

Getting started, how to Get more Business, and how to Market your product or service effectively

This is about Marketing your new business, it is not about how to set up a business, that is a separate subject.

Introduction

First of all, when we are daft enough to think that the world will beat a path to our door for that special product or service that we can offer to people we need to sit down and think carefully about whether we have finally gone out of our tiny minds. Yes - what has given our ego the idea that we have something special which would make others believe it and buy from us. It is no use doing what everyone else does in the belief that we can do it better, because on its own we probably can't unless we are really special - and let's face it, few of us are.

A couple of phrases that you may have heard of before, - *Me too businesses may earn you a living, but you have to have something unique in order to make money,* - and *Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door.*

So, where does that get us. It should make you think what you are about. It is no use trying to sell anything and everything to everyone, you can't sell that. If you market yourself as a handyman, no one will come to you because they don't want handymen, they want a plumber, a builder, a plasterer, a car mechanic, an accountant, a pensions advisor and will look up the appropriate trade they want, never thinking to look up a handyman, even if you can do all those things well. I went to an IT exhibition at the NEC about a year ago and nearly every stand was declaring that it offered *ABusiness Solutions®* - which was the same thing as saying - we are handymen, it told me nothing about what they were selling and I had to waste much precious time trying to determine what they had on offer.

First easy step

First base then, is decide what you are, and try and describe yourself in one word or short phrase. I am a web designer, or as a phrase - I am an e-commerce programmer and web designer. Be succinct. Be simple. People remember simple. If you can't do that, you are lost. If you can, you have achieved the first step towards marketing your business and getting new customers, and it is the cheapest way of doing it because what you do now is start a policy of introducing your business to everyone you meet. It is called networking. It is called networking because at the same time as you do this, you ask the person whom you have met what they do, and this business of taking an interest in others inflates their ego, and helps to make your statement to them more memorable. They may not need a web designer or programmer at the time you first meet, but at some time in the future they might meet someone who does, and they will remember you, because you took an interest in them. A bit of psychology at work.

It doesn't matter whom you meet, or what for. Open the conversation with, *>Hello, my name is Tony Cadwallader, I am an e-commerce programmer and web designer, what do you do?* Practice it so that it comes naturally. If you know what the other person does, then modify the statement accordingly by perhaps asking them how long they have been a milkman or whatever, but the important thing is that you get your statement across. This is most important when starting out in a new business, but don't forget it even when you have become established.

Benefits

Our next step is to determine what it is that we do that is unique, and which sets us apart from all the other *me too* businesses. Don't kid yourself that you are just better than the rest, you are probably not, let's be realistic, but it is possible that you can be different. The acid test is to sit down again - we do quite a bit of sitting down - and ask ourselves why someone should buy our product or service rather than the next guys. In marketing parlance it is called our unique selling points. So write down what you do that is different from others, never mind order of importance, just do it, and list the points.

Having done that, this is not the end, because what we now need to do is to write down beside each unique selling point, how that benefits the customer or client. We need to do this because people don't buy selling points, or features as they are called, they buy benefits to themselves. You see what we need to be thinking of is what customers want, not what we want to sell them, and if we take this approach to selling, we shall get much further towards what salesmen call a closure.

Let's take my own example by illustration. My first attempt at setting out my unique selling points might be:

- \$ web design
- \$ domain name acquisitions
- \$ e-commerce programming
- \$ perl scripting
- \$ good coffee

I now try to put benefits to those features and I get the following list:-

- web design - to help get you more customers and/or business recognition
- \$ domain name acquisitions - so your web site will be recognisably yours
- \$ e-commerce programming - so that you can sell product on-line
- \$ perl scripting - your pages can be made dynamic, responsive to input
- \$ good coffee - which means we have a sense of humour and we are friendly

So far so good, but if I look at that critically, what am I doing that is different from what other web designers are doing, or is my business a *Me too* business. Am I making a better mousetrap, or am I making the same mousetrap as everyone else and just hoping that people will like me enough to buy mine!

So let us re-visit that list and see what we can do, honestly, to put ourselves above the rest. We find that we have discovered that other web designers just web design, and some do it very well, but while they impress their clients, many of them fail to fulfill the promise that a client thinks he is getting when requesting a web page, which is that people will find his web pages and thereby make a judgement about whether to buy his products or services. That promise, which is unwritten, is that his web pages will be found. My business goes out of its way to get its client web pages found, not only by doing the Search Engine listing for the customer as part of the service, but also by authoring the pages so that they are Search Engine friendly and start to attract reasonable listings when punters do a search for our client's product. - That's different and is worthy of incorporating into the benefits thinking.

Next we have to think of what the client wants to buy. He doesn't want a web page, he wants more customers, or he wants to establish integrity in his profession, and by making a site informative, he can do that. By making the site responsive to question or input he can do that.

There is no point in pushing web domain names, because when we provide web space

via an Internet Service Provider, the domain name is acquired without cost, so why sell something that does not cost anything. The problem is that when clients acquire their own domain names and get them registered, we have to charge quite a lot more because in most cases it can take several hours to prize the domain names from whichever registration agency has registered them, to use them on a suitable corporate Internet Web Site host. So that is not worthy of stressing on our benefits list.

He may want to sell product on the web. He can do this by buying a shopping cart programme from a number of good sources, but what we do is write our own shopping cart scripts, and tailor each one to each client's own special needs. The neat thing about this is that at the end of the day this is cheaper for the client than buying a pre-boxed package, and since it is serviced by us, he does not have to be a technical wizard to make it work - he can concentrate his time on selling more of his own product. Very few web designers write their own scripts, that is different and is worthy of incorporating into our benefits list.

In all this, as a company, we not only provide web design service, but we include in the cost, for servicing it for twelve months after conception, so that for a fixed fee, the pages can be changed as often as the client wants in order to get it right for him, and to keep the pages fresh throughout the year, and to allow for monitoring the hit success rate of the site.

On top of all that, we can demonstrate a proven track record in what we have done in the past, so why don't we tell the punters that and stand on merit. You can only do that once you have been in business for a while, but testimonies, references, or proof if you can provide it, is good to help you offer integrity to what you are saying.

Finally we should consider peoples Primary Buying Motives. At the end of the day, there are only three things that people want to buy. - They are - **Pleasure, Pride, and Profit**, for those who like alliteration. It is an old marketing maxim, that we sell benefits, but those benefits must in themselves target one or more of the primary motivations in order to ring bells with potential customers. How do our benefits stack up against those?

OK, so how does that effect our benefits list, can we now declare a uniqueness to it that will put us above the rest of the players.

- \$ We provide the capacity to obtain more business and raise your company's integrity profile by building Search Engine friendly Web Pages that look good and will help generate revenue.
- \$ We provide a Web Sales platform tailored to your products and services that can achieve sales success.
- \$ We provide an ongoing, year round service, so we can't escape after we have done it, and we have evidence of past successes that we can demonstrate.
- \$ We provide friendly help and good coffee and take pride in your success.

That's getting better, it is nearer to what we perceive that customers want to buy. Notice, that we have decided that they don't want to buy the services of a perl programmer, they don't want to know that, it's the *Web Sales platform, tailored ...* etc that they want, so let's tell them that is what they are going to get, rather than tell them how we do it!

Now, you don't want to know about my business, but I have set out my company thinking here as an example of how you need to think about your business. Now we have our list of benefits, how are we going to use them.

You need three things in your readily available armoury. You need your introductory patter, which we talked about earlier - *Hello, my name is Tony Cadwallader, I am an E-*

Commerce programmer and Web Designer - , you need a Business Card, and I would suggest that you need a leaflet of some sort to give folk that want to know a little more about what you do. I favour a three-fold A4 leaflet, simply because it will slip into an inside jacket pocket without having to be folded, and printed both sides, can contain quite a lot of information. With a little skill, both the business card and the leaflet can be produced on your own computer, but be professional about it, it is your image.

Talk the Customer's language

I receive about 800 e-mails per week, most of which are what we lovingly call spam, and all of them are trying to sell me something. Many are trying to coerce me to visit some nubile female, others to have my penis or my breasts enlarged, others inviting me to pay for the latest money raising scam, and still others are from a Nigerian source asking me to open an account to receive , 47 million pounds of which my share would be 15% if I were to co-operate. Non of these are very interesting, but the most stupid ones are those that are requesting me to download a Japanese language font so that I can read their messages, and look something like this: -

_3I 1AdŠí_FèŠú_, 0_ðe3eN=x_ê_Á_@~JAnxg_I_É__μAü_ê - which does not tell me a lot.

This is an extreme example of not speaking the customer's language, but the point is, on a more serious note, do sufficient research of your potential client list to at least consider whether there is a likelihood that they might be in need of your product or service, otherwise you are wasting considerable time and cost, and then address them in terms that they will understand.

Target Marketing

It is little use trying to market yourself as a handyman as we said earlier, people want to buy specific goods or services. You need to get your head round precisely what it is that you are peddling and then you are in the best position to craft your sales material accordingly. You also have to consider the type of people you want to reach, and this may also influence how you attract their attention.

Who are the people who might want to buy or benefit from your product or service. You may take the scatter-gun approach and tell everyone if you have an endless budget for advertising, or you can be selective and make your approach more cost effective - if like the rest of us, your budget is precious. If you have a consumer product or service, then newspaper advertising is probably the most relevant so long as the type of newspaper that you select matches the profile of the people that you want to get to, but if you are selling management advice, then you need a different type of paper, maybe a financial journal, trade paper, or direct mail might be more effective to the type of companies with whom you have had experience. The important thing is to plan it.

Another old marketing maxim is that *people buy people first*, and therefore try to add a little of your style and personality into your copy and get away from all those pages that say *here we are, we are the greatest, buy us*. A slightly more subtle approach can reap more benefits and you will be better able to get your message across.

Writing copy that sells

First, think about words for a moment. Think about how powerful they can be. Words.... so powerful they can cause people to fight or a whole country to go to war. Words make us laugh and they can make us cry but they can also make people buy! Ads written with a proven formula and with the right words can pull responses like crazy. If the ad is in a place where it can be read, the responses will just keep coming.

Save up to 50% on Groceries!
Plus Earn Thousands of , , , 's
Helping Others Save!
Write or call today!

This ad was written using the basic formula that most copywriters use. The fact is that anyone can use this formula and when you do, you will see measurable results. Here is the formula:

Attract - **Attention**
Generate - **Interest**
Stimulate - **Desire**
Ask for - **Action**

When people are scanning ads, and their eyes move across your ad, you only have a few seconds if that to capture their attention. The first objective is to write a headline that can **attract the reader's Attention**. This is the first step of the four part formula for writing successful ads. You want it to be your ad that grabs the reader's attention. You may have to write pages of different headlines to get one that stands out from the rest but this is really a small price to make the difference between success and failure. Start by writing down the main benefit of your product or service. A benefit is something that fills a need in the reader's life. It may be more money or better health. It maybe a service that saves valuable time or just makes life easier in some way. When you know what your main benefit is, start writing headlines using power words to emphasize and magnify your main benefit. Before you begin, it would be wise to read ads for the purpose of learning to write ads. You will start to see the big differences between ads.... from the bland to the downright compelling! One person might write *Eggs for Sale* but the next person may make his eggs sound so much better even if the eggs are identical! *Farm Fresh Eggs for Sale!* Now don't those eggs sound much better. Free Range eggs always worry me though, so be careful of your English. Once you have a headline that you feel can get the reader's attention, your next job is to develop **Interest and Desire**. As with most ads, you will have to do this with a limited amount of words so don't waste them! The reader of your ad should be persuaded that what you offer will solve one of their problems. Let them know that your Herbal Pain Relief Formula really will give them a pain free life once again! Use power words to emphasize the benefits they will get if they respond to your ad. Solve one of the reader's problems with words and your are just about there! One of the biggest mistakes made by ad writers is when they fail to ask the reader to **take action**. If you have a Herbal Pain Formula website, you might close the ad by writing *To End Your Pain - Click Here!* If you want the person to respond by email, by phone or to write to you, tell them how to respond. If you don't tell them to respond they probably won't! Here is how an ad for a herbal pain formula might read:

Live Pain Free!
New Herbal Formula with
Pain Free Guarantee!
To End Your Pain - Click Here Now!

Ad writing or copy writing is an art and you can't learn it all from any one article. But if you will seek out the information and spend some time at developing this art, you can see a difference in your response rates. With time, you may even write an award winner that could pull for years to come!

Product or Service Branding

What's this all about ? Essentially it means getting your product or service identity across so that it can be recognised as yours. It is achieved by looking at all your marketing tools; your business cards, your leaflets, flyers, brochures, information packs, adverts, web pages, your tele-marketing, your direct mail, and using a unifying theme and/or logo identity throughout the whole collection. Brand recognition is important, get it right and it will help establish your integrity and product worthiness. Many of us still call a vacuum cleaner - a *Hoover*, and carry a *Biro* around in our pockets. Sad isn't it. These companies succeeded in getting their name recognised as generic for the product which are well know examples, but we in our small way need to make a start.

To this extent, name is important. **Lichfield Web Design**, not only provides a company name, but also tells us a lot about what the company does, and indeed, where it does it from. **AR Cadwallader Enterprises** tells us nothing.

Don't be afraid of using a logo, but let it mean something, or at least grab attention. How about - Dorothy ?

Alternatively -

LWD



I am afraid the LWD does nothing for me, but at least Dorothy grabs attention, so I use Dorothy, and call her my assistant, and then blame her when people find spelling mistakes in my copy. She is a little endearing don't you think ?

Selling

So far we have talked about how we craft our marketing, but now let us turn our attention to selling methods, and here we have a useful tool provided for us by Alan Shaw of Carshaw Services. He has produced a PowerPoint show telling us how we can inexpensively get started, which is available on the web site for members to view on-line at the Lichfield Business Club web site: <http://www.ldb.co.uk/ldsbc/>

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