

from the desk of

**Jeffrey J. Kontur**  
**"The Storytelling Copywriter"**

Stories are more interesting than facts.

There is a story behind your business and behind each of your products and services. Truth be told, there are lots of stories.

As a copywriter, my job is to discover your stories and then to tell them in ways that will connect and resonate with your target audience.

If customers know, like and trust you, they will feel more comfortable buying from you. Even better, if they are fascinated by you, they will become your best source of advertisement.

The way to make all those things happen is to tell compelling stories.

I am a professional freelance copywriter and well educated US-born native English speaker. I pride myself on my ability to present complex or highly technical subject matter in compelling ways that are simple enough for even lay people to quickly grasp and appreciate.

I am versatile and have a broad base of experience from working in, with and for a multitude of different industries. Having said that, my passions lie in working in the alternative health field and for ecologically conscious "green" companies.

To date, I have written and published five books:

<u>Title</u>	<u>ISBN</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Photography Basics	978-0557027668	How-to book on understanding your camera
From Ho-Hum to Oh Wow!	978-0557043484	How-to book on composition and taking better photos
Fat-Free Marketing	978-1329748767	Book on marketing <i>A complimentary copy is enclosed in this packet</i>
Your Amazing Resume	978-1329621534	How-to book for writing winning resumes and cover letters
12 Fantastic Microsoft Excel Tricks	978-1-329-90513-9	Book of useful and little-known tricks for using Excel for both Mac and PC

After reviewing the contents of this information packet, I invite the opportunity to speak more with you about your specific needs.

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- One-page Magazine Ad: Cycad Sales
- Sales Letter: Understanding Your Camera's Controls

## [35 Types of Marketing... Explained](#)

- Fat-Free Marketing Book

# Jeffrey J Kontur

25 Bach Dr. ✧ Newark, DE 19702-5909

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[Jeff@fatfreemarketinggroup.com](mailto:Jeff@fatfreemarketinggroup.com)

*I am an octopus holding  
8 Swiss Army knives.*

*A lifelong learner with  
an active imagination  
and an insatiable  
curiosity. Well  
organized and highly  
productive.*

*An exceptionally broad  
range of skills gives me  
an unparalleled well of  
experience to draw from.*

## Professional Summary

I am like an octopus holding eight Swiss Army knives; a freelance copywriter with a broad and extensive background borne of more than 25 years in the business world. My business experience includes banking, finance, collections, project management, software development, retail sales and more. Exceptional written communications skills give me an ability to quickly deliver high quality written documentation.

## Partial Client List

BankOne, n.a.	The Nation of Sri Lanka
American Writers and Artists, Inc.	Health Power for Minorities
Message Medium	Manhattan by Sail

## Online Portfolio & Writing Samples

<http://fatfreemarketinggroup.com/portfolio/>

## Formal Education

University of New Mexico	Linguistics
Monterey Peninsula College	Personnel Management
Defense Language Institute	Intermediate Chinese-Mandarin
Marin Community College	Accounting
Marin Community College	Critical Thinking In Writing
Defense Language Institute	Basic Chinese-Mandarin

## Ongoing Professional Development

Advanced Copywriting Program	AWAI
IMC- Building a Web-based Business	AWAI
Advanced Copywriting	Clayton Makepeace
Professional Travel Writing	AWAI
OZ Principle Management Accountability	JP Morgan Chase
ACH & Electronic Payments Conference	NACHA
PMA Applied Project Management	Applied Card Systems
Writing for Today's Business	Applied Card Systems
Managing Multiple Priorities	Dun & Bradstreet Bus. Educ. Services
7 Habits of Highly Effective People	Covey Seminars Inc
Negotiation Skills for Professionals	CareerTrack Seminars
Doing Business in China	University of Southern California

## Key Qualifications

Deep understanding of motivation and persuasion as applied to sales and marketing. Exceptional writing skills backed by broad practical experience in business, finance and technology.

# Menu of Services

## Very Short Copy Marketing

Facebook/Instagram Ads

Google AdWords

Twitter Ads

Classified and Similar Type Ads

## Short Copy Marketing

Emails and Autoresponders

Blog Posts

Lead Generation Pieces

Web Pages

Editorial/Advertorial Articles

Press Releases

Product Descriptions

## Longer Copy Marketing

White Papers

Case Studies

Product Manuals

Sales Letters

Brochures and Booklets

Books and Magalogs

Video Scripts

## Summary

Depending on your needs and volume of work, pricing can be quoted on an hourly basis, on a per-unit rate or on an ongoing retainer arrangement.

Hourly and per-unit work includes a reasonable number of revisions (usually 2-3) without additional charge. While working on retainer, clients may have an unlimited number of revisions plus variations for split testing.

All good copywriting requires an initial investment of research. This makes one-off projects much more expensive than ongoing work. For subsequent projects, the research already done can usually be leveraged for faster turnaround times and reduced client cost.

## About Jeff Kontur

I have always been interested in marketing. Even since before I really understood what marketing was. As a young child, I appreciated TV commercials that were, in my adolescent opinion, well-made. I even wrote scripts for some of my own commercials and advertisements. I made up slogans for companies.

Fast-forward a couple dozen years, I never lost that zeal for truly well-made advertisements. (Which are rare, by the way.) So I began to study copywriting in between myriad other personal and professional pursuits. In the ensuing years I've gradually de-cluttered my life and pushed many of those other interests by the wayside in order to meld two of my greatest lifelong passions: writing and marketing.

## Contact info

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Twitter: [@JeffKontur](https://twitter.com/JeffKontur)

Facebook: **Fat Free Marketing Group**

LinkedIn: **Jeff Kontur**


Google+: **Jeff Kontur**

Scan this QR tag or this MobiTag with your smartphone:




# **Portfolio of Copywriting and Marketing Work**

# Facebook Ads


**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Not all sunsets are created equal




**Check Africa off your Bucket List**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More

**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Your friends have been waiting



**Check Africa off your Bucket List**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More

**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Every day it's the same old traffic jam



**The African Safari Trip of a Lifetime**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More


**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

South Africa is boring!




**The African Safari Trip of a Lifetime**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More

**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Not all sunsets are created equal



**The African Safari Trip of a Lifetime**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More

**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Just another commute to the daily grind



**The African Trip of a Lifetime**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More


**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Every day it's the same old traffic jam



**The African Safari Trip of a Lifetime**  
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Learn More

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Every day it's the same old traffic jam



**The African Safari Trip of a Lifetime**  
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Learn More

**Amazing World Adventures**  
Sponsored · 🌐

South Africa's beaches are crowded



**Check Africa off your Bucket List**  
amazingworldadventures.com

Learn More





**Amazing World Adventures**

Sponsored · 🌐



You're going to need a bigger boat



**Check Africa off your Bucket List**

[amazingworldadventures.com](http://amazingworldadventures.com)

[Learn More](#)



**Manhattan by Sail shared a link.**

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**So close you might get fireworks in your drink**

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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**Be part of the show**

Macy's 4th of July fireworks sh...

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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**Fireworks like you've never seen them before**

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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**You can't get any closer to the action**

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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**Get a front row seat**

Macy's 4th of July fireworks sh...

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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**Celebrate July 4th on the East River**

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



**Manhattan by Sail shared a link.**

Sponsored · 🌐



**July 4th on the East River**

Macy's 4th of July fireworks sh...

[www.manhattanbysail.com](http://www.manhattanbysail.com)

[Book Now](#)



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Client: George Massey  
Assignment: Real Estate Sales Letter

1022 words  
F-K Readability: 82.6%  
F-K Grade Level: 4.8

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Do you feel like somebody taped a "kick me" sign to your back?

As you begin the process of shopping for a mortgage, I know the gauntlet you are starting to go through. The endless stream of calls. The mailbox full of so-called "irresistible offers" that no one actually qualifies for.

The big banks are great at marketing themselves. They are great at extracting your social security number and other personal information. They're also pretty good at fast talking you into a deal that may or may not be right for you.

How will you even know if the deal you get is the best one for you?

How many banks will you talk to before it all just becomes too exhausting and overwhelming? Until it all just becomes one big blur of cryptic "bank-speak"?

How much fine print will you have to squint your way through?

How many asterisks can they possibly put behind their amazing teaser deals?

What the big banks are not great at is just laying it out in plain English and actually talking to you like a human being. They are not great at finding out whether or not that deal they're trying to push on you really is the right one for you. Instead they wear you down so that you just give in and say yes to the "least bad" deal offered.

I should know. I have been a licensed mortgage broker for over 20 years. I know all the ins and outs and have heard all the horror stories. I've rescued thousands of customers just like you from the greedy paws of the big, impersonal banks.

My name is George Massey and I have stacks of thank you letters from customers just like you who are glad I did.

Not one of those big banks seems to care about the fact that they call during dinnertime. If they even bothered to ask how your day was, I'm sure it wouldn't be sincere. They'd be asking because it was on the script they are reading from.

Shouldn't it be possible to be treated like a human being and still get a good deal?

After all, it's not like a little courtesy would cost them anything. Not one red cent of their precious multi-billion dollar profits.

Yet they act like it does.

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I don't have a call center in India. I'm practically your neighbor. I live and work close enough that if you called me and said, "George, let's meet for coffee and talk." I'd get out my calendar and ask you where and when you want to meet.

No selling. I won't bring a briefcase full of contracts. I won't ask for your social security number or two years of tax returns or any of that nonsense.

Eventually I'll need that stuff if I'm going to write you a loan but for now we'll just sit down like two ordinary people. I'll answer all your questions. And when I tell you what I can offer, it won't come with 30 asterisks and 4 pages of fine print behind it. I'll tell you the deal I can give to YOU, not some theoretical perfect customer who doesn't actually exist.

I won't tell you "Oh sorry, you don't qualify for our best rate because you don't have a FICO score of 4,000, but hey let's get you to fill out this application anyway and I'll tell you what I can do for you."

What kind of nonsense is that?!

Do they think you're stupid?

I know that, no matter what, some people will decide to go with one of those big name banks anyway. I'm sure they have their reasons. After all, some people pay extra for premium gasoline even though their car runs just fine on regular or mid-grade. If that's you, no hard feelings.

At the end of the day, you're the one who needs to be okay with the deal you get. You're the one who's going to be paying for it for the next 30 years.

Speaking of which, what if it were possible to get a loan that was only 15 or 20 years? Same great rates, same low payments but 10 or 15 years less time spent in indentured servitude to a bank that doesn't even know your name.

Can I guarantee to do that for you? Not yet. But I'll lay all the options out on the table. I pull no punches and will just tell it like it is.

Will one of those big banks with the household name sit down over coffee and give it to you straight? Ask them. You and I both already know what the answer will be.

My bank isn't small. We're reputable and well known.

But I'm not trying to sell you on that. I'm not trying to "sell" you on anything.

Why not?

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Because I'm not extending this offer to everyone with a paycheck and a pulse. The big banks don't give personal service because they can't afford to. With all the millions of people they are soliciting, it's no wonder they have to have those call centers in India.

I do business differently. I can get you the best deal because I'm not playing the odds like the giant banks do. Instead, I carefully select the kind of person I'd like to do business with and send out only a small number of personal invitations. (Look at the bottom of this letter. That's my personal cell phone number. Go ahead, call me. You won't hear "press 1 for English." You'll get straight through to ME.)

Accepting my invitation to sit down and talk doesn't mean you're signing on the dotted line.

You won't be committed to anything. I can afford to make that offer because I know that when we talk you'll love what I can do for you.

So I'll get out my calendar. Call me and let's talk.

George Massey  
631-578-9120

And when I ask you how your day was, I'll actually listen to the answer. Because I'm your neighbor and that's what neighbors do for each other.

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Client: CCG  
Assignment: Two Young Girls

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797 words  
F-K Readability: 64.4%  
F-K Grade Level: 7.8

## What are we doing to our Children?

Mary and Debra are 5<sup>th</sup> grade classmates. By outward appearances, they could almost be twins. But there is a subtle and insidious difference between them...

They each just celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> birthdays within a month of each other.

Both listen to the same music, watch the same TV shows and like the same boy in their class. As best friends, they even sometimes wear each other's clothes.

Both girls get good grades in school and are generally well liked by their teachers and by the other students. They live next door to one another and come from families that are remarkably similar.

Each has a younger brother. Both girls' parents shower their children with loving support. Even the parents' household incomes are nearly identical.

Both girls have flowing dark hair, twinkling eyes and radiant smiles. From looking at photos, one might say that Debra is slightly prettier.

In person, nearly everyone finds Mary more appealing. She is much more popular and outgoing than Debra.

The boy they both like tends to show more interest in Mary than he does in Debra.

Mary radiates confidence, has more interesting stories to tell and generally handles herself better in almost every kind of social situation. Debra is more reserved. To the observant, she seems less sure of herself.

What makes the difference?

A common school assignment every fall asks students to write a report about what they did over the summer break.

Both girls are expressive and possess a natural writing ability. They even got the same grade on their reports.

There was one big difference however: the subject matter.

Debra's report talked about going to the community pool and spending time at the mall.

Mary's report boasted of zip-lining through the Mexican jungle, scaling a Mayan pyramid, snorkeling over coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea and playing soccer with a group of kids who only spoke Spanish.

Not just this summer.

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Mary's reports have been similarly exciting with each new school year.

You see, Mary's parents got their children passports when they were still very young. Every year for their summer vacations (which also coincide with Mary's birthday) they go on a trip abroad.

They visit a different country each year. This year was Mexico, last year it was Argentina and the year before that was France and Spain.

From a very young age, Mary and her brother have been able to take the Spanish lessons they learn in school and put them to use in the real world during their summer vacations.

By now, Mary is growing fairly proficient in the language.

Debra and her little brother also take Spanish classes but then, over the summer vacation, forget much of what they had learned.

Mary's adventures and first-hand insights into other cultures have given her more confidence, made her more worldly and more interesting. She has great stories to tell.

Even at this young age, Mary has started to develop an appreciation and an understanding of the world outside her own country's borders. She's made friends in each of the places she's visited; friends with whom she still keeps in contact.

Debra meanwhile, got some new jeans at the mall and saw the latest summer blockbuster when it came out in theaters.

In a few years, as Mary's cultural and linguistic horizons continue to broaden, and if Debra's remain as stagnant as they have been, the girls will inevitably begin to diverge.

They will show further differences in personality, in confidence, poise, and demeanor. Probably even in the kinds of opportunities presented to them by teachers and peers.

Mary may grow to become more fluent in Spanish while Debra may have no more proficiency than any one of her classmates who studies for only a few hours a week and then takes long breaks each summer.

Peering even further, into adulthood, Mary will grow to have a deep appreciation for the world and all the different cultures in it.

Meanwhile, Debra may be saddled with an understanding no deeper than can be gleaned from watching television and reading supermarket magazines.

Who will likely have the easier time in college?

When they embark on their respective career paths, if both were to go up against each other for the same coveted promotion, whose background and credentials will appear the more impressive?



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And all because Mary's parents made it a priority for her to see the world with her own eyes.

Eyes that sparkle as she tells her stories of the places she's been and the things she's done.

If you truly want to give your children the best possible opportunities in life, maybe you should book that summer vacation. Our expert travel counselors are standing by to help you. Just dial 800-555-5555.

# Overview of ACH Processing and Check Truncation

## 1. ACH payments typically originate one of two ways:



Customer does a payment by phone or online payment. From the merchant's perspective, the payment is electronic right from the start (they never see a piece of paper).



Customer writes a paper check. The check is scanned and the information on it is captured, converting it to an electronic transaction. This process is technically known as "Truncation".

## 2. The merchant or bank processes and sends the payment:

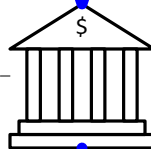
The Federal Reserve ('The Fed') is part of the U.S. Treasury and is the government agency which oversees banks and banking operations, including ACH and all other forms of check routing.

The payment information is compiled into a specially formatted file and sent to the Federal Reserve.

'ACH' stands for Automated Clearing House and refers to the fact that transactions are automatically cleared (settled between banks) by computer.

## 3. The Fed performs several tasks:

The file is broken up and each individual ACH transaction is forwarded to the specific bank where the account is held. (This would be the bank where the customer has his checking account.)



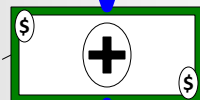
The merchant's account is credited for the total dollar amount of the ACH file.

All banks registered to do business in the U.S. have an account on deposit with the Fed. These accounts keep enough money on deposit to cover all withdrawals which take place in a typical banking day and are also used to automatically credit all deposits.

## 4. Hundreds (or even thousands) of individual banks receive and process their part of the ACH file:

The originating merchant already got its money (from the Fed in step #3) and the receiving bank already had the money withdrawn (in the same step.) The receiving bank takes money from the individual customer's checking account to pay back what was taken from its deposit account by the Fed.

Yes



Bank accepts transaction?

No



Just like with a normal 'bounced' check, banks can refuse payment but only for legitimate reasons. Such reasons might include insufficient funds in the customer's checking account, a closed account, customer stopped payment, the account number is invalid or not found, etc.

## 5. Item is returned unpaid:

Item would be placed back into an ACH file by the receiving bank for return to the merchant's bank.

The item is returned with the data largely unchanged (to aid in identifying whose payment bounced). The receiving bank (now the returning bank) also adds data to explain the reason why they are returning the item.

The ACH file with the returned item is transmitted to the Fed.

The Fed credits the money back to the returning bank and takes back the money it had previously credited to the deposit account of the originating merchant.

## 6. The merchant decides what to do with the item:

Normal Processing

Customer is charged NSF fee, letter may be sent, account may be flagged to indicate prior NSF's, etc.

None

Return to step 1

Do not resubmit

If the item was returned as a result of merchant error, such as making a typo when entering the data, they could not hold the customer accountable but would simply contact them to arrange for a new payment.

How to handle?

Resubmit

Return to step 2

Depending on the reason for the return, the merchant may have the right to resubmit the item, either with or without changing the data. This may be done twice only.

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Client: New Market Health  
Assignment: Cancer Sales Letter

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1932 words  
F-K Readability: 76.0%  
F-K Grade Level: 5.6

*To a Man with only a Hammer, Everything looks like a Nail.*

## **To a Doctor with only Chemo and Radiation Therapy...**

The day I got the results of the biopsy back and learned my diagnosis, like anyone else in that situation, I cried.

I was angry.

How could this happen to me?

A whole range of emotions washed over me. Sadness. Self-pity. Outrage.

On the way home from the doctor's office that day, I stopped off at a nursery near my house and picked out a small apple tree. It barely came up past my knees!

No more wallowing. By now I felt determination. I wasn't going down without a fight.

Back at home as I selected the ideal spot and planted that tree in my yard, I turned my gaze up toward the heavens. That was when I vowed that I would live to see this tree bloom and bear fruit.

Now if you know anything about apple trees, you know that they don't generally bear fruit until they're about four years old.

In cancer time, four years might as well be an eternity.

### **Then I Got Busy Looking for Answers**

With my tree safely in the ground and my vow whispered to the heavens, I got to work. That very same day.

I pulled out my computer and began researching everything I could find about my cancer.

My doctor gave me a bunch of resources. That was a start but I didn't stop there.

Some of the literature my doctor gave me was provided by big, well-known pharmaceutical companies.

Quite honestly, I had mixed feelings about that.

On the one hand, I know that a lot of very smart and dedicated people work at those companies. Chemists and researchers who know a lot more than I do about medicine. I believe they are good people who are dedicated to fighting diseases.

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At the same time, the companies themselves are run by people who... well, I'll just come right out and say it. I think they sometimes care a lot more about profits than patients.

### What I found next turned my stomach

Since I didn't completely trust these big drug companies, I began to research more about how they were run.

Believe me, I wanted to be wrong. I wanted with all my heart to believe that the drugs they were pushing would actually help me beat my cancer.

Call me a skeptic but one thought kept running through my mind...

Many thousands of people get cancer and all the treatments just seem to be about prolonging life, not actually curing the disease.

Remission isn't a cure. That just means you've bought yourself some time.

Is cancer completely incurable?

That can't be true.

You and I have both heard stories of people who have been cured. How did they do it? What made them different? Were they just lucky?

I had to know.

To find out, and to put my doubts to rest, I was going to have to find out more about how the giant drug companies are run. What is their real focus?

Is it curing people or is it their stock price and increasing shareholder profits, as I'd come to suspect?

That's when my research began to uncover some things that just sicken me to my core.

One of those things was that Big Pharma's sales divisions are **bigger** than their clinical research divisions.

In fact, their sales force is so big that the U.S. government has threatened to reclassify what line of business they are in because they put so much more emphasis on selling than on developing new cures for illnesses.

One government report said that, as an industry, their sales force numbers roughly 72,000!

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For the past 24 years I've been a middle school geography teacher. So when I saw that figure, I instantly knew that's larger than the entire population of some small countries!

To confirm what I already knew, I looked it up.

Sure enough, Big Pharma's sales force all by itself – not even counting the researchers and accountants and all the other people needed to run a large company, but just the salespeople alone – if they were their own country, their population would make them the 32<sup>nd</sup> largest country in the world!

That means that just the drug pushers trying to get doctors to prescribe their company's drugs more often... those people outnumber the entire population of 31 other countries.

In fact they're so big that if you combined the 11 smallest countries in the world into one, Big Pharma's sales force would *still* be bigger!

### On the day I was told I had cancer, *this was the worst news I'd had all day*

Like a bloodhound on the trail of his quarry, I kept sleuthing away. But the news just kept getting worse.

I found government reports that spelled out the scams the drug companies use to keep jacking up the prices of drugs. Even when Congress enacts laws to restrict them, they manage to find sneaky ways around the system.

The government reports that the pharmaceutical industry is 200%-300% more profitable than the average of all industries in the United States.

And it seems even that isn't good enough for them.

In fact, as big as they are, their profits actually increase by around 4% each year.

Not their sales, their *profits*.

I also learned how chemo and radiation literally burn cancer cells to death. Right inside your body.

That makes sense. Microwave ovens use radiation to cook food. But how can you cook one tiny piece of steak without also cooking the rest of the steak? Or at least part of it.

Touch a piece of fully cooked food, straight out of the microwave. It will burn you. So wouldn't your freshly cooked cancer cells also burn organs and other tissue touching them?

And have you ever looked inside a chimney flue? Or in your car's tailpipe?



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Client: New Market Health  
Assignment: Cancer Sales Letter

1932 words  
F-K Readability: 76.0%  
F-K Grade Level: 5.6

When you burn things, residue gets left behind. If they are burning cancer cells inside my body and there's no chimney flue, does all that residue just get left in there?!

So by this point all trust is gone. It's time to find a better way.

I kept up my research.

Then a thought occurred to me...

### **What about people who don't get cancer?**

We all know them. Nursing homes are full of them. All over the world, people live into their 80's and 90's and never get cancer.

Who's researching those people? Why can't someone find out what makes them different and then figure out how to apply that to the rest of us?

Doesn't that seem like a reasonable approach?

Call me dumb. Maybe I'm over simplifying things but that's the way I'd do it.

But I remembered something else from my research.

It isn't only the drug companies with their greedy executives. In a way, the U.S. government actually *pushes* drug companies to do business the way they do.

You see, the drug companies are not allowed to patent anything that occurs in nature.

In order to charge their outrageous prices, they need patent protection so they don't have to face competition.

So even when drug companies find naturally occurring substances that might be effective in fighting cancer, they usually find a way to bury that information while they quietly try to create their own synthetic versions.

That way they can take out a patent on the synthetic formula and charge crazy prices for it.

And what are we going to do? Not pay just on principle while cancer eats our bodies from the inside out?

Of course not. They've got us over a barrel.

That's when I started wondering...

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### How do other countries do it?

I told you I'm a geography teacher. So I already knew that the United Nations recognizes 192 countries in the world.

Even I don't have the wherewithal to research patent laws and the state of medical research in all those countries.

I'm not *that* good a researcher. And besides, I've got cancer! I'm on a time crunch! Surely someone else has already done the work for me.

As it turns out, someone has.

I came across a small company just outside of Baltimore called Health Sciences Institute.

They are basically a network of doctors and medical researchers from all over the world who keep tabs on research that's being done to fight diseases of all kinds.

These folks don't just limit themselves to the U.S. but they look at studies and research wherever it's being done.

And not just so-called modern medicine but traditional, homeopathic and other kinds of alternative medicine as well.

They try to find what works and don't care about patent protection or raking people over the coals to get insane profits.

What they've unearthed is truly groundbreaking.

Health Sciences Institute publishes a book – a book that those blessed angels give away for free, no less – that spells out the pros and cons of a wide range of cancer treatment options.

Many of them are options that even my doctor has never heard of.

Could this really be a solution?

What have I got to lose?

Well I got their little book and boy was I stunned. My doctor was too.

She still wanted me to go on chemo and undergo radiation treatments.

We talked about that for a long time.

Eventually we came to a compromise: With her help, I'd try two or three of these alternative treatments on a trial basis.

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(That was one of the best things. Most of the treatments listed could be done in combination. Either with other treatments from the book or even in combination with traditional cancer treatments.)

If I didn't show signs of improvement within a few months, I agreed to undergo the chemo and radiation she was recommending.

Truthfully, I didn't *need* my doctor's help. Most of these cures were so easy and straightforward, one of the children from my 7<sup>th</sup> grade class could have done them.

What I needed my doctor for was ongoing testing to verify the results. So it only made sense to approach this as a partnership.

### Six months later my tumor was GONE!

My results speak for themselves.

I started getting better almost right away. After just six months, my tumor was completely gone!

Even my doctor couldn't believe it.

It was almost like I'd gotten an organ transplant.

She ordered a copy of that little book for herself. She just had to find out more.

Why had she not heard of some of these amazing treatments? Why had she not learned of them in medical school?

### Back to that apple tree I planted

Fast-forward four years and I'm still cancer-free.

I managed to keep that vow I made and I did see my little tree bloom and bear fruit.

On the day when I first got my diagnosis, I bawled my eyes out.

But on the day when I walked into my doctor's office and gave her the very first apple that I picked from that tree, it was my doctor who cried.

By now you must be dying to know about this little book and how you can get your own free copy.

Well the book is called **The Ultimate Cancer Survival Guide**.

And boy does it ever live up to its name!

Getting your own copy is easy.

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You just have to tell the folks at Health Sciences Institute your name and a few other pieces of information and you'll be on your way to being cancer-free before you know it!

[\[enrollment form\]](#)

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Client: New Market Health  
Assignment: New Member Welcome/Stick Email

Page 1 of 2

540 words  
F-K Readability: 68.9%  
F-K Grade Level: 7.3

## HSI Membership “Instant Start Kit”

Welcome to Health Sciences Institute,

You’ve just made one of the best decisions of your life – to take control of your health.

Your enrollment information has been securely saved in our system and is already being processed.

At HSI, we realize that one of the main reasons most people come to us is because they have health problems in need of a real solution.

With that in mind, I don’t want you to have to wait while we process your membership and ship out your new member materials. If I’m right, you’d rather get started on the road to better health right now.

So let me help with that.

Let’s start with an unadvertised bonus that's extremely time-sensitive.

1. As a one-time introductory offer, for the next 24 hours get free shipping on anything you purchase from the catalog of our preferred supplement partner [NorthStar Nutritionals](#). Use special code “**HSI INTRO**” when you complete your purchase. They’ll send your order over to us and we’ll include it in the package with all the new member materials we’re already getting ready to ship out to you.

By piggybacking on stuff we’re already going to send you anyway, you won’t have to pay any shipping costs. Obviously, this offer is extremely time sensitive since we need to know before your shipment goes out, usually in less than 24 hours.

So go [check out their catalog](#) right now. Get as little or as much as you want. There is no limit placed on this special offer. Then come back here to see what else I’ve got for you.

2. **Miracles from the Vault** is a big book. (Quite honestly, I think you’ll be astounded when you see how much great stuff we’ve packed in there.) I can’t wait for you to have it in your hands! So let me get you started right away with these five late-breaking updates. Just click the links below to download each of these and start down the road to better health today.
  - a. [Big Pharma’s Ruthless Pain Conspiracy](#)
  - b. [Brand New Knees in 90 Days](#)
  - c. [Pain Relief in 45 Seconds](#)
  - d. [Did Our Creator Make the Perfect Food?](#)
  - e. [Forbidden Cures and Underground Medicine](#)



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Page 2 of 2

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3. I've already asked my subscription fulfillment team to get you started receiving the **HSI monthly newsletter**. They're so on top of things, they usually will send out last month's issue right away. That way you get your first issue immediately and won't have to wait until the next one comes out. (Don't worry, that extra issue is a free bonus. It won't shorten your subscription period by even one day.)
4. The **HSI Internet Archive** contains nearly *two decades* of groundbreaking medical research. This members-only benefit is already enabled for you. Just visit <http://hsionline.com/members-only> and enter your username and password (below) to log in.
  - a. Username:
  - b. Password:

Whatever ails you – now or in the future – I feel confident that our extraordinary team of experts has solutions to help you handle it.

Begin taking all these bonuses and extra resources for a spin today.

If you have any problems or questions, just let us know. We're here to help!

*Kelly O'Donnell*

Kelly O'Donnell  
Health Sciences Institute

Please note: We sent this e-mail to you because you became a member of the Health Sciences Institute. To log in to the website, please visit <http://hsionline.com> and login using the username and password below:

Username:

Password:

To cancel by mail or for any other subscription issues, write us at:

Order Processing Center  
Attn: Customer Service P.O. Box 925  
Frederick, MD 21705 USA

# Understanding Stock Options

A stock option is not a stock! It's a contract agreeing to buy or sell a stock at a certain price.

*Contract*

Regardless whether it is for buying or selling, the agreed upon price stated in the contract is called the "Strike Price".

Two different kinds of options

"Call" option

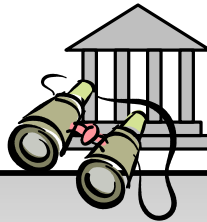
Buy

Option to Buy or Sell?

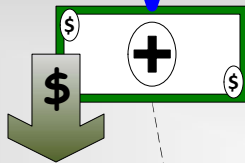
Sell

"Put" option

"The Market" watches the underlying stock



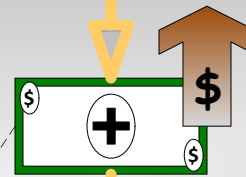
If... Strike Price is met, option is exercised



The price of the underlying stock rises above the Strike Price. In essence, the option holder has contractually agreed to sell at the lower Strike Price so someone buys his shares at a discount to market value.

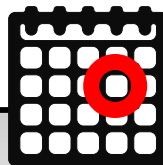
The price of the underlying stock falls below the Strike Price. In essence, the option holder has contractually agreed to buy at the higher Strike Price so someone sells him their shares at a premium to market value.

There is no requirement to actually own the underlying stock before purchasing Put options. If you don't and the option is exercised, you will be required to purchase the stock at the higher market price in order to sell it at the lower option Strike Price... a losing proposition!

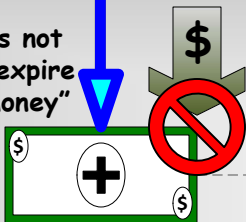


**DANGER!**

Options contracts have expiration dates

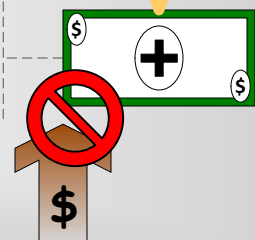


If... Strike Price is not met, options expire "out of the money"



The price of the underlying stock never falls below the Strike Price. The options expire and the option holder has only lost the cost of the options contract.

The price of the underlying stock never rises above the Strike Price. The options expire and the option holder has only lost the cost of the options contract.



Why use options?

You want to buy a stock but only if the price is low enough. Options are a way to get your order in early.

You own a stock but are worried that the price might fall. Options are a way to lock in your profits.

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Page 1 of 1

Client: New Market Health  
Assignment: Insert Ad

151 words  
F-K Readability: 73.9%  
F-K Grade Level: 5.3

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## Become IMMUNE to Cancer... Forever!

All over the world, people live into their 80s and 90s and never get cancer. What makes them different? More importantly, how can you become immune to cancer just like them?

Let us send you our free **Ultimate Cancer Survival Guide**. It will tell you EXACTLY what you can do to be more like them.

**Claim your guide and say good-bye to your cancer risk!**

It doesn't stop with cancer. Once you sign up, our doctors, researchers and other professionals will share daily news with you of other medical miracles; safe, effective cures you won't find anywhere else. We'll break down the results of the scientific studies and explain it all in plain English in ways that even your family doctor won't do. Best of all, we won't charge you a copay to do it!

Like you, we hate spam even more than we hate cancer. (If that's possible.) So your information is HIPAA-safe with us.

## Sri Lanka Ministry of Tourism Campaign

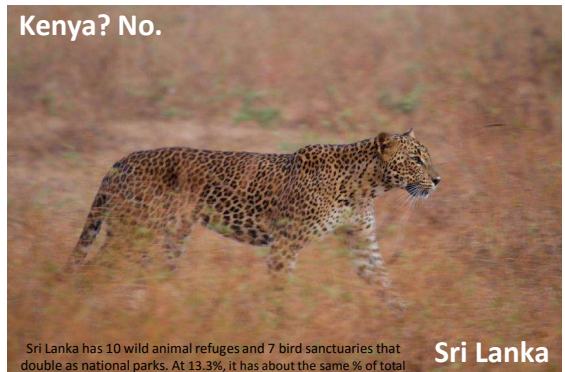
Hawaii? No.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's 1,340km coastline is roughly equal in length to California's

Kenya? No.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has 10 wild animal refuges and 7 bird sanctuaries that double as national parks. At 13.3%, it has about the same % of total landmass set aside for conservation and parkland as the U.S. (13.4%).

Puerto Rico? No.



Sri Lanka

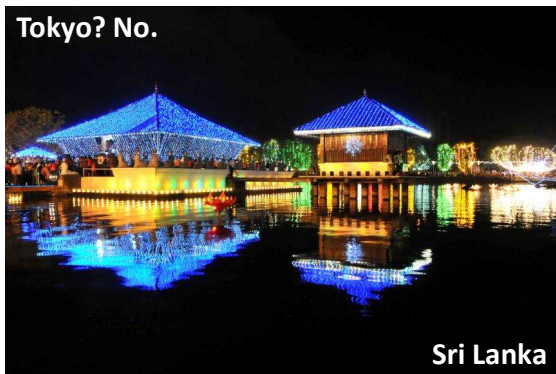
A Hollywood Movie? No.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has 1,449km (900mi) of railways, many of them scenic.

Tokyo? No.



Sri Lanka

Rome? No.



Sri Lanka



**Caribbean? No.**



Sri Lanka is the 25<sup>th</sup> largest island in the world and the 9<sup>th</sup> largest in the tropics.

**Sri Lanka**

**Jersey Shore? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Tour de France? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**China? No.**



Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon when it was part of the British Empire.

Ceylon tea is considered among the best and Sri Lanka is still among the world's leading exporters of tea.

**Sri Lanka**

**Torrey Pines? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Royal Colombo Golf Club has been in operation for over 130 years!

**Barbados? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

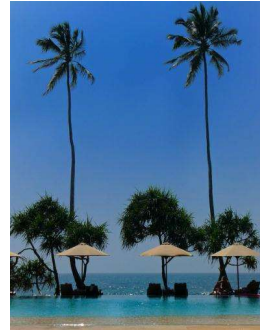
**Los Angeles? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Miami? No.**

In terms of population density, Sri Lanka is roughly on par with Florida.



**Sri Lanka**

**Oregon? No.**

Sri Lanka is a very ecologically friendly country.

In fact, the US emits 514 times more CO<sup>2</sup>.

48% of Sri Lanka's electricity is hydro-electric (United States: less than 6%).



**Sri Lanka**

**Africa? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is still a relatively unspoiled wilderness. In fact, the U.S. has:

- 4 times more cars per square mile
- 30 times more cars per capita

*(Don't worry. It's still very easy to get around.)*

**Northern California? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

From beaches to mountains, Sri Lanka has more geographic diversity per square mile than almost any other place on earth.

**Egypt? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lankan culture dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In ancient times, Arab traders referred to Sri Lanka as "Serendib". (Later to become the root for the word serendipity.)



**Chicago? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Southern California? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Six Flags? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Experience an amusement park, Sri Lankan-style.

Guruge amusement park just outside Colombo has dinosaurs, animal attractions, thrill rides, a wave pool, paintball, live shows and more.

**Wyoming? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**High Tea in London? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is one of the world's leading exporters of premium tea. In fact, Ceylon tea was named after the country!

**Vietnam? No.**



**Sri Lanka**



**Ozarks? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**South Africa? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Peru? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's highest peak stands at 8,281ft. (That's higher than 36 US states.)

**Bahamas? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is more than just beautiful.  
It has over a 91% literacy rate with both men and women being comparable in both literacy and years of schooling.

**Africa? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is home to the world's largest herd of captive elephants (all rescued orphans).

**California? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**New Mexico? No.**



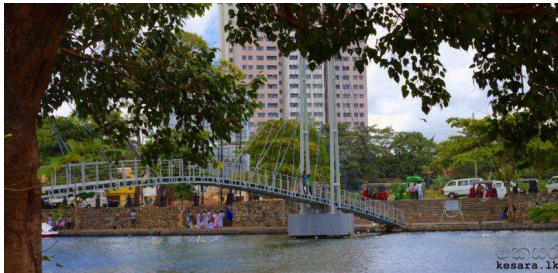
**Sri Lanka**

**Kansas? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**San Antonio? No.**



**Sri Lanka**

**Colorado? No.**



**Sri Lanka**



# Google AdWords Ads

Only One Week Per Year?

[healthpowerforminorities.com/act-no](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/act-no)

Let's Focus on Women's Health Every Week of the Year!

Let's Make It Every Week

[healthpowerforminorities.com/act-no](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/act-no)

Why Focus on Women's Health Only One Week of the Year?

Your Body's Heat Index

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Learn the Signs of Heat Exhaustion Home Treatment and Remedies

12 Heat Exhaustion Signs

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Know These Warning Signs Stay Cool and Healthy This Summer

Your Health At Risk

[healthpowerforminorities.com/mainta](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/mainta)

Heart Disease Kills 30% More Blacks Than it Does Whites

Simple Math

[healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe)

Calories In Minus Calories Out Adds Up to the State of Your Health

Disease Begins at 30

[healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe)

Understanding Body Mass Index (BMI) Minorities are at Greater Risk

Expressway to Poor Health

[healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe)

Being Overweight is the Gateway to These 8 Diseases (and More)

Disease Begins at 30--30%

[healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/overwe)

Understanding Body Mass Index (BMI) Minorities are at Greater Risk

Be Good to Your Tastebuds

[healthpowerforminorities.com/blog-c](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/blog-c)

Everyone Deserves Good Taste Choose Spices to Liven Up Your Diet

Forget the Gym

[healthpowerforminorities.com/gettin](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/gettin)

Everyday Ways to Be More Healthy Simple Tips for Living Fit

Flavors of Life

[healthpowerforminorities.com/blog-c](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/blog-c)

Unusual, Tasty, Healthy Recipes To Liven Up Your Dinner Table

Can We See Less of You?

[healthpowerforminorities.com/gettin](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/gettin)

Tips for Slimming Down And Staying in Shape

Big red genetic bullseye? - Are you a target of these killers?

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

Sobering disease statistics

"The most shocking - and inhumane

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form of injustice"- Martin Luther King Jr.

4 Big Targets for Health - Are you a statistic?

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Prevention, cure, coping and more for diabetes.

Nature's Pharmacy - Change how you shop for food

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

Easy steps to a healthier you!

Cornerstone of Health - Food and Fitness

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

Helpful tips, Free celebrity and ethnic recipes

Hit the Reset Button - Rethink your fitness goals

[Ad healthpowerforminorities.com/reset/goals](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/reset/goals)

Got off track? Don't stay there! Reset your fitness goals with key information.

We are #1 worldwide - The best health resource

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

Tops with Google/Yahoo/Bing for minority health resources

Minority Health Issues

[healthpowerforminorities.com](http://healthpowerforminorities.com)

Just because we're all created equal doesn't mean we're equal

Lower Blood pressure - There's nothing like "this" to make

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

you feel good. Try it and see!

15 things you didn't know - Zika virus:

[Ad www.healthpowerforminorities.com](http://www.healthpowerforminorities.com)

Facts, signs and prevention-- You Must Read This!

Summer Health Tips

[healthpowerforminorities.com/preven](http://healthpowerforminorities.com/preven)

Enjoy More Fun In the Sun While Avoiding Getting Overheated

# A “new” home heating system, only \$89.

## 100% Money-Back Guarantee

Sounds too good to be true?

It gets even better because “installation” of this rejuvenated heating system will take only about 90 minutes and I absolutely guarantee that this “new” heating system will work better than the one you have now.



How can I afford to make such an offer?

To be perfectly honest, there’s more than a little bit of self interest behind it. You see, by making this offer right now, before the first cold snap brings me into my busy season, I could actually make a lot more money this year.

Let me explain how...

If you’re like most people, you probably haven’t used your heating system much since about March or April. It’s sat around all summer gathering dust, collecting cobwebs and generally being neglected.

When the first real cold front comes along in a few weeks, you’ll turn on your heater. It will probably smoke and smell for an hour or two as it blows all that dust out (right into your home for you and your family to breathe).

Then, *if you’re one of the lucky ones*, the system will settle in and keep you warm through the winter months ahead.

However if you happen to be anything like the 327 frantic homeowners who called my office last year when the first cold spell hit, your heater may not work at all. At that point, because you’re freezing, you’d be willing to pay almost any price to get your heater working.

As sympathetic as I am to all those homeowners, I only have so many technicians on staff. We respond to as many of the calls as we can but the demand gets to be overwhelming.

So we resort to doing a simple checkup and the absolute minimum service required to get the heater functioning as quickly as possible. Not fixing it right, the way we’d prefer to do it, but just getting it generating some kind of warmth so we can move on to the next frantic, shivering customer.

Right now we’re still in a relatively slow season. A time when we can really take care of things properly and do the job the way it should be done.

Which brings me back to my \$89 offer...

Our “**Precision Tune-up and Professional Cleaning**” is a highly detailed 21-point operation. Once complete, your furnace will run like we just installed a refurbished, factory fresh one for you.

***Here's what's included in the "Precision Tune-up and Professional Cleaning" service:***

1. Infrared camera inspection of furnace and heat exchanger	8. Inspect and adjust fan belt tension	15. Measure and adjust gas pressure for peak efficiency
2. Test airflow for deadly carbon monoxide	9. Calibrate and level thermostat	16. Lubricate all moving parts
3. Test ignition system for safe and proper operation	10. Inspect for combustible material around furnace	17. Measure amperage and voltage of blower motor
4. Test safety and control circuits for safe and proper operation	11. Brush clean and vacuum burner	18. Tighten and inspect all electrical wiring
5. Test exhaust system for proper venting	12. Brush clean and vacuum heat exchanger	19. Clean upper and lower combustion vents
6. Lubricate and clean blower motor air vents	13. Test furnace flame for proper burn mechanism	20. Test for gas leaks
7. Measure supply and return temperature differences	14. Clean or replace up to 1" filter	21. Clean furnace exterior

In fact, I'll even back the service with a one year 100% money back guarantee. If you don't save at least \$89 – *the full cost of the service* – on your heating bills this winter, I'll cheerfully refund every penny you paid. That's even better than risk-free because I can't go back and un-service your heater.

By taking care of things now, you won't be one of those 327 people calling me when the temperature drops. And because I'll have that many fewer frantic callers inundating my phone lines all at once, my technicians will be able to spend a bit more time on the emergency calls they do make.

They will be able to provide the higher quality service I like to see them give on every call. Those are naturally much more profitable service calls for me and my company.

So you see, we both have something to gain from this \$89 offer.

Here's the catch (you knew there had to be one)... I can only afford to do this while business is still relatively slow. That means before the first big cold spell hits. Neither one of us knows when that is going to be so you must act quickly before Mother Nature forces me to withdraw this offer and shift back into "emergency response" mode.

As a bonus, if you **call before October 20<sup>th</sup>**, I will include a free carbon monoxide safety check (a \$189 value) as part of your ~~21-point~~ – make that 22-point – service.

Call today. With my no-strings attached 100% money-back guarantee, you have nothing to lose.

**New Castle County**  
**(302) 442-7594**

**Kent County**  
**(302) 724-6239**

**Cecil County**  
**(410) 942-9399**

For your comfort and health,

Mark Aitken  
Owner

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Newark, DE 19702-5909  
Jeff@fatfreemarketinggroup.com  
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Client: The Barefoot Writer  
Assignment: Editorial Article

Page 1 of 2

425 words  
F-K Readability: 71.5%  
F-K Grade Level: 6.3

## Is your copywriting a butterfly or a duckling?

Whether you know it or not, nearly all copywriting can be categorized as being either like a butterfly or a duckling.

If you lack a Big Idea or a cohesive storyline, your copy will meander. Sort of like a butterfly flitting to and fro. It first touches this flower and then that one.

But its path is definitely more random than linear.

Most writers who write like butterflies don't notice because both the butterfly (the writing) and the flowers (the points made by the writing) are all so beautiful.

They see the prettiness and ignore the wandering path it follows.

Good copywriting has a purpose; an end goal. The function of good copywriting is to march readers as directly as possible toward that end goal.

It should be like a row of ducklings following their mother. They may waddle and wander a slight bit but for the most part they march in a straight line toward their destination.

In order to effectively write like a mother duck leading her ducklings to water, you really need to start with three important things:

1. An idea of what you are going to sell with your copy. It must be a specific product or service. To borrow from the great Claude Hopkins, generalities roll off the human understanding like water from a duck. (Pardon Claude's pun.)
2. A so-called "Big Idea" for how to convince prospects that they really want to buy whatever it is you're selling. Or at least to read your entire sales pitch before making a final decision about buying. This can be a tricky proposition. As sales trainer Jeffrey Gitomer has said, "People don't like to be sold, but they love to buy."
3. A clear storyline that marches readers from headline to closing. If you wander, they wander. And if they wander, they might not follow you back onto the path of your story.

So, your trick is to lead your prospects along in such a way that they don't feel like they're being led at all. They should feel like this is where they wanted to go all along and you just happen to be helpfully pointing the way.

Try painting a richer word picture. Engage more of the senses. The more senses you engage, the more deeply readers get enveloped in your story. Include sounds, smells, tastes and physical sensations in your story.

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Then lead your readers, like a mother duck leads her ducklings, straight to the pond that is your letter's closing.



# A Quarter of a BILLION Years Old!!!

At least 250 million years ago, the World's Oldest Known Plant Already Blanketed the Earth!

That's about...

- 🌐 240 million years before Lucy and the earliest humans walked upright.
- 🌐 180 million years before T-Rex terrorized all the other dinosaurs.
- 🌐 160 million years before the Rockies, Alps and Himalayas were even hills.
- 🌐 100 million years before the continents as we know them even existed.

Think about that for a moment.

These plants were around to witness the very dawn of time.

They saw the rise and fall of the dinosaurs. They saw tiny mammals slowly begin to take over once the dinosaurs no longer ruled the Earth. They witnessed Lucy walking upright.

They've been around for The Stone Age... The Bronze Age... The Iron Age... The Industrial Age... The Space Age and now... The Information Age.

In fact, they've been around so long that they have suffered and survived through at least five major global extinctions, including the one which killed off all the dinosaurs. That's like **winning the lottery... five times in a row!** If these plants could tell stories, they'd have nearly 250 million years worth of them to tell.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. the ancient Etruscans found a large stone. It held the fossil of what they thought was a tree trunk. Finding this ancient fossil was considered so special that the fossil itself was placed in a tomb of the Marzabotto Necropolis. That gives this specimen the distinction of being **the oldest known fossil in history.**

In fact, fossils of these amazing plants have been uncovered in just about every country on Earth. Places as diverse and interesting as:

- 🌐 the Aleutian Islands of Alaska
- 🌐 Antarctica
- 🌐 Petrified Forest National Park
- 🌐 the roof of a Colorado coal mine
- 🌐 South Africa
- 🌐 Sweden
- 🌐 Chile
- 🌐 China

These plants are so important that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has a group dedicated entirely to them.

Now these plants, which have been around for around 250 million years, are threatened with extinction. They've gone from being the most common type of plant in the ancient world to being the most threatened type in the modern one.

Two species of this plant which still exist in cultivation are already confirmed to be extinct in the wild. In one of those species, the only surviving specimen is a single plant making it **the rarest known plant in the entire world.**

These plants have shaped scientific theories in the fields of paleontology, botany, anthropology, entomology, geology, climatology, genetics... the list is too long to name every field.

At first, they were a mystery that couldn't be fully explained by science.

Reproductively speaking, these plants bear their seeds in cones, much like pine cones. In fact, the largest among them have cones three feet tall that weigh up to 95 pounds. That's **seeds about the size of a third grader!**

They pre-date the existence of flowering plants by some 100 million years so bees and butterflies largely ignore them.

So how could they have become so widespread? Their seeds could not be spread by winds or ocean currents. They could not be carried by birds. No natural process could explain it.

So how could these plants grow in Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia, Europe and Antarctica? No other plant, no animal... no living thing had ever been found to have such an immense range of habitats. Not even humans! How was this possible?

Trying to find an answer was one of the key clues that led to the theory that our continents were once all joined together as one ancient super-continent called Pangaea. Many millions of years ago, that super-continent broke up and the pieces drifted out over the oceans to form the continents we know today.

But all those many millions of years ago, this incredible plant literally blanketed Pangaea with a carpet of green. When the ancient super-continent broke apart and the pieces drifted out over the vast ancient oceans, they carried these plants with them, spreading them throughout the earth.

These ancient plants truly are living fossils. They are both beautiful and easy to care for, requiring little water and no special gardening talent. As one magazine article put it, owning one of these plants may be **"the next best thing to having a pet dinosaur"**.

Now, through an exclusive deal negotiated especially for the purpose of trying to restore these wonderful plants to their ancient glory, you can own one.

Not a lab specimen or a fossil, this is a living, growing plant. Put it in a pot and watch it grow.

Call or go online today to get a living fossil of your very own.

## **A 200 page manual? Really?**

**All I want to do is push the button and have a great picture come out.**

**I don't want to have to take a college course to figure out how to turn the thing on!**

Cameras have been doing basically the same thing since the early 1800s. So why is it that cameras today have so many buttons and settings?

Why are they so hard to learn how to use?

Doesn't anybody make a camera that's easy to figure out and that just *works*?

Right out of the box. No fiddling, no messing about and definitely no 200 page manual!

The good news is that any camera – even the one you're using right now that came with that 200 page manual – can be made easier to use.

The key is knowing which buttons are important and which can be ignored. At least for now.

Think about your car for a minute and all the "settings" and features it has. These can be broken into various different categories, such as:

- ✓ Navigation: steering wheel, gas pedal, brake, turn signals...
- ✓ Comfort: seat adjustments, mirror adjustments, switches to put the windows down, heater, A/C...
- ✓ Reference: speedometer, odometer, trip meter, fuel gauge...
- ✓ Entertainment: radio tuner, CD player, sunroof...
- ✓ Utilitarian: release lever for the gas cap, oil pressure light, check engine light...
- ✓ Safety: anti-lock brakes, traction control, airbags, auto-tightening seatbelts...
- ✓ Communication: turn signals, brake lights, bluetooth...

The list could go on for pages. (Perhaps even 200 pages, just like your camera manual.)

What does all this have to do with that dang complicated camera? Plenty!

Just like the list of your car's controls above, you can break the list of your camera's controls into various different categories. Not every category gets used all the time. Some are pretty specialized. Many are used only at certain times, just like you only use the release lever for the gas cap when you want to fill up. Not every time you turn a corner or stop at a red light.

The trick is to learn which of your camera's controls can be safely ignored most of the time and when they must be paid attention to.

That's exactly what "Controlling Your Camera's Controls" teaches. It demystifies all those little buttons and settings and helps you figure out which are important for your style of shooting. (Not all of them are.)

Starting with the very first lesson you'll begin to feel like you have more mastery and control over your camera. Your greater confidence and understanding will lead to better pictures.

Don't let your camera continue to have the upper hand. Put down that 200 page manual and take charge now by ordering "Controlling Your Camera's Controls" today.

# **35 Types of Marketing... Explained**

# FAT-FREE MARKETING

35 TYPES OF MARKETING... EXPLAINED



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Fat-Free Marketing is also the name of my freelance copywriting business. While I will work with anyone, I specialize in partnering with ecologically friendly “green” businesses and technologies. If you want to take your business to a whole new level of success, contact me:

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# ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is not meant to be the exhaustive final word on the subject of social media and online marketing. Rather, it gives an overview of a wide range of marketing and self-promotion techniques. As you are about to see, I also throw out a bunch of ideas for using those techniques to promote your business (whatever kind of business that may be.) In fact, you are about to learn so many new ideas and techniques that you won't be able to remember them all. You're going to learn so many new techniques that you might feel overwhelmed.

Not to worry, there is an awful lot to know about marketing. You can't know it all and you certainly can't do it all. (Neither can I, for that matter.) So don't feel like you must. Pick a few that resonate and start with those.

Hopefully you come away with some valuable ideas. And remember you can always contact me for help if you feel you need it.

I want you and your business to succeed. Period. No strings attached. You don't have to hire me or buy anything from me in order for me to wish you as much success as you can handle.

To your success!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'J' being particularly large and stylized.

# 1 – YOUR BUSINESS WEBSITE

These days, a website is like a phone number; it's simply expected that every business has one. Even among the Amish and other communities which typically shun technology, most businesses have come around to the idea that having a website carries great benefits. Worse, not having one may be holding you back in ways you probably don't even realize.

When customers and potential customers want to find basic information about your business, the first place they will turn is online. Such basic information includes:

- Your phone number(s)
- Business address(es)
- Directions to your location
- Hours
- Information about the products and/or services you offer

Don't make it hard for customers to do business with you. If I'm looking for a plumber and I remember seeing a truck out on the road but only remember the business name, I will look online. If that business has no website or makes me "work" to track them down but another local plumber's website pops up right in front of me, chances are very good that I'll simply use the one which was easiest for me to find. The same is true of just about any business I patronize.

Not having a website may be costing you in other ways too. Say I need to find your location. I could call and you or one of your employees could take time away from other productive tasks to give me directions, or I could simply look at a map on your website.

Your website is your 24 hour storefront. Even if your real business hours are more limited, if I want to look up information about your business at 2:00am and no one is there to answer my questions, a good website will take care of my needs. If you engage in e-commerce, I may even be able to buy what I want right off your site while you are asleep.

## **WHAT KIND OF SITE SHOULD YOU HAVE?**

At the very least, you should have your own domain name (also known as a "URL") and a static page with the basic business information that I listed above.

Of course you can get progressively more fancy with multiple pages, regularly updated content, a searchable online catalogue and even a shopping cart which enables customers to buy from you online. Each of these things can be added incrementally when you come to need or want them as part of your online presence.

By integrating some of your existing systems such as inventory tracking, your employees could simply look up product availability or technician's schedules by pulling up your web site right in your store or office. At the same time, you also give your customers the ability to do the same thing for themselves.

## **A WORD ABOUT URLS**

A URL is your domain name. (The acronym stands for Universal Resource Locator, but that isn't important.) A good domain name has several very important characteristics:

1. **It is clear and easy for you to give out both verbally and in writing.**

Very often you may find yourself out somewhere such as at the park or grocery store when a casual

conversation turns toward business. If you do not have a business card with you, you are better off giving out just your web site URL than expecting someone else to remember a bunch of information about you or your business. The caveat to that is that a weird or complex name, especially if it has nonstandard spelling or unusual characters, may be both difficult for you to share and for others to remember.

- Examples of (fictitious) bad URLs:
  - Try2win\$.com
  - Gr8dealsonstuff.com
  - Cheepflytes.com

**2. It is easy for others to remember.**

Don't make things hard on your customers and prospects. Give them a simple, memorable URL and make it easy for them to find your web site. This is especially true if you merely tell someone the domain name.

Even if you hand it out on your business card, it may still be garbled. Say you meet someone at a business meeting where they have collected dozens of business cards. Chances are they won't read your business card. Instead, they may look over it or use it to jog their memory of their interaction with you and then look up your web site using your card merely as a reference.

**3. It isn't difficult to spell or likely to be misspelled.**

Let's say that your name is John Doe and you are the owner of John Doe's Limousine Service. A domain name like JohnDoeLimousine.com seems like a good bet. The problem is that many people don't know how to correctly spell the word "limousine". Call it a testament to the sad state of education but if it hurts your business then the reason doesn't matter. A simpler name like JohnDoeLimo.com might be better.

Alternatively, you can also purchase all the likely misspellings and have them all redirected to point to your correct URL. This is a relatively simple and inexpensive solution.

**4. It fits the tone and image of your business.**

Your URL doesn't necessarily have to be the same as the name of your business, but it should be reflective of your business. A name like FunForAll.com could be great for a family fun center with activities for kids. It would be less fitting for a dentist, though GreatSmiles.com would be descriptive and memorable.

## **UNDERSTANDING CMS**

There are lots of different platforms on which your web site could be built but the easiest way to get a site up and running without having to hire a programmer is to use a Content Management System (CMS). These are the software architecture platforms that make building and maintaining a web site user-friendly.

CMS systems go by some unusual names, many of which may not be familiar to you: Joomla, Drupal, WordPress, Tumblr, FrogCMS, Moodle, Mambo, Habari, Tango...

All share some common characteristics. They all build multi-page web sites. They all enable some form of blogging or article publishing. All have an extensive library of plugins or extensions to add new functionality that isn't native to the base CMS. All are also available free of charge.

By and large, the CMS interface is a bit like a word processor for writing internet content. They are usually not 100% intuitive but they also aren't hard to learn and you don't need to know anything about internet code or programming to make them work.

### **WHERE CAN YOU GET A DOMAIN NAME AND WEBSITE?**

There are literally dozens of companies where you can reserve a domain name and get web hosting. One of my favorites is HostGator.

Not only is Host Gator one of the least expensive hosting services around but they don't require a contract commitment, won't try to sell you a lot of extra services you don't need and they're environmentally friendly. (The parent company owns a windmill farm which generates 130% of the electricity used by their computer operations.)

### **HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?**

The cost of web hosting will vary based on many factors: the number of URLs you purchase, your contract term, extra features, etc. For a single URL and basic web site, it should be less than \$25 to get started and less than \$10 a month to keep the site up and running.

This assumes that you do everything yourself. If you hire someone to set up your site, write content or perform other tasks for you the cost for those services will be in addition to the basic hosting.



## 2 – WHAT AUTORESPONDERS CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

An email autoresponder is software that sends out pre-saved emails on a schedule. Better than that, it actually keeps a personalized schedule for each person on your mailing list.

Sounds complicated?

It really isn't; at least not from the list manager's perspective. (That's you!)

All you really do is create a series of email communications that you want everyone on your mailing list to receive. When a new name gets added to your list, no matter when they joined, the software will take care of sending them out the complete series of emails. The emails get sent one at a time, based on a predetermined schedule that you set.

Unlike you sending out a "bulk" email addressed to dozens of recipients, each person on your mailing list gets a personalized email that is addressed only to them. They never know whether you have three people on your mailing list or 30,000.

Because you can use a mail merge type feature to add user names and other personalization details, autoresponder emails do not have to be just static form letters.

You can even set up multiple lists and split out your customers based on criteria you decide. For instance geographically, by product line, or prospects who have only inquired versus customers who've bought within the last year versus customers who last bought more than a year ago, etc.

Each of those lists can get a different series of emails. There is no limit to the number of lists you can have, the number of emails on each list or the number of names on each list.

A good autoresponder service will grow with your business. A well-managed autoresponder account may just put your business on autopilot.

### **WHY SHOULD YOU USE ONE?**

Staying in contact (as long as you have relevant and useful information to impart) is the best way of turning prospects into buyers, buyers into repeat customers and repeat customers into loyal fans.

Perhaps you have a monthly newsletter you'd like to inexpensively share with your customer base. Or maybe you want to train the buyers of a complex system how to get the most of their new purchase. You could create holiday or seasonal messages that go out to all your prospects and customers. The possibilities are limited only by your creativity and imagination.

Say for example that you run a camera store and you sell a customer a new camera. Digital cameras these days have a mind-boggling array of features. Let's say you set up mailing lists for each of the different camera brands your store carries. When a customer buys a Nikon DSLR, you add her name to the Nikon DSLR list. Then once a week, your autoresponder will email her one lesson that teaches her how to use some particular feature on her specific camera. You write these lessons just once but every single customer who buys a Nikon DSLR from you benefits from them! You could create similar lists for Canon, Sony, Pentax and any other camera brand you carry.

This same principle could be applied to computers, cars, sewing machines, leaf blowers... you name it! It can even be applied to services such as tax preparation, house cleaning, dog walking and prenatal care. The list is endless.

### **WHERE CAN YOU GET ONE?**

Although it's possible to buy your own autoresponder software and run your lists in-house, it's not recommended. If for no other reason than compliance with CAN-SPAM laws. An online mailing service will assure compliance while simultaneously offering you the most up to date software available.

The three largest mail houses are:

- Aweber
- Constant Contact
- Mail Chimp

Of course there are other services out there but these are reputable companies that can handle even the most complex mailing needs.

### **HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?**

The cost for mailing services varies but is largely based on how many names are on your list (aggregate number if you have more than one list) and how frequently you mail to them.

To give you a general idea, a list with around 1,000 names to which you send out emails every week will cost \$30 per month or less. For most businesses, just one sale per month will pay for the full cost of staying in touch with everyone.

### **HOW TO GET NAMES ONTO YOUR MAILING LIST**

If you're just starting out but already have a list of names and email addresses, such as in CRM software or even just on a spreadsheet, you can import them and have a jump-start on your list building.

The service you use may require you to explain where the list came from and affirm that everyone on the list "opted in". That is, they all gave you their email address and explicitly agreed to receive email communication from you. This is done for compliance with SPAM laws but is really not a big deal.

Once your list is set up, even if it's just an empty shell without a single name on it yet, all of the services allow you to create sign-up forms that you can post on your web site. These fill-in-the-blanks forms enable visitors to your web site to sign up for your mailing list by filling in the form.

When they do, the autoresponder service kicks into gear and will begin sending that customer emails in your name. They will continue to receive emails from you until they have either reached the end of the series you set up or until they click the unsubscribe link included at the bottom of each email sent out.

If you have visitors come in to a store, you can also have your employees manually add customer information to get them on your list. Or you can set up a kiosk and let the customers do it themselves.

### **WHAT IF YOU HAVE UNSCHEDULED SALES OR EVENTS?**

You are not just limited to pre-saved emails. Say that you have a special event or an unscheduled sale coming up. You could create a one-off "broadcast" email that will go out to your entire list (or multiple lists or even just segments of lists).

Broadcast emails get sent no matter where in the series a customer may be. So a customer who just received issue #7 of your newsletter and one who just got issue #2 would both receive the same sale notice. This will not interrupt their sequence and the first customer will still get issue #8 next while the second customer will get issue #3 next.

There is no limit to the number of broadcast emails you can send.

### **EFFECTIVELY MANAGING YOUR LIST**

It doesn't stop with simply collecting names and having some computer automatically send out emails for you. Online mailing services include detailed reporting so you can closely monitor the effectiveness of your mailing operation.

- How many of the emails you send actually get opened?
- How many of the links in your emails get clicked?
- What percentage of users unsubscribe?
- You can even create multiple versions of your sign-up forms and test them against each other to determine which is better at getting prospects to sign up.

Worried that some third-party company has possession of your customer list? Well you can easily export the list from their servers and import it into your own CRM or other business management software.

Of course there's nothing you can do about them having the list. At least not as long as you want them to keep managing your mailings for you. (All the more reason to stick with reputable companies.) But at least you can easily get and keep your own copy in-house.

### **LIST RENTAL**

Some companies may allow you to mail to rented lists under certain conditions. If you frequently rent email lists, you should definitely solicit the services of a mailing professional to help you.

## 3 – BUILD YOUR CUSTOMER BASE THROUGH BLOGGING

Some people don't really "get" blogging. I'll admit that for years it seemed rather self-indulgent to me. Not merely self-indulgent but disingenuous too.

If you're going to keep a journal or a diary, those thoughts are inherently private. Posting it online seemed to me tantamount to telling every detail of your finances or your sex life to every random stranger you come across.

The first few blogs I looked at seemed to be mostly unsubstantiated random thoughts about whatever was on the writer's mind. So it was a long time before I caught on to the potential in blogs.

A blog doesn't have to be like a journal or diary. It doesn't even have to be personal in nature. Think of a blog more like you would the editorial pages of a newspaper. It's "news" (sort of) but it can be about anything you want it to be.

### **A STEADY COMMUNICATION STREAM**

Does your company publish a newsletter? Every article in that newsletter would likely make a good blog post.

Perhaps you have an interesting story about how your company won a certain contract. Or where some of your materials are sourced. Or how you've been recycling since 1967. Or a string of ideas for creative and unusual ways to make use of your products.

Product literature, sales brochures, industry news, quarterly and annual reports... these can all be sources of potentially good material for blog posts.

By regularly posting small snippets – articles 100 to 1,000 words long – you do several things:

- Provide a steady flow of fresh content related to your business. The search engines love fresh content. The more frequently and regularly you provide it, the better your web site will fare in search rankings.
- Maintain steady communication with customers and prospects.
- By having a lot of material, you develop a content-rich web site that will become a resource for anyone who wants to know more about your company or its products.
- Create a deeper and richer base of keywords for which your site will be ranked. Users searching for a broader array of terms will find your site more often among the listings presented.

### **IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU**

Your blog entries needn't be – in fact, shouldn't be – all about your company, your products or your services. Most people are focused on themselves and their own lives. Most people also have a range of interests.

Let's say you're a realtor. Instead of only blogging about homes you have listed or what to look for when buying a home or finer points of financing and price negotiation, try a more holistic approach.

Of course you should blog about all those things but mixed in with those write restaurant reviews for locally owned restaurants in the area where you sell. (Share your review with the restaurant owner and invite him to link to it from his own site, thus generating additional traffic to yours.) Or maybe a local school is putting on a play or concert that is open to the public. Attend and then write a review in your

blog post. (Share your review with the school's newspaper. Some of those kids may have out-of-town relatives. If they are planning on moving to town, prior exposure to your site through those kids could be good for you.)

Or perhaps you own a shoe store. Blog posts which highlight walking and hiking paths in your area would be a good idea. A winery could keep a travelogue about day trips in the region or food-wine pairings complete with recipes. A pet store could highlight and review pet-friendly hotels and other businesses.

There should be some link between what kind of business you have and the topic(s) you blog about but the link needn't be direct and ideally should not be blatantly self-serving.

Please note that this approach is different from something like article marketing, which is covered later. Writing about other businesses and organizations on your own web site still generates traffic to your web site and helps you be seen as providing useful information. With other avenues such as article marketing, your articles will be posted on a third party web site and you'll get almost none of the benefits of this form of altruism. All you'll be doing is referring readers to those other businesses and organizations.

### **HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU BLOG?**

Everyone has a different opinion about how frequently a business should blog. The real trick is sustainability. Blogging every day will be great for getting exposure for your site, but only for as long as you can keep it up. As soon as you run out of topics to post, days go by without anything new. Then days turn into weeks.

Better that you space out your posts (once you have at least 10-20 published) to just one or two a week but to sustain that pace over the long term. By long term I mean several years.

### **WHO SHOULD DO THE BLOGGING?**

The question of who should write your company's blog posts hinges to a great extent on the size and nature of your company. Because blogging is like brand building in that it doesn't directly generate sales, it should be considered a relatively low payoff activity. In that sense, you generally don't want your salesmen or executive team writing the posts.

That said, your company's blog posts will be a highly visible representation of the company so they must be written by someone with good writing and communication skills. They should also be done by someone with small pockets of spare time. A smart and ambitious receptionist or secretary would be a good choice.

An excellent alternative is to have managers and executives make audio recordings of blog content then use a lower level person to transcribe the recordings and write the actual postings.

If you do not have a dedicated person to handle the task of writing blog posts, you can outsource the job to a professional ghost writer. Some very good writers may charge as little as \$20 per article. (That's about what I would charge for 300-500 words.)

You could also have more than one person write posts. They do not have to all have the same tone but they should all be comparable in quality in terms of the technical aspects of the writing.

### **GOING MULTIMEDIA WITH YOUR BLOG POSTS**

A blog post needn't be just a written article. It's possible to embed photos, video, audio, graphics, tables and a variety of other multimedia elements. In fact, putting such elements into your articles will not only make them more interesting to your site's visitors, but the search engines love them!

## 4 – MAKING SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION PRACTICAL & PROFITABLE

Much has been written about the subject of search engine optimization (frequently called by the acronym “SEO”); certainly enough to fill several books.

All of the search engines are rather secretive about their searching methodology and all change it frequently, mostly to keep people from gaming the system just to get higher ranking. Still, most of what’s written has merit at least some of the time.

The main problem is that much of it comes from technical people who are not thinking in terms of business value. Very often, getting a #1 rank in Google is the end goal. Nothing else really matters.

### **WHEN TRYING TO GET A #1 RANKING MAY BE A FOOL’S GAME**

If you’re a business person, the goal of ranking highly in Google or any of the other search engines only has merit if it leads to increased revenues and profits for your business. Otherwise it’s a fool’s game.

Not only will it take a great deal of time, money and attention to get that ranking, but it will take just as much to hold onto it.

Perhaps there’s a better way.

### **FORMING A STRATEGIC VISION FOR YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE**

Before you do anything else, you should define your goals. You don’t merely want more traffic to your web site. Post some free pornography and you’ll certainly get all the traffic you could ever ask for. But will that traffic translate into paying customers for your business?

So what do you really want? More sales, more revenue per sale, more repeat buyers, perhaps more names on your mailing list. There may be other goals but these are the big ones mentioned most frequently by serious business people.

Notice that these things share at least one major characteristic in common: they all involve prospects who want what you have to offer and are willing and able to pay for it.

So you don’t just want more traffic, you want more *qualified* traffic. That’s a lot more specific.

In order to know who you want to attract, you need a demographic profile of your ideal customer. If you run a liquor store, attracting lots of teenagers is of no value. Likewise, if you’re a car mechanic, you probably don’t want to draw people more than 10 miles or so away from your garage. An upscale women’s boutique generally has little use for attracting single men, children or indigent women to its website.

The more specific and accurate you can be, the better.

### **WHAT GOES INTO DETERMINING RANKINGS**

First let’s really understand what we’re talking about here. Search engine ranking is all about the various search engines deciding which web sites to display and in what order to display them when someone does a search for some particular term. (This also drives which ads are shown but AdWords is a topic unto itself which we’ll cover later.)

Searching for “movie rental” will not yield the same results as searching for “DVD rental”. In fact, even searching for “movie rentals” (with rentals being plural rather than singular) will yield slightly different results.

So rankings are based on highly specific search terms. This is a good thing! It means that you can work on ranking well for highly specific terms that very closely relate to your business.

There are lots of things that go into search engine rankings. I already noted that the search engines are all highly secretive about what they look for and how they determine rankings.

In general, there are a handful of things that are commonly taken into consideration:

- **Relevance** – How relevant is your site based on the terms being searched for?
- **Trust placed in you by the community** – Have others posted blogs, comments, reviews, yelps, tweets or other “buzz” about your site? This counts for a lot!
- **Being a resource for others** – Do other web sites use yours as a reference? This is judged largely by incoming links. Lots of SEO specialists and many scammers try to get as many incoming links as possible but the links must be relevant. A hospital linking to a doctor’s web site is relevant, a shoe store is not. You may be penalized for too many irrelevant links.
- **Having up to date information** – While it’s true that some technologies haven’t changed in years, stale information counts against you on the internet. The search engines love fresh content.

## THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF GETTING RANKED

The first, and most important, thing that your web site must feature is content. That could be in the form of articles, newsletters, blog posts, videos, photos, music or any combination of the above.

If all you have is basically a sales letter, it may do well at converting traffic that lands at your site but there isn’t much room for optimizing it so that the search engines will index and rank it.

Your written content should be keyword rich. Not just any keywords, but ones specifically relating to your line of business.

By keyword rich, I mean that for starters the title of each post or article should contain keywords that are part of some word combination your ideal prospects are likely to search on.

Let’s pick apart a real-world headline to see what I mean:

- Why Pay For Higher Risk Of Old Drivers? Use an Online Car Insurance Quote To Save Money

This title has one long-tailed keyword phrase – “online car insurance quote” – but I would have rewritten the whole title to something completely different based on other principles of good copywriting. At any rate, of the 17 words in this title (which is also far too many, by the way) arguably maybe 5 are keywords: risk, drivers, car insurance, money. That’s just 29% and none of them unique enough to make the author’s website stand out from the sea of others online.

Here’s a better one:

- Network Effectively in a Crowded Room - 8 Tips

Four of the nine words in this headline are keywords. Two others – “in” and “a” – are considered “nonwords” by most search engines and are ignored. That makes 4 of 7 words (57%) keywords.

Articles (a, an, the, etc.) and extremely high frequency words (is, are, of, etc.) are typically ignored by search engines. If you type a search phrase using some of these terms, they will likely be dropped and your search results will be based only on the “meaningful” terms you used.

In addition to your title, around 10% of the first 100 words in the body of each article should be keywords.

For multimedia elements, there are alt tags and metadata. These data elements are not displayed on the screen for humans but they are seen by the search engines. Nearly 100% of the words in these alt tag and metadata fields should be keywords.

In addition, your articles may have alt tag and metadata fields which should be laced with keywords.

Since these fields are not for people to read, they don’t have to make sense or be grammatically correct. They just have to be relevant to your article and the nature of your web site.

### **HOW MANY DIFFERENT KEYWORDS SHOULD YOU OPTIMIZE FOR?**

Like most things in life, there is not a black-and-white, right or wrong answer. Individual pages, assuming one article per page, should generally not be optimized for more than 10-12 keywords each. If you try to go much beyond that the search engines may consider it keyword “stuffing” and penalize you for it.

Within that limit of 10-12 keywords per article, you must also make sure that the keywords you use are relevant to the article, to one another and to your site as a whole. Surely you can see the obvious problem with using a list of totally unrelated keywords such as: teddy bear, bicycle, saw blades, massage, kung fu, snow tires.

Even if someone found your article, chances are good that it would not contain anything related to what they were looking for. This would not result in high quality traffic to your website.

As far as how many keywords to optimize for on your site as a whole, there really is no limit, so long as there is some cohesive theme. If you run a general store that carries a wide range of goods, it’s perfectly fine to have an equally long list of keywords. The key is that someone who finds your web site based on one of those keywords must be able to find what he or she was searching for.

One smart strategy is to break such sites into “departments” with each one specializing in a certain category of products or services. This is both customer and search engine friendly.




### **A TRICKY, UNDER-THE-RADAR WAY OF GETTING RANKED**

There is at least one sneaky way of making it to the first page of Google. It won’t always work and is not completely free but it’s very low cost and, depending on your niche, can work often enough to be worth your while. Mostly it has to do with being newsworthy.

Notice with some Google searches (see illustration on next page), you see not just a listing of web pages but may also see other categories of results mixed in. These include mentions in the news related to your search terms, shopping results, map locations, etc.

So if you can get in the news, you might automatically make it to the first page of Google for search terms related to the newsworthy event. The effect won’t last long but it can be a powerful driver to draw people to your web site.



<p>Las Vegas vacations at Texas Station Casino Hotel &amp; Gambling Hall start at \$27.99. Reserve travel packages, get room rates, deals, and discounts now!</p> <p>Entertainment - Dining - Hotel - Contact Us</p> <p>You recently searched for Texas.</p>	<p><b>\$59+ P</b></p> <p>www.tra</p> <p>Compar</p> <p>Find Ch</p>
<p><b>LAS VEGAS, TX   The Handbook of Texas Online   Texas State ...</b></p> <p>www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvt33</p> <p>LAS VEGAS, TEXAS. Las Vegas was a small farming community four miles southeast of Big Wells on the old San Antonio, Uvalde and Gulf Railroad in ...</p>	<p><b>Fly to V</b></p> <p>www.fo</p> <p>Las Veg</p> <p>Book V2</p>
<p><b>News for las vegas</b></p> <div>  </div> <p><b>Las Vegas still fumes over 2-year-old Obama remark</b></p> <p>The Associated Press - 19 hours ago</p> <p>LAS VEGAS (AP) — President Barack Obama has a Sin City problem that won't go away. Obama is counting on Nevada's support for re-election next year. ...</p> <p>2336 related articles</p> <p><b>Video: President Obama: 'we can't wait'</b></p> <p>The Telegraph</p> <p><b>Iverson hosting 2-day tournament in Las Vegas</b></p> <p>ESPN - 60 related articles</p>	<p><b>Las Ve</b></p> <p>www.50</p> <p>Great H</p> <p>Point H</p> <p><b>Vacatio</b></p> <p>www.ve</p> <p>Fabulou</p> <p>Las Veg</p> <p>See you</p>
<p><b>Las Vegas, NV</b> maps.google.com</p> 	

## WHEN IT MAKES SENSE NOT TO OPTIMIZE!

You may or may not have considered this but there are times when you do not want certain pages on your site optimized. In fact, you may even want them “hidden” from the search engines. For example, maybe you have a download page where customers can go to download some digital product they’ve purchased from you. Customers would only be directed to this page after paying. Obviously, you wouldn’t want people to be able to simply do a search, find your page and download your product without paying.

Web pages can be set with a property called “no index, no follow” which tells the search engines not to index that page and never to display it in search results. All search engines are set to honor such settings.

Obviously, if you are not allowing a page to be indexed, it would be a waste of time and effort to apply keywords to that page or to anything on it.

## 5 – PROFITING FROM FACEBOOK

I have a confession to make: I don't really use Facebook personally. I think it's a big waste of time. But I do use it professionally. Precisely because it's a big waste of time.

Let me explain.

Unless you've been living in a monastery these last few years, you have certainly heard of Facebook. You may use it yourself. In fact, you may or may not have read the statistic that if Facebook were a country, it would be the third most populous country in the world. Behind only China and India.

You only need a very tiny fraction of that "population" to buy your product or service for you to be resoundingly successful.

Even if you're familiar with Facebook, you may not realize that "corporate" pages on Facebook are different from personal pages. (I'm lumping all types of organizations including non-profits, businesses, and even governmental entities under the umbrella term of corporate because they're all more or less the same on Facebook for purposes of our discussion here.)

They have most of the same components – a comment wall, photo album and the like – but you can't add friends from a corporate page on Facebook. In fact, you can't reach out at all. People can find you but you can't go looking for them.

The only way to draw them to you is through your other advertising and promotional efforts.

Have you ever noticed the ads on Facebook pages? There are actually two general formats, with each having multiple types. We'll discuss each and its relative merits separately.

The first type we'll discuss was, until recently, the only type there was. These are called "market ads".

### **HOW FACEBOOK MARKET ADS DIFFER FROM OTHER ONLINE ADS**

Facebook's market ads are interesting. When used to their potential, they are unlike any other advertising you have ever done. It's even unlike other online advertising.

Google AdWords, the giant in online advertising, lets you target ads based on what people are looking for. (Understanding and effectively using AdWords is a complete topic unto itself and we address that in its own chapter.)

Unlike AdWords, Facebook lets you present ads to people based on who they are.

What does that mean?

Let's say you own a dog grooming business. You could create an ad in a newspaper. Everyone who reads the newspaper would see your ad, whether they have a dog or not.

Or you could use AdWords to present more or less the same ad online but show it only to people who search for dog grooming services.

Facebook, when used correctly, is different. A lot different.

With Facebook, you wouldn't write just one ad or even test a couple of different ads against each other. You might write 500 ads. (Don't worry, this will not be burdensome or expensive. The ads will all be more or less clones of one another.)

You might have one that starts out "Does your Scottish Highland Terrier need grooming?" That ad, of course, would be presented only to people in your geographic area who own Scottish Highland Terriers. A similar ad would start out "Does your Yorkie need grooming?" You could have another that starts "Does your Maltese need grooming?" And so on.

Each of these ads would be ultra-targeted and shown only to people in your geographic area who have the specific breed of dog mentioned in the ad. Surely you can already see how powerfully different that approach can be. In fact, your head is probably swimming right about now with all the ways you can make use of this kind of thing.

It's precisely because of the nature of Facebook that this is possible.

Facebook is a social networking site. People go on Facebook to spend (or waste, depending on your point of view) a great deal of time sharing what's important to them. They will post and chat about their pets, their kids, their cars, even their snowblowers.

That information is easily mined and turned into gold for your business.

Let's look at just one more example. Say you sell sports jerseys. You've probably already thought of the idea that you can easily target ads to fans of particular professional sports teams. Great idea. Now let's take it a step further and not just sell them one jersey for their favorite pro team but let's find out where they went to college. Now you can show them a second ad (they don't have to know that both ads are from you) that pushes jerseys for the college team from their alma mater.

The big schools are fairly obvious but imagine a customer who went to school somewhere smaller such as Tallahassee State and you show them an ad that says "Show them your Tallahassee State pride!"

## **A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME: SOCIAL ADS**

The other type of Facebook ad is even more different. In fact, they are relatively unique among online ads in general. You don't write an ad like you would with market ads, AdWords or other ad types.

Instead, postings that you make to the wall on your corporate page feed dynamically to the ad and become the ad's content. So you buy ad space but the ad format and content are dynamic, based on activity on your wall.

Not everything you post on your wall automatically drives to your social ads. You can designate whether something stays purely on the wall or is free to appear in ads.

These new social ads can follow multiple formats: text only, text plus photo, video (with or without accompanying text), events and calendar entries (such as upcoming sales or the launch date for a new product), polls and questions.

Capitalizing on the social nature of Facebook, when a user sees one of your social ads, they will also automatically see the names of any of their friends and contacts who have "Liked" your corporate page. This acts as a sort of tacit endorsement. Another feature is the ability for users to interact with the ad itself. There is a comment feature right in the ad and anything users write in the comment area will post both to your wall and to theirs (and be seen on the walls of all their friends).

As of this writing, there is no way to restrict or turn off the commenting feature so those who are concerned about people posting negative comments may wish to avoid using social ads.

On the other hand, if you have a quality product or service and are targeting your ads properly, social ads have the potential to be a breakthrough in online advertising effectiveness.

Imagine being able to share bits of news, product updates and the like easily in your ads. Or buying flexible ad space but having the ability to update your ad's content any time and as often as you like. Or to use your ads to ask your prospects what they want to see in the way of new features or new product releases. Imagine having your prospects endorse you to their friends and even spread your advertising message every time they comment.

### **IS THERE VALUE IN HAVING SOMEONE “LIKE” YOUR COMPANY?**

What's the value of being “Liked” on Facebook? Those who Like you aren't giving you permission to market to them, nor even really to contact them at all. So where's the value?

Well, as just mentioned, if you're using the new social ad format, Likes show up as tacit endorsements to anyone who sees your ads and is friends with someone who Liked you. It's still relatively new, but this ought to be powerful stuff.

If you are exclusively using the market ad format or not paying for Facebook advertising at all, having someone Like you doesn't have any immediate benefits. In that case the chief benefit comes about when and if you pay for social ads in the future.

Likes are “good until canceled” so accumulating them now may carry instant-on benefits later.

Outside of the social ad format, if you have a novel and highly innovative product or service, getting lots of people to Like you could trigger a word-of-mouth type ripple effect (or “buzz”) that amounts to free publicity.

If the person liking you is influential in their social circle it could cause their friends to like, and hence do business with, you as well.

The bottom line is, if you have a presence on Facebook, it should help you achieve some practical business goal. That means you should have a cohesive plan for why you are there, what you hope to accomplish and how you plan to go about it.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

Facebook advertising with market ads can actually be cheaper than Google AdWords while at the same time being more effective. Both services are similar in both their pricing and their auction-style pricing structure. So figure on anywhere from \$0.01 to \$1.00 per click or per thousand impressions.

With your ultra-targeted market ads, there will be far less competition. In many cases perhaps no competition at all. So you can stay toward the lower end of that range in your bidding and still be successful at winning the bids.

Facebook will even tell you how many people are in the ultra-narrowly defined demographic you create. So you'll know up front how many potential prospects there are who might see your ad and what it will cost you to present it to them.

Like almost all forms of online advertising, pricing is almost always in flux. So is targeting ability. In general, I expect that social ads will cost more than market ads. Whether or not their effectiveness warrants the higher price remains to be seen.

### **IS IT REALLY WORTH IT? WON'T PEOPLE JUST GET ANNOYED?**

I mentioned before that Facebook is all about people sharing what interests them. If you've correctly identified what interests someone and show them something that specifically relates to their area of interest, of course they won't feel annoyed by that!

If you're an avid golfer and every time you go online you get bombarded with ads (from others, of course) for student loan financing, cheap Canadian Viagra, home mortgage refinancing... and then you see something about the specific brand of golf clubs you not-so-secretly wish you owned, that is something that would stand out.

It's time for your business to stand out!

## 6 – BUILD YOUR BUSINESS WITH TWITTER

Of all the “big” social networking sites, Twitter is among the least well understood by non-users.

In a nutshell, it is a place where you can send and receive broadcast text messages.

These short texts, called Tweets, are limited to 140 characters each. Whenever you send one, it will be received by everyone who has signed up to “follow” you. That is, those who have explicitly opted in to receive the tweets you send out.

### THE BIG TRADEOFF

It can take a great deal of time and effort to build a following on Twitter. Almost no one gets fans to follow them without some form of reciprocation.

For individuals, that reciprocation most often comes in the form of “I’ll follow you if you follow me”. For celebrities, it’s a matter of remaining famous and entertaining. For businesses, your best bet is to be useful or very interesting.

### TWITTER ISN’T FOR EVERYONE... OR IS IT?

Almost every business has some kind of useful or interesting information it could share with past and potential future customers.

For example, if you run a restaurant you might tweet your daily specials, advice on food-wine pairings or even share recipes. A psychologist might tweet daily inspiration and de-stressing exercises. A tow truck company could tweet car care and road safety tips. A stationery store could tweet instructions for making paper airplanes, origami sculptures and paperclip monsters.

The only limit is your imagination!

### GETTING AROUND THE 140 CHARACTER LIMIT

It’s pretty hard to convey any kind of compelling information in 140 characters or less. Twitter therefore relies heavily on abbreviations. It also allows URLs which will take users to your web site where no such limitation exists.

There are services which will shorten URLs to be very small. These can sometimes be reduced to around a dozen characters, whereas even a short “regular” URL like [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) is 14 characters and your company’s URL is most likely substantially longer.

In order to get users to want to click on the URL, you’re still going to have to provide some inducement. That might be the promise of something valuable such as a coupon or special offer, it might be to find out the punchline of a joke or the answer to a mystery... anything you can fit into the 140 character limit.

Most users and companies on Twitter are not especially good at writing interesting tweets. Which would you rather read?

- List of artificial heat sources
- Proteins take bacterial prisoners

Both are short and to the point but the first basically just tells me I can read a list if I follow the link. The second hints that protein, something that I think of as inanimate, takes prisoners. That sounds fascinating!

In the same way that a newspaper headline has to convince people to buy the whole paper with just a handful of words, your tweets should convince readers to follow the link and read your story.

### **HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU TWEET?**

The CEO of Zappos.com tweets only once every few months. That may work for him but if you expect to use Twitter as a serious business building tool, you should plan to tweet at least once every workday. Of course if you come up with interesting or informative tidbits more often, even if at irregular intervals, don't hold back!

Going back to the example of a tow truck company, if one of your drivers reports a terrible accident on one of the major roadways in your area, tweet that immediately to all your followers. Likewise if there is snow, flooding, high winds or other conditions which can make driving hazardous.

Or maybe you're a tax accountant and you learn some new loophole in the tax law at a training seminar or over lunch with another accountant, tweet that right on the spot.

There are two reasons why:

1. It makes it less likely that you'll forget to tweet it later.
2. The unpredictability of your messages will actually increase your followers' interest in receiving them.

### **PIGGYBACKING TWITTER ON OTHER MARKETING EFFORTS**

Twitter can and should be used in conjunction with other marketing and business building efforts.

For instance, a writer I know specifically writes her articles with retweets in mind. (More on retweets in a moment.) Although her blog imposes no limits on article length, format or content, she deliberately laces her articles with short, pithy "sound bites" of 140 characters or less. She'll even go so far as to include a summary listing of them at the end of her articles in order to encourage readers to pick them up and retweet them.

This is essentially the same as getting your readers to advertise for you. It is them telling all their friends about your article and encouraging them to check it out for themselves.

### **WHAT THE HECK ARE RETWEETS?**

A retweet is to Twitter what forwarding is to email.

Twitter users who like a tweet can retweet it to all their followers. It doesn't matter if they got that tweet from the original source or if it was retweeted to them by someone else. This is the word-of-mouth phenomenon applied to the internet age.

If you write a blog post or other article anywhere online and want to encourage readers to retweet some of the content, here is the format for the link to do that:

[http://twitter.com/?status=RT+@\[username\]%20\[tweettext\]%20\[link\]](http://twitter.com/?status=RT+@[username]%20[tweettext]%20[link])

The entire passage above is basically a long internet address (URL). Therefore, it's not allowed to have spaces. "%20" is the ANSI code that represents a space. Web browsers will know how to interpret that and display it correctly.

Remember that everything which comes after the “=” sign must be a grand total of 140 characters or less (with “%20” counting as a single character).

Tweets that get retweeted are usually either entertaining, insightful, surprising, extremely useful or some combination of the above.

Retweets can also be retweeted. This can go on an unlimited number of times so that really great tweets can circle the globe in a matter of hours.

What do you suppose something like that might do for your bottom line?



## 7 – LINKEDIN: A NEW PARADIGM IN BUSINESS NETWORKING

I got a sales letter in the mail the other day. If you're like most people, you probably refer to these as "junk mail". I saw it as a business opportunity. Why?

Well obviously as a copywriter, writing these types of letters is one of the things I do. There are some I still toss into the old recycle bin just like anyone else. But some I like to read. I like to see what other copywriters are doing. I also look for ones where I think I can do better.

Which brings me back to the letter that appeared in my mailbox the other day and how that relates to LinkedIn. The letter was from a nationally known company. I felt pretty sure that I could put together a better sales letter than the one they sent me.

The question was, how could I get in contact with someone in their marketing department to convince them of this fact?

I went to their website but they did not have any marketing contacts listed. Not even a generic department-level email address or phone number.

So I turned to LinkedIn. It turns out that they did have a LinkedIn corporate page with nearly 300 employees listed. Many were private listings with names and other details hidden. Most were not in the marketing department. Almost all of them were essentially random strangers to me.

I found a single listing, of someone relatively high up in the marketing department, who was friends with one of my friends. So I wrote to my friend, explaining what I was trying to do and asked for an introduction.

I'm sure by now you can see where this is going...

### **A HALF-HEARTED APPROACH TO USING LINKEDIN**

Most people, when they first start using LinkedIn, toss up their profile without any real idea how they hope to use it or what they expect to get out of it.

I did that. I had a LinkedIn profile for more than five years with no concrete idea what benefit I could possibly derive from it.

I accepted connection invitations when they were offered but didn't go out of my way to reach out and forge many new contacts of my own.

Not surprisingly, after five years I only had something like 30 contacts in my network.

My excuse was that I wasn't yet a freelancer even though I knew that's the direction I was headed. I didn't see much value in connecting with coworkers at a job when I thought I might not be there in a few years.

Big mistake.

These days, no one stays at the same company for 30 years. Most people don't even stay in the same industry for 30 years.

Connections you make at one school, job or organization will almost certainly carry over to all of the future places where those people will eventually go to school, work or participate in other professional activities.

The mail clerk you befriend today may very well be going to law school at night and become a high-powered attorney in just a few years. Or the junior recruiter may become director of her own HR department two jobs from now.

### **IS LINKEDIN DIFFERENT FROM OTHER SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES?**

The biggest difference between LinkedIn and other social networking sites such as Facebook is that you can't "friend" someone unless you have a verifiable relationship with them. Typically that means that you've worked together at the same company, or belong to the same group or are friends in real life.

The theory is that by discouraging the collection of random connections, each person in the network has more meaningful contacts.

Then of course you can use your meaningful contacts to help introduce you to their meaningful contacts like I did with my friend to get an "in" with the marketing director I wanted to reach.

This is business networking done the 21<sup>st</sup> century way!

### **ISN'T LINKEDIN MAINLY FOR RECRUITING AND JOB SEARCHING?**

It's true that LinkedIn has stumbled into the role of being one of the largest de facto job search sites online. It's also true that many professional headhunters and recruiters use LinkedIn to either screen applicants or actively search for potential applicants.

It makes sense because LinkedIn is an ideal tool for that purpose.

In the case of potential applicants, recruiters are able to search for people who either currently are or recently have been in positions similar to those they need to fill.

For existing applicants, they can compare resume history against the claimed employment history shown on LinkedIn. Recruiters can also use LinkedIn to cross-check references or see if they share any connections in common with the applicant.

For example, if both the recruiter and the applicant have a connection in common, it's an easy matter for the recruiter to call or email the friend they share. During the course of ordinary conversation, the applicant's name could come up and the recruiter could pick up a great deal of valuable insight.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

You can set up a LinkedIn profile for free. Nearly all the functionality is available to free accounts. The basic limitations are that you can only reach out to people you are directly connected to or who are only one degree removed (e.g. you share a friend in common).

With a so-called "premium" account, you can expand that to reach people who are farther removed. You can also search larger numbers of people and generally get *more*.

Prices for LinkedIn premium accounts run as low as \$20 per month but can go up to as much as \$100 per month. The main difference is the degree of *more* you get. How many emails you can send, how many people are returned by a search, use of advanced search filters, how much information is available and how many degrees of separation are open to you.

## **CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS ON LINKEDIN**

LinkedIn has two main features that can help you stay in touch with your contacts: groups and status updates.

Status updates are the easier of the two. When you first log in, you will see a Facebook-type “wall” with recent status updates from your contacts. At the top is a text box where you can write your own status updates. Naturally, anything you write will be seen on the walls of all your contacts.

So it’s a relatively easy matter to write tidbits that are useful, interesting, productive or inspiring. You can even just copy your daily tweets here, since they should meet all the same criteria. Do this daily and watch your influence grow.

LinkedIn groups require a bit more effort and time commitment. Just like groups on many other social networking sites, LinkedIn has groups for just about any topic imaginable. Simply because of the nature of the user base, most groups are dedicated to some industry or professional specialty.

Find groups that resonate with you and join them. Post messages participating in the discussions from time to time but beware of what a drain on your time it can be.

Above all else, always be positive, upbeat and productive. If you consistently give out useful information that is relevant to the group and to the topic being discussed, other members will notice and your influence will grow.

Most members of the groups you belong to will not be connected to you in any direct way. With consistent actions, some of them will want to connect with you or be more inclined to accept your invitations to connect with them.

## **IS IT REALLY WORTH IT? WHERE ARE THE SALES?**

LinkedIn isn’t so much about making sales as it is about making relationships. Some of those relationships could eventually turn into sales but that shouldn’t be viewed as the primary purpose.

One way that salesmen can leverage LinkedIn to make sales easier is, if you’re going to call on a company, a quick search on LinkedIn could help you find a specific contact. If you share friends in common, it could turn a cold call into one in which your friend helps you cultivate an instant relationship.

All this for the cost of nothing. How can you beat that?

## 8 – GOOGLE+

As far as social networking goes, there are a lot of things that Google+ does right. The way they allow you to organize friends into groups (“circles”) and easily interact with some or all of your contacts is very neat. That feature could be quite useful for businesses who want to segment their customer base.

### OVERCOMING INERTIA

I was one of the early adopters and initially couldn't find a compelling case for using Google+ in a marketing and promotion context. It seemed to be just another in a crowded marketplace of social media outlets.

To their credit, Google realized this limitation. No matter how good the platform was, it wasn't so much better than other offerings as to induce legions of users to start using it. So Google played to their strengths, which of course is in search.

Google search results now include social media results by default. Naturally, those social media results are very heavily skewed in favor of Google+ pages. SEO alone is no longer enough to win prime placement in search results.

If for no other reason, having a presence on Google+ is important to your website's search engine rankings.

### GET FOUND

Another key advantage with Google+ is indexing speed. Create a new page on your website and optimize it for search engine results. After 2-5 days, you can expect to see your page indexed. Create a Google+ entry with links back to your page and the time is cut to minutes instead of days.

This is more than just another neat trick to get ranked highly in Google search results; it's free!

### HOW TO USE GOOGLE+

Like with other social media outlets, you can't simply create a static profile on Google+ and just leave it at that.

All social media requires a commitment and an active presence. Social media is like a cocktail party; merely showing up is only half of it. You need to mingle as well.

A lot of the same types of content that have already been mentioned, along with some of those that will be mentioned in later chapters, translate well across all social media platforms.

Which leads to an important point about social media: differentiate!

It's okay to cross-post items to more than one site, just don't do it with every item. Also, make sure you tweak things from one posting to the next.

While you will attract unique sets of visitors on each social media platform, there will be a great deal of overlap as well. So don't bore those prospects who see you in more than one place. They are likely some of your best prospects.

## 9 – MAKING THE MOST OF GOOGLE ADWORDS

If you've thought for five seconds about advertising online, you've no doubt considered Google AdWords.

AdWords is, by far, the largest of the online advertising services. In case you're not familiar with how it works, here is the thumbnail breakdown:

- Come up with a list of words and phrases that pertain to your line of business ("search terms").
- Write one or more advertisements attracting and directing people to your website.
- Bid in a closed auction for how much you are willing to pay to have your ads displayed to anyone who searches for one of your terms in Google.

That's the basics of it.

### WHY DO THEY MAKE IT SEEM SO COMPLEX?

Naturally it's not entirely as simple as I've outlined above.

For instance, there is a bit of alchemy involved in selecting good search terms. Pick one that's too broad and there's too much competition; bidding can get expensive. On the other hand, if you pick too narrowly no one may ever search for your terms; meaning no one will see your ads.

It also takes a great deal of skill and experimentation to write an ad that people will respond to. (More on Google's ad structure in a moment.)

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Theoretically, there is no minimum bid for ads on Google. Of course they will "suggest" a bid amount and even warn you if you bid a lower amount, but none of that is binding on you. The only consequence of lowballing your bids is that fewer people may see your ads.

The cost per impression rate ranges from a low of \$0.01 per thousand views to as high as you are willing to pay. As a rule, it rarely goes above \$1.00 per thousand.

Additionally, you can set a cap on the aggregate amount you are willing to pay each month or even the total for each campaign within your overall advertising account.

Google accepts no responsibility for whether or not your ads actually work. They get paid simply for presenting them. It's up to you to make them effective.

### TARGETING YOUR ADS

One way to ensure that your ad is only seen by likely prospects is through targeting. In addition to only showing your ad to people who are searching for terms pertaining to your line of business, you can further refine it so that only prospects within geographic areas you define get to see your ads.

So if you're an attorney, you might opt to only show your ads to people within a 20 mile radius of your office. After all, someone from Bangladesh finding your ad will do no good to either of you if your office is in Hoboken. Or perhaps your office is near the border between two states and you are licensed to practice in one but not the other. You can limit your ads to only be shown where you are licensed to do business.

In some cases, you can even limit your ads to certain demographic groups. Be warned: because Google doesn't collect and store demographic data for everyone who uses its search service, it can't always apply demographic filtering to all users. (Facebook advertising is more effective at demographic filtering.)

## A LITTLE HELP FROM GOOGLE'S ADVERTISING "EXPERTS"

When you set up your first AdWords campaign, Google will get one of their advertising "experts" to help write your first ad. They make it all but impossible to avoid accepting this so-called assistance but the people writing the ads are of the same caliber as the people who work the counter taking orders for newspaper want ads.

Their "expertise" comes mainly from mimicking what others put in their ads. If you want to stand out from the crowd and for your ads to be effective, you can't just use the same ads that everyone else is using. Once your Google-created ads are up you should consider hiring a professional copywriter to write new ads for you.

## THE FORMAT OF ADWORDS ADS

The ads we are talking about are the text only ads which appear at the top and to the side of the search results pages in Google.

They may also appear in other places, including on mobile phones and some of Google's partner

advertising networks. This is controlled by the options you select in your AdWords account.

**Heavy Equipment Rental | OneCallRentals.com**  
www.onecallrentals.com  
Pennsylvania's Source For Construction Equipment Rentals!

**United Rentals - The Right Equipment for Any Job | UR.com**  
www.ur.com  
Service You Can Depend On.

**Heavy Equipment Rental | knoxrentals.com**  
www.knoxrentals.com  
From Aerial Lifts to Wood Chippers We Have It All. West Chester PA.

**Construction Equipment Rentals & Tool Rentals -- Rental Equipme...**  
www.sunbeltrentals.com/  
Sunbelt Rentals supplies the rental equipment and tools you need to complete the project or job. Provides rentals to commercial, industrial, municipal, specialty ...  
Locations - Equipment - Careers - Earth Moving Equipment Rental ...

**Equipment Rental, Tool Rental & Construction Equipment | United ...**  
www.ur.com/  
Rent or buy construction equipment, heavy industrial equipment, hand tools and much more from United Rentals. Equipment rental locations exist in the US, ...  
⚙ Show stock quote for URI  
Locate Branch - Find Rental Equipment - Careers - Lawn & Landscape

**Used Construction Equipment**  
www.norrissales.com  
Large Construction Equipment Rental. Drills, Lifts, Saws & More!

**Heavy Equipment Rental**  
www.sunbeltrentals.com/ToolRental  
Nationwide Equipment & Tool Rental.  
Reserve Your Equipment Online Now.

**Delaware Heavy equipment**  
delaware.local.com  
Find heavy equipment here.  
We offer local search in your state

**Construction Equipment**  
www.rockanddirt.com  
Huge Selection of Machines For Sale  
Search 100's of Dealer Inventories

**Construction equipment rental**  
www.winchesterequipment.com  
Rental Construction Equipment!

Aside from the text only ads we're talking about, AdWords also offers graphical ads. These are the banners, squares, leaderboards and other block ads seen on all manner of web pages. For now, let's just stick with the basic text ads. The general principles for how to create and manage your AdWords account are similar for both.

The format for these text ads is somewhat rigid.

- A headline is required and you are generally limited to 25 characters in your headline. The headline itself will be displayed as a clickable hyperlink leading back to a page on your web site. (We'll set exactly where in a moment.)
- Next is a URL to be displayed in your ad. This URL is limited to 35 characters. It does NOT need to be the same as where prospects are directed when they click on your ad. (This appears as the second line in your ad but is the fourth line in the ad building interface.)
- Then you get two lines of text, limited to 35 characters on each line. (These are the third and fourth lines of your ad even though they're the second and third lines in the ad building interface.)
- Finally there is a destination URL. This is not displayed in your ad but is where users who click on your ad will be directed. The destination URL is limited to around 1,200 characters. Few, if any, advertisers will ever generate such long URLs.

The strict character limit (spaces and punctuation count as characters) requires your ads to be very concise. Making an effective ad may take time and experimentation.

Why two URLs? Google requires you to be up-front about where, in general, users will be directed if they were to click on your ad. Most advertisers just list the main page of their web site and this is perfectly fine. Some viewers may opt to type in your URL rather than click on your ad.

The more specific URL that is not seen is where users who click on your ad will be directed and is the key to effectively managing your ad campaigns. You can direct users to a very specific page that you set up. You can even have a different page for each ad.

## **MANAGING YOUR AD CAMPAIGNS**

Google's AdWords interface provides a myriad of reporting services to tell you how your ads are doing. This makes it easy to test different ads against one another and learn what is most effective for your business.

You can have many different ad campaigns and many ads within a given campaign. You can also pause and restart either individual ads or whole campaigns in real-time.

You can even do research to estimate the relative popularity of keywords and search terms you are considering. This can give you an idea of how much competition you will face when bidding on a given term.

## **LONG-TAILED PHRASES**

Think about how you do your own online searching. Rarely will you just search for a single word. More often you will put in phrases, combinations of words or even complete sentences.

When putting together the list of search terms associated with your ads, Google lets you do the same thing.

So if you're a plumber, instead of just bidding on "plumbing" (which would be far too broad and have far too much competition) you could bid on "clogged pipes Nebraska" or "bathroom leak Lincoln Nebraska". These are called long-tailed search terms.

Come up with as many combinations of these highly specific search terms as you like. You only pay when your ad is actually shown to someone and your ad will only be shown to someone if they do a search on one of your predefined search terms. By approaching it this way, the people who see your ads will have pre-qualified themselves by essentially saying, "I am searching for exactly what it is that you are selling."

It's the holy grail of advertising effectiveness.

# 10 – MARKETING WITH YOUTUBE

It used to be that video marketing (known back then as television commercials) were out of the financial reach of the small business person. With a cost often in the tens of thousands of dollars to produce, plus more than that to cover the cost of airtime, it simply made no sense to the stores on Main Street.

Those days are over.

No, advertising on TV hasn't gotten less expensive. It's simply gotten less relevant.

Nowadays, for a few hundred dollars (or often for even less) you can film your own short videos and post them online essentially for free.

All that's really needed is a digital video camera (even some higher end cell phone cameras will do), a quiet place to do your filming (such as your office) and something interesting or useful to say.

## **SURE YOU CAN POST THEM BUT WHO WILL WATCH?**

You may think that I'm oversimplifying it. I assure you, I'm not.

Or you may think that you need a professional "pretty face" to put in front of the camera. You really don't.

Have you looked at the videos online on places like YouTube? Some of them are very clever but most of them are little more than an ordinary person standing in front of the camera, often in their own living room, and presenting some kind of information.

They might be singing, dancing, giving unsolicited advice... or they might be teaching advanced mathematics, proper pronunciation in French or how to build a model airplane. They might even be selling a product or service. The range of topics is mind-boggling.

## **WHAT TO PRESENT AND HOW TO GO ABOUT IT**

What you should probably not do is simply turn on a camera and start speaking. Instead, the first step is to jot down a list of topic ideas. Each video only needs to be a few minutes long so it's okay if your ideas are ultra-specific. In fact, it's a good thing if they are!

The longer your list of ideas, the better.

Put a single video up and no one is likely to notice. Put ten videos up and still few are likely to notice. Put up fifty videos, or a hundred videos, or five hundred videos and you'll have so many prospects beating down your door that you may need to hire more people to handle them all!

Next you should "script" what you're going to say in your video. It probably isn't necessary to write out a word-for-word script. A good outline will do.

Your best bet is to record videos in batches, so prepare several scripts at once. Maybe you record eight to ten videos back-to-back. Or record one long video and get someone to edit it down into shorter segments. You can release them all at once or spread them out.

As far as topics go, the point of this is to build your client base. So you'll want to present on topics related to your business. If you own a fairly elaborate business like a car lot, you have many options available to you. Show the service area, the waiting room, the parts counter... You can also show snippets of what specific features smart buyers look for in a car.



The last three new cars I bought, I went to the dealership with a printed checklist of the features I was looking for. It was broken down by must-have features, would-like-to-have features and not-willing-to-pay-for features. Each of these would make a good video topic. Just using my list alone would yield more than a dozen short videos.

What if your business is less tangible, like a personal trainer? Give tips on nutrition, specific exercise regimen, hydration and physiology. An insurance agent could teach some of the commonly misunderstood aspects of insurance policies, or how to take a proper home inventory, or how to prepare for a natural disaster.

### **HOW DOES THIS HELP YOUR BUSINESS?**

A fair question to ask is how making all these videos leads to the ultimate goal of more customers, more sales and more income.

The short answer is, all by itself it won't.

Used as one component of a more cohesive marketing strategy though, having a rich diversity of informative content positions you as an authority in your field. It builds recognition and trust with your prospects.

There is also the consideration that some prospects need more information, more hand-holding, more explaining, more questions answered. If you have videos which take care of most of those things, you can better satisfy those prospects.

It's also true that many of those same prospects (plus some who don't need as much TLC but still have some questions that need to be answered) might prefer not to deal with a live person. Often it's for fear of being pressured into buying before they are ready. Making the information available via video is the perfect no-pressure sales pitch.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, YouTube is a search engine. Millions of people go there instead of Google, Bing or Yahoo to search for information. They use YouTube because they specifically want all of the search results to be video based.

By having many videos posted and properly optimizing them with descriptions and keywords, you increase your chances of being found by users searching for what you have to offer.

### **WHAT IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR VIDEOS PROTECTED?**

Google has proven rather decisively that it's possible to be extremely profitable even while giving practically everything away for free. Still, there are plenty of legitimate reasons why you might want to keep some things proprietary.

YouTube doesn't really have any facility for hosting "private" videos, but realize that YouTube isn't the only game in town. There are actually dozens of other video hosting sites. In order to effectively compete with YouTube, many of them specialize in features YouTube doesn't offer. Such as:

- Hosting private videos (such as training videos that are only shown to tuition paying students).
- Videos more than 9 minutes long. (YouTube's typical limit.)
- Downloadable videos.
- Videos that are protected from downloading and embedding on other sites.
- Non-navigable videos; viewers can play or pause but can't fast forward or rewind.

There are many video hosting sites but some include Vimeo, Viddler, DailyMotion, blip.tv and Revver.

Even for your so-called “public” videos, it often makes sense to post them to more than one service. Since you’ll want your business information included in the video so viewers can contact you in order to do business with you, it pays to get that seen by as wide an audience as possible. That means posting the same video to more than one service and effectively tagging it with good keywords so that it comes up in searches and viewing recommendations.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

YouTube of course can be used for free. There is considerable price variation with other video hosting services. There is something to fit every budget with most of them considerably less than \$100 a month.

### **GETTING CUSTOMERS INVOLVED**

To supplement the videos you create yourself, you can also get your customers involved. Ask them to film and submit short videos showing how they use your products. Make a contest out of it by offering a prize or two.

You can even make the contest into an event by putting the video submissions online and inviting public voting. The customers will get everyone they know to go vote for their video, resulting in a lot of free publicity for you!

Once the contest is over, those videos can remain online (make sure that’s part of the contest terms) and become video testimonials. In all, having a large and diverse body of videos can only help grow your business.

### **IS THAT REALLY ALL THERE IS TO IT?**

At its most basic, if all you do is post 100 or so good quality videos and do nothing else, you will get noticed and generate business from it.

Combine that with other free and low-cost marketing methods such as blogging, email, SEO and online advertising and watch your sales explode!

# 11 – USING FLICKR TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS LOOK GOOD

Put very simply, Flickr is to photographs what YouTube is to videos. It's a site where you can go to post photos, look at photos others have posted, comment on photos and interact with photographers in a discussion board type format.

## A GIANT STOCK PHOTO AGENCY

Because Flickr contains so many photos on every topic imaginable, it can be valuable to think of it as a sort of stock photo agency.

In terms of licensing and copyright, there are three types of photos you may find on Flickr. Listed from most to least common, they are:

- All Rights Reserved
- Creative Commons
- Public Domain

**All rights reserved** means that the photographer who took the photo does not automatically grant any rights for its use by anyone else. If you wanted to legally use such a photo (for example, on your web site or in a printed catalog) you would have to contact the photographer and obtain written permission to do so.

Nearly all of the photographers who post on Flickr are amateurs. That means that the quality of photos you will find there ranges from breathtaking to truly horrendous. A shockingly high percentage of Flickr users have aspirations toward being professional photographers. This means a few things:

1. You can almost certainly negotiate use of a photo.
2. Most of the people you approach will either have no idea how much to charge for its use or will have an unrealistically high initial figure in mind.

Be prepared to either negotiate or walk away and use a different photograph.

**Creative Commons** is essentially the artistic equivalent of open source. You can search Flickr specifically for images with a Creative Commons license. There are actually many different types of Creative Commons license but the most common types are:

- No Derivative Works – meaning you couldn't take an original photo and manipulate it in a program like Photoshop to look different. (This restriction can probably be negotiated.)
- Attribution – meaning the photographer wants a printed byline or some kind of credit for having taken the photo. Online, many also want a link to their web site or Flickr photo page.
- Noncommercial – meaning not for commercial use. This can be negotiated with some photographers as it usually only applies to unpaid use.

**Public domain** photos are most commonly posted by the US Library of Congress or by various museums around the world. They most typically are photos taken so long ago that the copyright has expired. There are no usage restrictions on public domain photos and no permission needs to be obtained to use them.

A handful of individuals will also post photos and explicitly surrender them into the public domain for unlimited usage.

## REMOTE HOSTING

Another way to use Flickr is essentially as a hosting service for your own photos.

Say you wanted to create an online catalogue with many photos. You could post those photos on Flickr and create links to embed them in articles or pages on your web site.

There are at least three benefits to using Flickr (or any other online photo sharing site) in this way. The first requires a bit of understanding of how web pages work. Unlike a page in a magazine which is simply a single unit (i.e. one piece of paper), a web page is more like a completed jigsaw puzzle.

Your web browser assembles the puzzle for you; this is the process known as the page loading.

Even a very simple web page may have many pieces. For instance:



This is a complete web page (it is not truncated, only shrunk to fit on this page) and is about as simple as it gets. Even this very spare page contains 21 separate visible elements including the starburst graphic, assorted icons, lines and boxes, hyperlinks and multiple text areas.

This is a very tiny and ultra-simple web page.

Most web pages are larger, longer, have more graphics and links, have far more text, may have background images, may have audio and/or video, may have programs running, may have database connections such as to accept user input and so on.

Hopefully you get some idea how complex it all can be. The key point that is relevant to this discussion is that each of those components doesn't have to come from the same place. In fact, except for the "instructions" telling your browser how to assemble the page, every item can be stored someplace different.

Going back to the jigsaw puzzle analogy, the box which ostensibly contains the puzzle pieces could actually contain only a set of instructions telling you what pieces to look for and where to find them.

How and why might this benefit you?

Some web hosting providers charge based on data transfer and/or amount of storage space used on their servers. So storing a large number of photos (or any other type of file) on their servers and/or having a steady stream of visitors to your web site download copies of those photos can increase your costs. (When they visit a web page, their computer downloads a temporary copy of everything on that page.)

However you could put your photos on a photo hosting site like Flickr and simply have your web site pull them from there to assemble the page. From the perspective of visitors to your site, the difference can easily be made 100% invisible. They will simply see a page and be none the wiser that some of the components making up the page are coming from other servers or even other web sites.

A second benefit is that this could speed page loading times as you would now have several servers feeding your page's components rather than just one.

The difference in overall data transfer can be considerable. The data transfer load for your photos will be coming from Flickr's servers, not yours. Because of the business critical nature of your web site, it's important to use only reliable hosts if you plan to do this.

The third benefit to hosting your images elsewhere has mainly to do with exposure. Unless yours is a well-known company, the only visitors you are likely to get to your web site are those you send there through your marketing and promotion efforts.

Just like people search YouTube for videos showing how to do something or how something works, many people search sites like Flickr for high quality photos of products, components, etc. If your photos are interesting or instructive, they may show up in such searches. Especially if you apply proper keywords and searchable descriptions.

With links to your web site in the descriptions or attached to the photos, this can become yet another avenue for attracting the attention of prospects and customers.

## **FLICKR CLONES**

Just as YouTube isn't the only video hosting service, Flickr is not the only online photo hosting service. It is simply the largest.

Just like with video hosting sites, each photo hosting site has a slightly different slant. Some target those who take snapshots while others target professionals hosting fully copy protected online portfolios.

Some of the larger names in this field are:

- SmugMug
- Zenfolio
- PhotoBucket
- SnapFish

## **COST OF FLICKR**

A basic Flickr account is free. It is ad-supported since nothing in life is truly free. To get an ad-free account will cost you \$49.99 per year. This applies to your user experience while browsing the site and not to the photos you have stored there.

Cost for some of the other photo hosting services listed ranges from free to \$250 per year. Lower cost options subject you to advertisements and usage restrictions while these fall away with the progressively higher priced services.

## **UNDERSTANDING FLICKR AS SOCIAL MEDIA**

At its core, Flickr is a social media web site designed to foster interaction between members.

There are many interest groups on Flickr, and any member can create their own interest group. The interest groups are essentially photo bulletin boards or discussion boards. Flickr groups are typically special interest groups centering around one of three types of interest categories:

1. Equipment such as a particular camera brand or type of lens,
2. Location for taking photos such as Grand Canyon or Paris, or
3. Subject matter such as puppies or sunsets.

Unless your product or service is specifically photography related or has mass appeal, the user interaction and social media aspects of Flickr may not have much direct benefit to most businesses.

I suppose if you posted photos of your products and/or employees and a Flickr user commented on one of the photos (assuming the comment was business related), it opens up an opportunity to start a public dialogue.

If the comment were a complaint, it would give you the opportunity to address the complaint in a public way and show others that you stand behind what you sell.

Of course if the comment were a compliment or testimonial, its merits are obvious. Even then, you have the opportunity to open a dialogue with the poster to get more specific information or even to use the comment(s) in other media such as future marketing materials.

Outside of those examples, chances are that you won't get many meaningful comments and should not waste time with groups or other social networking aspects of Flickr. In that sense Flickr, if used at all, should be viewed as a strictly utilitarian file hosting service for your business.

# 12 – STAYING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS VIA NEWSLETTERS

If you have any kind of direct to consumer business, chances are good that many of your customers wouldn't mind hearing from you from time to time. The caveat of course is that what you say must be interesting or useful to them.

If all you do is send out sales notices or make attempts to get customers to buy more from you, they will be turned off and stop paying attention. They may even stop being your customers. The irony, proven by Google and countless others, is that giving away useful stuff for free can be highly profitable.

## **WHAT CAN YOU WRITE ABOUT?**

As a rule, all people are tuned in to a station called WIIFM – “What's in it for me”. Whatever you write about in your newsletter must address this reality. It should be informative, interesting or entertaining.

Winning some kind of award or honor may feel great to you but unless there is something in it for them, most of your customers really won't care all that much. However if you can find a way to make it about them – for instance as a way to show that you're better than your competitors, or as a lead-in to the fact that you're going to hold a celebration sale – customers will happily rejoice with you.

Articles with unique or clever ideas for ways to use your products are always good. For instance, Kraft sends out a newsletter with cheese recipes. GEICO's newsletter highlights great road trip destinations. A local plant nursery might send out articles about seasonal tree care.

Think of topics that don't sell your products directly but which get readers in the mood to buy the very kinds of products you sell. If they like and trust you enough to subscribe to your newsletter, chances are they're already more likely to buy from you than from one of your competitors.

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU SEND OUT YOUR NEWSLETTER?**

The short answer is, as often as you have something useful or interesting to say. As long as it's on a predictable schedule. Typical intervals are weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and quarterly. The key is to watch your unsubscribe rate.

Each time you send out a new issue, 0.1% or fewer of the recipients should unsubscribe from receiving future issues. If the rate climbs above that threshold, either send content less often or work to make it more interesting or useful.

## **MAINTAINING YOUR MAILING LIST**

There are a number of online mailing houses which will help you maintain your email list as well as provide a host of related services. The three largest mail houses are:

- Aweber
- Constant Contact
- Mail Chimp

Of course there are other services out there but these are reputable companies that can handle even the most complex mailing needs. (There is a great deal more information about mailing services in the chapter on autoreponders.)

## **WAYS TO MAKE MONEY FROM YOUR NEWSLETTERS**

Once you have a mailing list up and running, there are a number of ways of profiting from it without offending your customers.

To start with, customers realize that you are a business. They expect that you are in business to make a profit. Readers will not object to your doing so, as long as there is some payoff for them. So you can write articles such as those from Kraft which highlight your company's products and encourage readers to buy them. Of course you could make one of Kraft's recipes using another brand of cheese, but enough readers will use Kraft cheese to make it very profitable for them.

Another way to profit from your newsletters is to openly advertise between the "useful" articles, just like ads in a magazine. You can even sell ad space to other companies. As long as you are not giving the names or contact information for your readers to those companies, you are not violating any kind of privacy agreements. The key is that the ads you display should be properly targeted and relevant to your readers.

Don't overlook direct competitors as a potential source for ads. Most businesses shy away from this but there are smart ways of going about it and it could prove to be profitable for both companies.

The Japanese do this all the time, like when Toyota and Isuzu collaborate on designing and building a new car model then each sells essentially the same car under their own nameplate with different model names.



# 13 – THE INS AND OUTS OF ARTICLE MARKETING

Article marketing, for those unfamiliar with the term, is simply writing and publishing informational articles on a topic related to your business. As an expert in your field, you give away a bit of knowledge as a way of attracting qualified prospects.

Your articles may be picked up or syndicated by blogs, news services and a variety of web sites around the world.

Readers interested in your topic will read your article. Some of those readers will want to know more or may be looking to hire or buy from someone like you. Links and references in your article will lead them back to your web site.

Two principles are at play when you market with articles:

1. Reciprocity – Some of the people who have gotten free advice or content from you will return the favor by granting you their business when it comes time to buy.
2. Expert status – By sharing what you know, you are, in essence, giving away free samples. A prospect gets to see with his own eyes how well you know your topic and gets a sense of whether or not you are the type of person he wants to do business with.

*(To be completely candid, you may have noticed that I am employing exactly these same principles myself in giving away all the marketing advice contained in this book. Nothing obligates you or anyone else to hire me but by sampling what I have to offer, some percentage of people who read this will be more inclined to do so purely on the basis of having sampled the value I have to offer.)*

## “EVERGREEN” CONTENT

Let’s say that you own a tire store. Think back to the huge issue a number of years ago in which some tires on Ford Explorers would spontaneously blow-out. The cars flipped over and many people were killed or seriously injured.

Suppose something like that were going on now. You could write one or more articles about the topic. Those almost certainly would get wide distribution and generate a lot of traffic back to your web site. But only for as long as the issue were in the news and on top of everyone’s minds. Once the fervor died down, your article would essentially be like old fruit—no one would want it.

If you write on a topic that has no expiration date, so to speak, you may not generate as strong a rush of traffic but the traffic you get can be perpetual. Such topics are referred to as “evergreen”. (Because timely topics can create a strong rush of traffic, I recommend writing on both types of topics.)

So let’s say you write an article about understanding what the numbers mean when looking at tire sizes. Or something about the relative merits of different tread design features. Such topics are valid all the time.

Even if a topic is seasonal, it could still be evergreen. For example, say you wrote about snow tires. While it’s true that it may only be of interest in the winter, it will be relevant every winter from now until the end of time.

Consumer magazines do this all the time. Think of a magazine for parents of school-aged children. Do you think they come up with 100% original content all the time? No way! Every May they run articles on what to do with your kids this summer. Every September they trot out the back to school articles. Every November it’s how to beat the common cold. There is a formula for every month of the year and that formula is filled with articles on evergreen topics.

## **THE LENGTH AND FORMAT OF A MARKETING ARTICLE**

Online articles don't have to be long. In fact most blogs, article syndicators and other outlets actually prefer that your articles only be 400-700 words. (By contrast, this book is well over 30,000 words.)

If you happen to write a substantially longer article, perhaps there is a way to break it into a series of shorter ones. The more articles you have published, the greater the exposure any one of them has for you.

Let me elaborate. Just using very round, hypothetical numbers, say that one article can bring you ten new prospects. You might think that 100 articles could bring in 1,000 new prospects. Or you might reason that some of the prospects would see more than one of your articles so the number may be less than that. But the math isn't linear.

Truthfully, once you get to a critical mass of articles (most experts say 100 as a nice, round number but the actual number is probably closer to 50-60) each article starts attracting more than ten new prospects.

I used ten prospects to keep the math simple but just what is a realistic number? A great deal depends on the field you are in and the interest in your article topic. I have written articles that brought in 14 prospects and I've written some that generated well over 100. An average number seems to be 20-30 over the life of an article with the bulk of those coming immediately after the article's initial publication.

Article format isn't much different from what you were taught in high school English class:

- Headline or Title (this should be keyword rich)
- Introductory paragraph (also keyword rich)
- Two to five body paragraphs
- Conclusion or summary paragraph

Online articles have one additional element: a resource box. This is a small paragraph, text box or other blurb at the end which tells a bit about you and your business and includes links back to your web site.

There is a variation to this format used in press releases. These run only about 250 words each and are just five paragraphs long. The body is typically limited to just three paragraphs. Either the first or second body paragraph may also contain an embedded link back to your web site in addition to the link(s) found in the resource box.

## **WHERE DO YOU PUBLISH THESE ARTICLES?**

There are many places online that publish marketing articles. Some of the more common for articles include:

- EzineArticles.com
- ContentCrooner.com
- DistributeYourArticles.com

For press releases, you have options such as:

- WebWire.com
- PRweb.com
- PRnewswire.com
- free-press-release.com.

Of course there are many more. It is best to choose just one or two of each type and focus your efforts there rather than taking your attention off your core business to juggle many different article marketing services.

### **ANOTHER APPROACH**

Aside from article syndication services, there is a different approach you might consider. You could become a “guest author” on another web site and write articles specifically tailored to that site’s readers.

I have done this several times. The main benefit is that you are not writing for an unknown audience so your writing can be much more specific.

If you can negotiate such an arrangement and produce interesting, high quality content, you may be asked to do it on a recurring basis. If the other site has a large user base, it can be valuable exposure for you and your business.

### **WHAT DOES IT COST?**

Of course writing guest articles costs nothing. Pricing for article distribution services varies, ranging from absolutely free to fairly expensive. Some services charge a monthly or annual fee while others charge by the article.

Monthly fees at paid sites tend to hover around \$50, with discounts available for longer contracts. Annual fees are typically in the \$200-\$300 range.

Per article fees run from around \$25 to nearly \$400, with increasing costs generally granting greater exposure.

Which is better? There really is no one right answer. It depends a great deal on the nature, timeliness, mass appeal and shelf life of your article content.

As a very broad rule of thumb, paid services are better for more timely but short-lived content. They will get you a big burst of traffic but it is unlikely to last long.




Free services can actually be an exception to the get-what-you-pay-for philosophy. Evergreen topics work very well with free article distribution services and interesting, high quality content may generate slow but steady trickles of traffic over many years.

### **OTHER BENEFITS OF ARTICLE MARKETING**

The number of people that article marketing brings to your web site isn’t really the whole story. Another big part of it is where that traffic comes from. Very often, it is coming from a hodge podge of web sites, many of which target a different market than you are targeting directly. So by marketing with articles, you reach an audience that you are probably not reaching right now.

Since you’ll have little control over who picks up your articles and press releases or who they present them to, it’s best if your company’s product or service isn’t highly local.

One additional side benefit is that your article, if it presents something newsworthy, may put you on the front page of the major search engines. Such placement may be short-lived and highly specialized but it can be quite valuable while it lasts. It’s also something that there is simply no economical way of doing on your own through organic rankings.

<p>Las Vegas vacations at Texas Station Casino Hotel &amp; Gambling Hall start at \$27.99. Reserve travel packages, get room rates, deals, and discounts now! Entertainment - Dining - Hotel - Contact Us You recently searched for texas.</p> <p><b>LAS VEGAS, TX   The Handbook of Texas Online   Texas State ...</b> www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvi33 LAS VEGAS, TEXAS. Las Vegas was a small farming community four miles southeast of Big Wells on the old San Antonio, Uvalde and Gulf Railroad in ...</p> <p><b>News for las vegas</b></p> <p> <b>Las Vegas still fumes over 2-year-old Obama remark</b> The Associated Press - 19 hours ago LAS VEGAS (AP) — President Barack Obama has a Sin City problem that won't go away. Obama is counting on Nevada's support for re-election next year. ... 2336 related articles <a href="#">Video: President Obama: 'we can't wait'</a> The Telegraph <a href="#">Iverson hosting 2-day tournament in Las Vegas</a> ESPN - 60 related articles</p> <p><b>Las Vegas, NV</b> maps.google.com</p>  	<p><b>\$59+ P</b> www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvi33 Compare Find Ch Fly to V www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvi33 Las Vegas Book Va Las Vegas www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvi33 Great H Point H Vacation www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hvi33 Fabulous Las Vegas See you</p>
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Notice with some Google searches, you see not just a listing of web pages but may also see other categories of results mixed in. These include mentions in the news, shopping results, map locations, etc.

So if you can get your article picked up by news services, you might automatically make it to the first page of Google for search terms related to your article's topic. The effect won't last long but it can be a powerful driver to draw people to your web site.

## FREE PUBLICITY

One tool you can use is called HARO ("Help A Reporter Out"). This website links reporters looking for stories and/or sources to contribute to a story they're already writing with people who are experts in their field. As their tagline puts it, "Everyone is an Expert at Something."

Pricing ranges from free to \$149 per month. (Unless you're a reporter, then it's absolutely free.)

With your membership, you get email and/or text alerts when a reporter submits a request for help on a story. You review the details and if it turns out to be within your area of expertise, contact the reporter directly with an offer to be a source.

Getting quoted – or better yet, profiled – in any major media outlet can bring tons of visibility and credibility to your business.

# 14 – PODCASTING AND OTHER FORMS OF AUDIO MARKETING

Podcasting is a form of marketing that's not going to be for everyone. Unlike a newsletter or an article or even a YouTube video, which can all be very short, a podcast is typically much longer.

Fifteen minutes is about the minimum length of time you should aim for and even an hour would not be too much.

A podcast is really nothing more than an audio file users can download to an iPod or MP3 player and listen to later. It's essentially talk radio for the digital age.

## **SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT**

One of the keys to a successful podcast is that you must have something of substance to present. This also isn't a one-and-done platform. Prepare to commit to a series of podcasts released at regular intervals.

A series of interviews would be ideal if they are with interesting personalities or cover interesting subject matter. Anything entertaining is always a good bet.

So if you ran a theater or entertainment venue, you could produce podcasts based on that.

Say you have a bar with stand-up comedy or live music on Friday nights. Interview some of the acts, record snippets of their performances then get someone to edit that into a cohesive, engaging audio product for you.

The key here is that your podcast is not a product in and of itself. It is a means of promoting your business. So you want the podcast to be entertaining and engaging enough to make people want to download and listen but at the same time build desire in listeners to come out and see the acts first-hand.

To see an organization that really nails it when it comes to using podcasting as a marketing tool, check out the Capital Steps ([www.capsteps.com](http://www.capsteps.com)). They are a comedy troupe in Washington, DC that specializes in political satire. All of their income is derived from sales of CDs and selling tickets to their live shows. They record a podcast four times a year which also gets broadcast live on both traditional and online radio stations.

## **OTHER OUTLETS FOR YOUR RECORDINGS**

There are other things you can do with your recordings. In fact, one of the most productive is done while the recording is being made: internet radio.

There are internet broadcasting sites such as BlogTalkRadio.com and ShoutCast.com which allow you to create your own "radio" show. These shows are usually broadcast only online (though many traditional radio stations also use these sites for simulcasting their own shows).

You determine your own broadcast schedule. Listeners and fans who find your show, or who are directed there by your promotions, can listen live (if they log in while the show is airing) or can play back previous episodes.

If you record these episodes as they're being aired, you'll have the material available for your podcasts.

## **YOUR OWN RECORDING STUDIO**

It isn't necessary to rent a professional recording studio. Any reasonably quiet space where you can record without interruption will do just fine.

If you record in an office, be sure to turn off or disconnect the phone. Post someone outside to prevent unwanted intrusions if that is a possibility.

Buy a decent quality microphone. The cost of such microphones is surprisingly affordable. I paid around \$20 for the one I use (which also plugs into my video cameras). You should easily be able to find one for under \$50.

For those looking for a specific recommendation, my microphone is an Audio-Technica ATR-3350 Lavalier Omnidirectional Condenser Microphone. It requires one watch battery and comes with a 20ft (6.1m) cord.

## **DOING TRIPLE DUTY AND MORE**

Even better than recording your radio show while it's airing, set it up to be recorded on video. With a single expenditure of effort, you have the radio show plus can have someone edit the audio track for your podcasts and also edit the audio/video together to post on YouTube.

Depending on the nature of the content, you could even have it transcribed and use the written content in other promotions or on your website.

There is a fine line to tread with this. It's very smart to get multiple uses and benefits from each expenditure of effort but you must also have a deep variety of content.

# 15 – SELLING PRODUCTS ONLINE WITHOUT A WEBSITE

Having a website is so important that I made it the very first chapter in this book. Still, it's possible to sell products online without a website. Or you could have a relatively basic website which just gives information about your company but do your online selling elsewhere.

## WHERE TO SELL IT

There is no shortage of places where you can sell products online without having your own website. Some of them, such as Pinterest and Squidoo, are covered in their own sections because they offer other benefits besides just ecommerce.

Given that there are literally hundreds of outlets, let's stick with just a few of the "big" ecommerce sites. These are reputable, have lots of traffic and are easy to use.

A few of the bigger names to look at include:

Site	Stores	Auctions	Allows you to sell
Yahoo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Practically anything
Amazon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Practically anything
eBay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Practically anything
Etsy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand-made goods, handicrafts or the tools and supplies for them

I included Etsy in this list for two reasons. One is that it's a huge site with over 800,000 sellers and 12 million buyers. That makes it perhaps the biggest online marketplace you've probably never heard of. The other reason is that it's amazing what you can count as handicrafts if you're creative enough.

For example, wire. It's used in making jewelry and certain kinds of sculptures. Vintage clothing, even if it was once mass produced, also seems to pass muster. Pens, pencils and stationery are allowed, as are plants and gardening supplies. Custom printed t-shirts, coffee mugs and other items. Even this book might be allowed if I wanted to list it there!

## STORES VS. AUCTIONS

One key question is whether you want to set up an online store and sell things for a fixed price or whether to sell things auction-style.

Before you answer too quickly, there are sometimes benefits to auction-style selling. For instance, if you have a new or very unique product and you don't really know what price to set for it. Rather than choosing a price arbitrarily, let your market tell you what it's willing to pay.

Auctions can also be a good way to clearance close-out items or test new items you're thinking of adding to your line.

If you're worried about customers lowballing you, it's possible to set a minimum price. If customers won't pay above your minimum, you're not obligated to go through with the sale.

For large, bulky or heavy items where shipping may be impractical, you can also specify local pickup only. That limits your pool of potential buyers but can be invaluable in certain situations.

### **SIMPLICITY COMES AT A PRICE**

Selling on one of these sites simplifies the process for you because the host site provides the shopping cart and does most of the hard work of attracting buyers.

The downside is that you pay a relatively high commission on sales. You also face limitations in the formatting and presentation of your product pages. Since they are the host, you typically do not get a unique or memorable URL to help brand your business.

You usually will be able to collect customer names and email addresses but compiling those into a mailing list may be cumbersome or require the purchase of additional software.

### **CUSTOMER DEMOGRAPHICS**

Most buyers on these auction style websites are not repeat customers. So if you have a “sales funnel”, selling on a site like this may not work very well for you. If the nature of your business is such that you already have primarily one-off sales anyway with little in the way of customer loyalty or relationship, any one of these sites can be a quick and easy way to start selling online.

### **THE QUICK-START GUIDE**

With just a few things, you could make your first sale today.

Obviously you need one or more products to sell. You also need at least one photo of the product you’re selling. More and higher quality photos will pay off in the form of more sales and higher sale prices.

You generally should not rely on manufacturer-supplied photos. Instead, either take your own (if you have the skills and equipment to take very high quality photos) or hire someone to do it for you.

Depending on the nature of your product, you will most likely need specifications such as size, weight, color(s), model number, etc.

You’ll also need to write a description. While I could extol the virtues of hiring a professional copywriter such as me to write your product description and sales pitch for you, the truth is it probably wouldn’t matter very much. Unless you expect a high volume of sales or have a very profitable item, the payoff probably wouldn’t be worth it.



# 16 – SELLING ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS THROUGH CLICKBANK

Think of ClickBank as sort of like the eBay of instantly downloadable electronic products. It is a vast marketplace of such products. Of course there's one little twist to the analogy: instead of being the storefront, it's more like the back room warehouse.

End-user consumers generally do not browse ClickBank for things to buy. Instead it is where you can store your product(s). It's also a place where enterprising entrepreneurs from around the world can look for things to sell.

If someone finds one of your products and decides he likes it enough to want to help you sell it he can sign up to become an affiliate, grab your link, sell your products and collect a commission on each sale he generates. These sales may take place on his website, through emails he sends out, he may create online ads such as with AdWords or in a hundred other ways.

You determine the amount of commission you are willing to pay beforehand and ClickBank takes care of everything automatically.

## **WHAT KINDS OF PRODUCTS CAN YOU SELL?**

ClickBank only handles memberships and electronic products which can be delivered instantly via electronic download. You can offer a physical product, such as a book or CD but only if it's a supplement to an instant download. Specifically, ClickBank allows:

- Streaming and downloadable audio files
- eBooks
- Games
- Software
- Streaming and downloadable video files
- Web site membership fees

## **WHAT DOES CLICKBANK DO FOR YOU?**

Aside from helping you recruit a worldwide sales force of commission only sales reps, ClickBank does several other things for you:

- It acts as an online shopping cart and payment processor
- Takes care of delivery and product fulfillment
- Provides tracking and reporting services

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST AND IS IT WORTH IT?**

When you first sign up to sell your own products, you must pay a one-time only \$49.95 fee. That fee is good for life (provided you don't violate ClickBank policies and get your account terminated) and allows you to sell an unlimited number of products in an unlimited number of categories.

Other than commissions that you pay to affiliate marketers for selling your products and a 7% sales commission to ClickBank, there are no other fees or costs.

## **ARE THERE STRATEGIES FOR AFFILIATE COMMISSIONS?**

ClickBank affiliate commissions are set by you but are applied in blanket form to all products marketed under your account. The minimum commission is 1% and maximum is 75%.

There are two strategies you might think of pursuing with ClickBank affiliates. The first assumes that you only want ClickBank as a payment processor and fulfillment house and would prefer that others not sell your products. In that event, set your commission percentage to 1%. Such a low percentage would not be worth anyone's while and no one will want to sell your stuff.

A generally more sound strategy is to set a high commission, 50%-75%. I've even heard of some marketers offering special bonuses which must be paid manually outside of the ClickBank system, in essence making the commission rate even higher than ClickBank allows. In some cases even slightly over 100%.

By offering such high commissions, you attract and motivate profit hungry entrepreneurs to sell your products for you.

The theory behind this approach is that once someone has identified themselves as a buyer of your products – someone who is interested in what you have to offer and willing to pay for it – it is much easier and more profitable to sell to that prospect than to an “unknown” prospect. So you offer some front-end product as a loss leader to get customers in the door then market higher priced and more profitable products directly to those buyers without allowing affiliate marketing or paying sales commissions on those subsequent sales.

A secondary consideration is that your affiliates – your commission only sales force – can collectively attract more people than you can on your own. They are also likely to attract prospects from different places than you will try on your own. So you cast a wider net and bring in a more diverse clientele.

Another very important consideration is that, because these are all electronic products, there is essentially no overhead in stocking or delivering them. You can afford to pay a higher commission when your costs are so low.

## **WHAT IF YOU WANT TO BECOME AN AFFILIATE YOURSELF?**

There is no cost to being a ClickBank affiliate. (The \$49.95 fee is only if you want to sell your own products.) If you find products in the ClickBank marketplace which are similar or complimentary to yours, there is no restriction on selling those products and earning a commission on the sales.

The same strategy applies as outlined above; once you have turned a prospect into a customer, even of affiliate products, you are free to market your own back-end products to them for a higher profit potential. Assuming you have captured their contact information and have a way of marketing to them.

# 17 – RING IT UP! UNDERSTANDING ONLINE SHOPPING CARTS

Business web sites can be broadly categorized into two types: those which exist purely for disseminating and/or collecting information and those which make sales.

There's nothing wrong with the first type; for some businesses it may not make sense to do selling or take payments online. For instance a house painter could book appointments online but can't really price or sell his services online.

Most businesses however, could benefit from making sales and taking payments online. Those sales might be strictly supplementary such as a veterinarian who also sells a line of pet care products or they might be the main staple of the business such as a graphic designer who works from home making web pages.

The one thing that all income producing web sites have in common is a shopping cart; some way to actually accept payments.

## FEATURES OF ONLINE SHOPPING CARTS

By now, pretty much every man woman and child in every first-world country has used an online shopping cart at least once to purchase something. You may or may not have stopped to consider all the functions that a shopping cart performs.

- Keep a tally of the items a customer purchases. By doing this in the background, it allows customers to keep shopping and adding items to the cart until they are ready to check out.
- Automatically remember the “contents” of each customer's shopping cart. This memory is configurable and can last only as long as the customer's session is active, it can last a predetermined number of hours or days or it can last indefinitely.
- Allow customers to update quantities and/or remove items from the cart.
- Automatically calculate sales tax, where applicable.
- Offer one or more shipping options and automatically calculate shipping charges for the option selected.
- Accept discount codes and automatically apply the correct discount.
- Display a total (plus usually subtotals) so customers know how much they are paying.
- Accept one or more forms of payment:
  - Credit cards
  - Debit cards
  - Direct debit from a bank account
  - Online payment services (Paypal, BillMe, etc)
  - Corporate or government purchase order
- Perform currency conversion as needed. In some cases even accepting payment in multiple currencies for the convenience of your buyers.
- Display and/or issue a receipt. The best shopping carts will both display as well as send a receipt to the customer's email address.
- Send order and payment details to the merchant (you). Most will also send the customer information they collected.
- Perform order fulfillment:

- For electronically downloadable purchases (eBooks, streaming audio/video, membership subscriptions, etc.) the shopping cart will deliver the final product.
- For physical goods and services, the shopping cart will format and print shipping labels or work orders.
- Track shipment and send updates to the buyer and/or seller.
- Collect feedback on the transaction after the fact.

That's a lot of stuff!

## **WHERE TO GET A SHOPPING CART**

Online shopping carts are complex and highly specialized pieces of software. For that reason, it's generally best to use a hosted shopping cart service rather than purchase, install and own dedicated software. If you do want to purchase and install your own software, eCommerce Templates has one of the best packages available.

There are many shopping cart service providers. One of the more well-known stand-alone service providers is 1ShoppingCart.

Or you could sign up with a more all-inclusive merchant web site hosting service like 3Dcart or Shopify. These are essentially web site hosting providers which also provide a shopping cart and all the other amenities needed for eCommerce as part of your standard account.

If you have a very low volume of sales or are just starting out, you could also use a "free" shopping cart service such as those hosted by Paypal, Amazon, Google and others. Recognize that these are not really free and charge a rather substantial (on a percentage basis) fee for each transaction.

## **COST AND FEE STRUCTURE**

The cost of an online shopping cart varies based on features and sales volume. In general, there are two components to the fee structure:

- A base fee, which ranges from free to several hundred dollars per month, and
- A per-transaction fee for each sale made.

Lower base fees typically equate to higher per-transaction fees and vice-versa. Only you can determine whether your volume of online sales and average sale amount would make one fee structure more attractive than another.

As your business grows and changes, so can your shopping cart account.

## **CUSTOMIZED INTERFACE**

The non-integrated hosting services such as 1ShoppingCart allow you to customize the appearance of the shopping cart pages. So even though they are hosting the shopping cart software on their own servers the colors, text, images and other visual elements make it indistinguishable from your own site's pages. This gives your customers a seamless buying experience.

The third party providers also send all the buying information back to you. They never store or record it for their own purposes. (Except credit card numbers and related validation information. Laws regarding the safeguarding of this information are strict enough that you are better off letting them handle it.)

**GET SELLING!**

Whichever type of solution you use, the listing process is pretty simple. You just enter a few pieces of information such as a unique item number and description, some pricing information and perhaps a link to some photos or an online catalogue page. Within minutes, you can have your first few items up for sale.

No special technical skills needed.

# 18 – INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMERS ONLINE

One of the things every smart company, no matter what its size, must do is to monitor their online reputation. This involves searching periodically for mentions of the company name and/or the names of products in blog posts, tweets and other public forums.

When customers and prospects mention you to their circle of friends, it opens up an opportunity to start a public dialogue.

## **AVOIDING THE NEED TO DO DAMAGE CONTROL**

It perhaps goes without saying that your customer service should be top-notch. If a customer comes to you with a complaint, you should promptly take care of it to the customer's satisfaction. Of course we all know that some people will simply never be satisfied with anything but it takes surprisingly little to make most customers happy.

If you have staff, they should have the authority to do whatever is necessary to resolve complaints to a customer's satisfaction. Of course this also mandates that they know how to also keep the interests of the company in mind while doing so.

## **EVERYONE HAS A LOUDSPEAKER**

Some customers may not even come to you with their complaint. They may simply take it directly to the court of public opinion. Even those who do come to you first may later appeal to the court of public opinion if they feel that their concerns are not being addressed properly.

Just what does that mean? It means that customers may post a complaint on their Facebook page, or tweet a complaint to their followers on Twitter. They could also give a negative review on feedback sites.

There are hundreds of these. Some of the better known are Yelp, RipOffReport, TheSqueakyWheel and PissedConsumer. Many major ecommerce sites also have built-in customer feedback mechanisms.

On top of that, unhappy customers may write a blog post or even comment on someone else's blog post. Some consumers may even post video complaints on YouTube.

## **HOW TO FIND THEM**

Once something is out there on the internet, it's basically permanent. There is no way to "erase" it. Your best hope is to find the comments quickly and address them publicly.

There are so many places and ways for customers to make their opinions of you known that you can't possibly monitor them all. Find the comments by searching for yourself and/or your company.

Naturally start with major search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo but don't stop there. Specialized search engines such as Twitter search, Social Mention, Technorati and Google Blog Search (which is owned and operated by Google but is not the same as the general Google search) may turn up mentions that the mainstream search engines miss.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT**

Whether you find a compliment or a complaint online, address it publicly. You may also address it privately – for compliments contact the customer and try to get more detail and permission to use the comments as a testimonial, for complaints try to find a way to make the customer happy – but the public part is important.

Anyone can see the original comment so it's important that they also see your response to it. They don't need to know every gory detail, and you certainly shouldn't defame your unhappy customers, but you can't give the impression that complaints are simply ignored. (Or that compliments go unacknowledged.)

Handled well, this could prove to be one of your best forms of public relations. Fans will become rabidly loyal and even jump to your defense. Detractors will likely never come around but those on the fence will choose sides and some of them will become customers and fans.

# 19 – MEET WITH CUSTOMERS IN PERSON

There are lots of reasons why you might try to assemble a group of customers: to host an after-hours customer appreciation event, to put together a focus group for feedback, to get input in developing a new product or service....

Of course you can and should use low-tech means such as signs and flyers in your store to announce such events. You may also include mentions on your website or in your email newsletters.

But how do you keep track of who will be there?

## **FORM A GROUP!**

Get customers to sign up. You can do so with an event scheduling website such as Meetup.com.

Meetup.com is normally used for recurring meetings of special interest groups such as book clubs and the like but who's to say that you couldn't use it for your business?

Simply decide what kind of meeting you want. Determine where and when the meeting will take place and what type of person you'd like to be there. By entering specific details you avoid confusion and make the process smoother for everyone.

Have a restaurant, bar, deli, barber shop, muffler store or really any kind of establishment where customers come into your store? Create themed nights then set up open Meetup groups where your customers can sign themselves up to participate! Having a pasta night at your Italian restaurant may seem obvious but why not kick it up a few notches? Find an Italian language teacher at a local high school or college and hire them to teach a one hour lesson while diners enjoy a prix fixe meal with a preset menu.

Restaurants and bookstores are easy but you can still use this idea even if you have a less traditional type of business. Say you own an auto repair shop. What about teaching preventative maintenance and car care? Team up with a local liquor store or brew pub and serve hors d'oeuvres and beer tasting to go with the presentation.

A movie theater could do a themed night based around a movie. Choose an older classic movie to keep costs down. For that matter, perhaps you run a hair salon. Why not rent a projector and do an after-hours showing of a classic movie like Hairspray?

Or think bigger! A photography studio could invite in make-up artists and hairdressers and have a "glamour expo". A recruiter or job staffing agency could organize a job fair.

Sometimes you may want to offer such events for free, other times you might charge a token amount to offset your costs, and at other times still you might charge a bit more and make a small profit from the event.

## **PRIVATE PARTIES**

Meetup is a great tool but anyone can search for events and invite themselves. What if you wanted to prevent that or to control the number or type of people in the group? You could set it up to be by invitation only. Sites such as PunchBowl and Evite make this easy.

Simply post the details and send out invitations. Recipients click a link to RSVP, so you know who will or won't be there.



## **MAKE IT VIRTUAL**

You can also go virtual with your customer meetings. There are a couple of formats you could follow: an interactive type meeting where customers are allowed to interact with you and even with each other, or a webinar where you convey information to customers but control what comes back.

Customers who want to ask a question or make a comment during a webinar typically must “submit” it privately. You can then choose to respond publicly, privately or ignore the message. (For instance if it was a simple “I agree” that didn’t really warrant further response.)

## **INTERACTIVE ONLINE MEETINGS**

It’s not always easy to do fully interactive online meetings in real time. Some webinar services (addressed next) allow you to open up the discussion to all participants but it’s not an ideal solution.

Another approach is to not make the meetings take place in real time. Both Google and Yahoo offer a service called Groups that let you set up online meeting places. These can be made public or private. They can even be set to allow admission by invitation or permission only.

Both services offer a discussion thread where members can post comments or questions. These can be moderated so that comments must be approved before they are seen by the rest of the group, or they can be open with comments posted immediately.

Communities such as these can provide valuable ongoing customer feedback in certain circumstances but they are not real time; there is no “live” interaction. They are more like interactive message boards.

## **WEBINARS**

A webinar, in case you’ve never been involved with one, is basically just a seminar which is conducted online.

Typically they are conducted exclusively online though there is also the option of a live/online hybrid in which some participants are in the room with you attending a live seminar while others are attending online (also live and in real time).

Webinars can also be recorded and downloaded or played back after the fact, but that’s different from you meeting and interacting with your customers.

There are a number of services which will allow you to organize your own webinars. Two of the biggest names in this field are Webex and GoToMeeting. Both services have pricing plans under \$50 per month and both offer free trial periods. They are free to attendees.

Both also offer smartphone apps which allow customers to attend from their phone.

Just like in a more traditional seminar, information primarily flows in only one direction with a webinar. It is theoretically possible to open the floor to all attendees, but this is not recommended. It would be akin to everyone in a large conference hall having a microphone that is connected to the speaker system. With no one to regulate who speaks and when, chaos would reign.

Instead, you as meeting organizer act as traffic cop. Attendees can request to speak and you can selectively “turn on” their microphone while leaving all others off. Each person could get their turn at the podium by doing it one at a time.

An alternative is that attendees can type their comments and questions. These can go to a private queue that only you can see or they could be made public and visible to all.

### **USING THE FEEDBACK YOU GET**

Of course a lot depends on the purpose of the meeting you conduct but if you are soliciting customer feedback, your customers will expect you to act on what you learn.

Make sure that you not only take the feedback seriously but send out periodic follow-up notices to keep attendees (and possibly all of your customers) apprised of what you are doing with the feedback.

The bottom line is that meeting with customers is a great way to help your business flourish!

## 20 – AN ASSORTMENT OF ONLINE “CANDY”

In this chapter we'll introduce a whole host of really cool online tools that are available but that didn't warrant their own chapter.

### GOOGLE DOCS

Let's start with a fairly obvious one that most everyone probably already knows exists. Google Docs is a completely free online service that lets you create many different types of documents.

All of the Google Docs suite of programs are compatible with popular installed software such as Microsoft Office, Open Office and Apple's iWork suite. The Google Docs suite features:

- Word Processor
- Spreadsheet
- Presentations (similar to PowerPoint or Keynote)
- Drawings and Diagrams (can be used for flowcharts too)
- Forms (can be used for surveys, polls, mailing list signups or any other type of information gathering)
- Tables (an interesting database program used to analyze and present data, especially in maps)

Because documents you create are saved online (you can also download them if you prefer to save them locally), they can easily be shared with others or embedded in web pages and the like.

### SPICY NODES

If you do mind mapping, or just want to present some super cool interactive graphics on your website check out [SpicyNodes.org](http://SpicyNodes.org).

They have a free option which sports the SpicyNodes logo on any maps you create. They also have paid options starting at \$24 per month which allow greater customization and the ability to hide the logo.

### SLIDE SHARE AND PREZI

Want to present PowerPoint-type presentations online? Google Docs will let you create them and share them with a handful of others but SlideShare.net will make your presentation public on a grander scale. SlideShare is to online presentations what YouTube is to videos or Flickr is to photos.

They do have an ad-supported free option as well as ad-free subscriptions starting as low as \$19 per month.

Another really cool site for doing creative things with presentations is Prezi. Prezi gives a very slick look to the finished presentation in which you can zoom and slide around on what is essentially a giant image. They offer lots of samples on their site and you kind of have to watch a few to get an idea of what's possible.

Prezi also has an ad-supported free option plus \$59 and \$159 per year upgraded options which are ad-free.

### POLLS AND SURVEYS

One way to find out what your customers want is to ask them. A great way to do that is with a poll or a survey. While it's possible to create surveys using the Forms application in Google Docs, there are plenty of dedicated survey building sites online which specialize in that sort of thing.

A few notable ones are:

- KwikSurveys.com (completely free, ad-supported)
- SurveyMonkey.com (free with a 10 question limit, unlimited plans starting at \$17 per month)
- Zoomerang.com (free with a 12 question limit, unlimited plans starting at \$199 annually)
- PollDaddy.com (free with a 10 question limit, unlimited plans starting at \$200 annually)

There are some compelling reasons to consider a dedicated survey tool.

One is a feature called “branching and piping”. This enables you to control what question a user sees next based on how they answered the previous one. For example, if a respondent said she was unemployed you would not ask her annual salary.

Another feature is the ability to randomize the questions. Or to split test different questions or different question formats.

## **WIDGETS**

Widgets are essentially like smartphone apps for websites. They are very small, usually single-purpose programs.

For example a currency converter, a calendar or a ticker for news headlines. There are myriad kinds of widgets so it's likely that some are relevant to the type of business you own.

These can be a great way for users to customize the way they experience and interact with your web site. (Note that not all platforms support user-added widgets. In particular, many of the CMS systems I recommend support only widgets -- most call them plugins or extensions -- you get from their own repositories.)

If your site can support it, one great place to get widgets is from WidgetBox.com which offers plans starting at \$2.50 per month.

## **FIVERR.COM**

In the chapter on smartphones, I list several resources for cheap outsourcing of technical help. It actually works for much more than just technical help. For example, you can hire someone to write an article, do research, act as a personal assistant... just about anything you can imagine.

But there's another site that brings this concept to a whole new level. It's called Fiverr.com (that's not a typo, there are two "R"s in the name) and you kind of have to see it to believe it. Basically, people go there to list a product or service that they would be willing to provide for just \$5. (Hence the name.)

Boy do some people have some crazy stuff to offer. Some guy will sing Happy Birthday while dancing in a thong. A woman will videotape her bird walking on a piece of paper with your company logo. People offering to perform magic tricks of various kinds. A guy who will translate your name into Japanese and write the characters for you.

The point, as it relates and has value for business building, is that some of these wacky offers could be leveraged into eye-catching marketing gimmicks. Since the offers only cost \$5, it is something you could experiment with very cheaply.

What about a magic trick that makes your product or logo materialize out of thin air? Or a stop-motion claymation video? How about a birthday cake with your logo on it? Or hiring an animator to create custom art for a marketing campaign?

Simply perusing the site is bound to spark more than a few inventive promotional ideas. Or you can even request something specific and see who responds.

One word of caution, it's both unethical and unwise (i.e. you will likely encounter scammers) to hire people for certain things. Such purchases include things like giving your website a whole bunch of backlinks, or 10,000 Facebook Likes, or 1,000 new followers on Twitter or buying fake testimonials for your product.

## **GovLOOP.COM**

If your business is government or if your business interacts with government at any level from federal all the way down to municipal, then GovLoop may be worth looking into. GovLoop is a social networking site for government employees.

Most members talk about policy and technology trends as well as "how to do it better". That type of professional discussion makes it somewhat like LinkedIn, but members typically do not forge lists of connections. One of the main features is discussion threads, making it somewhat like Google Groups or Yahoo Groups. The site itself also sponsors training webinars, polls and other tools to encourage community engagement.

GovLoop may or may not add anything to your bottom line if you're a government contractor, but the free membership certainly can't hurt.

## **TOP-LEVEL DOMAINS**

First let me explain what top-level domains are. They are the segment that appears to the right of the very last dot in a URL. In other words, the "com" in .com (or .gov, .org, .net, etc.)

The reason I'm presenting this information here instead of the first chapter on having your own website is because of a relatively new ability that only became available in January 2012: the unrestricted opening of top-level domains.

Until 2012, there were a limited number of top-level domains possible. Each country had its own, plus there were a handful of generic ones with .com being the dominant option.

Beginning in 2012, we started seeing (and you could potentially start using) all sorts of interesting new top-level domains:

- .secure, for secure web sites
- .eco, for ecologically friendly organizations
- .bank, for financial institutions
- .shop, for stores and retail shops

These are hypothetical examples but just about anything will be eligible to become a new top-level domain.

Individuals will not be able to make up their own top-level domains. They are still regulated and there is a complex and expensive application process to acquire the rights to create and administer a top-level domain. The real candy here is that some cool new ones may soon exist.

## PINTEREST

Pinterest is another up and coming social networking site. (Truthfully, in early 2012 it made its way into the top 10 most popular social networking sites.) It rivals Twitter for being among the least well understood by outsiders.

Think of Pinterest as a sort of public display board. The essence of it is that users have display boards (they can have more than one) to which they can “pin” items of interest to them.

Say you are surfing online and see a sports car you’d love to own, you could pin a photo of it to one of your boards. Or a woman about to get married could pin floral arrangements, cakes, bridesmaid dress designs and other things related to her big day to one of her boards.

The boards on Pinterest are visual so pinned items are always photos or graphics of some type. Underlying these can be notes, links to web pages and other information.

These boards are public so “Pinner”, as Pinterest users are called, can search or browse others’ boards. They can follow boards that interest them, thus getting notified whenever they get updated with new content.

So how does this apply to your business? Naturally a lot depends on the type of business you have. One idea is to turn Pinterest into a sort of online catalog. Because Pinterest allows you to add prices to pinned items, this is easy.

Pinner could follow one of your boards (try setting up boards for each different type of product or service you offer) or they could even re-pin something they see on one of your boards to add it to their own wish list board.

You could also use Pinterest as a way of tracking and presenting trends in your industry. Say you run a clothing boutique, create boards for new seasonal fashion lines. Or hot color trends.

Or perhaps you run a travel agency. Create boards for different regions or types of destinations: tropical, Mediterranean, adventure tours, etc. Then pin items related to those destinations.

A shop that sells auto parts and does car customization could create boards that feature their customer’s cars. An author’s boards might feature literary or promotional events.

Naturally, Pinterest has built-in integration with other major social networks so items on your boards can easily be shared to your Facebook page, your Twitter stream or even back to your own website.

There are lots of ways to get images onto your Pinterest boards but the manual way, while it requires the most up-front effort, is best because it lets you have the most control. It also lets you manage where you direct click-through traffic.

To manually pin items, first find or post the item online (i.e. on your website). Now “build” the following URL right in your browser’s address bar:

`http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=CLICKTHROUGH_URL&media=IMAGE_URL&description=DESIRED_DESCRIPTION`

Note that this is one long URL with no spaces. If you need a space, such as in your description, substitute %20. For example:

This is my description.

becomes:

This%20is%20my%20description.

CLICKTHROUGH\_URL is the URL users would be directed to if they clicked on the item you are posting.

IMAGE\_URL is where the image you are posting is located. (It must already be online elsewhere as you can't upload images to Pinterest's servers.)

DESRIED\_DESCRIPTION is whatever you want as the caption for your image.

Once you've done it a couple of times, it will become easy.

## **SQUIDOO**

Squidoo is a cross between Pinterest, a blog and a traditional website. The concept isn't terribly easy to describe, though it's simple enough to grasp once you browse a few pages.

The service is free and anyone can sign up and create their own pages. Each Squidoo page is essentially a one page website.

Unlike a regular website, you don't get your own URL. Instead, all pages are hosted on Squidoo's site. In that sense, it's kind of like one long and detailed blog post and Squidoo itself is like a public blog that anyone can contribute to.

This carries some of the benefits of blogging, article marketing, having your own website and several other forms of promotion. In addition, it very likely reaches a different audience than you will reach on your own with any of those other methods.

Squidoo is not something to be used to the exclusion of any marketing methods already discussed, but it can be an effective supplement.

One final note: any or all of your Squidoo pages could be sales pages where you actually try to sell your wares online.

*(There's more to Squidoo than I've described here but this is what I find relevant to business building.)*

## **STAMPS.COM**

If you ship goods or send out even a modest amount of physical mail, consider opening a Stamps.com account. Why? There are both tangible and intangible reasons.

If you typically spend \$50 or more per month on postage, Stamps.com might just save you money. You get discounts on certain classes of mail, plus by weighing your mail you can apply exact postage and never overpay. The basic account costs \$16 per month so the pennies you'd save on each item mailed would have to add up for this to pay for itself on that basis.

Luckily, there are intangible reasons to use Stamps.com as well. The most significant being that you can customize your "stamps" with graphics and text; for instance, your company logo and/or advertising slogan.

Think how professional each of your outgoing pieces of mail would look with your company logo as part of the postage block.

At \$16 a month, this is cheap advertising but only if you send out enough mail to get it in front of a substantial number of eyes. Then again, the time and expense saved by not having to make trips to the post office could help offset that cost too.

If you use UPS WorldShip software, Stamps.com will automatically compare all your packages based on size, weight and destination and tell you which carrier will be least expensive.

Stamps.com integrates with popular ecommerce software including all major shopping cart software, eBay, Amazon, Etsy and others. It also integrates with popular office software like Quicken, Word, WordPerfect and almost all address books.



# 21 – WHEN SPELL CHECK FAILS

## ODE TO A HUMAN SPELL CHECKER

This poem was written by an unknown author. I first saw it when it was distributed by John Forde at [www.CopywritersRoundtable.com](http://www.CopywritersRoundtable.com) and is used with his permission.

*Eye halve a spelling chequer  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.*

*Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.  
As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.*

*Eye have run this poem threw it  
I am shore your pleased two no  
Its letter perfect awl the weigh  
My chequer tolled me sew.*

## THE DANGER OF RELYING ON SPELL CHECK

As the poem above demonstrates, it is relatively easy to have correctly spelled words that are still wrong for the context in which they are used. This is perhaps the most insidious danger of relying entirely on spell check.

Another danger, seen most often on “smart” cell phones but also occasionally found on computers too, is well-meaning spell checkers which auto-correct your words to the wrong thing.

I’m not saying that spell checkers are bad or shouldn’t be used but the spell checker between your ears is still often the best one. If you’re simply a terrible speller, it can pay to get help with anything important.

Hire someone to write it for you or, at the very least, get someone to read over what’s been written. When it’s your business you are presenting, you don’t want to present the wrong image.

## VERY PUBLIC ERRORS

On a major highway near my home there is a sign painted on the side of a large trailer. The trailer is parked right next to the road and is seen by everyone who passes by. The sign reads:

**“YOU SHOULD OF STOPPED”**

Clearly, the intended meaning was “You should have stopped”. And this is a professionally painted sign, not some spray painted sheet of plywood leaning up against a fence.

What percentage of people who see that sign do you suppose refuse to do business with that establishment purely on principle? Is that something you even want to find out the hard way for your own business?

A similar error appeared on a huge billboard for a very well-known pizza restaurant. The sign has since been replaced but it was up for years and read:

**“CAN YOU TASTE IT!”**

Obviously either the exclamation point should have been a question mark or the first two words were inadvertently transposed.

This may seem like nitpicking but such very basic errors reflect poorly on the businesses they represent. After all, the examples above are not even up to a 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

Would you accept such mistakes from a doctor who was about to perform surgery on one of your children? Or an attorney who was writing up the contracts you use for your business?

### **THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE**

One of the things a professional copywriter does is make sure to use correct spelling and grammar. When “wrong” sentence structures are employed, it is done deliberately and for a purpose.

For instance, I will frequently start a sentence or even a whole paragraph with a conjunction such as “and” or “but”. While it’s true that such usage is incorrect according to the rules of proper English grammar, it reflects the way people actually speak.

In fact, this very book is rife with examples of “incorrect” English usage which reflects the way that people speak. Written promotions which reflect how people speak are faster and easier to read. They read more naturally and are proven to generate a higher response and more sales.

The same principle usually explains paragraphs that are only one sentence long.

Or sentences that are only one or two words...

Sometimes without verbs...

Or the apparent over-use of ellipses...

And semicolons.

When it comes to promoting your business, there simply is no substitute for knowledge and experience. The spell checker is merely a backstop.

## 22 – THE CURE FOR BUYER’S BLOCK

My 15 year old daughter and I both got smartphones within a few days of each other. We got the exact same model, in the same color, from the same manufacturer, purchased at the same store, with service from the same cell phone provider.

Look at our phones now and it’s hard to see how they could be more different.

Hers has an orange protective case with stickers from her favorite band all over it. Mine is in a retro 1950’s style case in light blue. The passcodes to unlock the phones are different. The background picture on the main screen, the apps we’ve each downloaded, how we have our apps organized, even the names and numbers in our contact lists... all different.

What does this have to do with you and your business?

### **DON'T LET TWO CUSTOMERS GO TO THE PARTY IN THE SAME DRESS.**

Henry Ford was famous for saying that customers could get a Model T in any color they wanted, as long as it was black. How well do you think that sentiment would go over these days?

We accessorize and customize our cars, our phones, our homes....

There really is no end to customization. Students in college customize their course loads. So, in fact, do high school students.

You probably customized your meal the last time you ate at a restaurant. (Did you ask for dressing on the side? Or mashed potatoes instead of fries?)

You almost certainly customized the last computer you bought.

If we follow this reasoning to its logical conclusion, you might ask if there are any businesses which don’t allow orders to be customized.

### **“ALLOWING” ISN’T ENOUGH!**

Merely allowing customers to customize their orders is the minimum standard. If that’s all you’re doing, your competition will pass you by.

Make order customization a standard part of your offering. More than that, advertise it in every way possible and encourage buyers to fully take advantage of the offer.

Getting customers to buy-in makes them an interactive part of the production process.

Customers who feel like you gave them something unique that no other customer of yours has will voluntarily sign up to be your company’s free sales force. Especially if it’s not the norm in your industry.

### **SHOUTING IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS**

If you went to a discount store and bought a box of crayons, you probably wouldn’t think to tell anyone about it. If you went to the factory, got to watch the crayons being made and then got to customize your box with exactly the colors you wanted, you’d tell everybody. And you’d keep on telling that story for years... long after your kids were grown up and in college.

In fact, when they had kids of their own, you'd want to take your young grandchildren to that same factory and give them that same experience.

In essence, over the course of several years you not only "sold" dozens of people on those crayons but even sold yourself into becoming a repeat customer.

How can you get your customers to be so impressed by the experience of doing business with you that they tell everyone they know and then keep on talking about it for years to come?

### **THE IKEA EFFECT**

Have you ever walked around an Ikea store? It's an experience in and of itself. Families plan full day shopping trips around it.

There are lots of things that make Ikea so successful. Customization and personalization is certainly one of them. Another is that they don't just leave their customers to come up with their own ideas for room decorating. The bulk of each store is a series of room "suggestions".

Go into any Starbucks. They will let you customize every last thing about your cup of coffee. But they also have a menu and a chalkboard where they make suggestions.

While studies have shown that too much choice leads to decision paralysis, some choice can be a huge driver of both sales and customer satisfaction.

Writer's block comes when a writer is staring at a blank page and can't think of anything to fill it. Fill that same page, with anything at all, and it's much easier to change what's already there. The same applies to the "page" of what you have to offer.

Cure your customers' buyer's block by giving them something to change!

## 23 – "SMARTPHONE-IZE" YOUR BUSINESS

Smartphones are ubiquitous. Each new generation of phones has more and better capabilities. Already, even base model cell phones are capable of making calls, sending and receiving text messages and accessing the internet.

Higher models have even more capabilities: storing and playing audio and video files, playing streaming audio and video, GPS, calendar, contact management, voice recordings, still and video cameras and more.

Smartphones are the pinnacle of the cell phone pyramid. Their capabilities are almost infinitely expandable through the use of downloaded applications ("apps") which can do nearly anything that a full-sized computer can do.

A hybrid of these are new tablet devices. Tablets are essentially Smartphones with giant screens, though usually with the phone capabilities disabled or removed. Think of the iPad and similar tablets.

All this capability has led, naturally enough, to people using their phones for more and more tasks. Some of those tasks include interacting in new ways with the businesses those users patronize.

### **THE MOST BASIC THING YOU CAN DO**

Because smartphone and tablet screens come in all different sizes and resolution capabilities (so do computers for that matter), the single easiest and most important thing you can do is to ensure that the content and layout of your website is dynamically resizable.

What that means is that when a user goes to your website, no matter what size screen they are using, your site will detect it and automatically adjust itself accordingly. The most advanced adjustment options even allow the layout to change and content to move around for better display on smaller screens.

Adding this capability is relatively easy and will go a long way to improving the user experience of your customers.

### **WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO "SMARTPHONE-IZE" YOUR BUSINESS?**

A well-designed smartphone app could take the place of some of the things currently done by paid staff. For example, you could allow customers to set their own appointments by showing a public calendar with unavailable times greyed out and allow customers to pick from remaining time slots.

If you have customers who have a revolving account or who regularly carry a credit balance, allow them to access their account information through the app interface.

Or your app may feature a calculator for customers to figure out how much of your product they need. This could work well for paint stores, fabric stores, garden centers, etc. It could also work for service providers such as financial planners and investment advisors.

A checklist could be handy for some types of businesses. For instance, if there are certain things your clients must do for themselves before you can effectively start providing services. Say you are a carpet cleaner, some things you need are for dogs to be locked up, clutter to be picked up, perhaps you even want breakable or very valuable items removed from the rooms to be cleaned.

Think of a smartphone app as a utilitarian marketing tool not much different from a calendar, calculator or ruler. Brainstorm features and functions pertaining to your business which can be automated, which help

both you and your customers and especially which your customers are likely to find cool or useful. If necessary, enlist the help of a marketer who understands your business to help you come up with ideas.

### **HOW DO YOU GET THE PROGRAMMING DONE?**

A good app should have no more than a handful of features. Too many and it becomes both expensive for you to build and confusing for your customers to use. Even just one truly great feature can be enough to sustain an app.

You don't have to be a technical expert. Just write out in detail what you want done and how each function should work. Then you can hire freelance programmers to do the work of building the app.

Freelance coding can be surprisingly affordable. Check out online services like:

- Odesk
- Elance
- Rent-a-coder
- Guru.com
- Freelancer.com

Pricing will vary depending on the specifications you provide but even a fairly elaborate app should be well under \$1,000. Most should be only a few hundred. With some of the sites mentioned above, you set the budget you are prepared to spend and the programmers will "bid" on the contract within the constraints you set.

There are several major smartphone platforms. You don't necessarily need to support all of them, but you should consider supporting at least the top two or three. Add more if your app proves popular and drives business your way. In approximate order of popularity, the major smartphone platforms are:

- iPhone (iOS) – which can also run on iPod and iPad
- Android – which also runs many tablet devices
- Windows Phone – and other mobile Windows versions
- Blackberry and Blackberry enabled tablet devices
- HP/Palm (also known as WebOS)

Once the core functionality has been developed, porting it to additional platforms is only incremental work and should cost a mere fraction of the initial development cost.

### **HOW DO YOU GET CUSTOMERS TO USE YOUR APP?**

If your customers see some clear benefit to using it, all you'll really need is to make them aware that your app is available. Try offering features or services via the app that they can't easily get even directly from you or someone in your office. For example I'd much rather spend 30 seconds looking up my account balance or setting an appointment than five or more minutes on the phone having someone else do it for me.

### **SHOULD YOU CHARGE FOR YOUR APP?**

Unless your app has mass consumer appeal or the nature of your business is such that your customers would expect (and be willing) to pay for it, you are better off giving your app away for free. The cost to

develop it is a one-time expense. After that, you can distribute an unlimited number of copies for no extra charge.

Think of it like an electronic marketing premium that gets your name in front of customers and prospects who will see your company's name every time they use the app.

### **WHAT ABOUT UPDATES AND ONGOING SUPPORT?**

The point of this project is to attract new customers and to make your existing customers more loyal. There is no need for your app to always be cutting edge. Once it's in a stable, releasable form it should go several years without needing to be updated if it was well designed in the first place.

If a flaw is found in the app, the original coder should agree to fix it for free or a substantially reduced cost. If that isn't possible or you do wish to add new functionality, you can either go back to the original coder or return to any of the sites listed earlier to find a new developer to work on it.

## 24 – ALL ABOUT QR TAGS



You've seen them but may not have known what they are or what they're used for. QR tags are two-dimensional "bar codes" that can contain relatively large amounts of data. A standard bar code, such as the familiar UPC codes on product packaging, can encode perhaps a couple dozen characters at most.

By contrast, some QR tags can hold over 4,000 characters. The most common sizes can hold from about 75 to about 400 characters.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH QR TAGS

The big deal, as it applies to your business, is that these tags can be scanned and "read" by any smartphone which has a camera and a tag reader installed. Once read, the phone can automatically act on the data embedded in the tag.

For instance, you could set up a special page on your web site. You could even make it "hidden" from search engines. (See the chapter on Search Engine Optimization for how to do this.) Then embed the URL in a QR tag. When a user scans the tag, their phone's browser will automatically go to this special page. There, you can do anything you would do on any web page:

- play an audio or video file giving special tips about your product
- allow the user to view or download a manual for the product
- present a coupon
- ask the user to sign up for a contest or newsletter
- schedule an appointment
- register their product

There is really no limit.

Best of all, you can change what appears on the web page any time and as often as you like. As long as the URL stays the same, the existing tags will still work. And you can have an unlimited number of unique URLs for all different tags; one for each product, for each new marketing campaign, by region or customer segment... whatever suits your business needs.

### WAY BEYOND JUST WEB PAGES

While 90% or more of the QR Tags you see just point to a web page, it ignores so many other cool things that QR Tags can do. Here are just a few (the technology keeps evolving):

- Map coordinates
  - Print a QR Tag near your address on printed brochures and other "take-away" literature. Then you won't have to include a low-resolution map or lengthy directions to your location from every possible direction. Users who scan the tag will have it come up on a map right on their phone. From there, the phone's built-in GPS system will guide them to you from wherever they are.
  - Show customers where your materials or ingredients come from!
- Tweets and retweets for Twitter
  - Retweet links won't work in print, right? Wrong! You can embed the retweet into a QR Tag. If readers can just scan the tag and not have to retype the tweet on their phone, it makes it much more likely that they'll actually send the retweet.



- Facebook profiles and Likes
  - It's pretty common to see companies asking people "Like us on Facebook" in their ads. Why not go one step further and include a QR Tag that automates the process!
- LinkedIn profiles and status updates
  - Encourage people to connect with you on LinkedIn by making it super easy with a QR Tag that points to your LinkedIn profile.
- FourSquare check-in locations
  - Make your store a FourSquare location then post a QR Tag somewhere in your store. That makes it super easy for shoppers to check in and let others know they've been by to see you.
  - Have multiple locations? Put a different check-in at each one!
- Links to YouTube videos and iTunes songs
  - Have promotional videos, video testimonials, how-to videos and other kinds of videos showing your product or service in use? Do you have customer-submitted videos touting your business? If they're not already, all of those should be up on YouTube. Then you can create QR Tags to point to some of them or to your channel where they are all listed.
  - Specifically create a video showing how to assemble or install your product. Now your installation instructions can be a small sticker attached to the product itself!
  - Do you have a book, song, course, app or other media that is available in the iTunes or Google Play stores? Create a QR Tag to direct users to it.
- Simple text (almost anything you want, within the Tag's capacity)
  - Have a highly customizable product? Let's use a coffee shop as an example. A customer comes in and orders an African blend with a shot of orange syrup, soy milk and a dash of cloves. You create a tag on the spot describing the exact ingredients for that particular cup of coffee. Give it to the customer or attach it to the cup. If the customer wants to come back and order another just like it at a later time (or recommend it to a friend) all she has to do is scan the tag.
  - Create a contest or scavenger hunt which requires participants to assemble clues and solve some kind of mystery. Embed some or all of the clues in Simple Text QR Tags. Because the tags are not online, participants will have to be physically present to scan them. Scatter tags around your city, publish them in magazines or newspapers, even give some out with purchase of a product.
  - Encode a thank you note or discount code that customers see only after they've purchased one of your products. It can be printed right on the receipt, invoice or packing slip.
  - When you travel, create luggage tags with all your info. You could even put your complete travel itinerary.
- Phone number
  - Want to get customers to call you? Sure, you can print your number and ask users to dial it. Or you can use a Phone Number type QR Tag that will auto-dial it for them.
- Skype connection information
  - Connect on Skype? This QR Tag is similar to the phone number type except that it connects a Skype call rather than dialing a regular phone call.
- Text (SMS) message, including the number that the message should be sent to
  - Want confirmation that your product was delivered? Attach an SMS Message type QR Tag to the package and ask the courier or recipient to scan it upon receipt of the package. It will automatically send you a text message confirming delivery.
- Email address

- Easily share your email address by embedding it in a QR Tag. No more worries about misspellings or typos.
- A complete email message, including both recipient address and subject line
  - Want to invite user feedback via email? Use this QR Tag to simplify the process. You can even pre-fill the first few lines of the email for your users.
- vCard (virtual business card)
  - Show that your company is truly green by going paperless even with your business cards! Just carry one card that has a vCard type QR Tag on it. Show it to a prospect or business partner and when they scan the tag, it will add all your contact information to their phone's address book. It's one business card they won't forget!
  - To be truly attention grabbing, add one to your name tag when you go to meetings or conventions. Invite those you meet to scan the tag in order to add your contact information to their phone. They'll remember you!
  - Print a vCard type QR Tag on the back of your regular business card. Recipients won't have to scan or transcribe the information from your card, they can just scan the tag. No tedious typing or misspelling.
- Calendar entry
  - When you have a special event coming up and want people to mark their calendars, you can embed all the details in a Calendar Entry QR Tag. Scanning the tag will create a calendar entry with date, time, description, location, reminders... whatever details you specify.
- WiFi login credentials
  - Have secure WiFi at your location that you selectively open up to certain visitors? Instead of openly sharing the login credentials, either verbally or in print, encode them in a QR Tag. When a user scans the tag, they'll be connected automatically without seeing the credentials.
- PayPal "Buy Now" link, including everything needed for a 1-click purchase
  - Let customers buy a product and pay for it with Paypal. While buttons and hyperlinks work great online, for a physical product try a QR Tag. Scanning it takes the customer to a Paypal form with all the fields already filled in for them. You can even put the tags on all your pricing labels.
  - Turn your phone into a portable cash register by carrying around a pre-printed cheat sheet with QR Tags for all your most common items or prices. Scan the appropriate one and half your work is done for you.

Because QR Tag generators are free, you can economically try any or all of these ideas even for very inexpensive products like a cup of coffee. (There are lots of free QR tag generators available online. Try the one at [www.qrstuff.com](http://www.qrstuff.com))

## INVENTORY CONTROL

The technology for QR tags was originally developed by the automotive industry as a means of inventory control. They attach tags to cars on the assembly line to track them as they progress through the manufacturing process. A less marketing oriented but no less useful application would be to do something similar with your own products by attaching an encoded serial number. (You could also put the model number, date of manufacture and other such information.) This would be an example of a plain text tag.

Have consumables that need to be replaced? Let's say you sell and service copiers and printers. Attach QR tags to every device. When a user scans the tag on their device, they are taken to the order form on your website with all the info about their device already filled in. From there they can easily order new toner,

parts or schedule a service call for that exact model device. No wading through lots of menu options or trying to remember details about the printer that is down the hall, the tag contains all the data and feeds it right into your online ordering system. Making it so easy and convenient for customers means they'll never shop with another vendor again. A great example of a website URL tag done the right way.

## A COMPETING TECHNOLOGY



A variant of QR tags is a similar technology from Microsoft called MobiTags. Although the two formats are mutually incompatible and compete with one another, they share many of the same capabilities.

One major difference between the two is that QR tags are an open source standard throughout the world while MobiTags are proprietary technology belonging exclusively to Microsoft. There are many QR tag readers on the market but MobiTag readers can only be obtained from Microsoft (<http://gettag.mobi>).

Both formats are free. Being open source, QR tags will always be free or at least have a free option. Microsoft claims that MobiTags will always remain free as well but there is nothing preventing them from changing that stance or even from abandoning support for the technology entirely.

Microsoft's development of MobiTags is also ongoing but they natively support a much smaller range of data types. Basically, the options are: website URL, app download, plain text, vCard and phone number.

One strength of MobiTags (aside from the automated app download, which is a bit more cumbersome with QR Tags) is the more robust tracking and reporting abilities. Because Microsoft controls the entire MobiTag experience and all scans are routed through their servers, they can collect and report much more data than is possible with the more open QR Tag standard.

Microsoft's tighter control over the process also lets them impose expiration dates on tags. This might be useful for things like a tag-based discount coupon, for instance.

Another cosmetic difference that may be important to some businesses is that QR tags are limited to black and white or to some basic color and white (i.e. red and white or blue and white). MobiTags are a full color format and can even incorporate photos or other graphics within the tag itself, as seen in the MobiTag that Fat-Free Marketing Group uses.

## 25 – WRITE THE BOOK ON IT

Want to really be seen as an expert in your field? Write a book!

Of course to pull this off effectively assumes that you actually are something of an expert in your field.

Writing what you know into a book will have several benefits.

### **BEYOND BUSINESS CARDS**

Credit for this idea goes to a marketer and salesman named Jeffrey Gitomer. When you've written a book and have actual published copies of it, you can give away an autographed copy of it when you meet someone you think you might like to do business with.

Think about it for a moment. When was the last time someone handed you their business card and said they'd like to do business with you? It's probably happened hundreds of times. After a while, the faces and the details of those meetings kind of blur together.

Now when was the last time someone handed you an autographed book as a gift and said they wanted to do business with you? Chances are it's never happened. If it did, that's one introduction you'd likely remember.

You can employ variations of this principle with other types of gifts besides just books. However a book carries other benefits as well.

### **PROVE YOUR WORTH**

If you know enough about your field to write an entire book on the subject, people who are inclined to do business with someone in your industry will sit up and take notice. In essence, before they've even read what you've written, you will have "proven" your credibility with them.

Published authors enjoy a certain stature.

### **A 30,000 WORD SALES LETTER**

Using this book as a perfect example, writing a book in your field gives you the opportunity to essentially write the longest sales letter ever.

When someone is considering making any kind of substantial investment, whether it be of time or money or any other scarce resource, they usually want to know a great deal of information. If yours is a very well-known or commodity service, they may already have much of the information they need.

For instance, if you run a gas station, people are mostly buying on the basis of price, convenience or need. Someone whose tank is almost empty doesn't do a lot of comparison shopping and doesn't need a lot of information to make a buying decision.

On the other hand, if I'm having Lasik surgery done on my eyes, it's impossible to give me too much information about the topic. I'll want to know different approaches, techniques, procedures, equipment used, alternatives and anything else that's relevant.

I'll also want a strong sense that I am dealing with a professional who is competent and trustworthy. If you've written an entire book that anticipates and answers all my questions, you've given me two valuable things:

1. The information I need, whether I hire you to do my surgery or choose someone else, and
2. The confidence that you are an expert in your field.

As already discussed in the chapter on article marketing, your book doesn't have to push me to do business with you. The law of reciprocity, combined with my sense of confidence in your qualifications, will automatically make me predisposed to choose you over others who perform the same service.

## **WRITING WITHOUT WRITING**

Don't have time to write a book? Hire a ghost writer to do it for you!

You can dictate what you want written onto a series of audio recordings then hire a professional writer to transcribe them for you.

For this to really work, the writer may need access to interview you several times during the course of the project. Those interviews could be in person or by phone.

When Randy Pausch was writing "The Last Lecture", he and his ghost writer had almost daily phone interviews while Professor Pausch exercised or spent time with his family.

The ghost writer is a worker for hire. He gets paid for his time and effort but is not a co-author. He generally does not get credit for the writing of the book. (*Full disclosure: I offer such ghost writing services as part of my freelance business practice.*)

Pricing should generally be on a per word basis with \$0.25-\$1.00 per word being fair. Total final cost for the completed project should be in the range of \$2,500-\$10,000. Two to three rounds of edits and rewrites is standard and does not merit additional compensation.

## **GETTING IT PUBLISHED**

Once you've written the book, the next step is getting it published.

Unlike an artist putting forth the great American novel, you should have no illusions about your book being a bestseller. In fact, you may want to consider not even selling it at all.

Writing and publishing is probably not your primary line of business and, unless you wish to make it so, the book is really just a form of advertising. As such, there is no stigma whatsoever to your book being self-published.

You basically have two possible avenues you can follow: electronic publishing and distribution (aka "ebooks") or hiring a printer to create more traditional books for you. These options are not mutually exclusive and you can certainly do both.

For ebook publishing, nothing special is really needed. Simply write your book, get it edited for clarity and content then save as a PDF file.

The easiest form of distribution is to post the PDF file on your website and let interested readers download it from there. You could also distribute it through various sites like:

- Lulu Press (more on them in a moment)
- Scribd.com (which is to self-published books what YouTube is to self-produced videos)
- SmashWords (similar to Scribd)
- Amazon.com

In fact, you can also designate your ebook to be released for Kindle, Sony Reader, Adobe eReader, Apple's iBook and other electronic readers.

There are also a number of places online where you can have books printed. One that I have used and can strongly recommend is Lulu Press ([www.Lulu.com](http://www.Lulu.com)).

They have a relatively easy to follow user interface and will walk you through the publishing process. You can create both public (i.e. books for sale) and private projects. You can also get an ISBN number and even get your book listed for sale in places like Amazon.com if you should wish it.

Lulu also has its own marketplace. This is similar to Amazon.com but features only books published by Lulu. Even readers who have never heard of you before may find your book in the Lulu marketplace if you make it publicly available. You can offer both traditional and electronic books there.

### **ALTERNATE FORMATS**

Once you've written your book, leverage the content and also release it as an audio book! Of course this may not work in some highly visual fields but for most, it's a great option.

Podiobooks is a SmashWords partner specializing in distributing audio books. All of the titles they distribute are free (they do have a donation acceptance system in place) so Podiobooks wouldn't work for a traditional author trying to make a living by writing. However they will work just fine for a business owner who is only using his book as a means of promoting his business.

This information was originally developed and offered to promote the freelance copywriting and business building services of Jeff Kontur and Fat-Free Marketing Group.

While I'll consider working with anyone, I specialize in partnering with ecologically friendly "green" businesses and technologies. If you want to build your business to a whole new level of success:

- Visit: [www.FatFreeMarketingGroup.com](http://www.FatFreeMarketingGroup.com)
- Email: [Jeff@FatFreeMarketingGroup.com](mailto:Jeff@FatFreeMarketingGroup.com)
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