to lose 34% of your sales and make the same income! That's the difference between finishing work on Thursday morning and working through till Friday afternoon. I think that's a good deal).

The converse is rather more frightening: a 10% price cut on a 35% margin means we have to *double* our volume of sales just to stay where we are. Great: we're working twice as hard for the same money!

So, just do it, as they say.

Put your prices up and see what happens. You will lose virtually no business and your profits will soar. In a recent survey, 94% of my VIP Inner Circle members who tested a 10% price increase got excellent results and no objection from customers

Sell your Products and Services on Benefits, not Features.

People don't want to just buy "stuff". They buy "stuff" to solve their problems, ease their pain. The trouble is, most businesses just sell "stuff". Unfortunately, "stuff" is available anywhere so it has a commoditised price.

How much can you sell a pint of milk or a packet of aspirin for? Pennies - because you can get the same thing anywhere.

But if you can sell someone a drink to refresh their maddening thirst, or something to soothe the pain of the headache that's threatening to see them locking their kids in the cellar and throwing away the key, then you can ask more.

Add elements/bonuses to increase perceived value.

People don't buy on price, but what they do want is *value*. So, increase the perceived value of your products and services.

And the trick to pulling this off successfully is to make sure whatever it is has a high perceived value to them, but costs you very little to produce or give. For this reason, information, even in the form of CDs and DVDs is great because all it costs you is the time to compile it once, and then the few pennies it costs to reproduce and send the disc itself.

But be generous here - don't necessarily think cheap is best. Remember your long-term customer value is where the profits are.

It's a mistake to think your business is "different" and there's nothing you can add like this. There's a dentist in Australia

who gives his child patients a little paper card that gets stamped after every visit. After the card is full, the kids gets a free *bike*.

The bike probably costs the dentist a couple of hundred dollars. Big deal. How much are all those visits worth to the dentist? How keen will the kids' parents be to pay his higher fees - and pay them often - because they now have a dentist the kids can't *wait* to see?!

If a dentist can do this, so can you.

Overcome Objections.

Remember earlier I said "the vast majority of us only buy on price when we've not been given a reason *not* to".

If you get an objection about the price of something, it's because you've not given that all-important reason for them to pay you what you're asking. It's not that they're tight-fisted: it's your responsibility to make sure you have given them all the information they need to make the right decision.

If people are not willing to pay the price you ask it's because you haven't persuaded them of the value of your products and services.

One important thing you must *not* do is be ashamed of charging high prices or even just to avoid the issue.

In fact, it's usually counterproductive to do this, and it can increase both the response rate *and* the quality of your customers and clients if you wear your prices like a "badge of honour": "*Yes, I realise our fees are twice as high as our nearest competitor, and I'm glad you brought that up. Here are the 17 good reasons you are better off doing business with us and paying our prices*".

One thing you will find is it can take a steady nerve. People will often tell you they can get the "same thing" cheaper down the road.

This suggests a couple of things: they can't; or they don't want to (because if they could and they wanted to and low price was important to them, they'd be down the road right now buying it -- what they usually mean is they want *your* service and quality, and the *other* guy's prices).

Add an Elite or High Price Option.

This is one of the easiest to do, and yet one most business owners miss.

As always, the 80/20 rule applies. If you sell a £100 widget, then there is going to be in your list of customers maybe 20% of people who would be willing to spend, say, £400 or £500... IF you gave them the option.

And if you take that list of high-spenders, you'll find maybe 20% of them will be prepared to pay you, say, £1000 or more for something... IF you give them the option.

The trouble is, if you don't ask, the chances of them offering is as close to zero as makes no difference. The easy way to do this is to think about creating a "de-luxe" offering which costs you nothing to offer but for which you can command an insanely high price. Let me give you an example.

Imagine a carpet retailer who decides to do this. So instead of just saying he'll come and fit your carpets, he offers a high-end service where he'll come and fit the carpets, get your furniture cleaned, your house spring-cleaned professionally, your dog groomed and shampooed... and at the same time send you and your family to a luxury hotel in Spain for a long weekend while he does it.

You could charge a *lot* of money for that - and I guarantee, every carpet retailer has clients who'd pay his price for it. It's probably only 3 or 4% of the customer list but there are big profits in that 3 or 4%.

Sell Yourself

In British society we're very firmly taught that understatement is to be desired. That's nice when you're dating. It's deadly when you're running a business.

As the great salesman Zig Ziglar said, "*Timid salesmen have skinny kids*", and the rather more poetic Shakespearian "*Faint hearts n'er won fair ladies*." If we don't sing our praises then no one else is likely to.

Now, this is not to say you should elevate yourself by treading all over everyone else. I don't know if you've ever had the experience of having a salesman try to sell you something by doing nothing more than criticising his competitors, but it's very ugly.

And not only is it ugly but it's also counterproductive and *unnecessary*.

First, we instinctively mistrust anyone who's negative and bitter. And this is exactly how you seem if you try to climb by treading on others; secondly, you take the focus away from your own positive attributes; and thirdly, it implies you're insecure and have some ulterior motive.

Instead, then, be relaxed and confident about your business and your competitors. Openly acknowledge you charge more than they do and don't be afraid to tell your prospects they can get the products and services cheaper from them, and they'll get good service, to boot.

But *then* tell them about the things you do that they *don't* do. People want to be looked after and look for strong, confident leadership, especially in today's economy. So tell them all the great things you do to take care of them. It doesn't even matter if your competitors *do* do it, too - if they're not making a song and dance about it but you are, then the perception is you're the only ones.

There are three really important words you need to burn into your soul in letters of fire when it comes to service: "*and then some*". Remember this and put it into practice, and you won't go far wrong.

Value yourself and your business properly.

Finally, we can predicate all of this on the necessity of your having a strong sense of self-esteem.

You see, you can't expect to gain the respect and trust of your prospects, customers and clients unless you first respect yourself. Yes, it sounds terribly New Age, but it's true: all respect starts with self-respect, both your respect for others and their respect for you.

And if you want to be charging Premium Prices, then believe me, you need to have the self-confidence and self-respect to stand there and ask for them. You've really got to feel your services and products are *worth* the prices you're asking for them.

And for your prospects, clients and customers to agree to pay them... they need to respect you and trust you.

It comes down to this: value yourself *and* your business. Be proud of who you are and what you do. There's no business, no job you can't be proud of being the best at. Not one.

Principle Eighteen - Pull In The Prospects

If you're a retailer and you're selling from a store, then before you can sell anything... you've got to get people in the door.

And this is the big problem. Most store owners tackle it by putting dull and boring ads in the local press saying, in effect, "*Come in and see us if we can help*". It rarely works and getting new customers through the door is largely a matter of random chance – luck in other words.

But here are six simple ways you can get people coming through you door so you can sell to them:

1. Get your regulars to bring a friend – and reward them for it if they end up buying something.
2. Form partnerships with related but non-competing businesses and send your customers to each other with discount-coupons and special-offer certificates.
3. Hold "open evenings" for your regulars where the doors are closed to everyone else and they get special offers, discounts and so on... but their ticket to entry is... a friend!
4. Mail your best customers and tell them you have a free gift for them – no strings attached – but they have to come in by a certain date to claim it.
5. Hold contests – free gift certificates and other gifts, but people have to come in to enter.
6. Make a habit of offering buyers unadvertised in-store only discounts, gifts and special offers. Meaning they have to keep coming in to see what goodies you're giving away.

Principle Nineteen - Learn PPC

Of all the hundreds if not thousands of ways to drive Internet traffic to your website, I reckon Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising has to be probably the most effective *and* the most misunderstood of them all.

Nevertheless: I passionately believe pay-per-click advertising is the single most important shift in the entrepreneurial marketing world this century. The reason those nice guys at Google are billionaires is because of PPC.

And pay-per-click is something I do myself in my *own* business, and I've spent over £1 million on pay-per-click alone on my own business over the last couple of years. So you might just want to pay attention to what I have to say here. There's NO point in you trying to figure all this out for yourself when I've already done it for you.

I talk chiefly here about Google's version of PPC, Google AdWords, but it's worth mentioning there are several other versions of it (Yahoo and MSN, for example). Even so, the principles are the same and AdWords is definitely the most popular.

How PPC Works

When you type a search into Google, you'll see you get a list of links down the right-hand side of the results page and often one or two at the top. Each of these sets of links has a heading "*sponsored links*" over it.

If you click on one you'll be taken through to whatever web-page the advertiser wants you to look at. The advertiser pays only when you click on the ad and the amount he pays depends on how much he's "*bid*". And what he bids on is the *keyword* you typed into Google.

So if you typed in "*entrepreneur success*" all the AdWords ads you'll see are from people who want their ad to appear when someone is looking for information on that subject. And (in general) the more you're prepared to pay every time someone clicks your ad, the higher up the list it appears.

There is a more to it than that to getting a good placement for your ad, and Google don't make the details of their algorithms public, but that's a good rule of thumb.

Now, it's true the basics of PPC are simple and anyone can get started and have an ad for their business in front of 100 million or more people within just a few minutes; but it's also true if you get it wrong you can end up spending a lot of money on it and get precious little in return.

And it's this "problem" which makes a lot of business owners wary of it.

But this isn't a fault with PPC at all -- it's exactly the same for any kind of advertising. In fact, PPC has the edge here because a typical ad in a local paper or magazine can cost you hundreds (sometimes *thousands*) of pounds to place, hundreds (sometimes *thousands*) of pounds to have created by some funky Graphic Designer, and you get the "privilege" of paying all this even before your ad sees the light of day.

And if you get no responses? Tough.

But with PPC... if your ad doesn't work and no one clicks on it... you don't pay a penny.

Pay-per-click's success is a result of its laser-like, focused, precise model of reaching people who are interested, right now, in what you have to offer.

Let's look at an example of how it works in real life.

Suppose I own a hotel in London. My target customers are people who are looking for a hotel in London while they are on holiday or visiting on business. Ten years ago the only way I could find these people was to book big, expensive ads in publications I hoped people coming to San Francisco might read.

That resulted in a lot of wasted money.

Nowadays, though, people search for hotel accommodation online. They'll typically go on Google and type in "*hotel London*" or "*vacation London,*" or "*business trip, hotel London*"

And if I can get my ad to appear at or near the top of the results when they do that, I have a way of reaching these highly qualified customers - and I pay for the ad only when someone clicks on it and is sent through to my website.

It's unbeatable for getting highly qualified traffic to your website.

OK, so that's how the system works in a nutshell.

The next question is, how do we create our ads?

How to choose your keywords

As we saw in the last section, your ad is triggered when someone searches for something.

But if you get your keywords wrong (and it's easy to do), then you can lose a lot of money and not actually sell anything.

Here are three tips to help you ensure you use AdWords to *win* in your business:

- 1. Find out how many people are actually searching for your products and services.** It's possible no one is searching for what you're selling. It's unlikely *no one* is, but it's important you don't deceive yourself into thinking AdWords is going to solve all your problems. No matter how powerful it is, it can't send you traffic out of thin air: people have to be searching for what you're providing.

I'm afraid there is no effortless way to get your keyword analysis done, unless you pay someone else to do the work, and it relies heavily on some very powerful commercial tools, although the free ones Google provide you with for free when you create your AdWords account are also very useful when you're researching your keyword list. The simplest research is to see how many searches have been conducted for your keyword. For example, at the time of writing this, one of the tools I use tells me there are an estimated 284 searches every day for the keywords "London hotels".

You could conceivably get 284 clicks a day on your ad and depending on how good a job you do of converting your website visitors to paying guests, this could be enough to keep you in clover!

But... these clicks are not free. So before you start bidding on them, you need to... .
- 2. Figure out of how much the clicks on your ad are going to cost you.** The easiest way to ensure your ad gets shown at the top of the page is to log into your AdWords account and use their free tools. I'll be going into more details about these in the coming months, but essentially, as you start to create your campaigns, Google's free tools will estimate the amount of traffic you're going to get depending on how much you're willing to spend every time some-one clicks through to your website.

Exactly how much that is depends on your business, and only you can decide. For example, if you know on average 5 people out of every hundred who visit your website buy something from you and you make a profit of £100 on the sale, you know you can afford to spend £5 per click and still break even (I don't want to get into this now, but sometimes it's worth just breaking even so you can get a customer whose real value is in their long-term relationship with you).

This aside, there are lots of strategies, tips, and techniques I'll share with you in the coming months which will slash the costs of your clicks while at the same time increasing both the number of conversions you make from those clicks.

As I've implied: it's complex and it depends on your keywords, the text of your ads, and how "relevant" the page your ads are pointing to are in Google's estimation in the context of the term searched for. In short: if the search term is "London hotels" and your ad is clearly about "London hotels" and the page it points to is filled with info about "London hotels", then your clicks will be cheaper than if your ad and web page is just about hotels in general.
- 3. Who else is bidding on these keywords? Now you're checking out the competition.**

Unfortunately, it's not possible to see your competitors' keyword lists; at least without hacking into Google's computers and going to jail for a long time.

But a rough-and-ready test you can do to see who else is bidding on your keywords is to search for your keywords on Google and see how many ads come up. Using our "London hotels" example, some 27 pages each with 12 ads comes up with no apparent repetition, so that suggests there's a lot of bidding.

As in any market, the rules of supply and demand apply: the more people are bidding, the higher Google can ask for a bid good enough to get you at the top of this big list. You'll be pleased to know it's not all as cutthroat as it seems because there are some little-known "tricks" you can use to get to the top AND pay less per click. I'll cover that in the next section.

Don't be put off by going into a competitive market -- it shows there is business there to be had! All it means is you might have to work a bit harder and a bit smarter to get the results you want.

How to write your AdWords ad

This is the topic of more than one book all by itself, but the fundamental principles are really very simple.

A Google AdWords ad comprises:

1. **A headline (max 25 characters).** You'll find you get your best results if you include your keywords in your headline *as well as* follow all the usual rules for headlines (promise a BIG benefit matching your intended audience's problems, etc.).
2. **Two lines of description (max 35 characters each).** The first line *generally* works best if you promise a benefit (often following on from the headline), and then in the second line make your offer. You need to test this ordering, but this is how it works best in most markets (and not coincidentally, it follows the famous *problem - agitate - solve* copywriting formula).
3. **A displayed URL (max 35 characters, but the actual URL it clicks through to can be up to 1024 characters).** This is where you're going to send them when they click. Note the *display* URL doesn't have to be the same as the *actual* URL although they both have to resolve to a real page on your site.

How to make your AdWords make YOU rich!

Probably the thing that gives AdWords *most* of its power is the ease with which you can test your ads.

I haven't covered the Google AdWords software here because it's simply too complex for one short report, but one of the really neat things about it is how you can write two ads with the same keywords and have them shown in the same campaign -- so you can literally see which one gets the most clicks.

And when you've got some data and found one ad outpulls another, you delete the poorest-performing one and then write another to try and beat the previous winner.

By doing this, in process of incremental stepwise refinement, you build up enormous momentum in your marketing. Don't be deceived: even small changes can have big effects. If every time you cycle through your testing and increase results by just 1%, it's exactly like compound interest, the same force Einstein reckoned to be the most powerful force in the universe!

And the great thing is, most of your competitors won't be doing any of this. They'll simply be bidding blindly on keywords and struggling to make AdWords pay for them.

If you are new to pay-per-click, *please* test it out. You can try it for just a few pounds and the results might just amaze you.

However, as with anything worth doing well, there is an art and science to pay-per-click. You need to be willing to take some time getting good at it, but the results can be well worth it.

But even though there's a lot more "meat" to effective PPC advertising than I've given you here, these fundamentals I've just shared with you, *if* you apply them rigorously, *will* make a huge difference in your marketing.

Principle Twenty - Be Seen

Most Press Releases are a disaster

First, the bad news. 99% of Press Releases get thrown in the bin. Yes 99% - and most of them are written by PR Agencies who are charging their clients a fortune. This is a waste of money. It's also a waste of perfectly good trees.

The good news - The 1% of Press Releases that lead to a story or interview have certain qualities in common. The following are a few of them.

Step into the Shoes of the Journalist/Producer reading your Press Release

The best Press Releases step into the shoes of the journalist or producer reading it and meet their needs. If there's one secret to great PR it's meeting the needs of the journalists. Everyone thinks PR is hard work.

What they fail to understand is that every day, these journalists are pulling their hair out trying to fill their newspaper, magazine, radio or TV shows with useful, entertaining information. If you can show them how to do that, you're virtually guaranteed some coverage.

How do you meet their needs? Think about it like this. All of these journalists are under pressure from their editors to find stories that are of interest to the readers/listeners/viewers. So you meet the needs of the journalist by meeting the needs of their audience. If you're targeting a woman's magazine you need to think of a story that's of interest to their readers. If you're targeting a late afternoon radio show you need to think of a story that's of interest to people driving home from work, listening to the radio.

If you were reading the publication or listening to the radio show, what would jump out and appeal to you? Answer that question and you've got the subject for your press release.

The Press couldn't care less about You and your Business – but they LOVE a Good Story.

The harsh truth is, these journalists are not particularly interested in your company, your history, or your product or service.

Which is why Press Releases with headlines such as:

'Local Company celebrates 30 years in Business'

OR

'FJ Widget and Son appoints New Chairman'

go straight in the bin. They're boring. So just get over the fact that the press don't care about your business and come up with a story (journalists call it an 'angle') that is of interest.

For example, if the new Chairman of FJ Widget and Son celebrated his appointment by painting the building pink, or giving his top performing sales person some free plastic surgery or whatever - that would gain instant coverage.

As with most marketing, it's all a matter of being creative and thinking outside the box.

(Let me know how you get on if you steal the plastic surgery idea!)

The Headline is the most important part of your Press Release.

The first thing the journalist sees is the headline and if that doesn't grab their attention, your Press Release is heading for the dustbin.

Your headline needs to be bold and interesting - and above all it needs to stand out from all the other press releases.

Your best option is to write it in the style of the headlines of the publication you're targeting.

For example, if you were selling a new supplement to help indigestion, which of these Press Releases do you think would get the best response:

New Supplement helps Ease Indigestion

or

Why Some Foods Explode in Your Stomach!

The reason that newspapers use bold, attention-grabbing headlines is that they work. You can deploy the same strategy to grab the attention of the journalists you are trying to reach.

Format your Press Release Correctly

Here are my Golden Rules for formatting Press Releases.

- Make sure the headline is big and bold
- Aim to fit the Press Release on one page
- Use short paragraphs
- Use language that will appeal to the type of media that you are targeting. You may want to write different press releases for different media, e.g. use different wording for targeting a tabloid than you would for a technical business publication
- Insert the words 'For Immediate Release' in bold in the top left hand corner
- Include a call to action at the end of the release, e.g. 'Our CEO John Smith is available for interview. He has appeared frequently on local/national media and is an excellent speaker. If you would like to arrange an interview or require any further information, please call on etc.'

Follow up your Press Release with a Telephone Call

Public Relations is just like all other forms of marketing – you have to be persistent.

Journalists tend to be very busy people (when they're not in the pub) so the fact that they've missed your Press Release or not contacted you, doesn't mean they're not interested in what you have to offer.

If you don't hear from the media outlet in two or three days, give them a call. Say you're just checking that they got the press release about XYZ. Of course, at this point it doesn't matter whether they've seen the release or not.

Use the conversation to sell your story. Concentrate on the benefits and what's in it for the journalist/producer's audience.

Principle Twenty-One - Become Excellent at Marketing

How to write to SELL

Copywriting is sometimes seen as a “black art”, to be practised only by those special and privileged few who are ordained into some secret society or other.

Fortunately for me, and for you, this is a myth. Writing persuasive and compelling copy is actually fairly simple, because it's a formulaic process. A skill, in other words.

And because it's a skill, *you* can learn it.

No, you might not become the next Dan Kennedy, Gary Halbert or Robert Collier, but you can very easily learn to write much better copy than any of your competitors are writing, and so reap the rewards in terms of *more* sales and sales at higher prices.

The simplest formula, and one used even by the “greats” is the **AIDA** formula:

If you follow this formula in every ad that you write or produce, you will greatly increase your chances of success.

- **Attention** – the first thing your ad needs to do is grab the reader's attention. You achieve this with your headline.
- **Interest** – once you've got their attention, you need to create an interest in your product or service.
- **Desire** – There is a big difference between being interested in a product or service and desiring it. You need to convert the reader's interest into a strong desire for what you are offering.
- **Action** - Even if someone desires what you have, it is not enough until they take action. At the end of the ad you need a call to action. Tell people exactly what they need to do to follow through and make it easy for them to do so. This is where many people go wrong. Even if you have a good ad, you still need to tell people precisely what to do - how to take action.

Every bit of copy you write for your business, whether it's a postcard, a web-page, a Yellow Pages ad or a full-blown sales letter, there are 5 elements you need to consider.

A compelling headline to get their attention

One of the biggest challenges that any copywriter faces is getting people to read their copy – let alone for the copy to produce a result. So the main purpose of the headline is not to sell your product – it's just to get people to read your ad, letter or other marketing piece.

This is how you get *attention*.

So, all sales copy should begin with a headline – including your Yellow Pages ads, your sales letters, your flyers and your adverts. Everything. Even the titles of your Special Reports should be written as headlines.

Because the headline is the first thing your readers are going to see and at that point their minds are probably on other things than wanting to buy your products and services.

So your headline should immediately catch your readers' attention and offer a clear benefit for reading the rest of the copy. In fact, the very purpose - and the *only* purpose of a headline is to get your intended reader to stop in his tracks and read the *first line* of the copy.

The headline should be about your readers – not about you. If your headline has the name of your business in it, you are probably losing out.

Imagine you own a company selling £10 fire alarms. Which of these headlines do you think would be most likely to get the reader's attention?:

Simpson Fire Alarms - Your Guarantee of Safety

OR

Is your Family's Life worth the price of a round of Drinks?

Most creative advertising-agency types will try to sell you lots of white space, "clever" but meaningless headlines and "eye catching" graphics. Well, they would, wouldn't they? They're selling you space by the square inch and often getting paid twice for it.

But you'll find if you stick to your guns and insist on a strong headline, your results will soar.

A second, more advanced strategy you can test with your headlines, is write them not only to *attract* the kind of people you want, but also write them to *repel* the people you don't, by being very specific about whom your products and services are for and whom they are not for.

It's tempting to think "more is better" and worry about disqualifying some people even before they've read your whole ad, but that's a mistake.

The responses you get from adverts with strong headlines are very strongly qualified - which means readers will be much more likely to be persuaded by the rest of your sales message.

So your headline is the most important part of your sales letter or advert because if the reader isn't grabbed by it, the rest of the copy won't get read.

A compelling first line

The next thing the reader sees after reading your headline is the first line of your copy. This is the part where you're making the transition from *attention* to *interest*.

Remember the purpose of the headline is to hook your readers, stop them in their tracks and get them to read the first line of the rest of your copy. And this first line has to be strong enough, and compelling enough to get them to want to read the *next* line. At this point, you've got your reader's *attention*... but you've not necessarily got his *interest* yet.

So, consider the headline above for the fire alarms. If our first line then begins:

Dear Sir,

My name is Sammy Simpson, owner of Simpson's Fire Alarms, and I've been selling fire alarms in Boringsville for the last 23 years

Then I've not only lost my reader's interest, but I've probably also put them into a coma.

Now consider how this rewrite carries on from the headline and draws them into the conversation I've just started:

Dear Home owner and loving parent,

Did you know 73% of all fires in the home result in someone suffering death or serious injury? And that over half of these are children? And yet, were you aware how easily this can be avoided with one easy-to-install fire alarm... which costs less than a round of drinks to buy, and under 9 minutes to fit, even if you're a "DIY novice"?

Obviously, I don't know what the exact numbers are here, but you can see the difference in the two lines, can't you?

The second is much more compelling and interesting to the reader, and it also continues the "story" begun by the headline.

Which leads on to...

Compelling body copy

Copywriting legend Joe Sugarman often talks about what he calls the "greased slide" to the sale, and what he means is your copy tells a story, beginning with the headline and the first line of the copy... and then always moving the reader

forward to the sale.

The headline gets you the *attention* and the opening line and paragraphs of the copy must get the *interest*.

This is why it's so important to get the headline and first line right, because at this point you don't have any momentum, no real desire for what you're selling.

Once you've got them past the headline and the first line, you've now got to keep them moving and in fact *accelerate* them down the slide until they're moving so fast towards the sale they couldn't get off even if they wanted to!

How do you do this?

By building *desire*.

And how do you build desire?

Probably the simplest and one of the most powerful methods to use when writing marketing copy is the **PSA** formula:

- **Problem** – identify the problem or pain your reader is experiencing or feeling and then, along with a promise you can make it all go away, show them you can empathise with them. Speak to them in the language of shared experience and understanding.
- **Agitate** – twist the knife. Use strong, emotional copy and make the pain worse. In the fire-alarms example above, we wouldn't just write about the fire. We'd go into detail about not only how terrible the fire can be, but also the subsequent consequences. Even if your entire family isn't actually wiped out, you've got all the hassle of insurance claims, valuable documents being destroyed, all the hassle of moving, rebuilding... all the things you can think of to make your readers think "Oh my, anything I can do to avoid this has GOT to be worth a measly £10!"
- **Solve** – you offer the solution plainly and simply. You become your readers' "lucky rabbit's foot". By the time you get to this part of your copy, your reader is out of control on that greasy slide and is inexorably on their way to the sale. This is where you really create the desire for your product or service.

And how do you write your copy to do all this?

The simplest thing to remember is your copy is your way of communicating with your prospect in an attempt to get them to buy something from you. People tend to buy from people they like and trust, so it makes sense to write in a way to engender liking and trust.

And the easiest way to do that (and regardless of what the teachers told you in science classes at school, what your colleagues tell you and what all the "professionals" out there say), *write like you speak, like you're having a conversation with a friend or a favourite Aunt and you'll find your words having a much greater effect than you ever dreamed possible.*

So, this means writing using everyday language and phrases. As a rule of thumb, since the average reading age of adults in the UK is about 10½, if your letter can't be understood by a 10-year-old child, it's too complicated (and I strongly recommend you get your kids or someone else's kids to read it for you – and get them to read it aloud so you can hear if they're having any problems getting through it. You'll also get a feel for how well it "scans" and flows).

It also means dropping unnecessary jargon, big fancy words, complicated and "impressive" phrases, and all those things you're tempted to put in so you sound "professional".

Finally, you should also use "emotional connection" with your readers. All experienced copywriters and marketers know, and recently science has proven with the aid of fMRI scanners, we humans decide emotionally and then justify it logically.

This means it's no good trying to sell me a fire alarm using logic – you've got to use words and language which connects with the emotional pain of what a fire would mean to me and my family. It's no good telling me how reliable it is unless you tell me what that reliability *means*.

Which takes me to...

No one cares about you or your products, or what you *do!*

No one cares if your fire alarm offers the latest enhanced intelligent sensing algorithms, has an advanced laser light source and patented optical design, and gives you rotary, decimal addressing.

In fact, no one cares about your product (or you) at all: what they care about is what you and your product can do *for* them. In essence, they're interested in the *product of your product* rather than the product itself.

You've probably heard the old chestnut about how it's not the drill you're buying from B&Q but the hole in the wall it gives you.

Well, it's even more than that: you're not buying the drill or the hole. No, you're buying the warm, fuzzy feelings you get

from looking at your child's face in the photograph hanging on the screw screwed into the rawplug pushed into the hole the drill drills.

We buy on emotion, every time.

Let's look again at the fire alarms: you don't care about *enhanced intelligent sensing algorithms*; no, what you care about is this *feature* means your fire alarm can tell the difference between a bit of dust raised by an enthusiastic broom in the kitchen and a smouldering cigarette on the sofa, because the latter just might kill you.

So, sell benefits not features. Features are just what you do.

And while you might love your business and have a passion for what you do, your customers and clients are interested only in what you can do for them, and instead of waxing lyrical in your copy about what you and your products do, instead write in terms of what you and your products will *do for the reader*.

Tell them why they need to respond!

The last part of the puzzle is to get them to take *action*.

Take a look in the Yellow Pages and your local newspapers, and then at the direct mail you get, and you might begin to notice something: everything starts to look the same.

Look carefully at what they virtually all say: "we're different from everyone else, we give great service, and we won't be beaten on price".

And if you're lucky they might end up with a pitiful invitation to "*Call us if you think there's anything we can do to help*". The common mistake is for businesses to put out so-called image-ads, which are nothing more than an expensive way of showing people your company name and logo. Hardly the kind of thing to get you quivering with excitement and anticipation, is it?

Never mind this is dull and meaningless, the real problem is it's missing something vitally important: there's no reason to respond. No offer, and no call to action.

So why would anybody want to respond? They wouldn't and they usually won't.

To be effective, your copy has one objective and one objective only: to get people to respond. There's no other reason for writing it. Getting them to take *action* is crucial!

And what they respond to is the offer you make them, which is why it makes sense for you to make the offer generous and exciting to the point of being irresistible.

So, real copy - the kind *you* should be writing - should be direct response copy: making an offer that's measurable, trackable, and, as the name suggests, one giving a clear, unambiguous reason for readers to respond to it.

The actual offer depends on what your purpose is and what business you're in, of course, but there are two things you *must* do:

1. **Have only one offer.** Robert Collier showed as far back as 1937 making more than one offer in the same piece kills *both* offers; and
2. **Make the offer irresistible.** Most business owners don't make any kind of offer at all; and if they do, it's usually something to do with low price. People are much less price resistant than you think, *if* you give them a good reason to want what you're offering

Running a successful business is not a matter of getting leads as cheaply as you can. The real value you'll get from lead-generation is getting *highly qualified* leads. Quality is better than sheer quantity.

Good business is about relationships. And if you want to have good relationships, you have to put something in before you can expect anything out.

How to tap into the power of email marketing

Email marketing is one of the most powerful yet most underused and misunderstood tools in your online marketing toolkit. Even businesses which go to the trouble of collecting email addresses from visitors to their website then don't actually use them for anything worthwhile.

The truth is email marketing is fast, effective and can be incredibly profitable... but *only if you do it the right way*.

And, unfortunately, there are a lot of wrong ways to do it – and most business owners do get it wrong, if they do it at all.

This is a real shame, because it's just as easy to get it right as it is to get it wrong. Having said that, there are some widely believed myths about email marketing I see being constantly repeated, and I think it's time we dispelled them once and for all.

The biggest myth is people don't want to receive emails because there's too much spam. This is simply not true.

People don't want to receive spam, because they don't want emails from people they have no relationship with; moreover, they don't want boring emails continually trying to sell them stuff they don't want!

However, they do want interesting, useful emails from people they have a relationship with. This is why I recommend the lead-generation model and another reason you should begin the relationship by giving – and by giving something both useful and valuable when they first hit your web page.

Here are 4 tips to help you get the most out of your email marketing:

1. **First, mail more often.** I don't know how often YOU are emailing your list, but I bet it's not often enough – because *most* business owners don't send emails frequently enough. If you're not emailing your customers, clients, and prospects at least once a week, you're almost certainly losing out on profits which could so easily be yours. It is possible to email them too often, but the threshold is much higher than you think it is. And if they really do get tired of your emails, they'll soon tell you. Your job, once you have their contact details, is to keep sending them stuff until they buy, die, or tell you to stop!
2. **Secondly, use an autoresponder.** A common "complaint" – really an excuse – is business owners "don't have time" to write frequent emails. This really is an excuse and not a very compelling or persuasive one, either. For one thing, you can use what's called an autoresponder. You pre-write a sequence of emails and when someone leaves their details they get drip-fed the emails you've written at predetermined intervals. You write them once, and everyone gets them in the right sequence and with the right timings. And another thing is if you think you don't have time to be marketing... you might want to rethink your idea of being in business at all – because it's the most important thing you'll ever do.
3. **Thirdly, forget what you learned about writing "formal" letters in school or college and begin writing like a real flesh-and-blood person.** Make emails friendly, personal, and personable. Write as if you were writing to a favourite Aunt or Uncle. Use apostrophes, contractions and -- as often as you can -- the word "you".
4. **Finally, keep them simple.** You don't need fancy newsletters - simple plain text is fine (and often better because it gets delivered more reliably and email programs usually display it more consistently). Good, solid, informative and useful content is king, despite what graphic-designers tell you!

So, there we have it: 3 specific strategies you can put to work in your business TODAY to dramatically improve the results of your email marketing.

How to create an irresistible offer

The biggest barrier to business is lack of trust.

And the reason this is so important is at some point you make the offer and ask your prospects to take action and buy something from you.

And if they don't trust you... all your hard work will come to nothing.

Fortunately, there is a quick and easy way you can tweak almost any offer you're making and make it irresistible: with a guarantee

Because guarantees are a fabulous way to overcome price resistance, hesitation or mistrust.

You see, any transaction involves risk. And since you're the one asking them to trust you with their money, it's going to benefit you to take this risk onto your own shoulders. You do this by offering a fantastic guarantee.

Now, you might be thinking by giving a great guarantee you're opening yourself up to being ripped off by hordes of unscrupulous liars and cheats.

Well, technically you are, but in practice it never happens. Most people are fundamentally honest and won't cheat you. Most won't even call you on your guarantee when they're actually entitled to.

And even if a few do, so what? If you sell 100 extra widgets a week because of your guarantee and get cheated a couple of times, the extra money you make more than makes up for these small losses.

How to stop running advertisements that fail

If your Advertising isn't working – STOP IT!

Let's start with the simple stuff. If you are running advertising that is not working, please stop it!

This applies to you whether you're running ads in newspapers, magazines, or on radio, television, billboards, posters, taxis or buses.

I know it sounds obvious but here's what often happens: People run advertising because they feel they ought to. They're not really sure if it's working but they are hesitant to stop it because it may be one of their main forms of marketing.

By the end of this report you will have enough information to ensure that you are never in that position again. You will either be running great ads that produce great results, or you will be spending your marketing money elsewhere.

Only use Direct Response Advertising

There are two types of advertising – direct response advertising and brand advertising.

Understanding the distinction between the two will immediately save you a fortune.

Brand advertising is used by companies like Coca Cola and the large car manufacturers to build and increase awareness of their brand. Unless you have huge amounts of money which you are happy to lose, you should avoid brand advertising at all costs. For a small business it is a complete waste of money.

The only type of advertising you ever want to consider is direct response advertising. The only purpose of direct response advertising is to produce a clear response.

The type of response may vary depending on the type of business you are in and your overall marketing strategy. You may want the response to be an immediate purchase. You may want the response to be for someone to contact you to ask for a brochure.

The great thing about direct response advertising is that you can instantly tell whether it is working (see the next point) It either produces a response or it doesn't. One of the reasons that most small business advertising does not work is that it's a combination of half-hearted direct response and highly ineffective brand advertising.

Fortunately, you now know the difference. In the land of the small or medium business, direct response is King!

Testing and Measuring

It is absolutely essential that you test and measure all of your advertising.

If we are going to engage in direct response advertising we obviously need to be able to measure that response, otherwise we are not going to know if the ad is working.

At the very least we need to know how many people responded, how many of them were converted to a sale and what that is worth to you. Then you need to compare that figure to the cost of the ad and you can immediately work out how profitable the ad was, or whether you should stop running it.

So many businesses just allocate a certain amount of money to an advertising budget, spend the money every year... and they've only got a vague sense of whether the ads are working or not. This is crazy. If your ads are working, you want to roll them out on a larger scale. If they're not, STOP and use the money on one of the dozens of other marketing strategies that can bring you a 100 or 200 or 300% return on your investments.

You will obviously need some sort of system for asking people who contact you for the first time where they heard about you. If you have a larger business, you may even want to set up a separate phone line with a number that only appears in your ad. If you're directing people to a website, you may want to set up a special web page that also only appears in your ad. This will ensure that you can clearly identify when people are responding to your advertising.

One of the reasons that Radio and TV Advertising can be so high risk, is that it's very difficult to test it on a small scale. You should never invest in Radio and TV Advertising unless it's money you can afford to lose.

Your Headline is the most important part of your Ad

In the ad itself the most important element is the headline. The headline is either the heading that goes at the top of the ad or if there's no heading it's the first words of the ad. If you're on the radio it's the first thing people hear. If it's TV it's the first thing they see and hear. The headline needs to grab peoples' attention. One change in a headline can produce a 50-

100% increase in response.

One of the biggest challenge that any print advertiser faces is getting people to read their ad – let alone for the ad to produce a result. So the main purpose of the headline is not to sell your product – it's just to get people to read your ad.

The headline should be about your readers – not about you. If your headline has the name of your business in it, you are probably losing out. Imagine you owned a company selling £10 fire alarms. Which of these headlines do you think would be most likely to get the reader's attention:

Simpson Fire Alarms - Your Guarantee of Safety

OR

**Is your Family's Life worth the price of a
round of Drinks?**

Be adventurous with your headlines. Test different versions to see what works best. There are no rules – except what works.

Benefits, Benefits, Benefits

One of the principles that should drive all of your marketing is communicating the BENEFITS of your product or service.

Your ad needs to be a personal communication to the individual reading, hearing or seeing it. And it needs to be about them. It needs to address their needs, desires and fears and it needs to constantly communicate the benefits of what you are offering.

Nobody will buy anything from you until they have explicitly understood how they will benefit from what you have to offer. So here's a useful tip. When you've written your ad, imagine stepping into the shoes of your prospective customer. From this perspective does the ad fully convey what those benefits are? If not, go back and fine tune the ad until it feels right.

Never pay the full rate for Advertising

The person selling you the advertising needs to know very early on that you have absolutely no intention of paying the full rate.

Most advertising rate cards are far too high and you can always negotiate. If you're a small business remember that large companies who use ad agencies are buying based on the readership or audience levels rather than the rate card - so haggle and negotiate. If you can pay 20 or 30% less for your ads it can turn an unprofitable ad into a successful one.

Here's another handy little trick to pay less for your advertising. The closer to the deadline you can book your ad, the better. Sales teams work towards targets and as the deadline approaches they get more desperate to fill the ad space. They become far more open to negotiation.

This applies to all forms of advertising. If your local radio or TV station does not sell all its ad space that they have available for tomorrow - it's gone forever. If you come along and offer them a deal at what seems a ridiculously low price, you might be surprised at how low they're willing to go.

Don't Follow the Competition

One of the biggest mistakes people make is advertising in publications or on various forms of media (taxis, billboards, buses etc.) just because their competitors are doing so. Don't for a minute think that all your competitors are there because their ads are producing great results. They're more likely to be there because everyone else is and most of them won't have a clue whether their advertising is working.

In fact, this is a well-known sales trick used by the people selling ad space. If they can get one or two of your competitors to advertise, they can call you up and tell you how you'll lose out if you don't advertise too. What they fail to mention is that your competitors probably never test their advertising, often haven't got a clue how to market and are only advertising there because they think you will. This is a highly effective way to sustain the advertising industry. It's not a great way for you to run your business.

Why you should never advertise on a left-hand page

Most people are right handed. So are most mammals.

It's the way the mammalian brain has evolved. And like it or not we prefer the right hand side and "things" to our right (research shows that even dogs wag their tails more to their right than to their left... and the word "sinister" derives from the Latin *sinestra* meaning *left*).

So when your ad is in a magazine or newspaper it not only gets seen more (because readers pay more attention to that side), but it's unconsciously preferred, too... *if it's on the right hand side*.

This is not mere theory, supposition or superstition: it's been tested time and time again and the results almost always hold true to this. All other things being equal, your ad will get a better response if it's on the right hand page (preferably on the outside of the page) than if it's on the left.

If you're doing newspaper or magazine advertising, this one piece of knowledge can turn an unsuccessful ad campaign into a successful one. This has been tested again and again. When you read a publication, your eyes are drawn to the right hand page as you flick through, so statistically, more people will see your ad if it's on the right hand page.

If you look at the big national magazines and newspapers, you will see that most of the large advertisers are on the right hand pages. The few that appear on a left hand page will be paying less because their advertising agencies know that less people will see the ad.

When you book your ad space, tell them you want it on a right hand page. Very few people in your position ask for this, so the publication will normally oblige.

If they tell you they can't guarantee it – tell them you'll advertise in a future edition when they can guarantee it. You'll soon discover how obliging they can be!