



Hub Marketing

Build Your Business By Building Community
and Relationships

By Tad Hargrave

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“Mas fhiach an teachdaire, ’s fhiach an gnothach”

“If the messenger be worthy, the business is.”

— Gaelic proverb

Introduction

When I was in my early twenties, I had a private meeting with Vicente Fox. This was before he became the President of Mexico, when he was still the governor of his home state of Guanajuato.

I hadn't intended for it to be a private meeting.

It was 1999, and I was running the youth portion of an annual meeting of civil society organisations called The World Social Forum in San Francisco. Vicente had spoken one afternoon and I was very moved by what he had to say. In my youth I was obsessed with the spotlight of fame and desired to be anywhere near it. I convinced myself (correctly as it would turn out) that this man would become the President of Mexico one day and I began wondering about how I could have a conversation with him.

I was friends with Claire Garrison, the wife of Jim Garrison, who ran The World Social Forum. I didn't think Vicente would agree to meet with me alone, but he might agree to meet with me if the other young people were there. As well as if Claire was there, who I knew he was close to. So, I approached Claire and said, "Claire! All of the youth are having breakfast together tomorrow and we were wondering if you'd like to join us?" She was delighted to be invited.

The rest of the youth knew nothing about this, yet.

I then approached Vicente. "Mr. Fox," I said, "the youth and Claire are having breakfast tomorrow and I'm wondering if you might join us?"

"Well, I wouldn't have long because I have a flight to catch but certainly I could spare half an hour."

"Wonderful! Let's meet in the lobby of the Fairmont at 9am."

The deal was struck and I marched off to share this fine development with the rest of the youth in the program. They mostly nodded and agreed to be there. "This is great!" they said. "Thanks for setting it up!" they said. Some declined, and a few pointed out that because it was the last night of the Forum it was a big party night and, well, they'd have to see how they felt in the morning.

But, after an evening of hustling, I felt confident that I'd rustled up enough fellow young people to make it worth everyone's while.

The next morning, I made my way to the lobby to see Vicente waiting for me with no other young people around. Claire was nowhere to be seen either. After a few minutes, my stomach dropped as I realized that no one else was coming. I told him, "I am so sorry. I think everyone is hungover. I think I'm it." And so we sat and talked for thirty minutes about leadership and the world. Towards

the end, as the good Governor Fox was leaving, Claire arrived and we wandered off to breakfast together.

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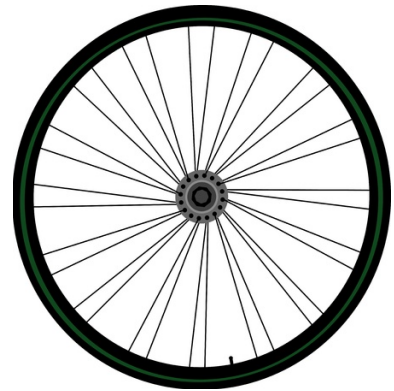
“Where do I find clients? Where do I advertise?” This plaintive cry lands at my doorstep all too often.

Of course, all of this starts with your niche, which I’ve written about extensively in my book *The Niching Nest*. Your niche is this strange constellation of *what you do*, *how you do it* and *for whom*. Your niche is your role in the community. One of the central questions that niching asks of us is: *Who are your people?* Until this is identified, the above question about where to find customers remains impossible to answer.

In the world of word-of-mouth marketing, we have a name for the places where you can find your people. They are called *hubs*. Why? Well, consider the wheel: the hub of the wheel is the only point on the wheel where all of the spokes connect. And so, in the marketplace, in the centre, hubs to market to are the places where your target market hangs out and connects with each other. Hubs are the centre of your niche’s world. They are very, very important.

My definition of hub marketing:

- Hub marketing is about putting your marketing where people are already looking and listening.
- Hub marketing is about finding the people, places, groups and events that are already well connected to and deeply respected by your ideal clients and marketing there.
- Hub marketing is about getting the people your ideal clients trust most to do your marketing for you.



Hub marketing is one of the core things that I teach in my marketing workshops. hub marketing is not a new idea, but it’s often new to those with whom I work.

Hub Marketing

Out of everything that I teach, hub marketing is one of the pieces that people consistently tell me is most useful and practical. hub marketing has four things going for it:

1. Hub marketing is an approach to marketing that is less expensive, and sometimes even free.
2. Hub marketing is also more effective than other forms of marketing. Much more effective, and not just by 10 or 20 per cent but sometimes two, three or ten times more effective as an approach to marketing.
3. Hub marketing feels better to do.
4. Hub marketing feels better to receive.

I've been baffled for years about why this isn't shared in more marketing courses. hub marketing is one of the magical things about marketing. A good question to ask of our marketing, as my colleague George Kao suggested: "Whenever you're about to try an approach – some technique, some tactic – ask yourself, 'If everybody in the marketplace used this approach, what would happen to the marketplace?'"

Of course, we can see the results of that all around us. The ways that we mistrust certain people, and even within this conscious business scene, there's a mistrust and a suspicion because certain techniques get used a lot. There are consequences to what we do. Hub marketing is an approach that, if everyone did it, the marketplace would actually, in my mind, be a much more trustworthy and safe place for people to be working, buying, exchanging, and sharing in.

To give credit where it's due, I first came across this notion of hub marketing through Jay Abraham. The way he talked about it was as Host/Parasite Marketing, later changed to what he called Host/Beneficiary Marketing (meaning that one person was the one with the connections and the other person benefitted from those connections). hub marketing also appears often as joint ventures or strategic ventures. In this scenario, you'd ask yourself which businesses you could partner with that are already connected to your people?

But the term "hubs" came to my art from Dominic Canterbury from Seattle. He's a marketing and sales strategist. When I heard the term from him at a workshop, it made so much sense and I've not shaken it since.

Here are some examples of how hub marketing works and why it matters:

In direct mail, if you sent out 100 sales letters to people who had never heard of you, you'd be lucky to get five responses. Five responses would actually be considered pretty good. But, if 100 people got a letter from their dear and trusted friend, endorsing something relevant and valuable to a problem they were having, in my experience, you might see 20-40 responses, sometimes even more.

That's hub marketing. Hub marketing works better.

People don't trust advertising. They don't want to talk to salespeople. They love buying, but they hate being sold to. They want to find something perfect for them, but they don't want to be pressured about it. They want to receive information in a no-pressure environment so that they can make their own decisions about whether or not something is a fit. And they would, ideally, like to receive the introduction from a friend they trust.

A while ago, I wrote this as my Facebook status update:

If someone I trust calls you "the world's leading authority on _____," then I'm paying attention. If you call yourself "the world's leading authority on _____," then I'm unsubscribing.

But hub marketing isn't always so far, so straightforward or transparent. In his book *The Great Formula*, Mark Joyner asks the question, "If you had a hamburger stand and were only allowed one competitive advantage, what would it be?"

And, of course, the ideas immediately come. Some answers included: best sauces, 100 per cent organic, vegetarian focus, local, pasture-raised meats, best service, etc. But, he points out, there's only one competitive advantage worth choosing if you can only choose one: to be situated right next to a hungry crowd.

Finding a complimentary business can be a great example of this dynamic. Here's some simple mainstream examples of businesses that are a natural fit and could benefit from working together:

- Girl Guides who sell their cookies outside of a bong shop.
- Taxis who wait around outside the bars at 1am.
- Coffee shops in bookstores. Every Chapters Indigo has a Starbucks in it now.
- Pizza places and video rental stores. This is mostly a historical example by now, but you always used to find at least one of each in neighbourhood plazas.
- Accountants and financial planners. Businesses could be situated together, or practitioners could even share an office.
- Toy stores and fast food chains. It's not unusual to find toy stores situated close to high-density fast food options.

Hub Marketing

- Dry cleaners and clothing stores. They could be situated close to one another, or have a clear referral relationship.
- Paint stores and tile businesses. As with the previous example, either situated close to one another, or having a clear referral relationship.
- Jewelry stores and wedding suppliers – another good example of proximity and/or referral relationships.

Why do they work so well together? They have the same customer. The “common customer” is the centre of the Joint Venture marketing concept. It’s the centre of this notion of hubs. Where else, besides your business, do your ideal clients hang out? Well, your customers are likely also customers of other businesses that sell related products.

Other examples include many hub partnership options. Say that you are a **personal fitness trainer** – you help your customers get and stay healthy. Most likely, your customers also purchase products and services from:

- athletic shoe stores
- athletic apparel stores
- athletic equipment providers
- fitness centres
- health-related mail order catalogue
- health-related magazines and books
- health food and nutrition stores
- sporting events
- health-related television providers

You could formulate hub partnerships. For instance, if you’re a chiropractor, then hubs for you could be:

- orthopaedic doctors
- massage therapists
- physical therapists
- family physicians
- local gym owners and managers
- yoga studios
- outpatient placement coordinators, etc

Consider these examples as well:

- Event planners who partner with venues.
- Chefs and caterers who partner with someone who rents out very unique antique china sets for parties.
- The acupuncturist who focuses on rest and rejuvenation partnering with yoga teachers and nutritionists.
- A mentor for “mother and daughter pairs” who partners with after school programs, summer camps, and other youth program leaders.
- A bodywork/massage teacher who partners with a pilates studio that trains teachers.
- A birthing teacher who partners with doulas, pre-natal yoga instructors, or midwives.
- A business coach who partners with professional organizers, money coaches, bookkeepers, and web designers.
- A teacher/tutor of cosmic science classes who partners with the local homeschooling community.

All of these examples are just the beginning. What would happen if you actually set a meeting with potential hubs in your network to come up with potential promotions to do together? The payoff could be tremendous.

And what would happen if you found a way to be the first person in their mind when someone comes to them looking for what it is that you offer? We’re going to explore how to do just that.

Welcome to hub marketing.

The Path To Your Door

My dear colleague Corrina Gordon-Barnes once taught at a marketing workshop I was leading in London. The first words she said are words I have repeated in most of my marketing workshops since. “Stop looking for your ideal clients. Your ideal clients are already looking for you.” I recall when she said those two sentence, and then repeated them, how I could feel the gears in all of our minds seizing up, and see by the puzzled looks around me, which seemed to say: isn’t the whole point of marketing to look for clients?



Our success as a business, it turns out, isn’t so much about *finding* our *ideal* clients (like a search light from which people tend to run), but about making it easy for our ideal clients to find *us* (like a lighthouse). This one shift in perspective will have monumental implications for your marketing.

The language of modern marketing has had the (perhaps unintended) consequence of rendering humans as “prospects,” as not really alive, not really having an agency or the ability to choose what they want on their own. They’ve become objects to collect. We speak of “getting clients” as if they have no say in the matter. Sales and marketing courses speak of their hallowed, “secret,” “stealth,” and “ninja” techniques that will guarantee you every sale if only you could be good enough at them. If they’re not working? Well, there must be something very wrong with you (but nothing their advance course can’t handle).

So let me offer a shift in language I got from Mark Silver of Heart of Business, Inc. The people we’d like to work with are less prospects and more *prospectors*, meaning they’re also likely doing their own looking and checking us out with more scrutiny than we check them out. To them, we’re a prospective vendor or service provider. This is much closer to reality. They’re looking for a solution to their problem or a better way to get some result that they’re craving. They’re not passive. Many of them are actively engaged in looking for or thinking about this issue.

“Stop looking for your ideal clients. Your ideal clients are already looking for you.”

And so, again, the goal here is about making it easy for *them* to find *us*.

Imagine that your business is a cabin in the woods.

Now imagine that there are no paths at all that lead to your door. Ask yourself, how many people are likely to hack through the underbrush to get to me?

Very few.

Stated differently, we are in the business of building paths to our doors. We want to make them easy to find, the right size, and well-marked with plenty of signage.

Another way to look at this is to think of a well. There is water in the ground but there's no way to reach it; so you build a well to create a path that water can travel to arrive with you.

Stated another way, imagine you are hosting an amazing themed party. You have your place decorated to the nines but you forgot to send invitations. How are people going to *find out* about your party?

There are many paths or ways that hub marketing can work. I want to focus on the 10 that are of particular use to service providers. They are:

1. Writing
2. Presenting
3. Networking
4. Creating community-building events
5. Social media
6. Hosting events
7. Advertising
8. Public relations
9. Virtual presentations
10. Free sessions

These are the 10 I tend to focus on, but what kind of hub marketing is best to use? What kind of parts to build?

Weight Watchers has a great line about how there is one form of exercise that has proven to be the best for weight loss. When I ask people at workshops what they imagine it might be, people will list things like running, swimming, walking etc. But here's the answer, the most effective form of exercise for weight loss *is the one that you will do*. It does not matter if walking or running or swimming is *technically* better. If you hate swimming because you almost drowned as a child, swimming is not the best form of exercise for you.

I think the same is true for marketing. **The best form of marketing is the kind of marketing you will actually do.**

Public speaking is a great form of marketing unless you are paralytically shy and cannot get up in front of people. If you write all the time, then writing may be a great form of marketing for you. If

you hate writing or can't do it, then it's not the best for you. If you love social media, I'd recommend it as a form of marketing. If you hate it and are trying to get off of it, it may not be the best thing for you. Networking is great. I could throw some people into a room full of strangers and, by the end of the night, they would have met everyone and made introductions between people. They would be sitting there, regaling their new friends, who are crowded around them, telling stories. Other people would have quietly drunken themselves into oblivion in the corner and just waited for the evening to end. For the profound introvert, networking may not be the best thing but for an extrovert, it might be. All of the approaches listed above work. And there are more.

I see it too often at workshops where some people focus on one particular form of marketing. They get swept up in that. It's easy to feel that you have to market with a particular path or approach, and you have to do it in the way that is being suggested.

At some marketing workshops they'll tell you that you *have* to blog, you *have* to do public speaking. But you don't. **You don't have to do anything, but you have to do something.** There has to be some paths. There's got to be some way that people can find you, but it doesn't have to be any *particular* thing. It can be whatever mix of approaches that works best for you.

It is always great to learn from others, to see what you can pick out. However, it can be dangerous when we start applying the exact same approaches to our businesses because, like a piece of custom-made clothing that's not ours, it's not likely to fit. I want to invite the possibility that our paths need to be made for us. They need to be authentic.

If you are marketing some green product but the *way* you are marketing it is not green, it is obviously not going to be a fit; it is going to trip people up. Whatever our platform or niche is, I think our marketing can and must be an expression of that.

Let's imagine you are running workshops about how we are all equal and how hierarchy is the devil. You do an intro workshop to promote it at some conference, or something, and you start by jumping on stage and acting like you are above everybody, talking down to them. The participants are never given a chance to interact and you do not take any questions. Well, this hardly embodies equality in the way you are talking about it. The gap between what you're offering and how you're offering it will be jarring to most people.

We want to find a way where our marketing can actually be an expression of what we are doing. I think there are two steps here. One, is figuring out, fundamentally, what the paths are that we want to pick – what resonates the most with us. Two, is figuring out the *way* we are going to do it that feels just right for us. The way that feels perfect for us. I speak about this second piece more in-depth in my eBook [How to Start](#).

Years ago, a friend of mine went to a workshop that was all about how to do these big presentations, and then sell a high-priced package. So, she gathered her friends in her living room one night and she did it just like the trainers had told her to do. There was a lot of “accelerated

learning” stuff: high-five your neighbour kind of forced interactivity; getting them to say yes a lot; getting them to buy-in; and then at the end, she made the offer, saying, in effect: “Here is this package worth \$10,000 dollars, but today I want to drop the price to half of that. And for the first seven people, it will only be \$1,000.” That kind of thing.

Her friends were all appalled and shocked. They said, “What happened to our friend? Where did she go?” She was doing what she thought she needed to do. And her friends were horrified.

So, which approaches do you choose?

They have to be ones you’ll do. And, ones that feel right for you.

But . . . there is one approach to marketing that can make any of the 10 paths (and others) you end up picking much more effective. There’s an approach that will cost less money, establish more good vibes, be many times more effective and also, if done well, it can be healing to the marketplace as a whole.

I call that approach hub marketing.

Part One: Learning About Hub Marketing

Part One Introduction: Learning About Hub Marketing

Once you understand what hub marketing *is*, the rest follows fairly naturally. But until it really lands (what it is and isn't) it all feels laborious and counterintuitive.

In this section, you'll learn what it is, why it matters, the different levels of marketing (and how this relates to hubs), the different types of hubs, the qualities of a good hub. As well as you'll read dozens of examples of hub marketing in action.

By the end of this section, you should have a solid understanding of what I mean when I say, hub marketing.

What Is A Hub?

Imagine a wheel. In the centre of it, connecting all of the spokes, is the hub. The hub is the connection point. Every community and niche has these. These are people, locations, events, media, etc. that connect people in communities. Keep this wheel image in mind as we move forward.



The wheel is a place where an existing community can connect.

The corner store, local bar, farmers' market, or nearby cafe are all places where people in the neighbourhood can see each other and have conversations.

There's that vegetarian or local food restaurant in town where you always seem to see someone you know and where even the strangers you meet are fine people.

The poster board at the organic grocery store is a hub (as is the store itself).

Directories are hubs. Facebook and Meetup groups are hubs.

Want to find a local business you can trust? Check out Yelp. That's a hub.

Want to find information? Go to Google. That's a hub, albeit a huge one.

Certain annual events (e.g. summer festivals) are hubs where you can count on seeing people you love.

Certain people you know who seem to know everyone? They're hubs too.

Funny cat videos? YouTube is definitely a hub.

Once you realize what a hub is, you begin to see and know they're everywhere.

Another way to think of a hub is as a trusted advisor. A hub is a go-to person on a particular issue. They seem to know everything about it.

It's also important to acknowledge that not all hubs are people but that all hubs have people connected to them. For example, a nightclub isn't a person, but if nightclubs were your target market then it might be helpful to know the DJs, bartenders, managers, or serving staff.

An organic grocery store isn't a person, but, if you were a holistic practitioner, it might be useful to get to know the folks who work in the supplement section.

Hubs are everywhere.

You are already a hub.

You actually get no say in this. You're already a hub for something (or perhaps many things). You exist at the overlapping of a few different communities. You're a connection point for certain things in a way that no one else could be.

There are people in your life who when they recommend a band, a movie to see, or a book to read, you're just like, "I'll get it." They are your filter. You're just like, "Your taste is amazing." You say yes to everything. And then, there are other people who will say to you, "Man, I just saw the best movie. You've got to check it out," and you'll reply, "Let me write down the name of this movie so I can make sure I never see it. Thank you for your consistent terrible taste in all things cultural." There are those people too —hubs of bad taste!

Without hubs, there's no community.

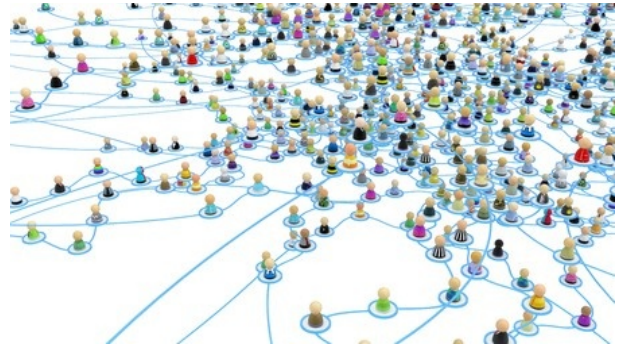
“The praise of the praiseworthy is above all rewards.”

— J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

Why Do Hubs Matter In Marketing?

Word-of-mouth is what actually drives marketing.

As much as we can learn fancy marketing techniques, different “closing techniques” and ways to pitch our products and services. Or, how to do the one-on-one discovery sessions, how to do public speaking, how to enrol people from the front of the room, it doesn’t take away from the fact that “word-of-mouth” is how marketing actually happens most of the time.



People talk to people. We trust the recommendations of our friends because they’re independent; they usually have no vested interest or selfish motive. They’re not being bribed to tell us about it and so we trust them.

However, there are certain people who are much more connected and respected than others.

This is vital to understand: *Who* we hear about something from has a lot to do with how valuable we think the message is. One person could say that they really like a movie and we know we’re never going to see it because we don’t trust their taste. Another person might say they loved the same movie and we would trust them.

Who we hear information from makes all the difference as to whether or not we trust that information.

This is how indigenous wisdom has survived and been passed down through generations, and how the validity of certain stories has been established. “Who’d you hear that from?” they would, and still do, ask. If the source was a credible one, then a community would believe it. If not, they would question it. And so, developing a reputation for telling the truth has been paramount.

And, sometimes, this can be a matter of life or death.

I recall hearing a story about a tsunami in Asia. I wish I could remember where or when but it is lost to me. All along the coast line, villages were destroyed and many people died. But, there was one village where a higher percentage of people survived. An elder in this community – someone everyone trusted utterly – knew, from the behaviour of animals, that a tsunami was coming despite not being able to see it. So when he told everyone to flee up the hill, they didn’t question him. If he said a tsunami was coming and that they should get to safety, it must be true. More people survived because of this trust.

Communities fall apart without the presence of reliable people.

And, for your marketing, this matters too.

Why?

Well, it's easy to get lost in paths and tactics. But, you can take any tactic and combine it with a hub and it will work better. Not just 10 per cent better but, often, double, triple, or ten times as well.

Don't believe me? Consider this. The average response rate for a direct response mail-out is 1-2 per cent. That means most of the people who get these letters don't even open them.

But, when's the last time you didn't open a letter from a friend?

When our marketing is based on trying to meet strangers and convince them that we're great, we are struggling uphill.

When you realize that one hub could bring you, for example, ten new clients, and you do the math, you see that the returns start adding up. Remember, when you get a new client, many of them will come back again and again. Let's say \$300 was the lifetime financial value of an average client for you. If you met one hub at a networking event who ended up, over the span of their relationship with you, referring ten clients to you, then that's \$3,000 from that one hub.

Your marketing can become ten times easier when you start basis your marketing on building relationships with hubs rather than the traditional "cold approach" marketing.

The following metaphor might help drive this home . . .

Hub Marketing Is Like Baseball

My colleague Robert Middleton often speaks of how marketing is like baseball.

You are at home base and you are a stranger.

First base is **clarity** — potential clients understand what you do and how you do it. For most holistic practitioners, it is a minor miracle when people actually get what you do.



Second base is establishing **trust**. They say, “Hey, I like you. You are my people.” But also, “I trust that you can do what you say you can do.”

Third base is a sort of **excitement**, a general agreement. They’re thinking, “I want to work with you. I want to book a session.” They are leaning in but they haven’t fully committed yet. The **home run** is that they actually pay you.

Most of us approach marketing thinking, “I want to get home runs.” But, in reality, home runs are difficult. Especially when what you are using is what I call a “cold marketing” approach. Effective marketing is a long process. You can’t skip bases.

But, consider what happens when word-of-mouth is involved, when there is a referral, when a hub — especially someone who is very well-connected and respected — says, “You should go check out this person.”

First of all, they are probably going to make it very **clear** to their people what it is and why they are recommending your service or offering. It’s also highly unlikely that a hub would recommend something that was unclear. So, you’re already on first base immediately. And then, **trust** is imported because this person said, “You should trust it.” So now, you’re on second base. With regard to the excitement of third base, assuming something is endorsed by a hub, people will immediately find themselves there, ready and excited to work with you. They arrived there thanks to the hub without you having to work so hard to get them there.

At this point, it’s often just a matter of timing or the right offer for people to take the leap.

It’s not uncommon for a hub to hit a home run for us; sometimes all it takes is for people to trust somebody enough. When they say, “Go buy this book,” they just go and buy the book. They say, “Book a session with this person,” and they book a session.

Hub Marketing

The cold approach will move people slowly but surely around the bases. hub marketing will quickly gather you crowds on second and third base with far less effort than you might have expended otherwise.

Additional Resources:

marketingforhippies.com/marketing-is-like-baseball

“We all know some talkers. There’s the neighbour everyone goes to for advice on travel, the friend who knows every doctor in town, and the co-worker who always knows about the best happy hour. Every product has some talkers – and you’re probably the talker for something. (What do people ask you about?)”

– Andy Sernovitz, Word of Mouth Marketing

The Three Levels Of Marketing

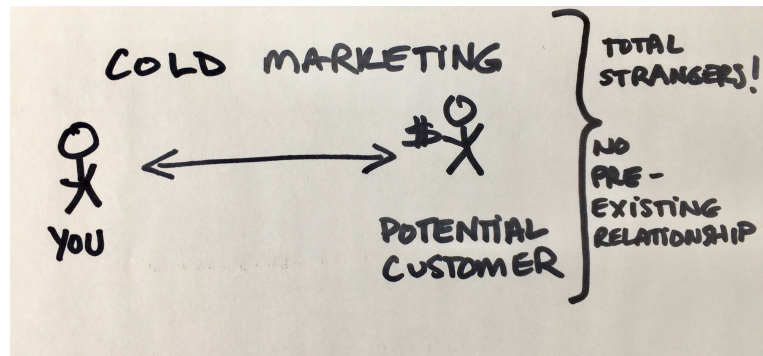
One day, and I can't recall when, it occurred to me that there are three levels at which marketing happened: cold, warm, and hot.

I recall this being a stunning realization.

It was followed by another realization that most entrepreneurs only ever do cold marketing, the most basic and ineffective level. Understanding all three levels can be a game-changer for your marketing that allows you to build your business organically and solidly but also faster than you might have ever imagined.

Level One – Cold

When people start out in business, the natural (and wise) instinct is to reach out to friends and family for help. We start with all the people we know. But then . . . we quickly run out of people.



The cold level includes things like: cold calling, direct mail to a certain postal code where you only get a 1-2 per cent response rate, knocking on doors, telemarketing, random billboards, or networking at random business mixers and luncheons. The key is that there's no pre-existing relationship or warmth between you and the person you're trying to reach. You're a total stranger. You are an unknown commodity to them.

When most people think about marketing, this is what they think about. As soon as I start talking about marketing, people immediately begin to think about examples from the cold level. You're standing here, your potential client is standing over there. They've got some money, you've got a product or service that you're offering. You don't know each other at all and then you go directly to them and try to sell them something.

The challenge with that approach is that it's a cold approach, it lacks meaningful connection. You're starting from zero. This doesn't mean don't do it. It means it's harder.

At the cold level, it's a 10:1 ratio. I see this sort of result over and over again with the cold approach. You're investing 10 units of effort and getting one unit of reward. This doesn't make a lot of sense from an energy-system standpoint — it's unsustainable. You're putting in so much effort and getting so little reward. This level of marketing is incredibly time consuming, not that

effective, and can leave you feeling desperate. It leaves us in a constant level of crisis. Again, this is most marketing out there.

Most marketing fails because it's cold.

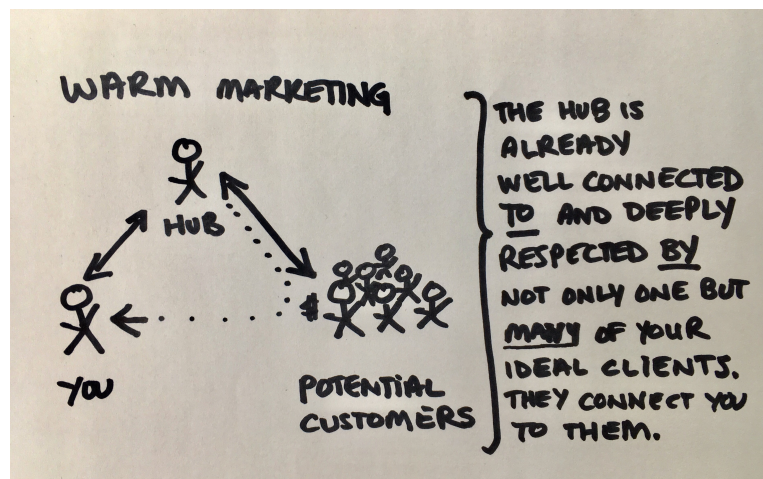
If cold marketing was the only option for marketing then, yes, it would be terrible and stressful indeed. Who would want to do that? The only way to survive in business, in this case, would be to have enough money in the bank to survive years of poor results and hope that eventually you developed a good enough reputation that you no longer needed to market.

Thankfully, cold marketing is not the only option.

Level Two – Warm:

The next level is the warm level. This level is a 1:1 ratio. One unit of effort for one unit of reward. You put in a lot of time and money and get a fair return.

This level is all about partnerships. It's all about identifying your hubs. Instead of trying to do it all yourself, you build something much stronger together because you're supporting each other. Most entrepreneurs are *solo* entrepreneurs and it can be a very lonely process.



Warm marketing looks like you standing with your product or service across from somebody who has money and interest in buying what you're selling. In this scenario, instead of going directly to them, there's actually a third person in the interaction: *the hub*.

The hub already has a pre-existing relationship with the person you're trying to reach. Now it's a triangle, not just a line. The critical thing to grasp here is that the hub doesn't have a pre-existing relationship with just *one* potential client. They have a pre-existing relationship with *many* people who could all be potential clients. And, the relationship between them is a very warm relationship. There is a lot of love and trust that already exists.

The hub's endorsement carries a lot of weight.

At the warm level, we ask ourselves, "Who is already connected to the people I want to be connected with and could they introduce me?"

Your ideal clients are already spending their time, money and attention in other places. There are certain events and locations where we're most likely to find them. There are certain magazines, blogs and websites that they check out. There are certain people that are already well-connected to and respected by our target markets.

So the warm level means that you start attending carefully chosen events and connecting with the right people who attend said events. You strategically build relationships with key hubs.

This is a huge leap for most businesses.

At this level, when you approach people they are already "warm" to you because they've already heard about you from someone they trust.

When I went to Ottawa for the first time, nobody was on my email list. I had never been to Ottawa to lead a workshop before and yet on this first trip I filled two day-long events with 50 people each. I spent maybe three hours working on my promo and outreach about the workshops. How is that possible? Let me tell you . . .

I were able to accomplish this because I connected to a hub. In this case that hub was a person: Heather Garrod, who runs Planet Botanix in Ottawa a holistic store that sells soaps and crystals and such), hosted me. She is very well-connected and well-respected in the holistic scene and she endorsed me to her community. They trusted her, so they came to my workshops.

Heather became a hub for me because she had seen my website and liked it, it resonated with her. She had heard something good about my work from a friend of hers (which helped, of course) so she decided to host me. To her I said, "I will give you \$25 per person who shows up," and she said, "That sounds great." We did it and the end result was 100 people signing up. Again, this was with almost no effort on my part.

Any tactic that you can think of will work better if you can figure out a way to connect it to a hub.

For example, let's say you write a blog post and post it on your blog. It sits there lonely if you don't have blog followers and aren't utilizing search engine optimization, few people will find your site. Nobody ever sees it for the rest of eternity; versus you write that same piece and post it on a frequently visited website. Let's say you're a yoga teacher and you write an article and post it on ElephantJournal.com, that article will be seen by millions of people who will then discover you and your website. That works much better.

Hub marketing works better.

Let's say you want to do a talk and you try to fill it yourself with your own crowd. You'll likely fill the first one or two events but, eventually, your crowd will have already seen your stuff and the

ticket sales will drop. But what if you were to find a conference that has already gathered your ideal people together and you get booked as a speaker at the conference in front of 1,000 people who are all your ideal client? That's better.

Hub marketing works better.

You put out a tweet yourself, and a few people see it. But, what if it were to be shared or retweeted by somebody who had a following of 100,000? Same tweet. Different level of reach. That's better.

Hub marketing works better.

How about networking? There are two ways you can use hubs in networking. One is to think of making hub connections over client connections. When most people go networking they are in a mindset of trying to find clients. I want to suggest that that's a stressful way to do networking because it becomes about trying to get the sale somewhere, which is the "cold approach." What if, instead, when you went networking, you didn't go networking for clients, but for hubs? What if you went networking for people who might, in the long term, be really good partners who could refer dozens of clients your way?

Another way to use hubs in networking is to have them network for you. Let's say you go to a networking event and you're cold approaching everyone. Some people are extroverts and can pull this off really well but it's still a lot of work. What if, instead, the host of the party took you by the arm and introduced you to the people you needed to meet. This person gives you a warm introduction, saying to everyone, "Here's a really great person. You can trust them. They're great." That would work many times better for you.

Hub marketing works better.

It doesn't take a lot of hubs to change the marketing game for you either.

In Victoria, B.C., there's a fellow named Ahmed Miles who is a white, British, Sufi, Chinese Medicine practitioner, and one of the loveliest men you'll ever meet. When I met him, he seemed to have a thriving practice in a town already full of holistic practitioners. Being the marketer I am, my curiosity led me to ask him one night over dinner, "Where do you get most of your clients?" He replied: "Mostly two sources." For many years, two main hubs have given him almost all of his clients.

Level Three – Hot:

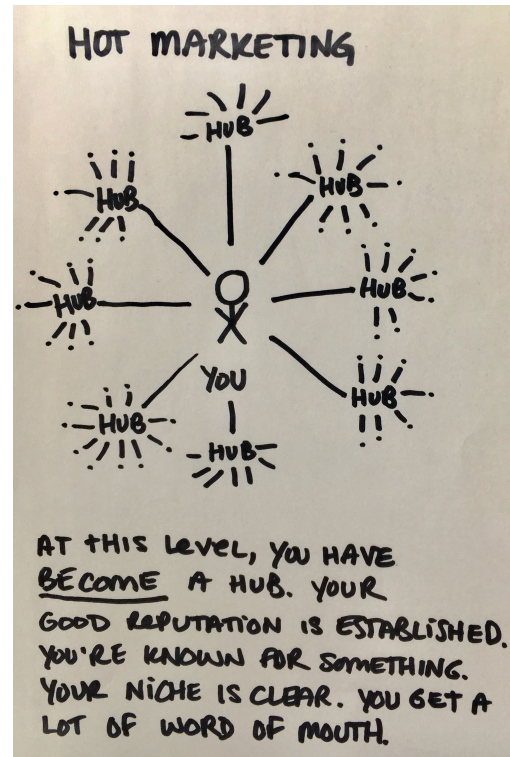
The hot level is a 1:10 ratio. One unit of effort for 10 units of reward. You put in a little bit of time and money and get a huge return. This is the level we're going for. At the hot level, the heavy lifting has been done.

At this level, we not only *work* with hubs, we have become one.

An added bonus of this level is that by simply working the warm level long enough, you naturally become a hub. And not just for your clients. You become a hub for your scene and for the hubs in your scene. You end up adding value to people's lives long before they become your client. If you're a generosity-based business, and do an excellent job at helping people, you will become a hub over time.

An important distinction to make at this level is between being a Passive Hub and an Active Hub. If you're a Passive Hub, then you just enjoy the increased stature as it comes. If you're an Active Hub, you're diligently looking at how to be a better connector in your community. The latter requires a bit more effort and ingenuity. It requires you to be constantly be thinking, "How can I help my community more? What do they need?"

At the hot level, people are seeking you out. You're very well-known for a particular thing. Your niche and platform have been clearly established. You likely receive a lot of referrals from others. You're a go-to person in a certain domain. When people are struggling with certain issues, they come to you. You're the trusted adviser. People are adding you on Facebook. You're no longer trying to receive awards, you're likely the one giving them out. Your reputation precedes you. You've shifted from being the searchlight, trying to chase people down, to being the lighthouse, guiding everyone towards what they're looking for. Instead of being a guest in the community, desperately trying to fit in and be accepted, you are now a host of the community. Instead of being at the periphery trying to get in, you sit calmly at the centre.



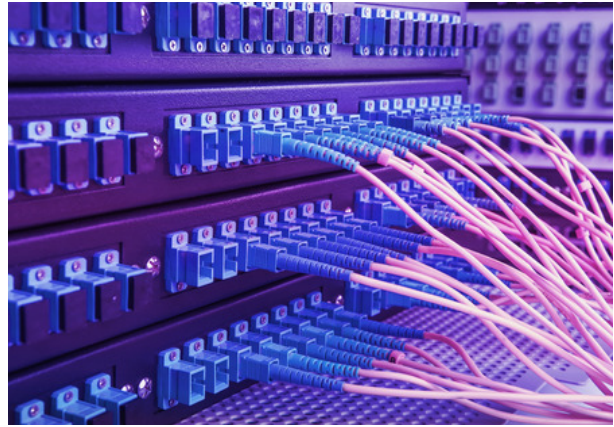
“Most people are careful about making personal recommendations. When you are on the receiving end of one, you evaluate the person making the introduction as carefully as you do the person being introduced.”

— Michael Phillips and Salli Raspberry, *Marketing Without Advertising*

The Seven Types Of Hubs

One of the most common questions I get about hub marketing is, “So, what is a hub exactly?” The answer is that, while there are always people connected to hubs, there are generally seven major types to consider.

This is important because sometimes the process of identifying hubs can feel a bit overwhelming and picking one category at a time can make this easier.



One central question to ask yourself is, “*Where does my target market already spend their time, money, and attention?*” This will reveal some hubs, but if you want to narrow it down even further, here are seven main categories to consider.

1. EVENTS and LOCATIONS: Where does your niche gather, congregate, celebrate and hangout?
2. BUSINESSES: Where do they already spend their money?
3. GROUPS: What groups are they a part of?
4. SUPPORT: What resources or groups exist to support them?
5. PUBLICATIONS (print and web): Where do they go for news and information that is relevant, credible and valuable to them?
6. INDIVIDUALS: Who do they most trust (whether globally or locally)?
7. WEB SEARCH: if your niche were to search for a solution to a problem on Google, what would they type in?

The answers to these questions will reveal, without fail, the best places to find your ideal clients. Or, possibly and more importantly, that there are no hubs.

The next page shows these seven types of hubs broken down with a bit more detail and some examples for each.

Hub Marketing

HUB TYPE	EXAMPLES
EVENTS and LOCATIONS (online and offline): Where does your niche gather, congregate, celebrate and hangout?	Examples: community meetings, protests, fundraisers, social gatherings, fairs, markets, potlucks, picnics, lectures, workshops, cultural events, expos, conferences, theatre, art expo events, sports events, trade fairs, parties, concerts, festivals, annual events, weekly meetings, vacation spots, parks, tribe.com, zaadz.com, myspace.com, etc.
BUSINESSES: Where do they already spend their money?	<p>Complimentary products and services, things they would likely get before or after buying your own products — things that are a fit to go with what you offer. Example: scented candles with yoga mats and yoga video and yoga clothes.</p> <p>Competitive products or services: Example 1: Non-toxic salon catering to people with allergies – health food stores, allergists, medical doctors, prenatal groups, florist who sends unscented or non-allergenic flowers, etc.</p> <p>Example 2: Realtor focused on Dog Owners - dog groomers, vets, dog walkers, dog trainers, dog daycares, pet stores, etc.</p> <p>Example 3: GENERIC LIST: fitness centre, recreation club, clubs, restaurants, retail stores, grocery stores, cafes, community centres, spa, clothing store, educational institutions</p>
GROUPS: What formal groups are they a part of?	Examples: church, mosque, associations, networks, alumni associations, trade groups, networking groups, coalitions, book clubs, interest clubs, unions, guilds, service, organizations, hobby clubs, professional clubs, non profits, societies, spiritual groups
SUPPORT: What resources or groups exist to support them?	Find a complimentary charity: Examples: lobby groups, advocacy groups, toast masters, volunteer orgs, government programs, government departments, grassroots groups, etc.
WEBSEARCH: if your niche were to search for a solution to their problems on Google, what would they type in?	Examples: Google, YouTube, frequent press releases, lotsa links, key words, etc.
PUBLICATIONS (on and offline): Where do they go for news and information that is relevant, credible and valuable for them?	<p>Where do your competitors advertise? Is it effective? Find out . . .</p> <p>Examples: listserves, magazines, newsletters, trade journals, academic journals, catalogues, TV shows, radio shows, websites, blogs, newspapers, myspace.com, event programs (e.g. Greenfest), tribe.com, yellow pages, green pages, Chamber of Commerce publications, public library listings, city directories, locally produced maps, tourist publications, international directories, and publications of county, state and federal government agencies that operate in specialized fields.</p> <p>Online listings on electronic bulletin boards may also be useful. Remember also that local training schools (such as a culinary academy), trade schools, and wholesalers commonly publish directories, some of which may be appropriate for your business.</p>
INDIVIDUALS: Which individuals do they most trust (whether globally or locally)?	<p>Example: your own raving fan clients, and icons, industry critics, industry commentators, industry watchdogs, industry leaders, authors, folks who also have your niche as their clients, friends, family, coworkers and colleagues.</p> <p>Go to amazon.com and research authors who write about the topics your work focused on. Then look at the people who've reviewed those books. Some people write a lot of very in-depth reviews there — they're hubs too.</p> <p>To create such a list, start by gathering all the names on your invoices, ledger cards, mailing lists, email messages, personal checks you have accepted, customer sign-up sheets, electronic handheld device, and so on.</p>

“The opinion of people in your field – professional peers, leaders in the field, knowledgeable suppliers, key employees, or former students and apprentices – can make a huge difference to a successful personal recommendation marketing campaign.”

– Michael Phillips and Salli Raspberry, *Marketing Without Advertising*

Real World Hub Marketing Examples

The following section will give you a number of compact case studies to help you see some of the different ways that hub marketing can transpire.

Pet Photographer

Erica and James Fernandes of evocatedogphoto.com wrote me this after learning about hubs from me:

We want to be the hub for folks that love their pets and need great pet photography. We have partnered with a pet resort manager (Springbank Pet Resort) who likes synergies and offering our photography to his clients; a lovely couple who gave up good paying jobs to open their own pet store (Optimal Pet Foods) and share more time with their rescue dogs in their store; a pet treat manufacturer (Waggers Pet Products) who lives in our neighbourhood and provides exceptional quality pet foods; and have been published in *Citizen Pet Magazine* with a centre-fold and a how to photograph your pet article.

Hypnotherapy Case Study

I recently heard of a Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist in Edmonton who, to promote his work, joined a couple of networking groups. Of the groups, Business Network International (BNI) has provided him the most business. What he did was gather about eight or 10 people who he thought were movers and shakers and invited them in for a free hypnotherapy session so that they could fairly articulate the hypnotherapy experience to others. He also invited everyone in the BNI group to a free seminar called “Quantum Leap Your Sales Workshop.” This tactic helped increase his number of referrals dramatically. For someone who had only been in the industry a few months, these actions now have him well on his way.

Raw Foodist

One of my clients has used hubs in multiple ways. She is a raw foodist who moved to Santa Cruz and spent a year networking, attending workshops, chamber of commerce events, and all the food-related Meetup groups she could find. She was invited to speak at a solar oven cookout event (because she has expertise in solar ovens), which got her five speaking gigs. She also got a corporate gig by being on the event committee for a local business fair. At one of their meetings, she handed out gift certificates for the chiropractic office she worked with and a fellow committee member said, “Oh, I’m a VP of a company starting a wellness program.” So, she negotiated on behalf of the

chiropractic office and offered her raw food products to them as well as arranging to teach courses there as well. At the local farmers' market – a local hub – she would set up her solar oven and strike up conversations with people curious about the unusual looking cooking device. She'd also wear the necklaces she made so that when people so asked her, "Do you sell them?" she could say she did.

Depressed Teens

During one of my live weekend programs, a woman named Shyra Rawson was exploring working with depressed teens and had a huge lightbulb go off. She wrote to tell me about it:

I found out from Elizabeth that Wendy and Lana are both also interested in teenage depression. Lana wants to work with the parents, I want to work with the teens, and Wendy wants the teens and the parents to talk together! Elizabeth realized the link and brought us together and we were all dumbfounded!! Now, I'm starting from square one again with that first "homework" you gave us. Through synchronicity, I also realized that over the past few years I've met other people working in this field – yoga teachers, meditation teachers, other holistic practitioners, etc. It's definitely "meant to be!" Anyway . . . Long email, but thought I'd share the "magic" that happened for me at your weekend intensive!

A Mortgage Broker with Moxy

I once heard of a mortgage broker who worked the hubs angle beautifully.

He knew that realtors would be the central hub for him to get clients. But, why should they bother with him? Most of them already had long-standing relationships with his competition. So, he took this bold approach. He identified the top three realtors in town and said, "I'd like to make you an offer. Use me as your mortgage broker and, in return, I will take a fraction of my regular fee. You'll make thousands more dollars per transaction with your clients. I will do that for two years. At the end of those two years, if you agree that I have given you five-star service, then you will continue to work with me at my regular rates. As you can imagine, the response was overwhelmingly positive and got him in the door, whereas a generic approach would have found him locked out forever. Naturally, these realtors were thrilled and told their friends.

His was a hard pitch to ignore: superior service for less money.

And then, he took it even further. This mortgage broker knew that yelp.com was a major hub for him as well. He knew his ideal clients would use that website to check out mortgage brokers in the area. They'd read the independent reviews, so having a good ranking on Yelp mattered. Knowing

this, when he finished his work with a new homeowner, he would sit them down and say, “I hope that I’ve been a good mortgage broker for you. If I have given you any less than five-star service, it would mean the world to me to have your candid and direct feedback about what I might have done to be better for you. If you feel like it has been five-star service, and you’d be willing to leave a review about our work together on [yelp.com](https://www.yelp.com), please know that that would be an incredible help to me.” And so, from the realtors and clients with whom he worked, he quickly amassed sixty, glowing, five-star reviews, giving him the highest ranking of anyone in the area. I’m sure he has even more now as it’s been years since I heard this story.

The Folk Musician

My friend Scott Cook reminded me of the power of smaller hubs when he told me of how early in his career he had gone, full of hopes, to the Folk Alliance International event, which, at the time, was just too big an event. He was lost in it. So, he went to the regional events in the United States and did the bedroom concerts at the hotels where everyone was staying (a common practice), which got him seen by people and secured him a space at the international events.

Retreats

Years ago, Folk Tree Lodge outside of Calgary told me that they got 80 per cent of their business from [vrbo.com](https://www.vrbo.com). And, one of my clients, Russell Scott of [awakentheguruinyou.com](https://www.awakentheguruinyou.com), told me he got a surprising amount of sign ups for his meditation retreats on [retreats.com](https://www.retreats.com).

The Calendar

Periods of time can be hubs. For example, people go back to the gym in January, they start looking for trees in February, they go to festivals in the summer, and they start Christmas shopping in December. People party on Friday and Saturday nights (unless you’re in the restaurant industry, in which case it might be Sunday night). What time of year or days of the week are people looking for the kinds of solutions you offer?

Your Competition

Sometimes even your competition can provide good hubs for you. One woman I know, who ran a retreat centre, realized that she and the other retreat centres should all work together more. They decided to do a daylong tour of the local retreat centres so that they could all know how to refer people to each other when a particular patient wasn’t the right fit.

Lululemon

Lululemon, the store that sells yoga clothing, really understands this whole idea of communities and hubs. The first thing they did was to give anyone who is a yoga teacher, a pilates teacher, a dancer or dance teacher, a 10 per cent discount on anything purchased at their stores. That incentivizes these professionals to come to a store, which means they're going to be buying the product and wearing it. Having these people wear Lululemon means everyone they teach will see them wearing the product. That's huge.

Lululemon does classes in their store once a week. They sponsor events in the yoga community. They're often there with their booth, being very present.

But the biggest thing they do is to identify the top teachers locally. They look for highest profile teachers, those who hustle, are upcoming, well-connected and well-respected.

Then they went to them and said, "We'd like to have you be an ambassador for this store. What that means is we're going to do a photo session with you wearing Lululemon gear. We'll use these photos in our marketing but you can use them for whatever you want. We're also going to give you \$1,000 of Lululemon gear. [*For which their hard cost can't be more than \$100.*] The catch is we'd like your feedback on this gear at the end of the year, just as you're wearing it, let us know how it wears. Does it bunch up? Does it pinch? What could make it better?"

Few would say no to this offer.

A Theatre Company

I've done improv comedy with Rapid Fire Theatre for 24 years now in Edmonton. A number of years ago they wanted to do more corporate gigs. I thought, "Okay, corporate gigs, corporations. Who in the corporations decides on entertainment? Usually the event planners." So, I said, "Wouldn't it make sense to do an annual gala show for event planners in town?"

They just sat there stunned before asking, "Why haven't we done that before?" And so, every year, we bring all the event planners together and put on a show for them. They've gotten many corporate bookings out of this annual night.

A Doula

Angie Evans is a doula who was living in Canmore, Alberta. Canmore has a hub for the holistic scene called Nutters (an organic food store). At Nutters, there is the supplement section. People who need a doula would often show up in their supplement section looking for prenatal vitamins

and minerals. They would talk to the staff and all the staff knew Angie. Angie made it her business to get to know the staff at Nutters (she hung out there because it was her people anyway). Whenever they'd see that people were looking at prenatal things or it would come up in conversation that they were looking for a doula, the staff would refer Angie. It's that simple. This is how hubs work.

Eco Friendly Paints

When Moon Dance Paints started, they were one of the first eco-friendly, non-VOC paint companies in the world. They thought, "If people knew about this, they would want it." So they worked the hubs. They first went to the local Whole Foods, which is a likely hub for folks who would be interested in green and sustainable living.

They asked Whole Foods, "Will you host a Greening Your Home series?" This series was hosted by four local businesses: a green landscaper, a green interior designer, a green builder, and Moon Dance Paints. They hosted a series of workshops, which they all promoted for each other. Everybody won.

A Bank for the Black Community

Shore Bank was a bank in the United States that focused on the black community. Knowing that church is a hub for the black community, they started hiring – of course, African Americans, but also – people with degrees in divinity. These people had gone to divinity school and were now working at the bank to better be able to connect with the black, church-going community.

An Executive Recruiter

I read about one executive recruiter who began to give away high quality leads to his competitors (other recruiters). He knew he'd only ever place one per cent of the leads he got but knew they might be of use to his competitors. So he shared them. They were, of course, flummoxed, but grateful to get these leads. Whenever he was in a pinch because he couldn't find someone who was the right fit for what his clients were looking for, he'd just call up his competitors to see if they had anyone. Everyone won.

An Investment Broker

I once heard about a high level investment broker whose target market was CEOs. He would have had to ask, how do I reach these often heavily guarded and insulated people? He realized that he

could either spend countless hours courting them directly or he could connect with those who already knew them. So he connected with retired senior executives, former regulators, former staff who had solid, pre-existing relationships with one or more CEOs, and offered them 10 per cent gross, in writing, of whatever deal they helped him get. They were thrilled and helped him make the connections in a fraction of the time it would have taken him and with superior quality.

One unintended consequence of this approach was that the retired folks also told their friends about the deal he was offering and then they began calling him saying, “I heard about your deal and I could help you connect with so and so if you’re still looking for help . . .”

A Vegan Restaurant

Millennium Restaurant is a gourmet vegan restaurant in Oakland. They used some brilliant and simple marketing tactics to grow their clientele. They approached cardiologists who advised their cigar-chomping business exec clients to modify their diets, fitness trainers who told clients to try a low fat diet, and religious and ethnic groups that already follow meatless diets. They identified more than a dozen market segments. One of their best ideas was creating a monthly event that emphasized how vegan cuisine could help people feel sexier and more clever. Since many aphrodisiacs are herbal, they had the idea to host a Full Moon Aphrodisiac Night once per month. On the night of the full moon, couples would enjoy a fixed price, three course vegan feast intended to arouse an amorous mood, and then – because Millennium was located in a boutique hotel – those couples choosing this package would receive a free night upstairs (which cost the restaurant very little since the hotel and the restaurant were managed by the same company, Joie de Vivre Hospitality. The Aphrodisiac night, as you can imagine, had a lot of media potential. More than 100 articles were written about this package and it was a regular sell out. More importantly, it helped to position Millennium as something other than a humourless, funky, frumpy place to get some bland but “healthy” food.

Scrapbooking Massage Therapist

Once I had a massage therapist at my workshop who was a scrapbooker. She’d attended a scrapbooking retreat and ended up, informally, giving people massages there. Everyone loved it. The organizers, knowing a good thing when they saw it, asked her to come back. For them, it was a perk that could help attract more people to their retreats and encourage participants to talk about the experience after. “I went to this scrapbooking retreat to get away from all the stress and there was a massage therapist there you could book sessions with. It was amazing.” So, this massage therapist was wondering about how to market to this group. I suggested that she speak at scrapbooking conferences. “But what would I speak about? Massage?” she asked. My idea made no sense to her. And, of course, her speaking about massage would be a confusing waste of time for everyone. So, I said the following, “What if you crafted a presentation about ‘five ways to make

your next scrapbooking event memorable,' or relaxing, or remarkable etc. You could give them lots of ideas on how to make their events better and more likely to have people register but also rave about it afterwards. The fifth suggestion on you list might be, offer Body Work."

The Galifianakis Bump

When President Obama was trying to reach younger people to get them to enrol in Obamacare, he decided to appear on the popular online program *Between Two Ferns* hosted by comedian Zachary Galifianakis. Natasha Bach discusses the appearance in her March 31, 2014, *Huffington Post* article, "Kathleen Sebelius: We Got 'The Galifianakis Bump' For Obamacare Signups":

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius said Monday that the Obama administration has Zach Galifianakis to thank for a "bump" in Obamacare enrolment.

Sebelius appeared on HuffPost Live to discuss the latest Obamacare enrolment numbers, the administration's enrolment strategies and detailed the upcoming midnight Obamacare enrolment deadline.

When asked about unconventional methods such as President Barack Obama's appearance on Galifianakis' web show "Between Two Ferns," Sebelius said that they "definitely saw the Galifianakis bump."

"The website traffic surged once the 'Between Two Ferns' interview went on," Sebelius said. "But more importantly, what we're trying to do is reach people in the language that they most understand. Certainly Zach reaches a certain audience."

"As a mother of two 30-something sons, I know they're more likely to get their information on 'Funny or Die' than they are on network TV," Sebelius continued.

I hope this section has given you a taste of what hub marketing can look like in the real world in different industries and scenarios. Consider how much time and energy these businesses saved themselves by taking this route as opposed to trying to reach their clients one at a time.

I invite you to go back and read through these and examples and imagine how much harder the cold approach would have been.

Working With A Complimentary Charity

There are compelling arguments to be made for adopting a charity as a business. Consider finding a charity that is in line with the values of your business and then promote their work, host a fundraiser, or give a portion of your profits to them.

Aligning yourself with a charity, if you do it right, can build a tremendous amount of goodwill within your niche. It shows people that you aren't just in this for yourself. And, by aligning with them, you get their implicit endorsement.

A Hair Salon

Ashley Smith of DTox Hair Salon in Edmonton picked the Asthma Society one year. It was a perfect fit. Her salon is a non-toxic salon and it's one of the only salons that people with allergies and chemical sensitivities can go to. During the year of her partnership, when people would go to tip her (and they often did) she would tell them that their policy was not to accept tips. She actually refused to take the tips. "But," she would say, "if you'd like to make a donation to the Asthma Society, there's a jar right here." This did a number of things: it raised her stature amongst her clients as they saw her not as an entrepreneur trying to make as much money as possible but a community member focused on doing whatever she could to make her community better. It's a compelling thing to be able to tell your clients: "Last year we donated \$_____ to _____ charity." And, there's also a good chance that this can be parlayed into good PR with the members of their group (i.e. staff, clients and followers). That could be a mention on social media or a newsletter where their members (for whom such a salon such as this might be a godsend) could be told about it. "Finally! A hair salon that let's you breath easy." it might say.

A Health Food Bar

Luna Bar, a health bar targeted at women, gave support to local productions of *The Vagina Monologues*.

Bottled Water

Earth Water (now Earth Group) is a Canadian company that took working with a complimentary NGO to the highest possible level. Earth Water sells bottled water. There's nothing special about their product. It's no different from much of the other bottled water out there. But, they created a huge niche and a unique selling proposition by partnering with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). More specifically (and I'm not sure that this is still their structure), for years

they gave 100 per cent of their profits to the UNHCR. 100 per cent. The UNHCR logo and info is on all of their water bottles.

Why did Earth Water pick the UNHCR? What do refugees have to do with bottled water? Well, consider that many refugees don't have access to clean water. Consider that many of them are dying of entirely preventable waterborne diseases. So, Earth Water's money was directed 100 per cent to getting clean water (no, not in their bottles) to those who most need it – whether it was well being dug or having water flown into war zones.

Kori Chilibeck, the CEO of Earth Water, had to work hard to even get his foot in the door with UNHCR. He called, faxed, and emailed for months. Finally, he was given a 10-minute meeting with UNHCR on the understanding that he would stop calling them. Kori over-prepared himself for that meeting and the fellow he met with said, "We normally don't get into this sort of thing – but let's see what happens." That first encounter blossomed into a huge co-branding opportunity. When Kori launched Earth Water in Edmonton he got huge media coverage. It was a cool story, after all. Who'd ever heard of a business giving 100 per cent of their net profit to a charity? At the end of that week, Kori had 10 customers in Edmonton. At the end of the month, he had 100. And in 6 months, Earth Water was being sold coast to coast in Canada. Think about this. People weren't thinking, "Earth Water is a great product." Because it's not, it's simply water in a bottle. They were thinking, "This is a great *company*." One of the biggest benefits of working so closely and generously with an aligned charity is that it makes people trust you more. And people actually feel better about *themselves* for buying your product. That's a very powerful thing.

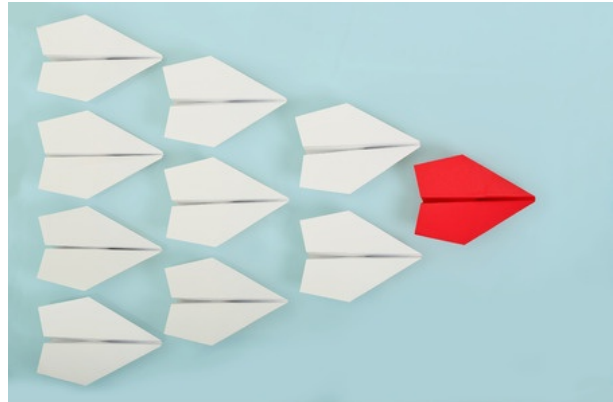
Be Controversial

Seth Godin offers this perspective:

Giving a portion of your proceeds to a charity is a nice thing, but it's actually sort of boring, isn't it? Lots of companies do that (which is good) but we hardly notice it anymore (which is not good). What if your company helped a controversial, but worthy (to some folks) cause (like broadening gay rights) with each purchase – like supporting the recall of the governor or the superintendent of schools?

The Three Core Qualities Of A Good Hub

Not all hubs are created equally. For the most part, the following three qualities are intuitive things that you can simply trust your gut on. But, at times, it can help to be explicit about what it is that makes a hub a good fit or not.



Quality #1: They are well respected.

- **Credibility:** The hub is trusted and respected by your niche. They are influential to the life, work, opinions and practices of your niche (e.g. maybe they're pushing the envelope, on the cutting edge and an industry leader or maybe they're committed to the basics, etc). They embody integrity and people look to them for guidance. They're not the ones talking to everyone at the party – they're the ones everyone is talking to. When they speak, people listen up. They're often the ones who are greeted most enthusiastically and happily when they walk into the room. These people are often “opinion leaders”. They are able to influence the opinions, attitudes, and behaviours more often than the average person can. And they are very often aware of their level of credibility and they protect it by only recommending things they feel very certain about. They know, as should you, that one bad recommendation can do great damage to their credibility. They know when they back a product they are putting their reputation on the line. They understand how fragile trust can be.
- **Mutual respect:** You already know them and they trust you. You have an authentic relationship with them. You genuinely respect them and already endorse their work to your clients and friends. You're a really big fan of theirs.

Quality #2: They are well connected.

- **Reach:** They have a large sphere of influence and reach a lot of people within your niche. You've likely heard their name mentioned by multiple people. They probably talk to more people than your average bear.
- **List:** They have already established, organized and set up communication mechanisms through which they are regularly in touch with your niche (e.g. email list, mailing list, blog, social media, etc.)
- **Active relationship with niche:** Your niche already spends a good deal of money, time, and attention on or with them.

- **Purity:** There's a difference between a mailing list that's pure and one that's mixed. If your target market is massage therapists then the mailing list of the local massage therapists' association is pure, but the mailing list for the local chamber of commerce (which may contain a few massage therapists) is mixed. Your ideal situation is that the hub (be it a person, group, or magazine, etc.) is targeted 100 per cent at your niche.

Quality #3: They are open to endorsing quality things on their lists.

- **Local:** As Emmanuel Rosen puts it, "Network hubs are individuals who communicate with more people about a certain product than the average person does." These people are not shy about speaking up and voicing their opinions and thus they are more likely to be heard. They're on the school board, lead community groups and voice their opinions in political forums. From *The Anatomy of Buzz*, "Roper Starch Worldwide found that when their Influential Americans [a group of well-connected trend setters they follow] like a product, they are much more vocal about it than the general public is. Thirty-seven per cent of them made a recommendation about a car or a truck in the past year, while only nineteen percent of the total public say they have done the same. Twenty two percent of these Influentials say that they have recommended a brand of liquor, wine, or beer to another person in the past year, while only 9 percent of the total public say they have done so."
- **Ahead in adoption:** Network hubs aren't usually the pioneers. They're not the very first to buy a new product or service, but they're definitely a little ahead of the curve. They're innovative and they often adopt new ideas, practices and technologies ahead of others. This is part of what allows them to be the ones endorsing things. They're often the first to know in their crowd.
- **Travellers:** One of the ways this group ends up hearing about new ideas early is t by traveling a lot. They don't just hang out in the same crowds or the same town their whole life, they get out and see other worlds and bring back what they find. They're explorers. They're the ones who are likely to attend the out-of-town industry convention, or go to the conference, make more trips into town. They get around. They may describe themselves as "wearing two hats" or "being a bridge."
- **Information hungry:** Another reason this group ends up staying ahead of the curve is because they really enjoy and want to keep their status as a hub, or "local expert." For this reason, they're often trying to learn more. This goes double for people whose *job* it is to be an expert for their hub. What they want is not slick sales copy, but cold, hard facts about the products and services you offer. They don't need to be sold to, per se. They're already interested in your industry. They just need to be educated. How can you identify them? They may call and ask questions that go beyond what other customers ask. They may spend extra time at your booth during a trade show to look at the new gizmo you're advertising. They may email again and again to see what's going on with that new feature you promised. Watch for these signs, they often indicate you're

speaking to a hub. Not always but the best policy is to assume that they are. Because they play this “local expert” role it can be a good idea to ask your clients, “Who do you turn to for information and guidance on these topics?” And because they’re so information hungry and they guard their reputation so carefully, a powerful strategy can be to give them access to “insider” or “behind the scenes” info that not everyone gets. They love to feel “in the know” because it builds their status as a hub.

Andy Sernovitz puts it this way in his book, *Word of Mouth Marketing*:

Talkers live on a diet of information. Keep them fed to keep them talking. The word-of-mouth stops when there is nothing to talk about. Talkers want to know what’s going on. They want the latest gossip. They want to know what’s happening before anyone else does. Talkers maintain their expertise and status by being well informed and educated about your products. Create a steady stream of exclusive information for your talkers. It doesn’t matter how you deliver it. Blogs and email newsletters are nice, but get the information out there any way you can. Just be sure that your talkers are the first to see it. Here is what talkers want to see. Detailed data: You’ll be surprised at how much of what you think of as mundane is of great interest to your fans. Progress reports: Talk about new products in development, future menu items, or next season’s plans. Let them know what you’re working on. Company news: Remember, talkers want to be family members. Fill them in on the personalities and happenings in your office, the new hires, promotions, and anniversaries. Put a human face on your operation.”

George Silverman in his book *The Secrets of Word-of-mouth Marketing* puts it like this:

The first thing to understand about experts is that they are in the expert business. They want to be experts. It’s part of their sense of self. They love being on the cutting edge, having people coming to them for the latest word on new developments. Whatever business or profession they are in, they are also in the expert business. In fact, they may spend more of their time in the expert business than in their regular business or profession. The expert business is like any other. Experts are continually seeking expert “jobs” (speeches, for example) and are continually seeking to bolster their status as experts, in other words, to market themselves. They spend much of their time giving speeches, seminars and consulting. They are usually prolific writers, which is their main marketing method. They are always travelling. Their marketing orientation makes them very approachable, contrary to the common view of them as insulated and hard to reach. People think of experts as being formal, pretentious, ivory tower,

inaccessible stuffed shirts. Nothing could be further from the truth. I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of experts, individually and in groups, in dozens of different fields. They are astonishingly easy to reach. Most are informal, friendly, even humorous. They tend to be open about what they know, and surprisingly willing to admit what they don't know. In other words, they tend to be intellectually confident and unthreatened by not knowing something.

- **Exposed to the media:** Because they're so info hungry, they read a lot. They expose themselves to more communication from the mass media — and traditionally to print media (though in the digital age this is shifting to more and more online consumption).
- **Cooperative:** They are open to endorsing quality things to their people and whatever email lists or social media followings they may have grown over the years. They're excited to partner and collaborate. This will likely mean that they are a complimentary service to what you offer rather than a competitive one.
- **Shared vision and values:** People love to feel like they play an important role in a cool new project (or at least a new phase of a project) when it's in alignment with their vision and values.
- **Fresh:** You haven't maxed your relationship with this hub already (e.g. maybe they've already endorsed you to everyone they can think of).
- **Service:** They're passionate about meeting the needs of your niche.
- **Not in crisis:** I've known many groups that would have been perfect hubs for me if only they hadn't been in utter crisis. They were well connected and respected with their niche, but they were also disorganized, swamped or overwhelmed and overcommitted. If they're in this place — even if they love you and what you're up to — they won't be open to endorsing you. If this is true, then you have three options: (1) you can help them get out of crisis, (2) you can make it incredibly easy and convenient for them to do work with you, and (3) you can patiently and persistently keep checking in and following up over the months and years to come.

Part Two: Identifying Your Hubs

Part Two Introduction: Identifying Your Hubs

It's one thing to talk about hubs as a theory, but how do you find them for your business? Where exactly do you locate them? What kinds of hubs are there? And how do you organize them once you've found them?

In this section you'll learn about different hub categories, how to create a hubs database, how to really proactively use your Facebook friend list, and some real-world case studies. There's a lot of detailed case study info on farmers' markets that may be of direct or peripheral use to you.

By the end of this section, you should have some real, actionable knowledge about how people have used hub marketing to expand their reach, and a good idea of how to identify your own hubs.

Hub Categories

When you're trying to find your hubs it can feel overwhelming.

It's often easier to identify what I call your "hub categories" rather than particular hubs.

For example, a target market for me would be "holistic practitioners." Hub *Categories* for me might be: holistic health colleges, new age books shops, or websites that holistic practitioners visit. *Specific* hubs might be: Bastyr University, Ascendant Books, or elephantjournal.com.



It's like finding the buckets (the category) and then filling those buckets with pebbles (the specific hubs).

If you want to identify your Hub Categories, you need to ask yourself, "Generally, where would I find these types of people?" and then write down what comes to mind.

So much of what entrepreneurs do in their marketing operates on the cold level. Most practitioners, when I look at them, have a business card, a brochure, and a fancy logo. They spend a lot of money on these things.

Most entrepreneurs focus on getting a brochure, business cards, and a logo but these things are all cold marketing. I want to invite you to begin letting go of even the notion of approaching people cold. I do not think this serves us.

There is a realtor in Seattle named Phoenix Rudner, and he was looking at where to focus his marketing. One of the central niches that came up for him was "dog owners." He is a dog owner and he loves dogs, so he thought he would focus on that.

Imagine you are on the marketing team that has been hired to help him find hubs. The important question is, "Where you find pet owners?" We do not want to approach this on a cold level. Instead, we want to know where they *already* hang out, where they are already spending their money, their time, and their attention.

In other words, what are the hubs they might be connected to? Instead of just walking down the street and asking people if they have pets, or approaching pet owners and asking them if they are moving, it would make more sense to identify where he could find these people around their hubs.

If you were to do a brainstorm of this, you might come up with a list that looked something like this:

- dog parks
- vets
- pet stores
- off-leash areas
- pet salons
- dog shows
- groomers
- sitters
- dog birthday party services
- local car and dog wash
- local pet chat groups
- dog beaches
- kennels
- condos that may be dog-friendly
- doggy daycare
- potlucks for pet-owners
- Meetup groups
- dog rescue organizations
- specific breed groups based locally
- dog magazines
- dog whisperers
- dog psychologists
- dog therapists
- trainers

These are all hub categories. Each of them might represent dozens of specific hubs. These specific hubs would be places he could go to start building relationships with people who already have an existing relationship with dog owners.

Marketing is all about building these relationships. It's about strategically asking yourself, "Who is already connected to the kind of people who are my ideal clients, the people who are a perfect fit for me? Where do they already go? What events could I find them at?" and then building relationships with those people and being in those places.

Imagine your niche was "divorced, separated women who are struggling with releasing the anger, grief, and fear surrounding their divorce." Your hubs might be things like:

- matchmakers
- lawyers
- discussion groups
- dating sites
- yoga retreats
- dating coaches
- fitness trainers
- yoga classes
- therapists
- beauty shops
- therapists specializing in women in marriage transition
- spiritual divorce coaches
- spas
- women's business groups
- relationship workshops
- new age and personal growth conferences and workshop leaders
- hairdressers
- women's night events
- weight loss coaches
- online moms' groups

Creating Your Hubs Database (why does no one teach this?)

It occurred to me recently that the bulk of my early business came from this one technique.

But it's something I do that I'd never taught explicitly. Or, still, after fifteen years in business, ever seen taught.

A Hubs Database is huge. It is literally a spreadsheet for your hubs.

My brother is a stand-up comedian actor but did stand-up professionally for a long time. The difference between a professional stand-up comic and an amateur is that the professional, when they're really building their career, writes down every funny idea they have. Every funny thing that comes to their mind gets written down in a little notebook, or saved in their phone. A professional screenwriter will write down every idea they have for a scene in a movie, and put it in a folder somewhere. Somebody who is a real poet, when they have an idea, they just stop everything and write that poem down, or even a line or two. A songwriter will have a little riff, and they'll write it or record it, or come up with a lyric and write it down. They capture it. They might not look at it for a year or two, but it's all captured.

It's the same with hubs. This is one of the big things in my mind that separates an amateur or hobby business versus someone whose orientation is, "I'm actually trying to make this work as a business that can sustain me."

People are already giving you hubs all the time but we don't always have a place to document them and so they're likely to be lost.



Step One: Brainstorm all of your hub categories:

Just start to map out even the general types of hubs you imagine there would be for the people you're trying to reach or the kind of work that you do. Within each of those categories, there are probably 10 or 20 hubs.

For example:

- Gyms would be a hub category.
- Gold's gym is a hub.
- Yoga Studios is a category.
- Organic Grocery Stores is a category.

Step Two: Identify the specific hubs for each category:

Let's imagine that, from all this brainstorming, you come up with thirty categories. Let's imagine you went through those seven different types of hubs and you find 10 specific hubs for each category on average. That's 300 hubs.

So, though it might sound impossible now, coming up with a hubs database of 200 hubs is not that difficult. It's actually funny, people will come to me and say, "I can't find my hubs, my gosh, it's so terrible. I don't know where to find my people." Then they do this exercise and they say, "There are too many places to find my clients! There are too many hubs." That will become the problem, an embarrassment of riches if you will.

Note: This is why it's wise to have that first column of your spreadsheet be for what priority they are to you so you can sort it like that and give yourself some focus.

Give yourself 30 days to do this. It could take you months to do this but give yourself at least 30 days to start mapping out the hubs, who they are, and to prioritize them.

How do you prioritize them? Well, there's a technical marketing term for identifying which hubs are going to be the best. The term is: guessing.

In the beginning, you don't know which hubs are going to work. Some you think will be really good hubs but they turn out not to be. Some you think will be terrible hubs and they end up being really great.

In 2014, we hosted a fundraiser for a nonprofit group called The Local Good, which I co-founded. We asked about 20 people to be "table captains," meaning they were committing to fill a table with 10 people. There were a few people who I thought would be able to do this easily and they didn't. Some of them showed up by themselves having brought no guests despite promising they would. But, there was one woman who ended up having twenty people at her table. Until that moment, I hadn't seen her as a hub at all. You can expect to be surprised like this.

How to do it:

Create a spreadsheet with the following columns or something like them:

- **Priority.** What priority are they to you? How good a hub? Try to give everyone on it a 1, 2 or a 3 – 1 being a super good hub and 3 as just okay. Eventually, it may get so big that you have to divide it up into different tabs by the type of hubs or different tabs by the priority.
- **Type.** In my case there are holistic schools as one type. Then there are groups, holistic centres, people, retail and online listing type hubs. In the beginning, I had this as a column but eventually, in major cities I toured to a lot, I created different pages in my spreadsheet for each.
- **Group/Business Name.**
- **Contact Name.** Who is the best person for you to talk with there to make things happen?
- **City/Province.** Where are they? If you're limiting your reach to a city, you might make it neighbourhood-based. If you're international, you might make it country-based. Again, because I've toured, I've got touring hubs databases so I have a different spreadsheet for each city.
- **Email.** If they have more than one, enter with a comma in-between, or keep the second email in the "Notes" section (see below).
- **Website.** Same as with the email, keep all their contact info, if there's more than one website, enter it, or keep a note of it in "Notes."
- **Who Referred Them.** This is great to keep track of. Then when you call them or email, you can remember to say, "I was talking with _____ and they said to call you."
- **Notes.** Just a place to type in any notes you have about them.

I challenge you to see if you can come up with 100 hubs for your business. Again, this might sound hard but it's actually easy once you sit down and really focus on it.

Once you've got this database you've got a lot of directions you can go. You've got a list of key people to invite to your special parties, to take to lunch, to give special invites to for your events, to

ask to spread the word to their lists. How to use this list is another topic. But having this kind of database can be a total game changer for people.

Note: If you feel overwhelmed at the thought of this because you've never made a spreadsheet, I get it. Here's what you do: email a friend who you know is a whiz with these kinds of things and ask them if you can meet them at a cafe for an hour or two and have them walk you through how to do this. You'll feel totally at ease about it by the end.

Facebook “Friend” Lists

If you use Facebook with any regularity, Friend Lists can be a game changer.

If you tour your work, this is of particular use.

On Facebook, there’s an option to create what are known as Friends Lists. You can add your friends to as many lists as you like. They won’t know they’ve been added.



Doing this allows you to look at your newsfeed and, if you choose, see only people from whichever friend list you like and, when inviting people to events, to select a particular list so that you only invite people for whom the event is (geographically or topic wise) relevant.

Facebook keeps changing its interface so I won’t try to explain the mechanics of how to do this here but I promise you have friends who know how to do this and would be happy to walk you through the process. And you can Google how to do it and some recent tutorial will no doubt appear.

But, to give some examples: I have toured my workshops and so I have my Facebook Friend Lists broken down by city. I also have a list for the UK and another for Europe. In addition, I also have a friend list for people who’ve been involved in initiatives from the past or people who are interested in topics that I’m also interested in. There are a lot of ways you can do this.

If you work locally only, you might just create a Friend List called “Local Hubs.”

What do you do with it?

A simple approach that you can do (in 30 minutes per week at the most) is this: Once a week, pour yourself a cup of tea and look over the newsfeed of those local hubs (again, Facebook keeps changing how you do this but I promise that you know someone who knows how) and respond thoughtfully to their posts where you feel called. This will keep you top of mind with them in a way that asks nothing of them. This sounds like nothing but it will, slowly, organically, and gently, foster a connection between you both. This way, when it’s time to reach out and ask them for help, they’ll be much more open to your request because you will already feel part of their world. Plus, you’ll be more aware of what is happening in their world so you can modify the tone of your approach accordingly.

Hub Marketing For Farmers' Markets

In 2016, I spoke to a group of about 50 good folks at the Alberta Farmer's Markets Association meeting in Edmonton.

The topic of the conversation was marketing and the idea I most wanted to share was around hubs. This idea that partnership is often better than going it alone when you're trying to build institutions. (You can watch the video of what I said as my introduction here: [youtube.com/watch?v=2esvK0f-Zvw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2esvK0f-Zvw))

Because the room was mostly full of people who ran farmers' markets, I decided to focus our hubs brainstorm discussion on them.

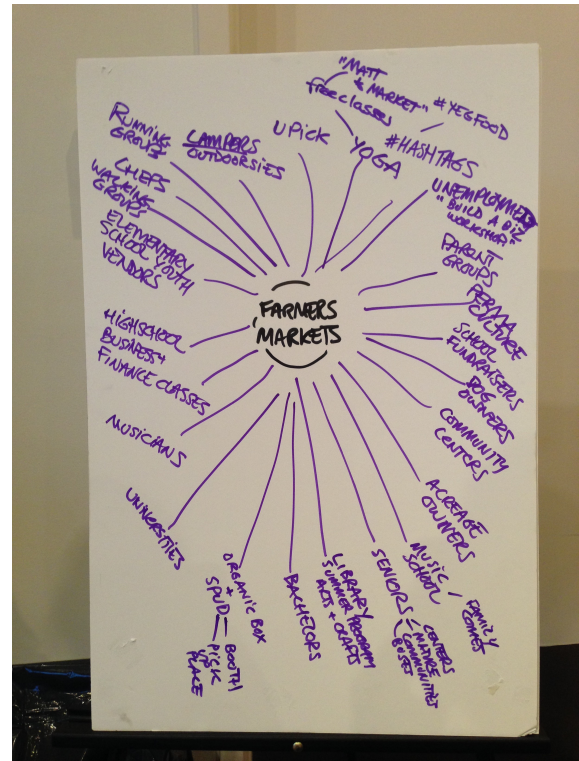
You can see some of the ideas we landed on by the end in the photo above. Here's how we arrived there.

The question that I asked the group to consider was: Where else do the people who go to farmers' markets (or those who would love them if they went) spend their time, their money and/or their attention? In essence: Where else can we find your customers? When they aren't at the farmers' market, where are they? What other crowds or scenes might be aligned with your market with whom you could partner on some sort of a win/win promotion?

Once you've identified a potential hub, then the active questions become, How do you work with them? What's something amazing you can create in a collaboration that would have your target market people just have to come out to check it out?

I gave them a few minutes to think before the ideas started flying. They were:

- **Yoga:** One farmer's market director had reached out to the local yoga community and created a Matts to Market event where a morning yoga class was held outside just beside the market and then they all went shopping afterwards. Here's another example of a similar collaboration from the Tosa Farmers' market [here](#) and one in Calgary [here](#).
- **Hashtags:** An important hub in the age of social media is the hashtag. One way to look at a hub is by asking where people are having conversations about the issues related to what you offer.



You can use hashtags to find them on Twitter. For Edmonton Farmers' Markets, the obvious one is #vegfood.

- **Employment Services:** When people are out of work from manufacturing, oil and gas, or other struggling industries, could they start a farmers' market business? Why not! One market shared the thought of doing a "Build a Business" workshop at the market venue. This could be done in partnership with local entrepreneur groups or employment services organizations. This could bring a whole new crowd to the market.
- **Parent Groups:** Parents need to feed their kids. Could you reach out to local parenting groups and create some sort of event to get them out? Could your market offer childcare while they shopped? Could there be attractions for the kids? If parent groups organize outings, could some of them be to the market?
- **Permaculture:** This is fairly low-hanging fruit. Folks who are into permaculture are already big fans of farmers' markets. But, how would you get them out to your market? Well, could you host a permaculture workshop on site? Could you partner on a social event? Could you invite them to do a permaculture installation on site (e.g. a cob bench) where they could come and learn how to build something and then go shopping after?
- **Dog Owners:** Could you have an annual day for dog owners at the market? Maybe offer a free kiln-dried bison bone to anyone who comes with their dog? Could you have a Dog Training 101 class there?
- **Community Centres:** People who are involved in their local community centres might be interested in a farmers' market. Simply putting up some posters in the right places in those centres could help. But certainly, there must be more that could be done. Could your market have an annual Community League Day where the various community leagues and groups compete to see who can get the most people out and offer a prize in exchange?
- **Acreage Owners:** If you have a more rural market, then you could reach out to these people and have a booth promoting your market at the events they're likely to frequent.
- **Music School:** a very charming partnership I heard about was when one market partnered with a local music school. The woman who ran it brought all of her students to perform at the market (which was, of course, adorable). But this also meant that the families of those students came as well and they ended up shopping at the market.
- **Seniors:** A number of market managers spoke of their successful outreach to mature living communities and other seniors institutions that would bus people in and out. It had me wonder if a market couldn't also arrange to have a regular event where seniors came to the market to play with little kids as a form of childcare for parents.

- **Libraries:** One market manager spoke of how they'd connected with a local library to host many of their classes at the market (e.g. arts and craft classes). This brought in many people who were new to the market.
- **Bachelors:** We laughed a lot about the possibilities of this idea. Could a market host some sort of singles event? Could you partner with local dating coaches, matchmaking organizations, speed dating services and come up with something amazing? I bet you could.
- **Food Delivery Systems:** In Edmonton, we have The Organic Box that delivers food to your door. Other services might have pick up at a central location. Why not have that location be your market? Could there be a booth at the market where people signed up for this service?
- **Universities:** I've heard of universities setting up their own markets but there's likely certain courses and clubs at your local university or college where students are supportive of farmers' markets and local food. Could you host an annual event for low-income students to come and shop and meet each other?
- **Elementary and Jr. High Schools:** Could you do some version of what the Denver's Youth Farmers' Market did where students sell what they've grown in school gardens? And could that encourage partnerships with local groups that work to foster gardens in schools?
- **Walking and Running Groups:** Why not have an annual event where a walk or jog starts and ends at the farmers' market and then people shop afterwards? If it was a walking group, I might call it March to the Market. If it was a running group, I might just name it Annual Farmer's Market Run or 5K for the Farmers' Market. This could bring a whole new group of people to the market, some of whom would become repeat customers.
- **Chefs:** This is such a natural fit. Could you host an annual event for local chefs at the peak of harvest season where they could come to the market and get a tour and be educated as to what you have available for them? Most restaurants are wanting to incorporate more local food into their menus but might not know where to start. Wouldn't there be local networks or associations for local chefs? Culinary schools? Even cooking classes for amateur chefs? Possibilities for partnership abound.
- **Campers and Outdoorsy People:** I'm not as sure about ideas for this one but I bet you there are many.
- **U-Pick:** People who drive out to the country to a U-Pick are absolutely the kind of people who would go to a farmers' market. Could you host a trip to a U-Pick that people could sign up for at the market?

It's important to point out that these ideas are just the tip of the iceberg. There is so much more that could be done. This brainstorming session barely scratches the surface of what's possible.

If you did one of these each month, twelve in a year, you'd likely get hundreds of new people out to your market.

And then, if you could give them some incentive to come back (e.g. a passport for the market where each vendor would give a stamp and a completed book could be entered for a prize, or, you could sell a coupon book with deals for various stands), these types of approaches could be a significant boost to your market.

The key here is to think about partnerships. To think about hubs. Wonder about where else your ideal clients might be gathering and reach out to those places.

Three Hub Marketing Case Studies From Farmers' Market Vendors

In the Spring of 2016, I was invited out to Fort Saskatchewan to speak to some good folks who sold their goods via the farmers' market. Just like those who run farmers' markets can benefit from hub marketing, so can the vendors.



The Set Up:

During the workshop, I asked each of them to reflect on who the hubs might be for their business.

Stated another way: I asked them to think about the kinds of people who would buy their products and then to ask themselves, “Where else might these people spend their time, their money and their attention?”

Stated another way still: “Where else can we find the people who buy your stuff?”

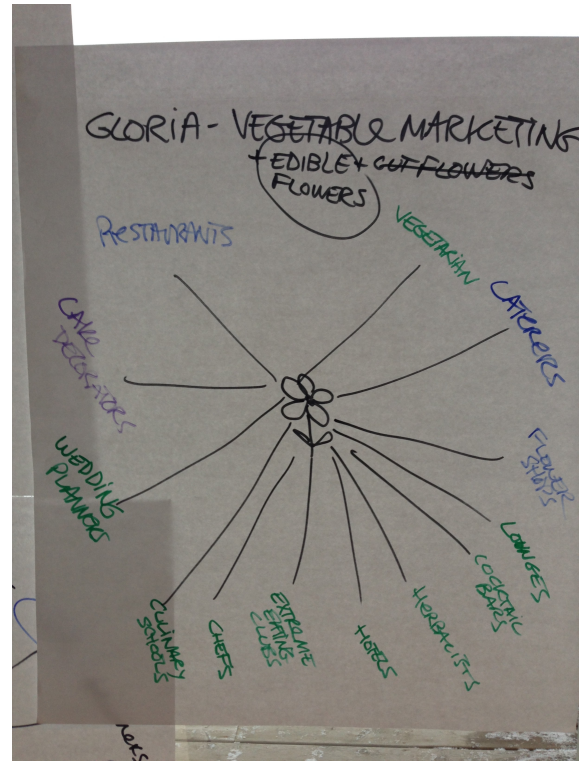
Three brave souls were willing to come up to the front of the room and share what they’d come up with and let us do some more brainstorming for them. I share these not as an authoritative strategy but to get your mind thinking about some of the ways that hubs and partnerships can look and work.

Case Study #1: Gloria's Edible Flowers

Gloria had a few businesses on the go, but we decided to focus on her edible cut flowers business.

The hubs we came up with for her were:

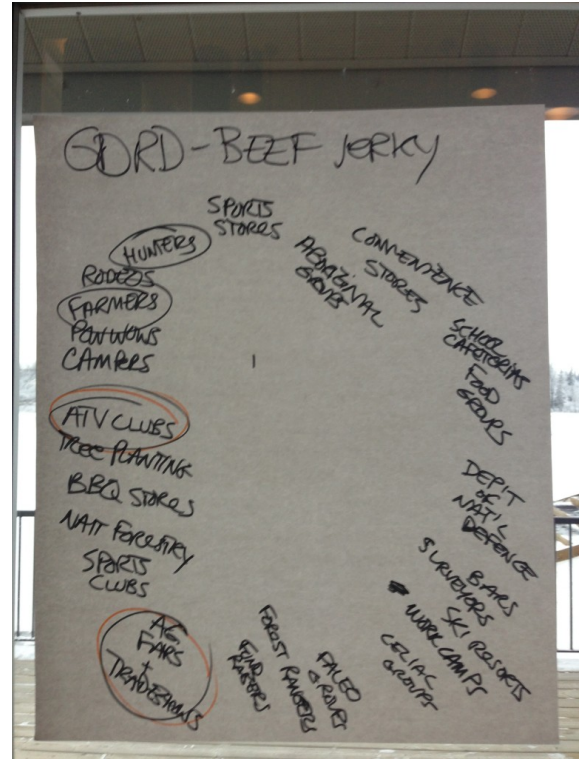
- **Vegetarians:** Maybe they're tired of their friends condemning their penchant for boring salads? Maybe they want to make a vegetarian meal to impress the family and mix it up a bit. There are lots of vegetarian groups, newsletters, blogs, etc. in local areas.
- **Wedding planners and caterers:** You'd better believe that catering companies would love to have a local provider of edible flowers on file just in case someone asks for them.
- **Flower shops:** If I were to want to find edible flowers in town, where would I go? I think it would have to be a local flower shop. Now they may not want to stock them, but they'd likely be glad to have her contact info so they could refer out to her.
- **Lounges and cocktail bars:** Maybe some of those fancy hipster cocktail bars might enjoy knowing where to get some flowers for their drinks.
- **Herbalists:** I'm sure the question must be asked to herbalists about medicinal uses of flowers. Perhaps she could co-host a workshop with a local herbalist or hire them to write some informative articles or blog posts about the benefits of the top five flowers they sell.
- **Chefs at fancy hotels and restaurants:** Again, a solid contact for such a niche product might be just the kind of thing chefs would like to have in their back pocket.
- **Extreme eating clubs:** Maybe flowers aren't super extreme but there are clubs in most cities of people who like to eat adventurously. Why not reach out?
- **Culinary schools:** Could she go in and do a presentation for them? Could she host a competition for students to find who can come up with the best use of her flowers?
- **Cake decorators:** Sure! Why not?



Case Study #2: Gord's Beef Jerky

The hubs we came up with for him were:

- **Agriculture Fairs and Trade shows:** These seemed to have worked well in the past. Just showing up and having a booth at these things might end up being his bread and butter. Just because it's a hub doesn't mean it needs to be out of left field and "never done before." Most hubs are hiding in plain sight. Some of the best hubs are "old reliable."
- **ATV Clubs:** This makes a ton of sense to me. If there's an ATV event, he could show up and sell it from the back of his truck, or set up a table. It doesn't need to be fancy and formal to work.
- **Indigenous groups:** There's certainly possibility here. I don't know the politics of who is allowed to vend at pow wows or Aboriginal conferences and events but it's an option to consider.
- **Convenience stores:** Sure! Why not approach a local corner store, especially if it's independently owned. Invite them to support a local beef jerky provider rather than the factory farmed crap version they're currently selling.
- **Food groups (e.g. celiac, paleo):** There are certain groups who'd be biased to eating beef jerky as a snack over fruit, sandwiches or other things. If he could find them, go to their events and sell some merchandise, but then, more importantly, make sure they know which farmers' market he'll be at and to invite them to come and visit his booth. Well, this is how it's done in one on one sales. They come to say "hi" and become regulars and now you're the place they get their jerky from.
- **The Department of National Defence:** I don't even know where to start but that could be a large order if he was able to secure it.
- **Surveyors:** a whole profession of people just standing around and getting hungry. Maybe he could sell directly to the companies for them to give as snacks for their workers?
- **Ski resorts:** Again, this could be a big order if he landed even one ski lodge for repeat business.

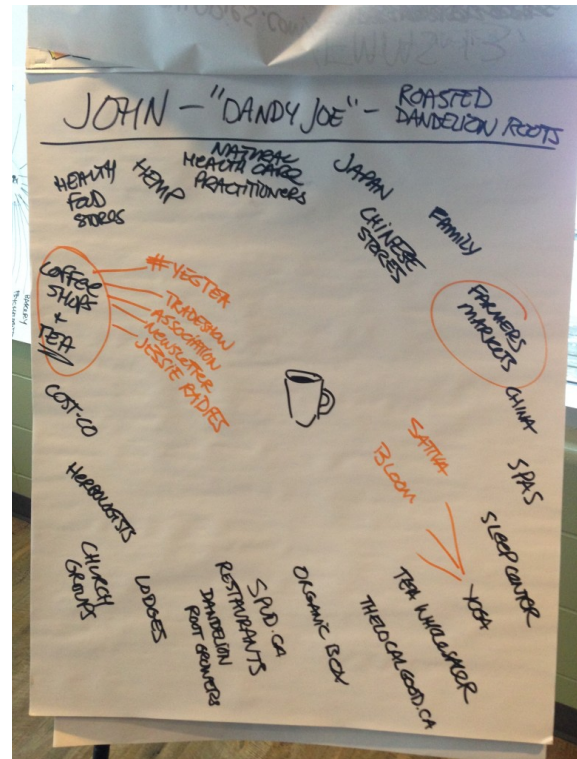


- **Work camps:** Why not call up the local industrial work camps and ask to speak to the person in charge of feeding everyone and see if there's some business to be drummed up?
- **Forest rangers:** They must have conventions. Why not go to one? I'm not as big a fan of this one because his business will likely be built best with larger orders instead of one on one. I've never in my life felt loyal to a particular local brand of jerky and I don't know if I ever will. I'll just buy whatever's closest to me that seems ethically raised.
- **Sports clubs:** Could be. Again, this becomes individual sales but having a booth at larger sports events and inviting people to visit at the farmers' market? Why not.
- **BBQ Stores:** If they're into BBQ, then they're into meat. Could be some regular business here.
- **Tree planting companies:** This could be big. They have workers who are out all day working hard and they need snacks. Could be worthwhile exploring.
- **Campers:** I personally wouldn't try to find individual campers but he could approach camping supply stores like MEC, REI and smaller more independent ones.
- **Rodeos:** Hell yes. Go and set up a booth at one of these and watch it rain money.
- **Sports stores:** This could be solid.

Case Study #3: John's "Dandy Joe" Roasted Dandelion Root Blend Coffee Substitute

The hubs we came up with for him were:

- **Coffee and tea shops:** Bulk orders. He approaches them and says, "Hey! Here's a unique, local coffee substitute that's like nothing else and it's local!" Boom.
- **Farmers' markets:** this is where most of his business has come from and where most of it will continue to. No reason to stop.
- **Chinese stores:** Joe said he'd had an order from a woman in China who loved it and thought maybe Chinese shops might dig it. Who knows? Worth exploring.
- **Spas:** an interesting idea. "Instead of serving your clients coffee full of caffeine or the same old herbal teas, why not offer this local super food to them?"
- **The sleep centre:** pitching it as something to drink late at night instead of coffee and offering them tins to offer as an up-sell to people who buy beds and want to sleep better. Maybe?
- **Yoga studios and events:** all these yogis are trying to kick coffee and give their adrenals some peace. What if he found the top yoga events in town each year and set up a booth there? What if he identified the top ten yogis in town and approached them with a free tin to try out themselves? He could win over a whole community here who is likely to be going to farmer's markets anyway.
- **Tea wholesalers:** this could become all of his business if it fell into place.
- **The local good.ca:** I co-founded a local network to connect good, forward thinking Edmontonians and we could maybe feature him on our blog.
- **The Organic Box:** Sure! Why not get himself listed as a product people could order in a monthly, organic, grocery delivery service?



- **Ski lodges and restaurants:** maybe some indie restaurants or ski lodges might love having a unique, hot drink like this to offer their clientele?
- **Herbologists:** they might not buy a lot but they could likely be a great source of referrals to others.
- **Costco:** Oh man. They'd eat him alive on margin. He'd make no money. Stay away from the bright lights!
- **Heath food stores:** an obvious one. Yes.
- **Hemp producers:** could he partner with a local hemp seed producer to make a local, superfood smoothie mix of dandelion, hemp and some other things? Maybe.
- **Holistic health practitioners:** of course. Yes. The more of these who know about him and his product the better. He could have a booth at the local, new age, holistic health consumer expos and spend all day working that room. He'd need to make sure people he was talking to knew which markets to find him and his website and. In the long term, this could be very solid for business.

Seven Hub Examples From A Hub Marketing Workshop

During an online workshop I hosted a few years ago, I asked people to share their niche markets and then asked the others on the call to brainstorm hubs for them. The following is what came from that exercise. Again, not all of these hubs are great ideas but I list them all so you can understand what might be possible for different kinds of businesses. Sometimes a hub you think would be great isn't. And sometimes the weird idea you write off ends up being 75 per cent of your business.



1. AppleLady.ca: bulk apples from the Okanagan.

She bought her apples in case lots. Her target market was initially attachment parenting groups because she discovered that many of them, being drawn to traditional skills and simple living, wanted to make their own foods, including applesauce. That initial target market expanded to include:

- homeschoolers
- canning groups
- local food groups
- Waldorf schools

2. “Divorced/separated women who have families. They have been divorced for awhile but still can’t get rid of the hurt.”

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • matchmakers | • beauty shops | • new age and personal growth conferences and workshop leaders |
| • lawyers | • therapists specializing in women in marriage transition | • forums and Meetups |
| • discussion groups | • feminist groups | • yoga teachers |
| • Facebook (lots of posts complaining) | • spiritual divorce coaches | • reiki practitioners |
| • ice cream stores, schools | • spas | • hairdressers |
| • plentyoffish.com | • women’s business groups | • therapy clinics |
| • yoga retreats | • relationship workshops | • women’s night events |
| • dating coaches | | • weight loss coaches |
| • fitness trainers | | • boxing gyms |
| • yoga classes | | • online mom groups |

3. “I work with artists, specifically writers and painters, to generate new ideas to grow their businesses and keep them competitive.”

- online writing groups
- art studios
- dance studios
- storytelling events
- #writersofinstagram or Instagram generally
- art academies
- art schools and colleges (specifically the teachers there)
- art collectives
- theatre groups
- community arts classes
- local writing support groups
- cafes, book stores
- art shops
- galleries
- libraries
- artists’ websites
- creative writing groups
- art galleries
- art supply stores
- bookclubs
- Meetup groups
- amnesty groups
- book readings
- travel writers
- travel blogs
- magazines (including trade, print, and online)
- community centres
- artists’ guilds
- art shows
- writers’ podcasts
- community arts organizations
- english department at a college or university
- studio rental spaces
- writing conferences
- independent book stores
- writers retreat centres
- art therapists
- local publications
- Wordfest events
- instructors in community programs
- poetry readings or open mics
- dedicated forums
- library programs
- youth artists
- youth art collectives
- poetry slams
- speaking events with well-known artists
- pottery studios
- yoga studios
- art trails
- art dealers or gallery owners
- cooperatives
- other business coaches who focus on this area such as Dan Blank of wegrowmedia.net
- craft fairs/sales
- festivals, Indigenous artist collectives
- wanted ads such as Craigslist or Kijiji
- storytelling groups
- writing contests
- CBC
- improv shows
- vintage stores
- coffeeshops
- restaurants

4. “Spiritual practitioners who are looking for quality crystals and minerals to add to their repertoires or collections.”

- new age expos
- crystal fairs and gem shows
- psychic fairs
- global alternative fairs
- meditation groups
- spiritual retreat centres
- healing centres, temples
- Buddhist retreat centres
- goddess circles
- music festivals
- yoga communities
- yoga studios
- yoga teacher training programs
- health fairs
- bodywork schools
- new age churches
- new moon groups
- lapidary societies
- crystal healing communities
- organic coffee shops
- Unitarian churches
- Waldorf schools
- new age cafes
- stores where aromatherapy is sold
- sellers of crystal skulls
- metaphysical stores
- health food restaurants and stores
- Etsy, interior designers
- jewelry designers, farmers’ markets
- networking groups for health practitioners
- holistic chiropractors
- massage therapist clinics
- health, new age/ meditation/spirituality magazines (online and print)
- qi gong or tai chi groups
- folk festivals
- alternative/new age bookshops
- naturopathic medicine schools
- reiki teachers
- holistic realtors
- coaching associations
- naturopathic offices
- new age/meditation/ spirituality blogs
- spiritual counsellors
- midwives, doulas
- mindfulness communities
- massage therapists
- massage schools
- bodywork practitioners
- psychics
- women’s groups
- drumming circles
- bellydancers
- hospital centres
- spiritual and new age musicians
- pagan circles
- Indigenous elders
- sweat lodges and Indigenous gatherings
- shamanic practitioners
- gurus
- biodynamic communities
- beekeepers
- campgrounds
- speaking events featuring key spiritual healers
- online life coaching communities
- targeted Facebook ads
- Twitter followers with shared interests
- essential oil network groups

5. “People who value small-scale and local who want to eat or learn to grow high-quality nutritionally-dense and delicious mushrooms.”

- hikers
- mushroom network conferences
- permaculture sites
- farmers’ markets
- wild foods sites
- people who “like” Michael Pollen on Facebook
- organic farming blogs
- vegan and vegetarian blogs
- cooking schools
- trail clubs
- hiking stores
- restaurants that have cooking classes
- restaurant industry events
- specialty food websites
- food Meetup groups
- food bloggers
- contests for recipes
- local outdoor schools
- local organic food co-ops
- food security groups
- community gardens
- food banks
- permaculture teachers and companies
- landscapers
- local food groups
- social justice groups
- community centres
- local foodies Meetup groups
- greenhouses, nurseries
- crop swaps
- community supported agriculture pick-ups
- locally sourced restaurants
- re-skilling groups or festivals
- organic grocery stores
- community composts
- natural medicine practitioners
- 4-H clubs, urban gardeners
- Chinese medical practitioners
- garden supply stores
- nutritionists
- parent groups
- horticultural colleges
- naturopaths
- nature-based schools
- Waldorf schools
- homeopaths
- vegetarians/vegans
- nextdoor.com or other neighbourhood lists
- door.com
- local food activists
- neighbourhood community centres
- music festivals
- naturalist clubs
- public library programs
- mushroom spore/seed/equipment suppliers
- spud.ca
- university professors in environmental studies
- mushroom addicts
- personal development leaders
- home chef parties
- Kerry Wood Nature Centre
- back-to-the-landers or re-wilding people
- businesses corporations looking for health and wellness lunches or talks
- Asian food stores
- foodmatters.com

6. “I help women who are struggling with their chaotic and painful menstrual cycles to find ease, flow, and well-being.”

- high schools
- gynaecologist offices
- yoga studios
- holistic wellness centres
- naturopaths
- health food stores
- colleges
- acupuncture clinics and offices
- pain medicine aisles of drugstores
- wellness classes
- women’s centres
- meditation groups
- therapists (psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors’ offices)
- dance classes
- herbalists
- school PTA’s
- beauty salons
- spiritual women’s sharing circles
- chronic pain clinics
- online forums and support groups
- local women’s business associations
- swimming pools
- Facebook groups
- aromatherapy stores
- EFT practitioners focusing on pain
- talks shows
- coffee shops
- massage therapists
- tai chi and qigong classes or Meetups
- medicinal marijuana outlets
- chiropractors offices
- health club locker rooms
- pregnancy/conception forums
- midwives
- Facebook groups for teens
- endometriosis support groups
- school nurse’s office
- rape/sexual abuse trauma groups
- herbalists
- online feminist blogs focusing on women’s health
- local live dinner and music shows
- pilates studios
- meditation workshops and classes
- birthday party zones for children
- hormone support groups
- 12-step groups for relationships and eating
- HR departments wanting to manage sick time off
- gyms for women
- activist groups for women
- sugar detox groups (diet related to condition)
- daycare centres, barre class studios
- university campuses
- sex shops
- red tent gatherings
- artist retreat centres
- medicine ceremonies/shamans
- peri-menopausal women’s groups

7. “Beginning gardeners looking to confidently grow vegetables for their family in just a couple of hours per week.”

- natural foods stores
- farmers’ markets
- garden shops
- gardening classes at health food stores
- co-op radio events
- nurseries
- hardware or grocery stores selling seeds
- natural/health magazines
- gardening classes
- food preservation or organic food cooking classes
- community kitchens
- organic gardening centres
- community groups
- parent/school committees
- allotments
- subscribers of gardening magazines
- book store gardening sections
- parenting groups at local family support centres
- meet up groups
- extension office classes or workshops
- online vegan communities
- organic food blogs
- food banks
- alternative schools
- holistic health centres
- organic food forums
- parenting classes
- local women’s business associations
- simple living fairs
- housing co-op or co-housing
- preschools
- homeschooling organizations
- Vancouver Folk Fest
- Burning Man
- sustainability and home shows
- fair trade activist communities
- local or online aromatherapists
- u-pick farms
- vegan and vegetarian magazines
- meditation and yoga groups
- homemaker’s and mommy-type support groups
- local cafes that are popular with parents (the ones with all the toys)
- homeless shelters
- churches
- synagogues
- mosques, etc — both for members and as community outreach
- teachers co-ops
- libraries
- local craft breweries and microbreweries
- organic farmers and growers
- historic museums with gardens
- acupuncture clinics
- maker fairs
- seed shares

Part Three: Approaching Hubs

Part Three Introduction: Approaching Hubs

Once you've identified your hubs, the work of approaching them begins. There's the sincere work of connecting, then subsequently staying connected and relevant to your hubs. It's important to appropriately gauge your approach, to be clear on what you're looking for, and what you have to offer, and to accept what your hub can — or cannot — offer you.

In this section you'll learn about strategies for approaching and then staying in touch with hubs. You'll also learn more deeply about the advantage and value of working with hubs. There's also the important work of understanding what hubs expect from *you*, and when they might not want or be able to support you.

By the end of this section you should have a clear idea of how to prioritize your hubs, how to “stay-in-touch”, and how to make yourself valuable to a hub in return for their help.

“Change the opinion of a relatively small handful of experts, and you’ll change the entire marketplace. You can fund the exchange of new ideas in your field. Organize and fund the forum (audio conference, computer conference, etc.) that gets the experts together. It can be surprisingly inexpensive for the payoff involved. Another approach is to bring them together into a private advisory group.”

— George Silverman, *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*

Connect With A New Hub Weekly

Here's a simple idea: Once a week, connect with a new hub. That could be via email, on the phone, Skype, a coffee date, or lunch. That means that in a year even if you take two weeks off, you will have made 50 connections with new hubs. That's 50 people who are sources for dozens of potential clients. This is really big. A lot of those potential hubs will not be a fit. Some of them will be a perfect fit.



You could approach multiple hubs every day if you really wanted to hustle, but you could even do one a month. I think one a week is doable for most people.

The pitch is not that difficult. You reach out and say:

"Hey, we work in the same scene. I'm doing _____ kind of work and you're doing _____ kind of work. I've been hearing about you. I sometimes need to refer out for the kind of work that you do. I'd love to learn more about you and your work, who your ideal clients are, who you specialize in helping or what kind of work you specialize in doing so I know who to refer to you, and who not to. I want to see if there might be any way we could collaborate or what else might be possible."

When you meet with them, there's no formula. But, there are a few questions worth asking, as indicated above. They get at:

- Tell me more about the work you do.
- Where do you specialize?
- Who's your ideal kind of client?
- What's coming up next for you?

If you meet with them and ask those questions, they're likely going to ask them back. You'll also have a sense by the end of those coffee dates whether or not they're the kind of person with whom you'd like to work.

Hub Marketing

It is never a waste of time because if you leave thinking, “Well, that wasn’t a fit,” that gives you information about your niche, the work that you do, and what kinds of hubs you most want to connect with. It can help you clarify your own position and role in the community.

If they are a fit, then seeds are planted for future collaborations.

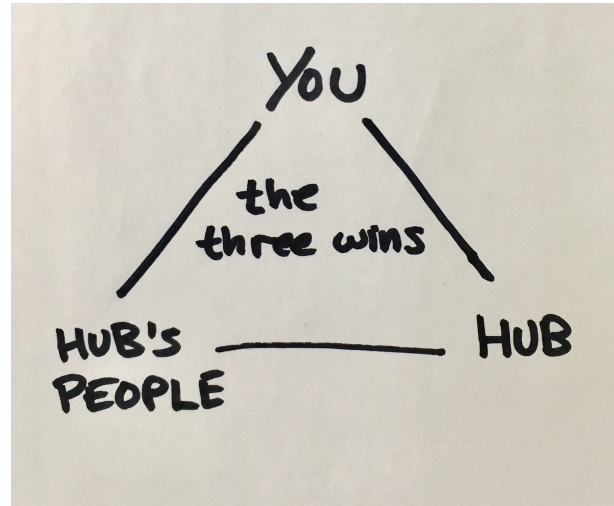
At the end of all those coffee dates, make sure you ask: “Who else should I talk to?” People will give you ideas for other hubs and people you could talk to who would be a good source of business.

The Three Wins Of Working With Hubs

When we are talking about connecting with hubs, there are “three wins” that need to happen. I got this notion from the good George Kao. Think of it like a triangle.

Win Number One — You

It has to be a win for **you**, (e.g. you’ll get clients, status, or money). If it is not, and the hub senses it is not a win for you, it will make people very uncomfortable. If people ask, “What do you get out of this?” and you say, “Well, nothing, I just want to serve; I just want to give,” there are some people who will back away because they mistrust you.



Win Number Two — Them

It also has to be a win for **them**. A core question when you are thinking about working with hubs is: “**What is in it for them?**” Yes, they might like you. There might be a feel-good aspect of it, but if you are asking them to really go out of their way, there has to be something in it for them. It’s got to be a win for them.

The most important way you can make it a win for them to be involved is to **make it easy for them**.

My friend runs a non-toxic hair salon. At her little counter she put up business cards of like-minded businesses. One lady brought her a stack of brochures but no stand to put them in. Because she did not want them taking up table space, she never put them out.

We need to put ourselves in the shoes of the hub we’re trying to work with and think, “Okay, what am I asking them to do and how can I make this as easy as possible?”

If you want them to send a letter or to send an e-mail on your behalf, then pre-write all of that for them. Make it easy.

Win Number Three — Their People

Lastly, it has to be a win for **their people** if they are going to endorse you. If you make some money and the hub makes some money but then the hub’s people have a terrible experience and complain to the hub, it’s over.

For a partnership to work, you’ve got to have all three wins.

"No man is an island, he's a peninsula."

— Jefferson Airplane

What Do Hubs Want For Supporting You?

We need to really think of what's in it for a hub. What could make it worth the hub's time? Below are some of the main possibilities.



- **Money:** For some people and hubs they, would love to earn some money from endorsing you — especially if their endorsement is going to make you money, too.
- **Help:** They might be interested in getting your help with something.
- **Debt:** Some people will do a favour for you now with an eye to collect later.
- **More Clients:** Make sure that you also have a referral mindset. Before you get, you must give, which means in order to get lots of referrals from these people, you might need to give them referrals.
- **To Look Smart and Feel Important:** A lot of people get their kicks out of being the expert on their favourite subject. When we tell people about what to buy, we're showing off what we know. Some people do this really well and everyone goes to them for advice. Melanie, the scrapbook guru; Bob, the HVAC king; Steve, the car guy. We love to ask these people for advice when we're making a purchase and they love to show you what they know. The more people ask for their advice, the more important they feel — it feels good to be an authority figure.

Find ways to recognize those hubs and give them higher status simply by acknowledging them, keeping them in the loop, and asking for their input. Being a frequent flyer used to be as much about the gold luggage tag as the miles and rewards. These customers will talk about you and your stuff because it shows off their importance and expertise and because they feel like they're in the inner circle. Most people wouldn't mind looking like a hero once in a while. Hubs love it when they are profusely thanked for connecting their people with you. They love it when their people come to them and say, "Thank you so much for sending me that email! That person changed my life!"

- **To Express Themselves:** Like it or not, the brands that we choose to tell people about says a lot about ourselves. When we talk about a store, or music, or products, it's a way of showing off who we are. I'm consistently amazed that the most rebellious teenager — who would drop dead if you called her a "conformist" — will proudly wear the logo of Gap or Abercrombie and Fitch.

- **To Feel Connected to a Group:** The desire to be part of a group is one of the most powerful human emotions. The hub might love what you're up to and just want to be a part of it.
- **To Mentor:** Anyone who is a hub didn't get there on their own. They got lots of help. They remember when they were you, reaching out and saying, "Hey, will you give me some help?" If you can be really candid with people and say, "I'm just starting out, I could really use some help and some advice. I'm not coming to you for clients. I'm coming to you for advice." You might be surprised how open they are to helping you.

Why Would A Hub Not Support You?

The following are some of the reasons why a hub might not support you.

- **No Money:** If their endorsement could make you money and you don't offer to compensate them, the deal may seem unfair. Ashley, a friend of mine in Edmonton, was a powerful hub. She was really connected and respected and when she would get excited about something she would go crazy endorsing it. She met a woman who was running a seminar. This woman invited Ashley to attend her \$199 workshop so she could see what it was all about. But she expected Ashley to pay. She was inviting a very busy and influential woman to take a whole weekend of her life and expected her to pay to attend. She didn't go and was insulted by the manner of the approach. Approaching a hub and asking them to spend money instead of showing them a way they can make money is a dead end road.
- **Too Much Effort.** The biggest thing hubs want you to understand about them is how busy they are. The more you ask them to do, the less likely it is that they'll do it. But if you can make it really easy and convenient for them to do, and with a big reward for themselves (or the members of their group), hubs are more likely to support you. It might be too much to ask them to write an email to their list endorsing you, but if you say, "We've already written the letter. We just need you to read it and sign off on it and then we'll send it to you to forward to your email list," they'll be more likely to say "yes." Make it easy for them to endorse you. *Do all of the leg work for them.* Do it all for them. Stu McLaren, a really brilliant marketer, wanted to get the endorsement of a bunch of business gurus for a seminar he was doing. So, he created a letter they could send out and also created a webpage-sales-letter for each guru with their photo and tailored text. Many of the gurus were speaking at the seminar. He called each guru and said, "I'd like to ask for your support in promoting this event. I've already crafted the email to send and the website it will send them to. Plus I'll give you \$_____ for everyone who enrolls." Make it easy. When you have a hub who has offered to spread the word, you give them pre-written things. "Here are ten pre-written tweets for you, edit them as you like. Here's a pre-written Facebook post, edit as you like. Here's a poster that you can put up. What's the best way? Should I send you a PDF or should I mail you some posters or hand deliver them? You want to send out an email to your list? Let me write that email for you. Edit it if you want." Make it easy for them to spread the word.
- **Status Not Acknowledged:** Let me be frank, hubs know they are hubs. They are incredibly busy. They know they are well connected and respected. And if, by the manner of your approach, they get that you don't understand that? They will back away. They're busy. They don't have time for people who can't or won't honour all of the work they've put into their community.
- **Lack of Credibility:** They need to know you, to trust you, to see your product or service in action. They will only endorse you if they feel confident that you can help the people they're endorsing you to. So, address their concerns. Give them the facts. Assure them it's safe. Make

your case to them. Show them hubs in other networks who have already adopted you. Let them talk to these hubs.

- **They Feel Used:** A friend of mine is a hub for a number of businesses. One of those businesses is a retail clothing store. For her birthday last year, she got a lovely piece of clothing from the store owner. A nice touch. This year, like clockwork, she got another gift! It came in a beautiful box, carefully wrapped. But it was the exact same thing she got last year. My friend felt so disappointed. She saw the relationship differently all of a sudden, and wondered if all of the gifts had just been token gifts motivated by guilt or obligation? Or that it was given to give the impression of personal affection when that wasn't really there. Don't give token thanks to your hubs. Sometimes you're stretched too thin. That's fine. It's okay to have many relationships that are essentially transactional and lacking depth. That's okay. Just don't pretend that they're any more than that. Don't feign affection where it doesn't exist. Don't put on the pretence of caring "soooooo much" about hubs when it's just business. Pretence might fool some people and get you ahead in the short term, but it will hurt you in the long term when people start to wonder if anything about your relationship is real at all. Though if you started and maintained a professional business relationship that didn't shift into feigned or forced affection, it wouldn't be a problem in the first place, because an expectation wouldn't have been created, and because a purely business relationship is also fine.

Hub Marketing

Hub	How they can help you	How you can help them
EVENTS	Speaking, and passing out email lists, putting cards on chairs with special offers, buying a booth, networking, donating silent auction gifts, donating grab bag gifts.	Promoting them to your list, bring your clients, volunteer, have photo and promo stuff ready, over-deliver on your speech, show up on time and ready.
BUSINESSES	Endorsed (e)mailing, calendar listings, host an event/workshop/demo, carry your brochures/products, offer a place to poster.	Set up a booth or shop in their stores (e.g. a la Starbucks in Chapters), endorse them to your clients, build friendships and alliances. Take them for lunch, give their employees gifts (Christmas, New Year's, birthdays), If you cannot think of an occasion, create one. Make sure to visit your cross-market friends' stores often and get to know the staff. Send thank you cards and/or flowers regularly, do in store presentations and give them all the credit for setting it up.
GROUPS	Endorsed (e)mailing, calendar listings, host an event/workshop/demo, invite you to speak at an event, carry your brochures/products, place to poster.	Be on their board, donate products and services, host a fundraising event for them, endorse them to your clients, give them a cut of the money you make.
SUPPORT	Connect you with their members, host an event.	Lobby for them to get more support, help spread the word about them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't just pull out your cheque book, give your time. • Get your customers involved in your cause • Organize fundraisers around your business • If you cannot write a powerful press release, hire someone • Become identified with your charity. Find ways to "market" your cause which in turn will market you
WEBSEARCH	NA	NA
PUBLICATIONS	Places to submit articles and press releases, place ads, calendar listings, classified ads, interviews with you, links to your site.	Pay for ad, give them a good story, provide them with good photos, comment on current events, give them valuable, relevant and useful content to their readers, link to them, write insightful commentary on their blogs – it will all help build a relationship.
INDIVIDUALS	Pass out information, gift certificates or invites or freebies for you to your niche, house parties to introduce you to their friends, write an "endorsement testimonial," use or wear your product, arrange meetings with key people, host an event, give advice or guidance on your direction.	Ask for their advice and feedback, introduce them to useful people and info, over-deliver on what you provide to folks they connect you with to boost their reputation, support a pet cause of theirs, ask how you can support them, express genuine appreciation, give them special invites to events, give them advance copies of materials, give them inside access, give them free tickets and products.

Some Truths About Hubs

If you're going to approach hubs, it's good to know a bit more about them. Here are a few things that I've found to be true over the last two decades.

What they already know about themselves: They are a hub.

What they are often driven by: A core sense of “not enough-ness.” They feel like they are never doing enough.

A secret you might not know about them: They're often far less well-off financially than you'd think. A good chunk of their time goes into connecting people and hosting events without getting paid for it. Being well-known and being wealthy are very different things.

Their deepest love: Seeing good people connect.

A pet peeve: People beating around the bush. Hubs love it when you are direct and straight to the point with them. This doesn't mean a lack of courtesy, it just means that they want to know why you're talking to them right away. They hate being schmoozed. They hate sensing a hidden agenda while in conversation.

Their biggest wound: Their limits. It is overwhelming to see so many possible connections, so many people you could help, and not be able to. There are just too many people wanting them to spread the word about their events.

What they're most protective of: Their reputation. If you do anything to mess with that, it's over.

What they don't get enough of: Time with good friends because they're so busy helping acquaintances, community members and friends of friends.

Their secret obsession: Growing their influence. More friends on Facebook. More people on their texting lists. They love meeting new people but it's not necessarily because they want to be famous but because the more people they know, the more connections they can make. They're like weavers collecting as many colours of thread as they can.

Their greatest skill: Connecting with people quickly and building their trust.

Something hubs have to get good at fast (or risk burning out): Saying no.

Don't Waste A Hub's Time: The Grave Consequences Of Being Fuzzy

In the Summer of 2016, I was in Toronto for a few weeks. My time felt precious to me because it was a busy trip, I had a *lot* of workshops planned, and I was looking forward to connecting with my Ontario friend and colleagues.



You might know the feeling if you travel. Sometimes you don't even tell the people who live in the city you're visiting that you're there because you don't have time to see everyone. But my friend Jean reached out to me wanting to connect for dinner. The only time she would be in Toronto was a Wednesday night, which so happened to be the same night that I was starting a weekend workshop. Normally I wouldn't cut it so close but, because she is dear to me, I told her I could spare an hour if we could meet close to the workshop. She arranged a place to eat and I arrived, happy to see her and meet her young friend with whom she was engaged in some projects. By the end of the hour, I was sitting there utterly confused and frustrated. Jean had worked so hard to make this meet happen and seemed to need my help with something but I had no idea what was going on in the conversation – it seemed to veer all over the place.

Finally, I spoke up and said, "I'm so confused. I'm just realizing I have no idea why we're meeting. Is this a personal catch up? Are you wanting my advice on something? I'd been under the impression you wanted to meet with me to get my take on something but I have no idea what that might be."

As it turned out, she had just wanted to reconnect and keep me posted on what had been happening and what was emerging in her world. If I'd known that upfront I could have relaxed and enjoyed our time together.

Don't waste a hub's time.

I've shared this example to share the other side of the story of marketing – how it's received. We spend so much time working on our business and our marketing that we rarely stop to consider how our marketing is landing for the person receiving it.

There are two issues here: laziness and fuzziness.

The latter is inevitable, the former isn't. The latter carries no shame, but the former might.

I want to highlight where laziness might be creeping into your marketing and the role fuzziness — despite best efforts and intentions — might be playing. I want to help you achieve clarity in your marketing, which might require more work from you than you initially thought. So much so that when you think you're done, you're likely not.

It's hard to know where to start because laziness and fuzziness happen so often.

Lack of clarity can happen in a beautiful way, occasionally. Often I find this beauty when a client hires me to look over their sales letter. Like when Daniel and Cecile of Round Sky Communications reached out to me, it was a pleasure to be able to help them redo their sales letter and to help them say what they wanted to say. Or when Carmen Spagnola asked for my help with her sales letter as she launched her Numinous School. Or when Russell Scott asked me to help him articulate the mandate of his Coming Home retreat. People often come to me not knowing how unclear their materials are. Sometimes it's laziness on their end and sometimes they just don't know how fuzzy their communication is.

Some Real Life Examples Of Fuzzy Contact & Content I've Received

The thing about the above example is that those clients are *hiring* me, so my time is being respected and compensated. But when someone asks me for assistance as a hub and their material is lazy or fuzzy, that's when I start to feel annoyed, frustrated, and even used, in my capacity as a hub.

What follows are some examples of colleagues and people who approached me for my help and support as a hub, but came to me unprepared and/or unclear (fuzzy, lazy) about the details of their offerings. Before you start reading these examples, I want to preemptively own that some of my responses below are petty. I'm not trying to hide that. In fact, I want to highlight that fact, because it's how hubs often feel when confronted with fuzziness (and almost always feel when it's a lazy-fuzziness). Are the reactions petty? Likely. Are they common? Yes. And it's important to be real about that.

I know that most of the people in the examples below were not trying to be rude or waste my time. And I'm aware that my reactions are about me and my own triggers. That's all true. But please, take from reading these examples of fuzziness and lazy-fuzziness that you can do a lot of irreparable damage to a hub relationship if you approach them unclear and essentially asking them to do work for you

I invite you to step into my world where fuzzy and lazy-fuzzy proposals are received often. I encounter a lot of *unclear* or *tired* marketing material. It happens regularly.

It happens with friends and colleagues who ask me to share their websites. When I look at them, I literally have no idea what the hell I'm looking at or what it's about. And I sit there for five minutes wanting to support my friend but having literally no idea what to write as a description or context for why I'm posting it. What the website needs is an overhaul. What they need, I tell myself, is to actually figure out their niche and what the hell they're up to. They have no idea what it's like to be me, wanting to help them and feeling baffled by their project. When I get the sense that they're still learning and growing, this doesn't bother me, but when I get the sense that they've just decided to be lazy about it, it does.

It happens when colleagues come to Edmonton and want my help in spreading the word about their workshop. I look at the marketing materials and my heart sinks. This is shit. This is all useless. It's full of jargon and platitudes and they have no idea how bad it is. I happen to know about their work and so I spend hours rewriting their materials so that I can share it without causing confusion to my friends. I don't want my friends to have to take the time to figure out why I'm sharing this, it should be clear. I don't want to waste my social capital and trust on a confusing sales letter. So, I redo it and send that out. After the workshop is done, I sit down with the person who asked for my help and explain to them that I'll never do that for them again, and neither will anyone else. I tell them how frustrating it is to want to spread the word for them but having to have

to redo everything in order to do that. They seem to get it and express their gratitude. That feels good. It's my choice to take on the heavy lifting of redoing their work for no payment. That's on me. And it's what your friends might do for you.

It happens when an old friend and colleague emails me over the years with various workshops and initiatives that I don't understand. Because I care for her, I actually open the emails and read her words. Because I care for her, I slog through the confusing text hoping that the next line will illuminate what this is for me only to be let down every time. My answers get more and more curt with her. She feels unsupported and it ends our friendship. True story.

It happens when a friend of mine sends me a message on Facebook asking for my help in sharing his crowdfunding campaign for a comedy tour. He doesn't tell me who's on the bill, where they're going, how many stops, why this matters enough to get funded or anything that might help me do more than simply paste the link to his gofundme.com page. I know that me simply posting a link will do literally nothing for him. Hell, even writing my most impassioned plea probably won't do anything for him. So I ask him to send me a pre-written Facebook post that says it all perfectly so I can get this right for him.

Here's the conversation:

Friend: Hey Tad! What's up man? I'm loving your Harper Has to Go Campaign and am behind ya 100%!! Just want to reach out to you about The comedy tour that I'm producing. 4 budding easy coast comics hit the road to perform everywhere they can; a camera rolls and a documentary is made. Please check out our Kickstarter campaign as we're trying to get funding to make this thing a reality and have some dope rewards. If you can't toss any \$\$\$ our way and still want to help out you totally can by spreading the word via social media or face to face with people; it's just as good as \$\$\$\$. The link is below, thanks for any help in advance and enjoy the rest of your summer! Much love.

Me: hey man! so good to hear from you. You are missed here in e-town. I can't give money right now but would love to spread the word. Can you send me a prewritten FB post saying it just the way you want with the link in it? I'll share it up.

Friend: Hey dude! Thanks, it feels nice to be missed :-). Here is the link and just say what you'd like about the idea of helping 4 DIY stand up comedians trying to go on tour and that your friend is one of them :-). Thanks again!!

Me: here's what i'd write now. but we can do better, "4 DIY stand up comedians are trying to go on tour and my friend John Doe is one of

them. Support if you can.” If you can add where the tour is going, the dates, how much money you’re trying to raise and by when.

Friend: Right. Not sure where we are going yet. Will know in the next week or so. The dates are Sept 27th to October 16th ; we are trying to raise \$20,000. We are almost 25 per cent of the way there. :-)

Me: any clearer sense of tour dates? And, if you’re able to give me exact wording that i can cut and paste it would be a big help. I want to get this as good as possible for you.

Friend: Tour dates will be announced tomorrow and I can send you a link to all that stuff. Have a great night.

I don’t hear from him again.

Ten minutes of my life wasted.

This doesn’t seem like a big deal until it’s ten minutes here and ten minutes there. And then ten more minutes.

It feels like death by a thousand cuts to have to read and respond to this kind of unclear stuff. And before I can respond, just reading the stuff is exhausting. I’m talking about long emails I have to slog through to figure out whether or not the email is even relevant to me.

It happens when I get hired for consultations with people whose projects are so vague and fuzzy and who either refuse to or are legally unable to get any clearer. I sit there for an hour wondering, “Why the hell am I here?”

It happens when I get an email invitation about the possibility of collaborating on a farmers’ market presentation and, after twenty minutes, it turns out that this collaboration couldn’t pay me anything. In fact, they were just wanting to get the contact info of the person who hired me for my last gig and, maybe, to get my endorsement. But somehow, in the end, the endorsement doesn’t even seem to matter. They could have asked me for the contact info in a one-sentence email and not wasted my time.

Fuzzy and lazy-fuzzy happen when I host a party and a woman stands up and, unusually dramatically and with too much emphasis, starts spinning a seductive but unsubstantiated web about a project she’s working on. The project can supposedly pay everyone incredibly well to do their work. When a client of mine says, “Wow. That sounds really good!” I turn to him and say, “You stay away from her. Or better yet, go and talk with her to find out what she’s up to, because I don’t think there’s anything of substance there.” He then returns an hour later to confirm that twenty minutes of digging yielded him nothing but a headache.

All of these examples include wonderful people who I enjoy and care for.

And I still get cranky.

It happens all the time.

It happens when people ask me to spread the word about something on Facebook and I have no idea what it is, for whom it might be relevant to, or even, often, what city it's happening in.

It happens to anyone who's invited for coffee just to "hang out" and their intentions are nebulous. They're not interested in the invitee romantically but . . . it's just coffee, right?

It happens when you meet someone who asks you to go for coffee and it ends up being Amway (or whatever multi-level marketing business is popular nowadays).

It happens when a known funder is schmoozed by people who are really friendly and asking all sorts of personal questions to "get to know" the funder (who can feel the ask coming).

I think that the laziness often happens this way: people are writing promo material for their programs, products and projects, and they often get lazy due to impatience. You know the feeling: you've been sitting at the computer for days on end and you're utterly cross eyed. You're so excited to just get your material out there and spread the word that you don't pause to look at what you've written and read it through the eyes of the person on the receiving end. What this means is that, often times, you send out something that's fabulously unclear. And you don't stop to consider the impact that your fuzzy words will have on the person reading it.

Hub marketing is about fostering meaningful connections between yourself and your colleagues who you admire and want to see succeed. The way you approach them can be a way you drain away their minutes and hours with confusion and annoyance or a way you bring more beauty and ease into their lives.

Backed Up By Science

Thankfully, my crankiness is backed up by science.

In 2011, Cory Doctorow wrote a post on boingboing.net saying:

Sebastian Marshall's Lifehacker post on the cognitive cost of "doing things" is a really interesting look at all the hidden "costs" that keep you from doing stuff, and that you pay when you make stuff happen. I'm especially interested in "activation energy" – "starting an activity seems to take a larger of willpower and other resources than keeping going with it," particularly this: "Things like having poorly defined next steps increases activation energy required to get started." I get a lot email asking me to help out with stuff, and I certainly notice that the more nebulous the request is, the more likely the email is to sit in my inbox for days or weeks as I try to figure out what to do about it. I'm certainly going to keep this in mind the next time I try to get someone else to do a favour for me.

Ego/willpower depletion – The Wikipedia article on ego depletion is pretty good. Basically, a lot of recent research shows that by doing something that takes significant willpower your "battery" of willpower gets drained some, and it becomes harder to do other high-will-required tasks. From Wikipedia: "In an illustrative experiment on ego depletion, participants who controlled themselves by trying not to laugh while watching a comedian did worse on a later task that required self-control compared to participants who did not have to control their laughter while watching the video." I'd strongly recommend you do some reading on this topic if you haven't – Roy Baumeister has written some excellent papers on it. The pattern holds pretty firm – when someone resists, say, eating a snack they want, it makes it harder for them to focus and persist doing rote work later.

You can read the whole article here: lifehacker.com/5798202/the-cognitive-cost-of-doing-things

Please Don't Waste Their Time

Out of friendship and good will, many hubs will give you their attention once or twice. But, if you keep being fuzzy, they will resent it.

Why?

Because they love you.

They care about you.

They think you're amazing and they want to support you but they have no idea what the heck you're doing.



It's a frustrating place to be in. They open your emails hoping for something they'll understand enough to put their encouragement behind, only to be lost in a sea of words. Sure, there's a link they could click, but, after years of this, they're not convinced it will be any clearer. They'll open your emails out of love for you but soon they're opening them out of a sense of guilt and obligation. Or they're ignoring them. Or, possibly worse, they're putting smiling faces and "Congrats!" on your Facebook posts because they love you. What they're not telling you is that they never clicked the link and they actually have no idea what you do.

Writing a good headline or email subject line isn't about selling people. Writing good copy isn't about selling people. It's about being as clear as you humanly can about what this is and isn't and who it's for and who it's not for. It's about cutting to the chase as quickly, artfully and clearly as possible. When you don't take the time to articulate what you do well, what that shows me is that you don't seem to care enough about me to take the time to make things clear.

Please don't waste their time.

Please don't make them sweat to understand what you're up to. Please don't confuse them. Please don't use the leverage of their love for you against them. And, please don't take it personally or be offended when they candidly tell you that they are confused by what you do. The truth: they love you and they are trying to give you the gift of their candour, which most of your friends aren't. They love you so much that they are willing to risk the friendship to support the friend. And, know that people have their limits to how much "fuzziness" they're willing to accept from you.

Eventually, you will be ignored. People won't even bother to read the subject lines of your email. They won't even look at what you tagged them in on Facebook or Twitter. And the whole time they're ignoring it, they are frustrated because they want to help you and feel guilty for not being

more supportive, but they don't trust you to respect their time. It's an awful place to put people. I've been put in this situation more times than I wish I had. Eventually, that resentment towards you will build into frustration.

Don't hijack their love.

Writing good sales copy is an act of love and respect for the time and emotional wellbeing of others. Taking the time to write thoughtful copy is an act of kindness. It is consideration. A good sales letter is a pleasure to read. If you claim to love your friends and those on your list, be clear with them. Don't waste their time. Don't hijack their love.

Bottom Line: Sending a hub your unfinished, unclear, or sloppy work is disrespectful.

It says "your time is less valuable than mine." I am often asked to promote people's programs but, when I read their sales letters, they're so confusing. There's no clear niche or offer and it seems like the person offering it couldn't be bothered to actually craft something clear and to the point. It seems like a rough draft.

I commend to most people that they get the help of an editor or copywriter. There are a lot of excellent people who do this work. And yes, it costs and it's a skill to edit and clarify promotional material. It's part of the work and expense of doing business if you're not well-versed at putting your offers down clearly yourself.

So don't waste the time of a hub with your in-process materials. You need to be ready when you contact them. Make it easy, clear, and joyful for them to receive your words and they'll be so happy to share it with their wide web of colleagues.

A colleague recently shared his own frustrating experience as a hub: "I asked a few people to give me a bullet point about their business so that I could include them on an email newsletter I was sending to my list that highlights other people's amazing work (just for the hell of it because their work is awesome). My clients all followed the directions, but the two friends who I wanted to include both sent me vague responses. It felt doubly disrespectful because I was actually offering to promote them for free. There's no way I was going to put other people's vagueness out there."

As I wrote this blog post I recalled some words Derrick Jensen had written in his book *Walking on Water*: "You mugged me with words." He speaks of receiving a critique from an elder storyteller Milbre Burch:

At one point I used the wrong word to describe something – I called a trowel a spade – and when she corrected me I said (the forty-two-year-old me is horrified to remember these words come out of my then twenty-six-year-old mouth), "It's just a word."

“Just a word,” she replied. “No. You mugged me, as surely as if you had taken my wallet. You mugged me with words, stole a moment of my life. Every time you’re on stage, or every time you write something for someone else to read, all the people in the audience, all the people who read your writing, are giving you the honour of time they could be spending elsewhere. You are responsible for every second they give you. You need to give them gifts – including the truth as you understand it to be – commensurate with that every moment.”

Basically, if you’re interested in a woman, tell her, and ask her out on a date. Don’t lie about your interest or attraction. If she’s not interested, she’ll tell you. And that’s fine. She’ll be grateful for you not wasting her time.

If you’re with a multi-level marketing company, don’t feign friendship with people to seduce them into your pitch. Tell them you have a business proposition for them and could you have five minutes of their time to pitch? They’ll be grateful for you not wasting their time.

If you meet a funder whose financial support you want, tell him that. Say, “Can I bend your ear for 60 seconds about a project we’re working on that I think you might want to fund?” They’ll be so grateful and will almost always say yes to the 60 seconds of their time. They’ll be grateful for you not wasting their time.

Who came to who?

Remember, you came to me for support, not the other way around. I didn’t approach you curious if I could spread the word on your project. You came to me.

If you are approaching someone, the central question in your mind must be, “How can I make this all as clear, quick, easy and worthwhile for them as possible?” You’re in their house. You are a guest. Don’t waste their time.

Now, if you’re doing what you do and not reaching out to anyone and people are just stumbling across your work then be as fuzzy as you want. Whatever. I don’t care. Maybe people will get it and love you. If they complain about how fuzzy you are, tell them to go to hell. It’s your life. Do what you want.

But if you come to them? That kind of laziness and fuzziness will not fly.

And remember, the bigger a hub they are, the busier they are, the more thought you’ll need to put into this. If you blow it with a major hub once you might not get a second chance.

And, this is so important: If you’ve been fuzzy for a while, expect people to be extra touchy and critical. That’s the price you pay for having wasted their time before. “The confused mind says

‘no,’” is an old adage I’m coming to understand in new ways. At first the mind says “no” gently, but eventually that “no” becomes more and more assertive.

I’ve already said this but it bears repeating: *please know that the greatest pain of someone who is well-connected is not having enough time to help everyone they want to help.* The more connected and respected you become, the more skills you gain, the more you realize that you can help more people. But you won’t have the time or the energy to help everyone. So, you have to choose because, soon enough, people will start sending you emails, texts and Facebook messages, all wanting “just five minutes of your time” or wondering if they could pick your brain for a bit, or if you might know someone who does a certain thing, or could you direct them on to someone to talk to. And, as a hub, it’s one of your greatest pleasures to be able to help these people and save them hours, if not years, of frustration. But, an ever-increasing barrage of contact like this can become overwhelming and make you feel helpless, too.

Because of this, you need to understand how your fuzziness will make a hub feel. The amount of time and energy the hub you are approaching has to spend trying to understand your request takes directly away from the time they have to help others. Don’t think for a second that any of us have limitless amounts of mental focus to spare.

So, if you consistently get feedback that your work is fuzzy (unclear, confusing), please take it to heart and get help.

Don’t blame the world for not getting you. Don’t blame your colleagues for being frustrated in their desire to help you. Don’t blame your friends for resenting the time they keep investing in what you’re offering only to find out, after far too much time spent, that it’s not a fit.

I understand that I have the choice of whether or not to read or respond to things people send me. That’s the truth. Their fuzziness is not my burden unless I take it on. But, because I love these people, I do open the emails and it means the world to me to feel like they’ve done everything they can to make it as clear as possible.

It's Not All Your Fault

All of the previous said, you don't need to entirely blame yourself either.

As I said before, there's no shame in fuzziness. There's no shame in *not* hitting a bullseye every time.

But there is some shame in not learning from past interactions and in not bringing rigour to the clarity of your communications.

Getting clear about what you do, how you do it, and whom your service is directed at, is one of the hardest things you will ever do in business. If you struggle with it, you aren't alone. This is the heavy lifting in business that many avoid and most don't even know is there for them to do.

The chances are that whatever education you got in doing what you do now did not include the marketing of that thing. Chances are also that you didn't go through a formal apprenticeship training with an elder that might prepare you to speak with immense clarity about what you do, especially to the village of people you take care of, who take care of you, too. If your business is about care-giving? You are likely self-taught in marketing and find it an uneasy proposition at the best of times. Y=Your business is functioning in a toxic economic system and may have been promised six figures fast by someone who should have known better and there's a chance this has left you feeling desperate. So, this is bigger than you. It's not you.

It's not your fault that your work may be fuzzier than you want. If you're fuzzy, there's a good chance you're still at stage-one of your business' growth. And that's a beautiful place to be, if you know that you're there. No one minds someone at Stage One. But they do mind people at Stage One walking around with Stage Four swagger. If you're just starting, you're going to need to experiment and try a lot of things to see what works for you. And, while you're experimenting, it means you're going to be making mistakes and putting out things that you think are clear but aren't. There's no avoiding it and there's nothing wrong with it.

You'll be forgiven for fuzziness, but laziness is less forgivable.

Just be mindful that it is costing people something to mentor you. And don't expect the mentorship. Don't bring your entitlement there. If you get the gift of someone's candour and encouragement, that's a wonderful thing. I enjoy mentoring people. I love the work that I do. But when people send me something fuzzy, despite my attempts to let them know how fuzzy it is, it's as if they're asking me to work for free. Some people seem willfully fuzzy. They resist figuring out their niche and yet keep asking for help, having no idea of the burden this is for those who care about them. As well, they likely have no idea that they've now been lumped in with others like them when, in fact, what they're doing is good, they just need to be more clear about it

Work to be more clear. Work to be better.

If someone comes to me with something nebulous and I tell them it's too vague to share and they work hard and bring me back something that is finer and clearer, I feel good in my heart and happy to help them.

You could do a lot worse than approaching this all with a humble spirit.

If you're getting feedback that you're confusing people, it's okay. It might take a while to get there but you'll get there – if you make it a priority and focus on it.

How To Get Clear

Consider asking friends for feedback before putting your offer out officially.

Consider posting your sales copy on Facebook and inviting people's candid commentary before approaching a hub with it.

Consider hiring a copywriter to look at it if it's an important piece for your business.

Consider learning about how to write a good sales letter. Consider learning how to create a compelling and clear package.

You can get clearer more quickly than you think.

Before sending an email to someone who's an important hub, consider what it is that you want them to do. Is the email as clear as it could be? Is it direct and to the point?

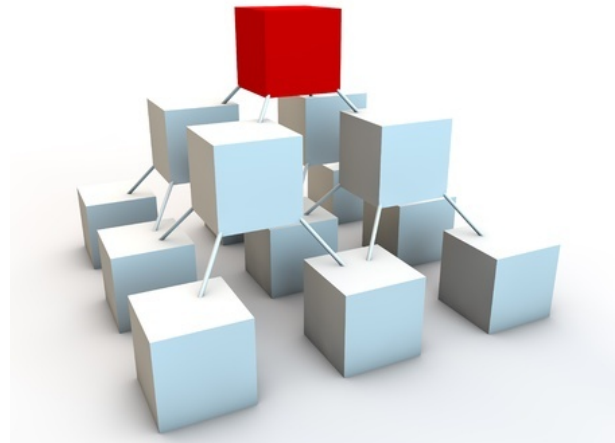
If you have an important meeting, really think through what you want to cover and how what you do can be of use to them.

How To Approach Hubs And Potential Clients Cold

In 2014 Tova Payne reached out to me to see if she could write a guest post for my blog.

I say “no” to most of guest blog offers. I get a lot of requests.

But, the way she reached out and the subject line in her email piqued my interest. I went back and re-read what she sent and Was incredibly impressed. As someone who is a hub in a number of arenas, I can attest strongly to the importance of what Tova is articulating here. It's very aligned with a post Ari Galper of unlockthegame.com wrote years ago. I wish everyone reached out to me in the way she is suggesting in her blog post – which you'll read below.



I don't recommend the cold approach as a core tactic in your marketing, but, sometimes, it's what you have to do. And there are ways to do the cold approach that feel classy and other ways that feel slimy, awkward, confusing and uncomfortable.

If you are thinking of reaching out to potential hubs or clients via email, please read this first.

This approach, tailored for your own voice, is pressure-free and will help to build trust and position you as a generosity-based business.

This is a beautiful slow marketing approach.

This type of approach highlights the importance of creating a “free gift” that you can offer people. Mostly, you'll use it as thanks for people signing up to your email list but you could also use it as a gift in an approach like this. And, once you've made contact in this way, you're ready to open up a conversation about working together.

Tova's article has since inspired me to share more examples that are aligned with her approach.

Guest Post: Slimy vs. Classy Marketing and Sales, by Tova Payne

Have you ever experienced slimy marketing?

I have. It makes my stomach churn just thinking about it. Someone I had interacted with in an online networking group took a jab at me with a sleazy sales

tactic. I thought: this is pretty lame and showcases a clear example of what NOT to do when it comes to marketing and sales.

I'm turning my experience into today's lesson:

We'll take a look at the difference between slimy vs. classy marketing, and showcase how class and integrity go a long way in building a successful business.

Here's what happened:

I got an email out of the blue (which is what cold-calling is internet-style), that basically said: "Looks like your programs are fantastic. But until you fix your website, I can't refer anybody to you even though I want to. Luckily, my course will help fix you right up. Join my course, you need it."

Let's break down why this kind of marketing is so bad (if you aren't already laughing in disbelief).

First of all, she never opened up a dialogue with me.

Since business is about relationships, you first need to meet the person.

If you are going to write somebody out of the blue —somebody who has never been a past client, or somebody who has never reached out to you for help —you need to start off saying hi. Introduce yourself first. And then, ask them if they want to hear more about your topic.

Basically — say hi and find out if they even want to know what you have to offer. Don't force-feed your opinions on others.

Don't be manipulative. Telling someone their work is great, but that you can't refer people because of image is bullshit (or extremely shallow). When you believe someone's work is great, and if you really want to refer others, you will. So please, don't ever buy into this line. It is total B.S.

Don't put someone down just to show off how you can be the saviour. That stinks. Seriously, this is where the negative connotations and images of marketing come from.

Basically, don't try to bully someone into thinking they need you. Don't ever put somebody down to sell your product. That is what Slimy Marketing 101 is about. It doesn't work. And if you get someone who falls for it, it won't last for long-term business building (and P.S Please don't fall for this).

Look — if you're in business, you need to participate in marketing and sales, especially if you're a startup. However, there is a classy and kind way to do it.

Here's the thing, marketing is another way of saying: Sharing and sales is another word for saying caring.

Seriously, if you have something you think is fantastic, you will tell everyone about it (marketing) and if you really care about helping someone, you will do your best to make sure they receive what they need (sales).

This is why it's important to create a positive mindset around marketing and sales. If you see it from the eyes of sharing and caring, of course you'd wake up everyday excited to get your message, product, and service out there.

But it's important that you market and sell from a place of humanity and kindness.

Mean marketing stinks of desperation. Don't do it. You're better than that. Instead, be kind. You can share what you have with the world in a kind and classy way.

So it's all about how you do it.

Let me spell it out:

Marketing + Sales = Sharing + Caring

This means:

Yes, tell people about what you have to offer. This is what newsletters, blogs, webinars, videos, and sales pages are for.

Yes, contact people who you think may be a good fit for what you have to offer and people who have reached out to you asking for help.

Yes, you can “cold call” or “cold write” somebody. But do it from a place of caring and focus on building a relationship first. Remember, if you met someone in real-life, how would you start the conversation? Treat people like humans. They are real and they have feelings. Be kind.

If you cold call/cold write, then come from a place of curiosity. Ask the prospect if they are interested in hearing more about your subject matter. This is a good

lead into building the relationship and seeing if they are even interested in the product or service you have.

Yes, share some free advice to show people that you know what you're talking about.

Yes, be kind and loving when you tell people what you have to offer.

Here is what NOT to do:

Do not put someone down to try to make them feel bad and vulnerable so that their confidence takes a hit and they feel they need your product or service to get better.

Do not tell someone that they are doing something wrong if they haven't asked.

Do not give unsolicited advice in a private e-mail if the prospect never reached out to you. If you sincerely feel you can help somebody, introduce yourself. You can let someone know about what you do and what you're passionate about. There is no need to put a prospect down in order to share what you have to offer.

If you truly believe somebody is doing something that can hurt them, share with them some free information that can truly help them.

So let's put this all into perspective. Had that e-mail I received gone something like this, it would have been classy:

E-mail 1:

Hi. I think your work is fantastic. Let me know if you're interested in some free tips that I think you may find helpful.

Aha! That would have piqued my curiosity and probably would have received a reply.

Email 2: (remember this is what relationship building is)

Oh awesome, I'm so excited to share this with you. Ok here are 3 things that I think you might find helpful: {list 3 helpful things} . . . Please let me know what you think. I hope that helps!

That's what it means to be helpful and show off your expertise. Don't tell someone you're amazing, **SHOW** them.

Then, I'd definitely reply to such a helpful e-mail. When somebody is helpful, they are memorable and seen in a positive light. In my mind, I would have seen this person as generous, smart, and may have even gone on to hire them or refer them!

And finally, Email 3:

Oh great, I'm so happy that helped. If you want more tips or strategies I have a course you may be interested in—here is the link. Let me know if you want to talk about it and we can set up a time to chat. Otherwise, I wish you the best.

Aha. You know what? Whether I purchased or not, in my mind I'd see this person as kind, helpful, be a possible future customer or definitely help support and refer her.

Do you see the difference now between slimy marketing versus classy marketing?

What I received was a sample of slimy marketing—there's no need to put someone down in order to go for the sale.

What would have worked? The example I just gave you—build rapport, be helpful, and then move towards discovery: find out if the person is interested in what you have.

Yes, it takes more time. Yes, it takes more effort. Yes, it takes generosity, and seeing the other person as a human and not just a pocketbook.

Remember, slimy marketing oozes of desperation. It may work on some people, but it won't take you far. And it could earn you a bad reputation.

Be kind first. Open the dialogue. Give first. If you are truly helpful, people will remember you, buy from you, or at least support and tell others about you (which is worth way more than a quick sale).

Now go on—get out there. Market and sell with kindness and class. There are people who need you.

Tova Payne Bio:

Tova's an author and business coach to soulful entrepreneurs. She helps her clients turn business dreams to reality by giving the practical strategies and soulful practices that help you go from idea to finished product. For your free guide on 5 Keys to Starting and Finishing your Dream Project and weekly tips to grow your business sign up with Tova at www.tovapayne.com

The key thing here is that we don't make the assumption that we can absolutely help them. We don't assume they are even having the problem we can solve or want the result we offer. We're genuinely asking just to see if it's a fit. When we come from this place and, instead of trying to force everything into a single email, it becomes a conversation, not a pitch.

This is the identical approach that I have used myself for years and years when approaching hubs. Start with a very brief, non-assumptive email to see if there's a baseline fit and let it flow from there. Hubs are busy. Potential clients (even if not as busy as hubs) have no idea who the hell you are.

Personally, I would reword Tova's Email #1 idea in this way:

Hi. I think you're work is fantastic. I came across it (tell them how you did and how long ago). I really love (tell them specifically what you love). I was wondering if you were wanting to/struggling with (name the problem you think you might be able to help them solve or the result you think you could help them achieve)? I was looking at your website/ebook etc. and had some thoughts I thought might be useful. Regardless, thank you so much for all of your good work.

Like Tova, I've been approached in ways that instantly turned me off. And, I've saved a number of them because I knew that, one day, I would write a book like this.

Seventeen Examples Of How *Not* To Approach A Hub

Some people think I email them too many things from colleagues. But they have no idea how much I filter out.

Please note:

- I've changed names and removed any identifying factors (emails, phone numbers) because the *who* is not important, it's the content that will illustrate how *not* to contact hubs.
- I've chosen to leave the spelling and punctuation as it came to me so you can see how that part really matters and is deserving of your attention, in addition to the content.



Let the horrors begin . . .

#1: Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) company.

Hi!

Don't worry this is not a spam message, I am the Webmaster of _____, just inquiring on selected high quality blogs like yours if you are open for guest posting opportunities. I have read your blog and thought that it is related to my site and therefore I am asking if I can share some insights or an article on your blog.

With this venture, we can help you in sharing your blog through our social networks and get some links for your site plus I can also get some exposure for my company.

I've actually prepared a proposed topic for your blog:

- *Online Marketing: Money in Every Click
- *Earn Money the Fast Way with Internet
- *Market Online, Earn Big Time
- *Building A Career Through Multi-level Networking
- *MLM is The Ladder to Success
- *MLM: The Secret of Rising Companies

Just choose a topic that you like but if you want me to write a different topic, I will be glad doing that also. For reference of my writing style, kindly visit my personal blog: (website.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration. Just e-mail me back for your response.

Sincerely,

_____ Webmaster

My take: This reads like a form email. But only, to be fair, because it is a form email. I'm a selected "high-quality blog?" How wonderful. I'm so flattered by the generic compliment. So meaningful. He asks if I'm open to guest posting opportunities. He could have just sent that as an email and he would have gotten a response. "Hey there, are you open to guest posts?" Short and sweet. It's not the best option but it likely would have gotten a reply like, "Sometimes. Can you tell me more?" And then we're in a conversation.

He tells me he'd share my blog through his social networks but I have no idea if they're a fit or how large his networks are. And then, he shares topic ideas. They're all MLM focused. None of them resonate with me in particular.

This isn't the worst email but it would have worked better with a shorter first email.

#2: Promote my book?

Greetings Tad, I am Jane Doe I am a book author and writer aged 20. My Book is called _____. the book is an inspirational book aimed at anyone who has a dream to achieve. The reason I am contacting you is that I need a hand with marketing, can you email your fans and bloggers and inform them about my book? God Bless!

My take: This email is very sweet and sincere. But, I'm not going to email my entire list about a book I've never read from a stranger. I love that she had the gumption to ask and a slower, relationship building approach might have yielded more fruit.

#3: Share my page, please?

Hey, i'm just getting my page going and was wondering if you could please help me out with a share? Thanks a ton

My take: I've never met this person. I have no idea who they are. Why would I share their page? What's in it for me? The spirit of this kind of email misses, so deeply, the nature of being a hub. When you're a hub, you are very careful about what you endorse or send out.

#4: Share my blog maybe?

Hello,

Would you be interested in networking?

It would be awesome if you could write a blog post about my business website.com with a couple anchored keywords.

In exchange I would give your Facebook page a bunch of shares on
www.Facebook.com/pagename
or on Facebook.com/otherpagename
or on Facebook.com/stillanotherpagename
or a combination of them, whatever helps you the most.

Let me know if you're interested? Thanks!

My Take: "It would be awesome if you could write a blog post about my business." Something about that didn't feel great. Very assumptive. Like, "You know what would be awesome. You dating me. It would be awesome if you could do that."

If, instead, they'd said something like the following, they'd have gotten a response.

"Hey there, I am a big fan of your blog and I have a few businesses that I thought might be a fit to be featured on it but I wasn't sure and wasn't even sure if you do that sort of thing. So, I thought I'd touch base. Thanks for all that you do."

#5: Share my completely irrelevant blog, please?

Hi there,

How are you? This is NAME from USA. I have a keen interest in studying metal treatment and I love to share my knowledge with people. I have my personalized Blog specially dealing with Metal Rust.

Basically, I wanted to touch base with you to check if you accept posts from other writers to publish on your blog? I would too like to contribute my uniquely written creative posts about Metal Treatment on your site. We all know that metals have become a part of our daily life, especially Stainless Steel. I would like to share a few points about how they can be maintained. That will offer a real value to your readers as well.

The following link will lead you to a recent Guest Post that I have written.
completelyirrelevantblogpost.com/

Please let me know your thoughts. Looking forward to hear from you soon!

My take: I didn't respond.

#6: Want to share a totally off-topic blog?

Hi

I have noticed you've had a number of guest blogs on marketingforhippies.com before, including this post on eco-friendly advertising:

marketingforhippies.com/eco-friendly-advertising

I just wondered if you would be interested in publishing a blog on "Seven appliances you didn't know were costing you money"?

I've attached the blog for your consideration.

If you have any questions or feedback then please get in touch. Alternatively, if you're interested in any other type of guest blog, please let me know also.

Thanks,

My take: Ahhh! He started so strong —he mentioned my website name! He even named a particular blog he liked! And then . . . what? How did he think that topic would fit a blog about marketing? It makes no sense. And why would I contact him for another type of blog post? Who are you, appliance man? Who arrrrre youuuuuu?

#7: May I totally confuse you, please?

Hi Tad,

Hope all is well.

I recently attended an event with Kenny and his wife who are wonderful heart-centred people. I made them aware of a Consciousness Party that I Am hosting in Calgary that I would love to drop into a deeper conversation with you around.

If this is something that feels right for you can reach me at name@gmail.com.

Take good care.

in Heartfelt Appreciation,

Name

P.S. You can also text me at _____

My take: What? I have no idea what she's asked about. At all. What is the Consciousness Party? Why should I care? What kind of conversation does she want to have with me and why? Whaaaa?

So, in confusion, I replied.

hey there,

sorry for the delay. can you give me a nutshell of what it is you'd like to talk with me about around this?

- t

To which she replied.

Hello Tad,

Hope all is well in your world.

I appreciate You taking the time to get back to my request.

I Am at an Amazing part in my life and fully embracing that the challenges I've experienced are now my gift. I Am honouring my true authentic power and my desire to align myself with those that embody the same essence.

Kenny had mentioned that You would be a powerful connection for the Consciousness Party that I Am creating in Calgary the evening of DATE. I Am flying up a woman who has been doing training for Google to share some of her expertise with those that attend.

I would love the opportunity to share more about this experience with You and if it feels right intention for You then You may choose to share it with your community.

Take good care.

My take: WHAT IS THIS PARTY?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?! WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?!

Pro Tip: Never ever, ever confuse a hub. They will write you off so fast. For a hub, the most valuable commodity is their time. Do not waste it.

Her follow up email confused me even more. Why is there a woman doing a training for Google at a party? Why do I care? (And what's up with all of the strange capitalization?)

#8: Can we book a time to talk?

Hello Tad,

My name is _____ and I'm the Joint Venture Manager for _____, founder of Coaching Business Name. We found your website and your work seems to be aligned with us and what we love to promote! I'd like to connect with you to see how we can best support each other in 2013! I'd like to learn what you're planning for this year and share a few things from our promotional calendar.

To schedule an appointment, could you fill out some brief information by clicking on the link below. This will help us see what may be a best match and how to best serve your organization.
websitename.com/jvsurvey

Our goal is to build synergistic relationships that are profitable and fun on all levels using the spiritual principles we teach and practice. We have an experienced JV Team in place capable of handling every aspect of any type of campaign or promotion.

Hope to speak to you or someone in your organization soon!

My take: This one isn't bad. I'd make it shorter first, see if I'm even open to exploring joint adventures, but this email is okay. However, I don't know why it feels like a fit for them. There's an assumption in the email that there is a fit here and we just need to figure it out. And, for me, whenever a stranger emails me saying "How can I help you?" I read that as, "I actually want you to help me but I figure that I've got a better chance of getting that if it seems like I want to help you."

#9: Can you promote my unrelated program, please?

My take: Okay. This one is longer so I'll pull it apart, piece by piece.

Aug. 30, 2012
Hello Ted Hargrave,

My take: You misspelled my name. And used my full name (this makes you seem like spam or my angry mother and neither of these associations will help you).

My name is _____; I'm a high school principal with an area of expertise that I believe many on your list of contacts would welcome hearing about: Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

My take: What? How do you see the connection between Emotional Intelligence and marketing? I don't get it. What problem does this solve for my clients?

I've created a School for Emotional Intelligence with a 6 week program entitled _____. It's a telecourse so people living anywhere can access it. I deliver it live weekly, repeat it regularly, and I provide e-mail support and enrichment after every lesson.

My take: Why do I care about the details when I don't see the relevance of the offer? I don't.

My program sells for \$197 and the affiliate commission for each referral is \$100. Would you like to partner with me as an affiliate in a joint venture by informing your contacts my course exists?

My take: This fellow is making the false assumption that the only reason I would spread the word about something is to make some money. I'm not against making money, but talking commission comes in Email #2 at the earliest. Likely not until Email #3. The most important thing is, "Is there even a fit?"

If so, I'd be honoured to work with you.

Naturally, before you'll consider promoting my program, you'll want to know these 3 things:

My take: You're already telling me what I want? Old Man Ted Hargrave is cranky.

1 - That having high Emotional Intelligence is a great asset which will interest a significant percentage of those whom you contact. (Many people already realize that Emotional Intelligence is strongly correlated with performance and

productivity – at work, at home, and at school – so they will understand its value either for themselves, or their children, or both.)

My take: How is this relevant to my people???? I don't care how abstractly valuable this is. I care if this is useful to my clientele.

2 – That I have the knowledge and skill to teach my program at a high level. (My websites include my qualifications and testimonials.)

My take: I don't care unless this is relevant. But I'm sure that will be your next point.

3 – That you'll be assured of receiving your commissions. You can collect the tuitions yourself if you prefer, and send me my share when the course is over. Or I can do that using a company with affiliate tracking software to identify all your referrals and credit them to you (they'd register via your affiliate link).

My take: I don't care. Strike three.

If you wish, I'd be happy to help you promote my program to your contacts. How?

My take: I'm sure you would.

1 – I could conduct a free preview teleseminar so they could easily judge for themselves if my program is a good fit for them or their children. If they then want to register for it, they would, of course use your unique affiliate link to ensure you are properly credited.

2 – I can provide a sales e-mail for you to copy, and then forward to your contacts. (Modify it any way you wish.)

My take: I don't care.

You can view the details of my program – and its benefits – on either of my websites. One is for adults who desire to enhance their own Emotional Intelligence; the other is for their teenage children.

My take: Ah, I see. To see how this might be relevant I need to go to your website. So, you're making me work for something that I don't currently see any value in. Right.

website.com (specifically for youth)
website2.com (for adults)

Thank you for whatever consideration you grant this proposal. If you are interested, please contact me. And if you have no interest, I'd really appreciate an e-mail just to say, "No thanks," so I'll know not to bother you with any follow-up to this.

My take: Say what? You're now pushing me to respond? You're putting that subtle obligation on me after totally wasting my time in reading this? No sir.

I can't offer a cross promotion of what you offer (I'm on your list) since I lack any list of my own. That's why I'm reaching out to you as a potential affiliate. I believe we can both benefit.

Sincerely,

name

contact info

P.S. If you promote my program, it will prove to be a win-win-win:

1 - Those completing the course - teens or adults - will enhance their EQ (and EQ correlates with happiness more than IQ).

2 - You'll be providing value to your contacts, and you'll also receive \$100 for all who take the course.

3 - I'll earn a portion of each tuition, plus the opportunity to share my expertise with a new audience.

My take: You have not shown me how this will be a win to my list. I do not see the fit at all.

Thanks again for considering this. I look forward to your response - either way. And should you choose not to become involved, I wish you every success in what you are already doing.

My take: I like this last line. That's very kind of him.

I suspect he is a good man who is offering something good to the world. But, the email he sent is a pitch, not the opening of a conversation. It's so long. And he doesn't clarify why he thinks it's relevant to my people. When a hub gets the feeling that, "this email could be going to anyone . . ." this is a template . . ." the chances are extremely high that you will lose their attention.

#10: Can you promote my telesummit, please?

Hi Tad,

I hope you are doing well. I would like to invite you to collaborate with us at “WebsiteName.com” and speak in one of our upcoming virtual events, possibly in January.

My name is John Doe, I have developed BusinessName to provide valuable and relevant marketing and personal development information and resources to coaches, consultants, and other service professionals and connect them with the best experts in the industry.

I was on one of your calls and would love to collaborate and share your thoughts with others. Also, I would like to invite you to our January Virtual Event that is about developing a 6 figure business.

websitename.com/jan-2013-6-figure-marketing-mindset-strategies

I would like to discuss these opportunities with you as soon as possible, when would be a good time to connect with you?

Mike

My take: This one isn’t too bad. But, when someone says, “We’d like to invite you to speak at an event,” what I hear (as someone who is approached all the time) is, “We’d like you to promote our event with at least one solo email to your list and we figure getting you, who has a sizeable following, to do that is to have you as a guest speaker.” This actually seems like it could be relevant to my people. But, again, if it had started with some brief and specific appreciation and an opening question like, “Do you speak in telesummits these days?” or “I’ve been working on something that I think could be of some use to the life coach and service provider types on your list in helping them with _____ problem” or something, it might have grabbed me more. This seems relevant but generic. And, the whole six figure thing feels a bit burned out these days for me.

#11: I’m famous so promote me, please?

My take: Again, I’m going to insert comments throughout this one because it’s a bit longer.

Hi Tad:

My take: You spelled my name right! You’re doing much better than that last fellow.

You were recommended! Some points:

My take: Wait . . . recommended by whom? For what?

“ We live in Brentwood Bay, BC – just a few seconds away from Butchart Gardens

My take: Nice. Note relevant, but nice.

“ We have run an international company for 20 years

My take: Okay . . .

“ We are known for our Life and Business Coach Training

My take: Are you though?

“ I am famous in India as NAME but not well known outside of India

My take: Okay. That sounds feasible but it’s also kind of bragging. And, I think India is full of a lot of famous people.

“ I am a Canadian best-selling author of many books including my latest release
Book Name

My take: Hmmm. It’s not hard to become a bestseller by getting #1 on Amazon for two minutes. But that’s different than being a bestseller for a few weeks.

“ I am the developer of multi-award winning coaching and leadership methodologies

My take: You seem to be working very hard to impress me and I still have no idea why you’re writing me.

“ I am the developer of human potential products that would blow your mind. They are very powerful. For example, Product Name.

My take: Aaaand, you’re really starting to lose me. Arrogance is incredibly unattractive.

“ We would like to work with an ethical company who is willing to make several million dollars from our human potential products.

My take: This sounds like someone on the edge of delusion and who takes themselves very seriously. Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!

“ I have many of these human potential products wishing to come out of my head as soon as we launch the current ones! (My husband and Co-President John tells me to stop creating and start marketing!)

My take: Your husband is a wise man. And I know the feeling about having so many products in your head. Totally. I’m feeling connected to you here.

“ We would like this ethical marketing company to work on the basis of “you develop the strategies and implement them to make the millions and you then share in the financial glory”.

My take: Ahhh. Translation: You work for free for a long time and maybe make some money. If it fails, it will be 100 per cent because of your terrible marketing. Definitely not because of us.

“ Please don’t look at our main website and think “Oh my God, these people need work.” We know we need work and are working on it.

My take: Thank you for being human! I feel connected to you again.

“ Your job would not be to help us fix our main website which is mainly about our services. Your job is to help us market our incredible products – not our services.

My take: Ah! I am finally getting clear about what you want. And, I totally don’t offer that service. If she had just emailed me saying, “I was wondering if you help other people market their products for them. Is that something you do?” She would have gotten her answer so much faster.

If you are interested in this fab opportunity to work with some very cool, spiritual and values-based folks, let’s set up an interview .

My take: I think I’d think you were cooler and more spiritual if you didn’t keep telling me you were.

We require that you be honest, loving and compassionate. Only marketing tactics with integrity are tolerated.

My take: Oh! Requirements on me already? I’m already being asked to jump through hoops to prove myself so you can bring me on to work for free?

PS Are you raw vegan? Just noticed a mention on your site. I have been vegan for years and love the raw vegan movement. Very cool.

My take: Not anymore.

With God's Love from another Hippie!

My take: I like that ending.

So I replied to make sure I was clear:

*hey there,
thanks for reaching out. just home from a big trip to the uk. just to clarify, you're wanting to get some
marketing support and guidance and are considering me and your thought is for the payment to be in
commissions in some way?
– t*

She wrote back . . .

Hi Tad:

Happy Friday to you!

When we work with apps builders, we give them 50 per cent of the revenue because of the enormous amount of work they put into the creation of the end product.

It's a sound partnership because everyone has the same amount of influence in the success of the product.

For the rest of our products, where possible, we see a similar relationship. It's a partnership. We have developed these extraordinary products. You, if the shoe fits, would develop the strategy to take them to the world in multiple languages and implement the strategy.

For the shoe to fit, you must be honest, ethical, passionate about our products and be noble in your marketing efforts. Nothing less would be accepted.

The company who wears the shoe would have the opportunity to put these products into the hands of all ages, in every country. From that opportunity they would see huge transformation happening in hearts and minds of corporate and government folks as well as Moms, Dads and children.

This, more than the revenue which would be substantial, is the real reason for joining hands with us. J

Blessings,

My take: Again, the demands on me don't feel great. I feel like I'm already being scolded. And her level of belief in the power of her products to change the world is . . . a bit disconcerting. I don't feel a lot of humility and humanity here. I didn't pursue this further.

#12: Promote my women's group.

"Namaste Tad, I'm starting a free women's group in CityName, including one hour meditation, sharing info, workshop, and just listening and receiving, we would love it if you could send me the first five female leaders that come to your mind, via Facebook, thanks, have a super fabulous day in the sunshine."

My take: First off, this email came from a woman who I didn't know very well. Just out of the blue. What this has going for it is that it's short and to the point. I'm very clear of what she's doing and what she's asking of me. But this felt a little bit too assumptive and she posted it on my new profile picture rather than in a message. That felt strange. If you want to ask a favour, ask me personally and in private. Why would I connect her with my key women's leaders in her city (and I know many) if I don't know her? This is an example of asking for too much, too soon.

#13: Promote our list-building event?

Hi Tad,

I'm writing again because I didn't hear back from you when I sent this invitation last week. :)

I'd like to invite you to participate in a list-building giveaway event. You could anticipate adding 800-2,000 new, highly qualified leads to your list in a way that's super-easy and fun for you AND your community.

The event is happening September 6-27 and we still have contributor spots available, but they are on a first-come-first-served basis.

Here is a link with more details: _____

I'm available to answer any questions you might have about this opportunity. This is a "big buzz" event, and you stand to gain a lot of new names and visibility.

Would you please let me know, yes or no, either way? Thanks!

Warmly,
Jane and Team

My take: This one rubbed me the wrong way for a couple of reasons. I replied with, *“This isn’t a fit for me but thank you for the kind invitation :)”*

She replied with this:

Hey Tad,

Thanks for letting us know.

AND . . . I just had a great idea. :)

You must have a few advanced clients (or colleagues you know) who are at the 5,000 and above list size requirement and who are actively seeking to build their list.

If they have a business-owner audience, they would be perfect for this giveaway, and it would really kick their list-building efforts into high gear.

Could you connect me with those of your colleagues or clients who would qualify?

Thanks so much!

Warmly,
Jane

My take: On the upside, it’s actually not a bad idea to ask me if I might have some clients for whom this would be a fit. But when she said, “AND . . . I just had a great idea. :)” I remember sitting back and narrowing my eyes. It felt like a template response to anyone who might have said “no.” It felt like I was being lied to. It felt like I was being worked. It seemed like this had been worded to suggest the idea had been spontaneous when it was strategized.

The other part that didn’t sit well with me was, “Could you connect me with those of your colleagues or clients who would qualify?” I don’t know this woman or her work. Why would I connect her with my most successful clients? Why would I put my reputation with them on the line for this? It felt presumptuous to ask this. If she’d couched it with, “I’m wondering if some of your clients might be a fit for this if not your whole list. And, of course, you don’t know our work at all and I’m not even sure what the best way to go about fostering such a connection with them might be. But I have a 7-minute video that walks you through our core point of view on list-

building. I'm wondering if you might want to take a look at it and, if it feels like a fit, then we could explore how to make that connection?" Then I might have been open to taking a next step.

#14: Here, just let me post this on your Facebook page . . .

One day, I woke up to find someone had posted this on my Facebook page:

"I, The Kickass Copywriter And Marketing Maven, was interviewed on The Bob Pritchard Radio Show on Voice America Business, the #1 radio show in the world for entrepreneurs. Broadcast globally. The topic was "_____." My interview starts at about the 17:00 mark. I offer a free copy of my ebook "_____" at the end of interview (about the 51:00 mark). Enjoy! Go to: _____."

My take: So, I commented on his post:

"Hey there, John. Can we unpack this post a bit? I'm curious about your intentions in posting this on my wall."

He replied, "I thought the free info might be helpful. I have nothing to sell. If you don't want it, please delete it and I am AOK. I wish you the best."

I was still curious:

"Why on my wall vs. in a message? And you have nothing to sell? Like you aren't for hire or have no products? Or there's nothing being offered in this interview?"

He replied, "Please delete and accept my apologies. You are the only one who has questioned this."

"No," I thought, "I'm just the only one who's told you."

#15: Promote my expo.

Years ago, there was a fellow who organized the local New Age Expo in town. He didn't have the best reputation. His standard way of reaching out to someone was to send them a message, fill it with flattery and tell them he'd really love to have them speak at his expo because "your message is so important." When people responded, touched by the outreach, saying they'd love to, he'd reply with, "Great! You'll just have to buy a booth for \$900."

He reached out to me knowing I was a significant local hub for him to spread the word through. I did what I could and then, one day, on my way to the airport to head out on tour, I swung by the Expo to check it out. He wasn't at the gate so they called him over. He walked over and greeted me in the least enthusiastic way I could have imagined. "Hey," he said. I was thinking that he might offer me a free ticket to come in but he made no such gesture and so, finally, I paid for a ticket and wandered around. He didn't offer to show me around. I was puzzled. I could have been so helpful to him but he treated me like every other expo attendee. If I were in his shoes, I would have done it this way. "Tad! Oh my god! Thank you for coming! You haven't paid for a ticket have you? Good." And then I would have introduced him to the team. "This is Tad. He has this incredible business called Marketing for Hippies and he helps a lot of the kinds of people who vend here. I'm so glad you made it. Ok. He doesn't pay. He's family. Can I show you around? Is there anything in particular you're looking for? I've got about five minutes." If I were him, I would have taken me out for lunch long before that and offered me two free tickets then. If I were him, I would have been hosting annual social gatherings of leaders in the holistic scene to connect with each other.

After this, I received the following Facebook invite from him:

"Hey Tad Hargrave, I know you have a lot of friends in Edmonton! hope you can share this with your friends there! Edmonton is next weekend (November 2-4). Calgary shared with over 9000 times. hope to get this going Viral in Edmonton! This is were our Facebook Friends can really help us create a successful event! Thanks in Advance! See you in a few day, it's going to be an amazing weekend! PS have a lecture spot open on Saturday . . . would love to offer it msg me if interested."

It was direct, which I appreciated, but we hadn't yet established a relationship so it felt like I was being used for my network and that this lecture spot was going to be another covert pitch for a booth.

#16: Join my Telesummit.

In 2017, I received an invite from a woman to be a part of her telesummit. I told her that I don't really do those anymore but wished her well. She replied persisting, asking if I could at least send out an email about the telesummit. I told her no. She replied, "Got it." The next day, I got the following email from her.

Who else do you know (that is awesome:) that is looking to expand their reach (late 20's-mid 50's corporate/stuck in a job entrepreneurs) who would want to share their point of view on the topic of ditching their 9 to 5 job because they want something more in life (passion and purpose and freedom)?

Grateful for any of your direction and sincerely look forward to working with you in the future. Inspired by your story and all that you are doing!

Have an amazing day!

Rock it!

I replied:

hey there,

I have two thoughts but first a reflection on the tone of this approach, which lands as assumptive and bordering on snapping fingers and demanding. we have never met. you don't know me. I don't know you. you seem familiar with my work and yet, I am not familiar with yours. you are writing me and asking me to connect you with people when I can't vouch for you and your work at all. you are asking me to take my time to help you in a way that landed, initially, as flip. And so, though it is unasked for, on the chance that this will be of some use to you, I offer this rewrite as an example of an approach that might have landed better for me . . .

Tad,

I know you can't be a part of the telesummit I'm hosting, and I know you don't know me or my work at all and that your days must be full to overflowing with things being asked of you by people dear to you. You have no particular reason to offer me any help but I am wondering if you might know of anyone for whom this telesummit might be a fit to present at? Perhaps you have a colleague looking to expand their reach (late 20's-mid 50's corporate/stuck in a job entrepreneurs) who would want to share their point of view on the topic of ditching their 9 to 5 job because they want something more in life (passion and purpose and freedom)?

Again, I know you're busy. No pressure to respond to this. I'm grateful for any direction you might be able to offer here and sincerely look forward to working with you in the future should that occur. I remain inspired by your story and all that you are doing, regardless.

Have an amazing day!

Rock it!

I replied:

Having said that, there are two men who would be brilliant in this telesemit, though I suspect their list sizes are too small:

*bigdreamprogram.com
allpointsdesign.ca*

I hope this day finds you well.

- t

#17: Join my telesummit!

A colleague of mine, who ran a blog about travelling with kids, once showed me an email she'd received. As things go, this is a very fine first email.

Hi! My name is Jane Doe and I work with John Doe as a marketing consultant. I just wanted to reach out and say how much we enjoy the articles you are doing on your blog. As a fellow lover of travel it is so great to see a blog focused on traveling with kids and creating amazing adventures.

Let me tell you a bit more about our website:

website.com was designed by John as a place to help couples who have struggled since having kids.

We would love to connect further on our social channels and have you take a look at our website. If you ever have need of guest articles or a guest blogger John would be happy to bring his unique perspective on marriage, family, and parenting dynamics to your audience.

Hope to hear from you soon. Have a great night!

My take: But, as I sat with it, I realized they could have sent something shorter and more to the point.

Hi! I just wanted to reach out and say how much I enjoy the articles you are doing on your blog. As a fellow lover of travel it is so great to see a blog focused on traveling with kids and creating amazing adventures. And I was wondering if you ever accept guest posts on your blog. Regardless, thanks for the work you do in this world. I'm a fan.

In conclusion:

If your outreach is generic, assumptive, fuzzy and/or arrogant, you'll blow your chances with so many hubs. It's better to start these things not as a long pitch in which you're trying to "close the deal" in one email, but as a personalized, short, clear and humble message in which you're opening a conversation to see if there's any fit at all.

Eight Examples Of How To Reach Out Smart & Well To Hubs

Of course, seeing how *not* to do something doesn't always give you a clear idea of how to do it *well*. What follows are a series of examples that I have seen or helped create that I think speak well to how to make a good first impression when reaching out to a hub.

#1: Can I speak at your venue?

My dear colleague and client, Russell Scott, of truesourceseminars.com, is looking to book a lot of talks for his wonderful work. Below are the emails we came up with together that he would use when reaching out to New Age bookstores, yoga studios, etc. This approach is deeply inspired by the work of Ari Galper on cold calling, which you can learn more about at unlockthegame.com. His end of the whole conversation is basically mapped out. He can tweak these to suit the responses he gets, but their responses are going to be fairly predictable.



Having this all mapped out makes the process of reaching out to hubs better for them and so much easier for you. I've set up a similar series of emails when reaching out to guest experts for GreenDrinksYeg.com.

Reaching Out Email #1

To whom it may concern at [name of company] or Dear [name],

I was wondering if you ever bring in guest speakers or facilitators to present talks or workshops? If you do, who is best to ask about this? I am an author and an international seminar/retreat leader.

Email #1 (a): If they don't get back to you:

I was just following up on my email from a few days ago.

No pressure, but I was wondering if you ever bring in guest speakers or facilitators to present talks or workshops and who would I ask about this? (I am an author and an international seminar/retreat leader.)

I wasn't sure if you book speakers or who to talk about this?

Reaching Out Email #2

Thanks so much for taking the time to get back to me. I am sure you are very busy.

Here's the nutshell: I am the author of the book *Awakening the Guru in You* and I have a new talk (related to my book) that is getting a great response. I thought it might be of interest to your community. There's more info at this link: truesourceseminars.com/articles/from-confusion-to-clarity-an-experiential-workshop.html

I am not sure if it is a fit for your community but I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

I also give talks on other topics:

The Fulfillment Factor – the one thing that affects everything else in life

Beyond Belief – how to get unstuck and get moving in your life

Deep Calling – finding meaning and purpose in life

And, if these aren't a fit, I'd be grateful for your guidance on good places to explore. Any support is warmly appreciated.

Reaching Out Email #3

Here's what has worked in the past for people like yourself in a similar business:

Let me know how long you want the talk. I can craft the talk to fit an hour or two-hour time slot.

We set a date and time for the workshop, preferably six to eight weeks from now.

You charge what you want for the talk and keep the proceeds or give a percentage to me, according to what you usually do. It would be good to have a discount for people that sign up before the event. I can set up a notice on Eventbrite for you, if you like.

I'll promote the talk to my network and provide you with a link to my website and promotional material, including: a poster, timed emails you can send to your list, pre-written Facebook and Twitter notices, and even a blog post if you want.

You promote the talk to your network of contacts and any other way you choose to let your community of people know about the event. This way, the more people you get, the better it is for you.

At the beginning of the talk, you can take a few minutes to tell the attendees about your business and then introduce me. I'll provide you with a short bio.

At the end of the talk, I'll pass out a feedback form and let people know that they can sign up for a complimentary mentorship session with me or request more information about what I do. I will not be doing any enrolling of people into any of my offerings at the workshop.

I'll make my book available for purchase at the end of the talk.

How does this all sound to you? Do you have any questions?

Using this approach, Russell booked a number of speaking gigs at various bookstores in his area. Those speaking gigs helped him to fill up his larger retreats.

#2: Can you help promote my workshop tour, please?

When I was doing a tour of the Kootenays with my workshops, I was faced with the reality that I knew almost no one. So, one thing I did was find a local New Age magazine and start emailing people who had ads in it —a 100 per cent cold approach. I normally wouldn't recommend this but my options were slim.

hey Jennifer,

i was wondering if you could help me.
i saw your profile in the holistic section of In The Koots and i thought you might have some ideas. there's a day-long, pay-what-you-can, marketing workshop i'm leading for holistic practitioners in Nelson this Friday (last minute – tied into a roadtrip and thought “why not?”) and it's my first time doing anything in Nelson. and i thought you might have some ideas on good places to spread the word about it. any guidance is so warmly appreciated. and nooo pressure. im sure you're busy. i hope your summer is going well :-)

Notice the lack of assumption in that email. And, notice that I'm not even asking her for her help directly. I'm just asking for advice. My friend, Julian Faid, once shared some advice his father gave him: "If you want advice, ask for money. If you want money, ask for advice." This is so true. If you ask someone for money, they'll often say, "You know how you get money . . ." and give you ideas. If you ask for their advice on how to get it, it takes all the pressure off and, if they see that it's a fit for the kind of thing they might want to fund, they'll say, "I could fund this . . ."

I've found that starting with asking humbly for advice opens up conversations in a much warmer way (and results in you getting some amazing leads and ideas you wouldn't have gotten otherwise).

When someone gave me a name of someone to reach out to for the tour, I'd send some version of the following:

hey there ali,
aga suggested i drop you a line.
there's a day-long, pay-what-you-can, marketing workshop i'm leading for holistic practitioners in Nelson this Friday (last minute - tied into a roadtrip and thought "why not?") and it's my first time doing anything in nelson. and aga thought you might have some ideas on good places to spread the word about it. any guidance is so warmly appreciated. and nooo pressure. im sure you're busy.
i hope your summer is going well :-)
- tad

And, of course, The Kootenays are full of holistic healing schools, which are a huge hub for me. So I'd send them some version of this email.

hey there,
i was wondering if you could help me.
there's a workshop in Nelson this Friday that i thought might be of interest to some of your students and alumni - but i wasn't sure who to talk to at your academy.
i hope your summer is going well.
warmest,
- tad

And then there were the holistic centres, spas and massage studios. They got this kind of email:

hey there,
i was wondering if you could help me.
there's a workshop in Nelson this Friday that i thought might be of interest to some of your staff and associates - but i wasn't sure who to talk to at your centre about it.
i hope your summer is going well.

warmest,
- tad

I got a very positive and helpful response to all of these emails and responses from most of the people.

#3: Would you help me promote my workshop, please?

When I was leading a workshop in Toronto that wasn't filling as fast as I would have liked, I sent out some emails like this to local hubs. Please note: these are all friends and colleagues with whom there's already some existing trust. And these were sent as individual emails, not a big group email. Though, in a pinch, you can get away with a group email to hubs who know and love you.

hey there,
i'm going to be running another weekend workshop for holistic practitioners (and also invited eco-permaculture practitioner types, too). it's happening Nov 25-27.
i think it's going to be swell.
i could totally use a hand spreading the word about it. i was wondering if you have five minutes to help? i've got something pre-written you can send out. i find it works best when people just email like 3-5 folks personally who they think might benefit and enjoy. and i figured you might know some folks in the scene.
would you be down?
warmest,
tad

The typical response?

Dear Tad:
Of course. Just send it on!
Hope you're doing well.

My response to that (already pre-written) was:

thank you!
so, this is the generic thing - feel free to tweak it as needed. putting it on Facebook helps but i still find that the most useful thing is when people take a minute or two to really consider particular folks who might be a fit for this and then send a personal email (edited template) to them telling them about it. it only takes five minutes but seems to have so much more impact. i'm super grateful.

*Hey there,
A colleague of mine, Tad Hargrave, is holding a marketing workshop designed just for
holistic practitioners and permaculture practitioner types and I thought you might be
interested in attending yourself. It's happening next weekend.
for more info or to register you can go to: [marketing101forholisticpractitioners.com/
weekend.php](http://marketing101forholisticpractitioners.com/weekend.php)
let me know if you decide to go?*

Again, instead of putting it all into one big pitch-based email, break it up into a few emails. Let it breathe a bit.

Of note: you'll notice I use a lot of all-lowercase in my personal messaging. I do this as it's my personal style, but I save it for people and organisations I know. Notice that the copy I've provided for them to cut and paste to share the info about my workshop is capitalized and punctuated correctly. Your promo copy should remain formal and standard, but your personal correspondence can get casual as you get to know someone.

#4: Want to promote this 60-Minute webinar?

Hi, Tad!

My name is Elizabeth Hamilton and I'm the business manager for Alicia Dunams.

I love your blog, especially the post about how charging what you are worth is bullshit. The line about Martin Luther King's mom is so spot-on — how our society can fall into the trap of devaluing that which doesn't make money.

I work with Alicia on Bestseller in a Weekend, and think that this is a program that could be an excellent fit for your audience. Using a very easy method, we teach our attendees how to write the manuscript of a non-fiction book over the course of a weekend, and also show them how to publish and market it.

I wanted to reach out to see your interest in doing a JV webinar for Bestseller in a Weekend. It's now a LIVE virtual workshop and a huge success with even one of my attendees calling it the "Best Online Program Ever." Recently, she did a custom webinar with online marketer Lewis Howes to sell Bestseller in a Weekend, and the offer netted over \$40,000 (sales revenue).

Since it's available to people nationwide, as I know your community is global, I wanted to see if you wanted to share evergreen and/ or webinar and offer a 50 per cent affiliate commission for anyone who signs up. Bestseller in a Weekend

sells for \$497, but at the end of this evergreen webinar I offer it for \$297 for a short period of time.

Please let me know if you would be interested in sharing a 60 minute webinar with your list. If so, I will get you set up on my affiliate program and send over promotional "swipe" emails, tweets and banners for you to start promoting to your community.

Thank you so much for your time.

Elizabeth Hamilton.

This message felt totally clean and the second paragraph let me now that this wasn't some mass emailed thing. That second paragraph had me willing to read the rest of it. I thought, "Well, if she knows my work this well and thinks this could be a fit then, perhaps, there's something here for me."

#5: Pamela Slim meets Guy Kawasaki's attention.

In an interview with Robert Middleton about blogging, Pamela Slim shared this approach:

Find the top ten blogs let's say that reach a similar readership to yours. The first step is reading those blog, getting familiar with their content and then commenting. Bloggers do pay attention to who's commenting. Always leave a link back to your blog when you comment. Very often, they just become more familiar with your name as it rises in their consciousness. Another thing I've done is send emails after I post a comment to someone's blog. This is the way I piqued Guy Kawasaki's attention with that one blog post. I had been reading his blog for a while and I wrote one post. I thought he would find it interesting, so I sent an email saying, "Guy, you don't know me. I love your blog. I thought you might be interested in this." I do not say "Please link to it." Never do that. Never ask somebody to link to it. The critical thing is writing really good, useful information that has an opinion, voice and authenticity to it. That's what will get you your links. It's not a strategy of, "On Day 10, you ask for the link." It's more that you're writing really good stuff; you're being yourself, being open and not needy. People will recognize that. When it's good, they will link to you. I fit it in between other things. I spend 30 minutes at the most throughout a day reading other blog posts. For me, it is a primary marketing activity, so I do spend more time with writing blog articles. That is the only way I'm attracting clients. I don't go out and speak anymore. I'm not traveling. It makes sense for me to invest a

little more time in it. All of these things are very synergistic. It's a triad. Website, eZine and blog support each other.

#6: How the good Rain Crowe approached me about her home study program.

Rain Crowe does incredible work with women around decolonization, ancestry, and history. We became Facebook friends a while back and she, knowing that I support such things, sent me the most eloquent and courteous of requests.

Good morning and well wishes to you. May the shining One find extend their beauty upon your face and give you and all life in your place sustenance. I pray this finds you in health and surrounded by beauty. I write today because I noticed that you shared an article "This is how they broke our Grandmothers" and I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to share with your readers that I have launched the self-study online version of the Burning Times Never Ended course. A course which guides folks through the deeper historical understandings of the witch hunts and the connection between enslavement of Africans, the settler colonialism of the Americas and the disenchantment of the wild holy. I'm trying to reach folks who may not have had access to the course when I've done it live, and who I believe would merit from the work I've developed. I wanted to ask permission rather than just posting the information on your thread, which seems rather inelegant. Thank you for considering this request. With every blessing to you and yours, may all of our good works thrive in service of leaving a living world for our descendants. - rain

#6: Joey Hundert shares his approach to reaching super in-demand people.

In 2016, my dear friend and social entrepreneurial phenom, Joey Hundert, wrote this Facebook post full of wisdom about the art of approaching busy people:

A little tip for those who make phone calls to super in-demand people:

This morning I successfully got a call back from the VP of a really big firm. I sent him exactly 4 emails and made 5 phone calls, leaving three voice messages before he got back to me. I employed some of the following guidelines:

1. I did not call on Monday (busy execs are putting fires out all Monday long)
2. I did not call in the late afternoon (push to the daily buzzer begins at 2-ish)
3. I tried to call between 8:30AM and 9:15AM, this seems to be the best slot for traditional industries (new digital industries can be on Hipster Standard Time HST)

4. I gave just enough information in each email and each voicemail to create curiosity but not give all the goods.
5. I became discouraged about 3 phone calls ago, but I know not to pay attention to discouragement, and I kept calling anyways.

The reality is that big execs are basically force-fed their days. Between support staff, impeccable scheduling, bureaucracy, and risk avoidance, their spare or discretionary moments are few and far between. Furthermore, memory of small things (and yes, compared to what they are typically dealing with, we are small things) is really short. They are likely to forget about our attempt to get in touch by the time the next major thing lands on their desk and requires attention, which is typically minute by minute.

Lastly, it is almost never personal. Someone not getting back in touch is 99 per cent of the time a function of situations having nothing to do with us.

Keep calling. Keep emailing. Be respectful. Be relentless.

#7: How Tova Payne approached me to write a guest blog post.

Tova Payne's article *Slimy vs. Classy Marketing and Sales* (that I shared earlier) would certainly not be a shining example without showing how gracefully and graciously she landed this guest blog post.

Here is the first email she sent me in April:

Hi Tad

My name is Tova, a fellow-Canadian out here in Vancouver :)

I love what you're about, and especially love that you focus on marketing without sacrificing our integrity.

I wrote a post about this, which has not yet been published anywhere. I thought of you and your audience first, and wanted to see if you were interested in giving it a view.

The subject is: Slimy VS Classy Marketing and Sales.

Please let me know if you would like me to send it over for your review.

And I wish you a wonderful weekend. Thanks for your consideration!

This whole email is perfect. She introduces herself warmly and makes the fellow Canadian connection. She moves to a specific appreciation that lets me know this is not a form email. And then she tells me about a post she's already written. Honestly, when I saw that this was about a guest post, my heart sank a bit. I get so many of these requests. But then I saw the title, I thought, "That's perfect for my audience!" She then asked if I'd like to see it and ended with warm wishes and a humble "Thanks for your consideration!" What's not to love?

I replied:

tova, i'd love to explore that. can you send it to me in early june? i'm about to go into a busy season and don't want to lose it.- t

She agreed and on June 3rd she sent me the blog post. It then took me two weeks to read but it was brilliant. I'm so glad she didn't offer it to anyone else and that I get to share it with you here.

The Two-Step Hub Email

I want to lift up the idea of the **two-step email process**.

You may have seen this hinted at in some of my previous examples.

If you are reaching out to a hub, whether you have a direct connection with them or if you've just heard about them, and you say, "Hey, this is who I am; please promote me," it is a solid approach. I hope I've made that case solidly in the examples above.

It is important to slow the process down a little bit.

When I came to Victoria for the first time to do a workshop, I did not know anybody here. I called my friend Jackie Kanyuk. She was really connected and gave me the names of 15 people to contact.

I sent them an initial email that basically said:

"Hi there. Jackie suggested I drop you a line. There is a day-long, pay-what-you-can, marketing workshop I am leading for holistic practitioners in Victoria coming up. It is my first time doing anything here and she thought you might have some good ideas on places to spread the word about it. Any guidance is so warmly appreciated. There is no pressure as I am sure you are busy. I hope your summer is going well, Tad."

That's it. Again, there are no URLs. There's no direct ask for help in spreading the word.

It is very low pressure and there is no assumption that they are going to help. I am not even directly asking them for help. I am not assuming they are going to help.

The response I get to this sort of email so often is, "This sounds great. Send me the info and I'll spread the word."

I didn't even ask for it, but there is graciousness in not going for the direct ask right away. I just presented it. Of course, they know if they can spread the word on it. They will let you know if they want to.

At that point, you have your second email (the "two" in the "two-step" process) ready to go. This email would look something like:



“Thank you so much for your offer. I’m sure your days are full. Below is a generic, pre-written Facebook post that you can share or email to folks who you think might be interested. If you post it on Facebook, I find it useful to take a minute or two to tag anyone you can think of who might find it of interest, to make sure they see it. Feel free to edit as you like. Thank you again for your offer of support.”

And then, below that is the pre-written email/Facebook post.

Here’s an example of a pre-written post.

VICTORIA ENTREPRENEURS: A marketing workshop for hippies? I just heard about a marketing workshop designed just for conscious service providers (e.g. holistic practitioners, life coaches and permaculture practitioner types). It’s happening next weekend. It’s being offered on a pay-what-you-can basis and is run by a fellow named Tad of marketingforhippies.com who comes highly recommended. It’s happening on _____ date. For more info or to register you can go to: marketingforhippies.com/events/ #mfh101

The key things to flag here are:

- **“VICTORIA ENTREPRENEURS”** I start by naming the geography. This is key. People post a lot of things on Facebook and only a fraction of them are relevant locally. Given that this is a live workshop, I want to get the attention of my hubs, and local, Victoria-based friends with this. I don’t care about all the rest. If this were a tele-seminar, I’d put the core problem that’s being solved in the ALL CAPS (e.g. “SUFFER FROM MIGRAINES,” “TERRIFIED OF MAKING COLD CALLS?” or “BAD BREAK UP RECENTLY?”). This functions as the headline for the post.
- **“A marketing workshop for hippies?”** I follow the headline with something catchy and attention grabbing.
- **“I just heard about a marketing workshop designed just for conscious service providers (e.g. holistic practitioners, life coaches and permaculture practitioner types). It’s happening next weekend.”** It’s important to note that I am writing this as if it were them writing. I’m writing it so it will read like they wrote it rather than, “Come to my workshop!”. This minimizes the time they’ll need to spend rewriting and makes it more likely that it will be shared. In this case, I said, “I just heard about,” but it might also be, “I just got off the phone with . . . ” or “I just went to a workshop led by . . . ” or “I’ve been a fan of Tad’s for years,” etc. You’ll tailor this depending on who it is and how they heard of it. But in this portion of the message you can just name what it is and who it’s for as clearly and succinctly as you can.

- **“It’s being offered on a pay-what-you-can basis.”** Make sure you name your core *unique selling proposition*. Name what it is that makes you different. What’s the main distinguisher? For me, it’s my pricing. But, for you, it might be something different.
- **“It’s being offered by a fellow named Tad of marketingforhippies.com who comes highly recommended.”** Honestly, when they’re introducing you, I think it’s best to understate things. Note that I didn’t write, “Tad is the fucking BEST! He’ll BLOW. YOUR. MIND! with his raw GOODNESS!” No, best to understate. If they want to edit it to punch it up a bit? Great. But it’s better to soft-sell this rather than feeling awkward and figuring out how to word it differently without offending you.
- **“It’s happening on _____ date. For more info or to register you can go to: marketingforhippies.com/events”**And boom. You tell them when, where, and how to get more information. Easy.
- **“#MfH101”:** A hashtag, you say? I include this because then I can search Facebook each day for the hashtag to see who has shared it (it’s rare that they actually tag me) and then I can like their post and say, “Thank you.”

Here’s another example of something I did during a recent visit to Calgary where I was leading workshops. This was sent to key local hubs who I was also excited to catch up with personally.

Email #1:

hey there, I’ve got a workshop coming up in Calgary on Dec. 4 and was thinking of gathering some good folks together for some food and drink afterwards around 6pm onwards. Can you make it?

Email #2:

If they replied YES: Ah! Amazing. Also wondering if you’d be open to spreading the word about the workshop on FB? I could send you some prewritten stuff. Also, how are you?

If they replied NO: Alas, sad to miss you. Fingers crossed for next time. Might you be open to spreading the word about the workshop on FB? I could send you some prewritten stuff? Also, how are things?

This approach lands as much more personal. I’m reaching out to see if they want to connect socially, not to ask them, again, if they can spread the word on something I’ve got going on. Of course, there are those hubs who I would just ask to share what I’m up to and who I wouldn’t invite out for drinks. But, if you’re touring, this can be a solid approach for staying connected to your favourite hubs and also enlisting their help in spreading the word.

Eight Key Points To Take From All Of This

1. **A Short First Email:** Make the goal of the first email to cut straight to the chase, to see if there's any possibility of a fit. Find out if they're even open to what you're offering at all.
2. **A Non-Assumptive Approach:** Don't assume it's a fit. Don't assume that they want what you're offering.
3. **Make it a Conversation:** Instead of sending them a pitch to close the deal, send them an invitation to open up a conversation. And then let the conversation flow naturally. Take your time with hubs. They may need to get to know you first. It's worth the investment. Take your time. Don't propose marriage in the first email.
4. **Be Okay With "No:"** I might not want to say "yes" to this but there might be something I could say "yes" to down the road. If you're gracious about my refusal, I will be much more likely to be open to you in the future.
5. **Be Humble:** Do not position it as an honour to work with you. That makes you seem arrogant. What impresses people isn't over-confidence, it's meeting someone who is composed and comfortable in their own skin.
6. **Be Clear:** Don't confuse your hubs.
7. **Be Patient:** Hubs are busy. It will take a long time to get a reply. Let it wait. Don't push it. It's okay to check in but don't lay on the guilt trip.
8. **Ask for Advice:** Consider asking for advice before asking for support. It gives the hub time to get to know you. If you ask for my advice and show me how well you used it, this will win me over big time. There is an old adage that goes, "If you want money, ask for advice. If you want advice, ask for money." Somebody might say, "I have to get \$10,000. Could you give me \$10,000?" and the person responds, "I'll tell you where you can get \$10,000." However, if you ask for advice, they tend to get more invested and might end up giving you some money too. I find it is a similar thing with hubs. If you go for support directly, it might be a little presumptive. Instead, I suggest saying something like, "Hey, this person said you might have some ideas. I am not asking that you to support it, but, I thought you might have some ideas of people I can talk to."

Colette Kenney & I Discuss The Amazon Best Seller Program

A few years ago, my colleague Colette Kenney and I got into a conversation about the marketing suggestions offered in one of those, “Make your book a bestseller on Amazon!” type programs.

In that conversation, we covered a lot of important ground around hub marketing and so I thought I would share an excerpt of it with you here.

Tad: Ok . . . So, Step 3. “Enlist support from connectors/sneezers.”

Colette: This one feels off. Because it’s contrived.

Tad: So, what feels contrived here? How is this different from getting endorsements from authorities? Or hub marketing?

Colette: I think it’s probably the *rate* at which I’m perceiving this step is expected to be taken . . . The way I’m looking at it is this: Okay! I’ve written a book, now I’ve got to hurry up and get a bunch of people on board quickly so that I can create lots of hype and buzz! Then, everyone will know I exist and I can sell lots of books!! (It’s not that enlisting support is a bad thing, not at all, but relationships take time . . . And we’ve seen what can happen when we endorse people we haven’t taken the time to really get to know. It’s not that they are bad people, but it takes time to see if they really jive with who we are, and whether or not we can give them our full support/endorsement . . . So, if this step is something that can occur over time, after true relationships have been developed, then great; if not, I think it feels icky.

Tad: Hmm . . . I love that reminder. Relationships take time. What this brings up for me is a memory of being on a call for a social media marketing coach. When the coach introduced me he said, “I’m so excited to introduce you to my good friend Tad Hargrave . . .” and I thought, “What?! I’ve never even met this man and we’ve barely spoken . . .” We were colleagues to be sure, but not friends in my mind. And it struck me the way that he was using this (maybe not even consciously) as a way of getting status from his association with me. But our relationship hadn’t actually developed to that point.

Colette: Exactly, In everything I do, I always like to say, my new friend “So and so” who I met “on Facebook, or in person, or wherever” and what I love about them is “xyz” rather than pretend that I’ve known them forever. We all know the importance of authenticity.

Tad: And it's a reminder that we need to endorse carefully. A bad endorsement can have a profoundly negative impact on the endorser. Sometimes it can seem like a fit on the surface but, if we were to do a little more due diligence, we might discover it's not such a fit. And due diligence takes time. And, as someone who's becoming a hub in certain ways, I'm often blown away when someone approaches me out of the blue to promote them.

Colette: Totally, you have become very well-known these days. But, I will tell you this, one perception out there about you right now is "Tad doesn't give out his endorsements lightly . . ." and I would say, keep that up. It makes you one of those lighthouses that we all look to in times of feeling overwhelmed by all the hype that's out there about whatever the next thing we "need" is.

Tad: Hmm . . . Yes. Here's what feels a bit gross to me: people trying to get me to promote them and promising huge affiliate cheques. And it's really tempting! I can totally feel that part of me that wants to promote them to my list so I can make a bunch of money. Totally tempting.

Colette: It can be totally tempting, but we do have to keep our integrity. Money can come, with endorsements that we stand 100 per cent behind. Think of Alex and Carrie, if they had an affiliate arrangement you would easily make tons of money because you know you can stand 100 per cent behind their work. One day, when I have an affiliate arrangement, you know you'll be able to stand 100 per cent behind me too – I promise.

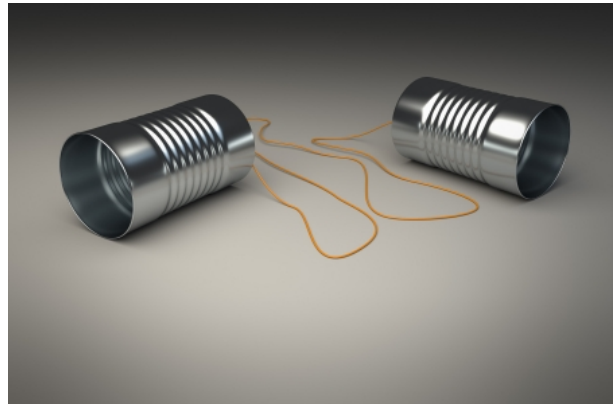
Tad: It feels so much better and more natural, which I think is what you're speaking to Colette, when these relationships and endorsements happen over time. When we have some time to "get to know each other" first. And the concern I have here is the idea of telling some new author to just go out and ask people to promote their book. It's like trying to hit a home run. I'd be more inclined to have them engage in relationship building with the people they're hoping to have as promoters, first –taking their time to explore that relationship. So then, when it's time to get their endorsement, it's an afterthought. Of course they would! This is helping me get clear about why hub marketing is so important. And to not wait until the last minute to build relationships with hubs who could spread the word for you. Start now. Don't wait until you bestseller campaign!

- Colette: Exactly, not to wait until the last minute . . . THAT is the key point in all of this. Develop those relationships now. And it's just like anything, you can have thousands of acquaintances, but only a few close friends. And if I remember correctly, that was part of your hub strategy, that there are only a certain number of spots, and if people don't measure up after you get to know them better, they just don't get invited back.
- Tad: If you, Colette, asked me to promote you and I could, I'd be thrilled because I just adore you. The same with Alex Baisley, Carrie Klassen, or Susan Falter Barns, etc. There are certain people who I'm just 100 per cent behind. But those relationships have developed over years. Okay, "5. Get sneezers to send a similar message all at the same time (specified time limit)."
- Colette: This one feels off. Because it's a pain in the rear end to be an affiliate who is told to "do this by that date." I'm all for growing organically . . . And truly, if it can't be done organically, then I don't want to be in business anymore.
- Tad: So, what about you hosting one of your events? There's a genuine time limitation there. You're asking people to send out invites at the same time. Is it the turning a book launch into an "event" that feels slimy itself? I'm curious about your past personal experiences with this – have you felt *pushed* into promoting something more than felt good for your own list? Can organic growth be punctuated with bigger launch events?
- Colette: I disagree. If I ask people to promote my event, it is totally on their terms, without any time pressure (except that the event happens on a certain date, so if they want to promote it then they would have to do it before the event. But not like, "You have to promote this email on this day, that Twitter post on that day, this Facebook post on this day, etc.). When I ask someone to promote an event for me, I'll just say, "If you are willing to post this link on your wall to encourage people to come out – great. If not, that's totally okay, too." And YES! I have felt totally "pushed" into promoting things for others, things that might even be good for my list but the way I'm expected to promote (i.e., in an email marketing campaign) feels pushy to me. I much prefer the style and approach that you take, where you will write a blog post about it, and let people know about other people's stuff that way. To me, that's waaaaay better than using some pre-written copy that was written by the person who wants me to promote them.

- Tad: Interesting. So do you think it's possible to invite someone into a time-sensitive promotion without them feeling pushed?
- Colette: Absolutely it's possible, but done in a way that says, "If you want to promote this, great! If not, no worries, I completely understand." Or, you could also say, "If you felt you wanted to promote this, I would truly appreciate it, but I also completely understand if you don't want to over-promote to your list."
- Tad: Alright, "7. Create a buzz (get people talking on blogs, forums, in the media)."
- Colette: I like this one. If people are interested and they are talking about something that you put out, GREAT! To me, that's where good marketing starts. It's not what I've been doing for the past year, because I've been listening to so many people tell me that I need to create this product and that product, and sell it to the masses. But now, I'd rather do something I love, let people catch onto it, create a buzz because THEY are talking about it, and then from there create a product if they are looking for something that currently isn't available. You may be reading this thinking, "Wow, Colette's jaded . . ." and I think that's what's going on for me right now. I've always loved the way you do things, Tad. In my opinion, you are not at all about hype, and creating contrived "buzz." People talk about you because you are someone worth talking about. That's who I want to be. That's who I am.

Other Thoughts & Approaches for Connecting With Hubs

Become Their Success Story: I got this idea from PJ van Hull and it's brilliant. Find a workshop teaching something you want to learn and that that you want to practice as a business, and then master and apply what they teach (e.g. she is a marketing coach and so she became a star student and success story of some marketing mentors of hers). You might want to practice a healing modality as a job and so you attend the training and apply it to yourself and heal yourself of something significant. If you do, you can bet they're going to want to feature you everywhere and brag about the work you did together.



Hang Out After The Event: My friend Patti played in a local band called Feast or Famine and he told me about how important the connections he made after the show were. So much of their success as a band was about going out to the bar after their gigs and connecting with fans. Casual connections can be stronger than formal ones.

Name Something After Them: I heard of a sandwich shop that would name sandwiches after local hubs. I read this article about my friend Tracey Mitchell in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix:

The Magic Mitchell sandwich is a bit messy and totally delicious. And there's no pickles.

The Magic Mitchell is the first "Local Hero" sandwich offered at the Root Down Cooperative Cafe and Bookstore, the recently opened, worker-owned vegetarian cafe that makes its home in the Saskatoon Farmer's Market.

While their fare is delicious, this is a sandwich with a story. It was created to honour Tracey Mitchell, the first in the restaurant's series of Local Heroes — people making a difference in the community.

The secret ingredient is pumpkin butter, and when you meet the person it's named after, you know why. Mitchell, 31, has ginger hair and an easy smile. She laughs often and freely. Her line of work is unique — as an independent consultant (officially, a professional facilitator), she runs a company called Facili Trace. She leads workshops, discussions, events and meetings, engaging groups in dialogue and making sure the discussions run smoothly with everyone given an opportunity to feel valued and heard. She's also studying conflict management and resolution and she occasionally conducts workshops in theatre for social

change. Mitchell has made her home in Saskatoon almost consistently since she completed her undergraduate degree in sociology and history at the University of Saskatchewan.

She laughs when she recalls her only suggestion for the sandwich to be named after her: “no pickles.” What it does have is roasted garlic and eggplant spread, quinoa and black bean fritter and caramelized onions. The goal was to use as many local ingredients as possible.

For each \$8 sandwich sold, \$1.50 goes to the Next Up program, which Mitchell runs. It was released in October and has steadily grown in popularity, raising more than \$350 for Next Up to-date.

The sandwich was created by two of the worker/owners at Root Down. Neil Jones was one of the people who developed the sandwich alongside co-worker/owner Lana Lehr. They chose Mitchell for their first local hero to honour both her work in the community and the assistance she gave them in developing the cafe’s co-operative structure. It was an easy choice for them to honour someone who has helped them so often and so much.

“Her facilitation was instrumental in helping us get the co-op off the ground,” said Jones. “Tracey has been at the forefront of a number of projects to improve mental health support networks and help activists avoid burnout over the years, and has been instrumental in training a lot of new activists and helping established social justice activists to improve their skills.

Let Your Hubs Know How It Went For Their People: If a hub supports you and sends you people, follow up with them afterwards to thank them and let them know how it went for their folks. If there’s a good story connected to their attending and you’re able to share it, do. It will make it about ten times more likely that they send you people again. Hubs want to make a difference in people’s lives. If they don’t know that sending you people made a difference, they will stop.

Ask For Their Opinion (And Mean It): This is huge. I remember going to one raw food restaurant where the owner never asked for feedback, even though his food was mediocre; whereas the restaurant Noorish in Edmonton always asks for and gratefully receives my feedback. If you ask for feedback with a tone that sounds like you already know what you’re doing to be the best and you aren’t really open to hearing feedback, you won’t get it.

Lovingly, Politely Nudge Your Hubs: Just assume they are swamped. Assume that they are utterly overwhelmed and have every intention of getting back to you but that they are drowning. Assume that it keeps slipping off the end of their to-do list each day. Be willing to be the squeaky wheel

from time to time. Follow up persistently but lovingly without ever making them feel bad for not getting back to you. You are in charge of moving things forward, checking in, and reminding them. Remember, you are the one coming to them, not the other way around. It's 100 per cent on you. When they apologize for taking so long (and they likely will) you can just say, "Oh hey, I get it. No problem at all. I just assumed you were really busy. I know how it is. It's all good." They will remember your chill, patient and persistent vibe and be grateful for it. If you can give them appreciation, love them as they are, and honour how hard it is to be a hub, they will feel deeply seen by you.

Is What You're Asking Them To Share Unique? If Not, Don't Ask: Give them something interesting to share that makes them look good. I get asked all the time to promote generic workshops and telesummits. Even if it's not generic, it is described as such. If I share that, it makes me look bad. It makes me look like a spammer. It makes me look like I've lost my touch and am probably just sharing it because of the affiliate commissions I'll get. I won't do it. Give me something novel, interesting, and valuable to share.

Get Yourself Reviewed: This is huge. For services, there are websites where you can get reviewed (e.g. yelp.com or coachexp.com). For products, there are plenty of sites (e.g. amazon.com). If you sell lip balms, there are beauty sites and lip balm reviewers, etc.

Don't Send Me Christmas Cards or Emails From Your Company: Bah — I don't care. Don't waste my time. You weren't thinking of me personally. If you're going to send me an email make it personal or make it useful to me. Send me a cool gift. Add value to my life. Don't use the holidays as your cynical marketing tactic to "stay-in-touch." Bah, humbug.

Don't Approach a Hub to Get or Give. Approach To See If There's a Fit At All: This is so huge. If you approach me to get something from me, I will feel it and back away. If you approach me to give something, I'll be suspicious as to your intentions. I'll assume that you're giving me this so that you can later "get" something . . . and I'll back away. Approach me to see if there's any kind of fit at all. The first conversation is just to see if there's a conversation to be had.

Help If You Want to Help: If you resonate with a hub so much that you just want to help them with no reward at all, by all means do it. They may, eventually, notice and will likely appreciate it. Sometimes just showing up to their events and being helpful is all it takes.

Ask Them For Advice: One of the sweetest ways to connect with a hub is to ask for their advice or mentorship. Not all are available or willing but some are. If you ask for their advice, they're likely to offer you their personal help too.

Write Them An Appreciative Note: So simple. Why not just send them a no-strings-attached email telling them how much you appreciate who they are and what they're up to. Be specific. Quote things they've written or said. Tell them what it meant to you. You could send this to them personally or make a blog or video about them.

Find Out What Events They'll Be At And Be There: Want to connect with a hub and getting nowhere with email? Try being where they are. Just go to an event that they'll be attending and see if you can sit next to them during lunchtime.

Send Them a Thoughtful Gift: I promise you that they almost never get gifts. If you are a musician, don't send them your CD. If you're an author, don't send them your book. Send them something that would be meaningful or useful to them. This can take time to observe and listen until the right idea appears. But, if you nail it, they'll be in touch.

Ask For Nothing When You First Meet: If you meet socially, don't ask them for anything. If you meet at a conference, summit etc., just bring the good vibes and don't be needy. Just enjoy their company and the event. You can follow up with a specific request later.

Approach As A Hub, Not As A Node: If you approach a hub from a needy place, you'll get one reaction. If you approach them as a peer, you'll get a different reaction.

Part Four: Becoming A Hub

Part Four Introduction: Becoming A Hub

Up until this point in the book we've been talking about shifting our marketing from "cold" to "warm" marketing approaches.

But, there is something beyond that: *hot* marketing.

Hot marketing is where you don't just approach hubs, you become a hub.

There is a passive and an active side of becoming a hub.

The passive side is what naturally happens when you have a niche and you stick around long enough: a natural word-of-mouth begins to accrue and you become known for a particular something without trying too much.

You are likely *already* getting some passive referrals, but could you be getting more? You are likely *already* getting repeat business, but could you be getting more? You're *already* making money, but could you be making more? You're *already* hosting your clients, but could you be a better host?

It seems to me that many businesses fail because they don't stick around long enough to make it work.

But you don't need help with the passive side of becoming a hub. This section is dedicated to showing you the active side — when you act like a hub consciously.



“As we have already stated, we are now living in a copycat world where most products and services all look alike – and almost everyone’s conventional marketing messages seem exactly the same. No one stands out as really being the supreme choice. Prospects can’t tell who is really competent, who has their best interests at heart, who they can and should trust with their purchasing decision and with all future purchases. As a result, they rely upon expert advisers, friends, and what’s already familiar to guide them in their purchasing decisions.”

– Mark Hughes, *Buzzmarketing*

Eight Key Benefits Of Becoming A Hub

Cold marketing produces abysmal results —o much effort for so little return. Warm marketing is much better.

So, why bother pushing past the warm level and into the hot level of marketing? Why actively try to become a hub?

The main thing is that when you move from cold to warm marketing you retain all of the benefits of cold marketing, you just add the far more effective warm approaches to it. Warm marketing doesn't mean you *can't* approach a stranger. It means you get to do that and also use hubs. It's the same with this hot level. You can still approach strangers, you can still use hubs, but you also now *are* a hub. This hot level carries with it distinct advantages offered below in no particular order.

1. **You are trusted:** You will enjoy deep, reserves of trust because people know you're not just in it for the money. They will believe deeply in your company. You become revered as a "trusted advisor" on not only the things you sell, but on the whole scene (e.g. if you're a magician, people call to get your advice on other entertainers in general. If you're a reiki practitioner, people look to you for guidance on holistic health in general). This means that when you endorse someone else's products or services, this will be listened to far more closely. This could benefit you in the form of joint ventures, affiliate deals and the like, but also just in the goodwill of your colleagues who are so immensely grateful to you for acting as a hub for them and introducing your people to their work. The truth is that, if your clients' pain is bad enough, they will pay almost any price to have it resolved. Price is rarely the final determiner. If people are in enough pain the only thing they care about is, "Will this work?" Word-of-mouth about you is a consistent background force. The word on the street is, "they can be trusted." When you introduce a new product or service, people are more likely to consider it. People are also more likely to forgive occasional dips in customer service. If you can imagine an emotional bank account, know that you have a lot of money in their and it would take significant withdrawals before you were in the red with your people.
2. **You are known for something:** When people are looking for what you offer or need help solving the problem you specialize in solving, you name is the first one that comes to their lips. You're known for something in particular. You have a reputation for a particular thing.
3. **You are adopted:** The community adopts you deep into the fabric of their "scene." This means incredible things for for how people are talking about you because as new people join the scene they will be told,"this is where we all go for _____. They will passionately recommend your work to their friends, neighbours, and peers.
4. **You'll grow the scene:** By becoming an active hub, you create a virtuous, self-reinforcing, collaborative, upward spiral. Not only help to grow your business, but you will ultimately help

grow the whole “scene,” which further grows your business. It’s not so much that you end up getting a bigger slice of the pie for yourself, but that you help make a bigger pie for everyone (e.g. not only are you selling more of your fair trade products, but more people are buying fair trade period). The more tightly woven the community you serve is, the more quickly and robustly word-of-mouth is able to spread. This benefits you. People will purchase your services as gifts and refer clients without expecting a reward. They will provide unsolicited praise as well as improvement suggestions.

5. **You can raise the industry’s standards:** By being willing to stand up for your values and sense of value in business, you become a powerful voice in your industry – an industry leader, critic. You may end up challenging your own industry to a higher standard of conduct and integrity. Being a hub allows you not only to get status, but to gain *stature*. You can become genuinely admired. Your community may grow to see you as their advocate and defender. You will gain a loyal following of raving fans.
6. **You have attention:** People read your emails and communications because you’re such an incredible hook up.
7. **Supporting your business is supporting a cause:** Your followers increasingly feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves by being connected with you. They see how your business is contributing to a cause that matters to them and that, by supporting your business, they are supporting that cause.
8. **You have support from other hubs:** Other hubs will be more likely to do favours for you and help you out because they see you as a peer and not someone for whom they are doing a favour.

“These experts have one overriding attribute that gives them their influence: trust. People tend to filter, distill, and objectively evaluate the overwhelming amount of information, make sense of it, and present it in a recommendation that is most likely to be right.”

– George Silverman, *The Secrets of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*

12 Laws Of Becoming Well Respected

In order to become a hub you must be well connected to your niche and well respected by them.

Being a hub means that you must know a lot of people, have means to be in touch with these people and do so frequently, in ways that firmly establish your relevance, credibility, and value. You must constantly demonstrate impeccable integrity and a commitment to the long-term well-being of your relationship with them. You must embody values that they respect and weave those values into the policies, procedures, and standards of your business. Again, they must see you as a trusted advisor, not a salesperson.

There are eight laws you can use as your guide in becoming well respected that I have borrowed from Peter Montoya's book, *The Personal Branding Phenomenon*:

LAW #1: The Law of Specialization. *Focusing your business on one area of achievement.* Diversification is tempting. It is normal to want to sell to the widest audience possible. It seems logical. But that impulse is a trap. Trying to be the solution to every problem results in a watered-down personal Brand message and overextended resources. Worst of all, it plants seeds of doubt: "If he does so many different things, he can't be very good at any of them." Specialization implies expertise. Growing a healthy personal brand requires choosing a specifically defined niche. Find a specialty at which you excel.

LAW #2: The Law of Leadership. You must be acknowledged as one of the most knowledgeable, respected, or skilled in your field.

LAW #3: The Law of Personality. *A brand must be built around one's personality in all its aspects, including its flaws.* We like people who are *real*, and we are willing to forgive a lot if a person simply lets themselves be human like the rest of us. You've got to be good, but you don't have to be perfect. There are four key qualities that most inspire this sense of connection and trust:

LAW #4: The Law of Relatability: You want them to be able to identify with you. They should see themselves — their struggles, ideals, and values — reflected in you. Be yourself. You won't connect with everyone, so don't attempt to. Watering down your personality will only prevent anyone from identifying with you.

LAW #5: The Law of Fallibility: You don't need to broadcast your foibles, but you also don't need to deny them. You might even learn to accept them as a part of who you are and maybe even relish in them as a part of what makes you you. Be willing to admit your flaws and take responsibility for their impact. Arrogance is a turn off.

LAW #6: The Law of Positivism: No one likes being around a negative, defeatist whiner. Smile. People like being around people who make them feel good.

LAW #7: The Law of Authenticity. Stay real. Share honestly from your heart. Don't try to become something you aren't, just find ways to express who you already are more.

LAW #8: The Law of Distinctiveness. Once you have created your personal brand, you must express it in a unique way. This might come down to the way you decorate your office, the way you dress, the colour of your hair, the colourful language you use.

LAW #9: The Law of Visibility. To be effective, your personal brand must be seen repeatedly. There are three areas of distinction:

- **Behaviour:** This can be anything from the way a person speaks or laughs to the jokes he tells, how he performs and interacts in a team situation, or how much emotion he shows.
- **Physicality:** This is how a person dresses or wears his hair, what kind of jewelry or body piercings he has, what kind of shape he is, or how she carries herself.
- **Lifestyle:** This encompasses everything from hobbies to religion to politics to social life. This type of distinction is most often reflected in the phrase, "He's the _____ who _____ ." as in, "He's the surgeon who surfs."

LAW #10: The Law of Unity. Your behaviours behind closed doors must match your public brand.

LAW #11: The Law of Persistence. Once you establish your personal brand, give it time to grow, stick with it and ignore fads.

LAW #12: The Law of Goodwill. The more you are perceived as being well-intentioned or for embodying valued ideals, the more influential your brand will be.

And, of course, the rewards are high for this level of service to a community. You will find yourself taken care of in unexpected ways. You'll be given free tickets to things, offered free therapy by those concerned for your well-being, you'll be given gifts "just because." I have been on the receiving end of this kind of generosity and it's an immensely touching thing. In little and big ways, your community will let you know, "We see you. We see all that you do for us."

“When you are doing work of value, people will support you in a variety of ways, not just money.”

— Toby Hemenway

Stay-In-Touch Marketing: Six Core Hub Marketing Approaches

Apathy after the sale kills more businesses than I can name. Many entrepreneurs are *self-defeated* by their own lack of follow-up.

Simply put: it takes a lot of fuel to get a shuttle into space and very little to maneuver it around once it's there. It takes a lot of fuel to get an airplane into the jet stream and very little to fly once it's there. Marketing is not about "getting the sale" and maximizing profits, it's about maximizing *relationships*. And yet, so many business people are massively negligent in their follow-up with their best source of revenue.



Go figure.

Consider these thoughts from Troy White at: smallbusinesscopywriter.com

What are you doing to keep in touch with your clients and prospects? It always amazes me to watch how the typical business treats their clients . . . after they become clients. At first, it seems they would do anything to get you to buy from them. Run advertising, offer special deals, bundle things together, new customer discounts . . . you name it, they do it. BUT, **as soon as they get you as a paying client** – you get dropped faster than a steaming hot iron. Why? After all the work you put into getting your first deal from a client: earning their trust, showing them you are different, getting them to pull out their wallet, and getting them to put their cash on the table for the first time. You do all of this – and then never communicate with them again. It makes no sense if you think about it. You know as well as I that it is MUCH easier to get a person to buy from you if they have already bought before. Your database is the true gold in your business. Not your products. Not your services. Not your expertise. The real gold is in a solid database of interested people. Or maybe it should be considered gold-in-progress. It is up to YOU to turn your list into gold. And the only way to do it is with constant contact and communication. You have to build, nurture and spoil your database. When you do, they will respond when you need them to.

Robert Middleton of actionplan.com calls this “stay-in-touch” marketing. Let’s talk about this idea of stay-in-touch marketing in broad strokes.

Why is it important to stay in touch?

Consider this: years ago, a mortgage broker in Calgary told me that people refinanced the mortgage on their home every five years on average. But how many used the same mortgage broker when they refinanced as the one they'd used five years ago?

Only 2%.

98 per cent of people find somebody new to work with.

98%.

Why does this happen?

My diagnosis: The mortgage broker never stayed in touch. They never built up a relationship.

So, how often should you be in touch?

Well, there's no easy answer. It's actually one of the most hotly debated topics in marketing today.

But the short answer is this: it's almost certainly more often than you currently are because most people are never in touch.

Why not?

They don't want to be considered spam. They don't want to "be a bother." They don't want to be seen as some slick "marketer" or pushy.

But here's the good news — you can be in touch with them much more often and never, ever trigger those things. Most entrepreneurs aren't in touch with their clients nearly enough, but let me qualify that.

I'm a big believer that your clients trust you far more when they "get" that you aren't just a self-promotion machine. They trust you more when they see that you have their own best interests at heart and are willing to recommend other resources to them. They feel much more open to you when you stay in touch and send them useful information — information that helps them understand or solve their problem.

Those who are in touch the right amount often do so with the wrong information.

And this is important — staying in touch with clients doesn't just mean bombarding them with offers.

There are six stay-in-touch core approaches:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Give Value | 3. Engage Conversation | 5. Take A Stand |
| 2. Create Context | 4. Reveal Yourself | 6. Shameless Plugs |

(Please note: The core approaches are not pitching, pitching, and more pitching. I'll be covering these core approaches in more depth in the next section.)

It means that the bulk of your efforts must be useful for them. Of course, the better you know who your ideal client is, and the more you know about them, the more useful they're likely to find it. I asked marketing guru [Robert Middleton](#) what he suggested as the ratio and he told me, "My ratio is about the following: 80 per cent useful info and 20 per cent offers. By focusing on valuable info, people give you permission to promote. If it's all promotion, they tune you out faster. I still get pushback and un-subscribes because people feel it should be closer to 99 per cent to 1%! But that is clearly unworkable."

What's your goal here?

They should feel grateful to be on your list. The information they get on your list should be so relevant and valuable that they pass it onto others from time to time. They should *actively* be looking forward to your emails. You should be getting notes of thanks from time to time for what you're sending.

Marketing guru Even Pagan offers this piece of wisdom:

"Money-Making Tip: If you don't know what to send to your prospects and customers, ask THEM to tell you. Send out an email that says "Hey, I'd like to know if you have any questions for me that you think others like you would want to know the answers to. Please email me your questions, and maybe I'll feature them in my upcoming email newsletter." Simple, effective, and ENGAGING. You can then take the questions you receive, answer them at your leisure, and create an email newsletter that you can broadcast to all of your prospects and customers.

If they experience your outreach as spam, an annoyance or a hassle, you're doing something wrong. Most of the unsubs will happen in the beginning when you start to email regularly. But once that levels out, if you're getting more than a 2 per cent unsubscribe rate response from people to any of the emails you send, you should look at what you're doing very closely.

“Many businesspeople are understandably uncomfortable phoning or otherwise directly contacting customers. They feel that if they offer a good service or product, people should appreciate them so much that they will seek them out. Often, too, there is the fear of being rejected. Many people resent getting sales calls at home. But if you’re informing them of some new offering; if your information is genuinely useful, this approach is usually appreciated.”

— Michael Phillips and Salli Raspberry, *Marketing Without Advertising*

Four Stay-in-Touch Marketing Case Studies

Case Study #1: Rapid Fire Theatre

I have been improvising with Rapid Fire Theatre since I was 16 years old (around 1992). This theatre company is the world's longest continuously running weekly improv show – 25 odd years. Well, around 2006, myself and my friend Kevin Gillese were hired to do marketing. The first thing I asked was: “Where’s the mailing list?” The short story is that – after 20 years or so – they didn’t have one. Nothing. No means of staying in touch with their audience. It’s a weekly show in a 170-person theatre. Let’s just say that it was only 30 shows a year. And let’s say that there was only 20 new people at each show. That still means 600 new people every year – for 20 years. We could have *easily* had a list of well over 5,000 people.

So, I grabbed a piece of scrap paper and a ballpoint pen and went out into the lobby to invite people to join our new email list. I did that every week for a few months and soon we had 1,200 or so on the list.

We emailed the list regularly with special Bring-a-Friend deals, we updated them on who was performing when. We give them the first crack at tickets for our annual improv festival Improvaganza. And it’s changed everything.

Case Study #2: The Blue Pear Restaurant

The Blue Pear was a great restaurant in Edmonton. And they did a great job of staying in touch with their clients. When they had a new menu, they let their clients know. During the holidays, they contacted their best clients and gave them first dibs on tables. Simple.

Case Study #3: La Isla Restaurant

Here’s an email I got from a client years ago: “Hey Tad, I wanted to forward on this example of utterly charming, small business marketing. I put my email on the list at this tiny restaurant in Seattle a few months ago and, since then, have received these absolutely charming missives from the proprietor about once/week. I’ve been thinking a lot about why this is my favourite piece of spam (and I’m on a lot of lists). It is clearly a one person speaking to many kind of communication and yet it **feels** like a one-to-one communication. Plus, it has a good balance of personal, business, and community elements. He constantly engages me and asks for my thoughts and feedback on menu items. I remember at Christmas there was some special cake that I was invited down to try. Last week, they began the process of becoming a green restaurant and I’m certain that

I will get an update about that soon. Finally, the word dork in me is charmed by the clearly translated, formal English, which results in some unusual sentence structures.”

See the email here:

From:"AlfonsoG" alfonso@laislaseattle.com
Subject: Late nights and Mother's day at La Isla
Date: Mon, 7 May 2007 22:53:23 -0700

Hello everyone,

We are very excited to announce that we will begin offering our happy our menu late nights Monday thru Saturday every week until the end of the summer.

Half price appetizers from 10pm until midnight except on Sunday night when we will be open until 10 pm. We will kick off the late night menu on Tuesday the 8th while playing some dominoes so come join us.

We are also expanding our drink menu. There are now flavoured mojitos on the menu as well as some new drinks. Give us some feedback when you get a chance to try them out.

I would also like to wish an early mother's day to all those wonderful mothers out there. And let you know that we will be trying out some new desserts that day in honour of mom. We are experimenting with a cheese flan, as well as a rum flan. We will also have mimosas on the menu to help celebrate mother's day in style.

And finally, my band Picoso will be playing this Friday night May 11th at Nectar down in Fremont. If you would like more information on the show, or the venue, please visit the band's website at picoso.net.

For this week we will be offering mofongo (mashed fried plantain stuffed with your choice of shrimp, chicken or veggie mix) on Tuesday and Wednesday, and our Pernil (slow roasted pork shoulder) on Saturday and Sunday.

Hope you are all doing great. Take care

Alfonso

La Isla Restaurant 2320 Nw Market st Seattle 98107 206-789-0516
laislaseattle.com

Case Study #4: Doula in Canmore

I encouraged a client of mine, Angie Evans, who used to live in Canmore, Alberta, to be in touch with her clients more often. She was, understandably, nervous about it coming across as spam. After receiving one of her emails (below) I asked her what the response had been. She sent me this reply: "Hi Tad - I always get lots of responses from these notes. The positive feedback and thanks you have taken away any fears I had about sending info that merely bugs people. Thanks to these newsletters and my web guy ensuring my site gets on the first page or two of Google, I'm also slowly getting known as the one to go to for baby and birth info in the Valley."

Here's the newsletter she sent:

Subject: Breastfeeding circle and summer survival tips for wee-ones

Hi All - The Breastfeeding Circle's tomorrow, Wed Jul 25. Details below.

Pregnant women - I urge you to go and gain some invaluable info before your birth. Also below is info about a couple of upcoming classes. Feel free to pass this note on to anyone who might be interested. Thanks!

Summer Survival Tips for Wee-Ones:

Sun Exposure. Some sunshine is healthy! Besides our summers are short, so love it up.

- To avoid burns use common sense to determine appropriate clothing, time of day and duration of exposure. Remember that sensitive skin can burn through clouds.
- Aloe gel with a drop of lavender essential oil is soothing and healing for burns. Keep a small bottle in the fridge all ready to go. Homeopathic Cantharis (internally) helps for bad burns.
- Use non-toxic sunscreens available at health stores.
- Proper hydration (water or herb tea) and adequate anti-oxidants help protect our skin from burning. Plants are outside in the hot sun all day and don't burn! Why? They're full of water and anti-oxidants.
- Sun stroke and heat stroke need lots of rehydration and rest. Get out of the sun immediately.

Bug Bites. Ouch! My daughter got bit by a horsefly on the weekend and I've never heard screaming like that! We're all thankful I had my bug first-aid kit handy. She was playing again within 20 minutes and has had no swelling after the fact.

- *Aspivenin* is a reusable suction system for all manner of bites and stings. (We don't bother at all for the mossies b/c it would be a full-time job this summer!) Basically it sucks out the stinger or venom – works on snake-bites too. It comes in a hard plastic case with enough room to add a little tube of homeopathic remedy or sting cream/oil. Check health stores or contact me if you don't find them there. Apply it and leave on for 3 minutes to get all the goo out. Leave on until being seen by hospital emergency staff in case of potentially fatal bites or stings.
- Homeopathic *Apis*, any potency ASAP and as needed.
- Apply some kind of natural sting-soother topically ASAP. I like *Doliso Apistick* or *Apisgel*, or *Blaine Andrusek Anti-venom* essential oil blend. The latter is our first choice for really nasty stuff that needs a lot of astringent help and I keep a little 2ml bottle in my wallet. For the little stuff such as mossies we use whatever's closest to help with the itch.
- *Rescue Remedy* applied topically, and also 4 drops under tongue in case of panic or fear. (We used a few doses of this for the horsefly incident. I think I took some too!)
- After all this is done, if there's still potential for swelling then apply ice packs for a few minutes.
- If any stinging or burning starts again simply reapply the sting-soothers and/or give another dose of *Apis*. A very sensitive child or a very nasty bite may require these measures into the next day.

Enjoy the outdoors and our lovely summer days! Keep the kiddies fed and watered and rested. Keep the parents that way too and see how much stress-free fun you can all have.

INFO ABOUT THE CLASSES AND GATHERINGS:

Breastfeeding Circle : Last Wed of every month, 10:30am ; Parent Link Playroom. Contact Rayna 678-1273 or tupper@shaw.ca. (This month contact me as Rayna's on holidays, so I'll be there.) Pregnant and nursing mamas, and children welcome. Come to share triumphs and pitfalls, learn from others, or just chat and relax with other mamas-to-be and mamas-of-weebees. Lateness understood! It's a drop-in thing. No charge.

Prenatal Wisdom Classes: You have choices in birth! This series explores options to prepare mentally and physically for a healthy pregnancy and birth, with a focus on pathways to natural childbirth. A hospital tour will be arranged. Pros and cons of interventions will be discussed. Topics include labor and birth

positions, emotional support, breastfeeding, newborn care, holistic health options, natural pain management, and more . . .

Next Series: 6 Mondays, Sept 10 – Oct 15. 7PM

Investment: \$165

Instructors: Angie Evans 609-1733 and Mimi Pothaar 678-4904

Childbirth Prep for Men: This class will focus on the man's journey to parenthood. It's your birth too! Learn how to prepare for birth and the early weeks of fatherhood. Explore options to support both your partner and yourself, learn to be the ideal birth partner, how to deal with unexpected situations that may arise, and contribute to a healthy relationship and family.

\$35

INSTR.: Angie Evans , BScH, MH, Doula

(A couple people have asked so I would like to do a late August class. It's a 7-9 evening. Please contact me if interested.)

That's it for this month. Happy Summer everyone!

Angie Evans, BScHon, MH, Master Herbalist, Doula, Iridologist, AngieEvans.ca

How Often Should You Email Your List?

This is one of the most hotly contested topics in the world of marketing. And, of course, it could also relate to how often you should post on social media.

There's no one answer to this but I would suggest a few guidelines.

- **Monthly works.** No one will bat an eyelash at getting a monthly email from you.
- **It will always be about balancing quality and quantity**
It's about finding the right balance of frequency and content. Seth Godin sends out a short email every single day. Others might send out a longer email once a quarter. But frequency is often a red-herring. If the quality is very high, if the content is relevant, they'll be happy to hear from you more often. If it's low, then even once a year is too much.
- **Only send an email when you have something to say that's really valuable.** You don't have to commit to sending an email every week no matter what. I'd rather have a gap and then receive something amazing than get something that feels forced every week.
- **Only post things that are a 90 per cent or above.** By that I mean, your excitement level to share it should be a 9/10. If you look at it and think, "meh," don't share it. If you look at it and are 100 per cent sure your list would love it, do. But don't share or post it if it's less than 90%. Less is more. Don't post more just so you can "have content" and "stay in touch."
- **The 80/20 rule:** Make sure 80 per cent of what you share is valuable content. Then 20 per cent of it can be things that aren't "value" in the direct sense (e.g. shameless plugs, personal updates, causes you want to talk about).
- **Pay attention to your open rate.** Is it dropping fast? If so, you might want to change your strategy. But also, the people who leave your list might not be your people. It might not be a sign that you're sending the wrong things but that the wrong people are signing up for your list. Is it clear what list they're getting on? Could you be clearer upfront so that the wrong people would never subscribe in the first place?
- **Consider emailing key people about certain things vs. your whole list.** Let's say you've got a high level coaching program that you want to launch. Do you really need to tell your whole list about it? Maybe you could send off twenty personal emails and fill it that way. Or, let's say you're leading a workshop in Toronto —o you need to email your whole list about it? You could



geographically segment your list so the people most likely to say yes to a regional offer hear about it first and you only tell the rest of your list about it if it doesn't fill up.

- **Imagery:** Use striking imagery and art in your posts to draw people in and drive the point home more strongly.
- **Seasonal and topical emails:** If you can tie an email into a seasonal event, holiday or something topical, people are more likely to pay attention.
- **Sleep on it.** Don't send emails out immediately. If you're able to, write your email, save it as a draft, and revisit it in the morning. ask yourself, "How could I make this better?" I promise you'll find a way and be glad you waited.

Six Core Stay-In-Touch Marketing Approaches

I'd like to make the case that there are six basic things you can be doing when you're staying in touch with clients (e.g. emails, offerings, events and posts).

I believe that the **first three should make up 80 per cent** or so of your “stay-in-touch” efforts.

1. Give Value
2. Create Context
3. Engage Conversation

If you do this, then you earn the right to spend the remaining **20 per cent on the following three**:

4. Reveal Yourself
5. Take A Stand
6. Shameless Plugs

1. GIVE VALUE (part of the 80%)

There are two ways you can give value. The first is to create the value (i.e. your own original thoughts and content). The second is to curate that value (i.e. the thoughts and content of others). They are both potent, though here I believe the 80/20 rule applies as well: 80 per cent of what we share should be our own and 20 per cent can be the work of others. They're on your email list because they want to know what you think about things, not other people.

Give Value Option #1: Create Value and Advise Your Following

Our people trust us and turn to us for advice. They want us to be their caretaker, guardian, defender, advocate, industry expert, and, above all else, trusted advisor. People are struggling and they don't have time to learn everything we've learned.

If they can see us as a reliable source of education, perspective, and information, they will be much more open to our offers. Fundamentally, they want to come to know and trust our point of view (something I have written about extensively in my eBook *Point of View Marketing*).

For example, though this is changing as more and more people choose to learn online, many people learn the basics of, say, photography, through classes offered for free when they purchase their **cameras**. If you buy from a certain store and they offer free classes, the store owners know that you'll be more likely to buy from them again knowing that they provide support. Stores that don't provide instructional classes are missing an obvious marketing and relationship technique; an approach that could position them as a hub.

There are a lot of ways you can add value to and advise your people in a way that positions you as a hub. Here are some ideas to get your started:

- Make **videos** of yourself demonstrating the work you do with people. Create or point to free, 5-10 minute **video clips** on/from YouTube.
- Quick **tips and nuggets** that are maybe a paragraph long but contain immediately applicable wisdom that your list can use today.
 - Give them a "how-to" on their biggest problem or help them get the result they really want (e.g. how to make the perfect cup of coffee, how to pin back your plants without killing them, how to plant a new tree without killing it, how to make our restaurant's best dish at home, or for parents, how to make the morning routine go smoother).
 - You could go the "Focus on ONE thing to avoid" approach (e.g. don't get this ingredient, don't ever use _____ strategy, never refinance in _____ situation, never say these words to your spouse, etc.).

- You could also focus on “Biggest Blunders” that people make (with this approach, consider that it helps to include a story with your tips —from your own life or the life of a client — so people can relate and feel less alone).
- Offer DIY home remedies (e.g. 15 minute self massage videos, make _____ at home).
- Watch this TV show coming up! or watch this clip from this show.
- **Articles** written by you or someone else.(Note: If you send your list a 10-20 page article every week, many folks will feel overwhelmed. Better to send 1-3 page articles).
- **Top Ten Lists:** You see these all over the internet. “Top Ten Ways to Simplify Your Life,” or “Top Ten Ways to Treat Migraines Naturally.” When you hone in on the core issues of your niche, could you create a few of these lists offering your best thoughts on how they might address those issues?
- **Podcasts:** Podcasts are an emerging field and type of media. There seems to be a podcast for just about everything. If you have a clear niche and unique point of view, why not put out a monthly podcast where you share your latest thoughts or interview key people in your field? Some people like to read content but many like to listen to it while they drive their long commute to work or go for their morning walks.
- **Event reviews and summaries.** If you go to an event that is of interest to your community, why not tell them about your experience of it? What did you like? What didn’t you? What did you learn that could be useful for them?
- **Share relevant knowledge.** “Did you know _____ about _____?” Educate your list on things they might not know about.
- **“_____ of the month.”** Maybe you sell stones, herbs, or recipes. So, perhaps, you share beautiful photographs of what you sell, or more on the metaphysical properties of each. My colleague, Tiina Veer, told me about the website spezzatino.com, which is an e-zine is about one ingredient totally deconstructed — you learn its history, the structure of it, the nutritional elements, and its many uses. Their newsletter is well-written with beautiful, eye candy photos and, the proceeds of your subscription goes towards a healthy food bank. What could you do for your business? The stone of the month? The herb of the month? The marketing tool of the month? The “app” of the month?
- **Free audio.** Like self hypnosis audio tracks, short meditations, a clip from one of your workshops, or clip from a teleconference call.
- **Feature cool resources or helpful websites.** For seniors:, that could be links to funding to pay for care givers, seniors events; for single moms, you could include leads on local support for childcare; for people who want to renovate green, local retrofitting subsidies, etc.

- **Interviews with famous people in your niche.** I remember a fellow in Halifax named Andru who had played with Bob Marley's bassist. so He interviewed the bassist and sent their conversation to his fans. Do you have connections to people who others would love to get to know?
- **Case studies**
 - Of people like them who've gotten the results they wanted. Let's say you help people recover from severe back pain and you find a YouTube video of someone who recovered that's incredibly inspiring. Even though you weren't the one to help them solve their problem, your clients might certainly appreciate the encouragement of seeing such a success story.
 - Success stories from people you've treated. What if every month you reflected on your clients and the results they were getting and decided to share a story with your list (and their permission).
 - An example: "John Doe came in with _____ problem. I saw that _____ was causing it so I did _____ and _____ happened. And he felt _____ and said "_____"!" about that." Type this story into a one-pager and watch for a great reaction from clients. The more specific you can be the better. Pick a problem that you helped someone resolve and that applies to most of your list. Pick something that will be relevant. (Note: if you're like I was for the first five years of my practice, you may not have many case studies. Personally, I had a lot of one-time sessions with entrepreneurs —I'd see them for one session but not do any follow up. A true case study shows your followers that you not only gave them good "information" but that you helped them achieve a specific result, one that they wouldn't have achieved without you.) Case studies are a way that you can brag without bragging. You could also share success stories of people who've done a similar journey and what they learned in the process.
- **Posts that are tied into seasonal/holiday things.** Make a seasonal checklist of things to be doing and buying: e.g. the essential oils that are perfect for this season, recipes for the season, allergy related things. This is a mix of creating and curating. You're *creating* a list of *curated* things.
- **Conversation starters.** Provocative questions to ask your friends, new ideas for dialogue with friends (e.g. ask your friends "what fascinates you these days?")
- **Offer your commentary on something.** For a while, I was sharing ads I came across on social media and offering my take on what the ad was doing well and what it could do better. Perhaps you could do this on: financial plans you've seen offered, nutritional approaches you've heard talked about, relationship strategies that are in vogue, etc.
- **Shopping guidance.** Where to shop and what to shop for if you're trying to solve _____ problem (e.g. nutritionist: recipes and where in town to get the ingredients and brand names,

include photos. **Product reviews or endorsements.** Highlight complimentary businesses or other products that might be related to your work. **Just for fun.** Throw in humorous comics relevant to your crowd.

- **Profiles.** Offer examples of people doing cool things in your industry
- **“In conversation” features.** You could include transcripts of Facebook chats or email conversations. Let’s say you type out a particularly powerful chat with a client that helped them through a problem, why not ask their permission to share it publicly? You’re having the chat anyway and, with a bit of context added, it could likely be very useful to others who are struggling with the same issues.
- **Q&A blog posts.** You don’t have to come up with all the content yourself. You could send an expert you respect some questions in an email and then turn their answers into a blog post. Easy.
- **Blog events.** If you’re at a conference or workshop that your people would find of interest, blog the session and share the best of what you’re learning.
- **Scripts.** You could give them a word for word example of what they might say in a particular situation where they feel stymied (e.g. “Here’s exactly what to say when communicating with ill family members,” or “Here’s what to say when your partner is upset,” or “Here’s what to say to your child when they’ve had a rough day at school”).
- **Surveys and quizzes.** People love to learn about themselves and their loved ones (e.g. how to figure out in what way your child is sensitive)

Here are 14 real-world examples of businesses offering useful advice and guidance to their clients from the book *Marketing Without Advertising* by Michael Phillips and Salli Raspberry:

1. A weight-lifting **gym** offers introductory instructions to its customers.
2. A **women’s clothing store** offers colour analysis and wardrobe design classes for its clientele.
3. An **outdoor equipment** store offers to teach people how to use the equipment it sells.
4. A **word-processing firm** teaches its techniques for high-speed mailing list input and for doing statistical tables.
5. A **school for children** for learning disabilities teaches parents and grandparents of students about recent developments in this rapidly changing field.

6. A **locksmith** teaches businesspersons the elements that go into creating a tight security system.
7. **Fireplace** manufacturers have a special opportunity to teach classes to architects and decorators on the mathematical calculations necessary to design a fireplace that works.
8. An **illumination consultant** comes by a few weeks after a lighting job is completed to see if any adjustments might be helpful.
9. A Texas **dentist** sends out toothbrushes for patients to use without water or toothpaste while driving.
10. A **lawyer** with a new practice sends his small business clients a copy of a booklet explaining partnership laws.
11. A **florist** gives a customer who buys cut flowers a sample package of a substance that extends the life of the flowers.
12. A **humane society worker** calls a week after a pet is adopted to see if there are any unexpected problems.
13. A **computer-based information retrieval service** calls a day after a requested research report is sent to the client to see if additional material needs to be generated.
14. A **knife manufacturer** offers a free sharpening training session to clients.

Give Value Option #2: Curate Value for Your Following

Part of being a hub is also be about being seen as a source of good content. Part of your role as a hub is to be an aggregator, a channel, filter, a source of good things so that people come to know that you'd never steer them wrong in a recommendation.

This could be in your Facebook feed. It could be in your newsletter. It could simply be in conversations with you. Certainly people want to hear your opinion and point of view on things, but it doesn't have to all come from you, it can be in the sources of content that you curate. Again, I suggest that what you share is 80 per cent created by you and 20 per cent curated from the writing and content of others.

If they trust your taste in things, your aesthetic, your sense of what's cool and what's real, they will also trust you more (even if what you're sharing is not your own content).

I recall during the last municipal election in Edmonton that many of my friends asked me, “Who should I vote for in my ward?” They were looking to me for direction. Your clients are doing this with you, too, because they trust that, most of the time, you’ll be on target. They trust that you’re a good barometer of what might fit their values. They trust your discernment.

So if there’s something you’re consistently told you have excellent taste in or where you consistently get rave reviews for your recommendations, this could be an area to focus on.

There can often be overlap between *creating* and *curating* content. The former is something *you* make and share. The latter is something that someone *else* makes and that you share.

Here are seven simple examples of ways this can be done:

- A **calendar of events** happening in your community that is relevant to your niche. In Edmonton, TheLocalGood.ca hosts an events page where you can learn about all of the activist events happening over the coming months.
- **Insider info**, education and gossip on your industry that will help your following make better decisions (e.g. a small **publisher** producing books for craftspeople that includes materials in its mailings describing useful books and resources published by other companies).
- **Heads up on sales** held by complimentary businesses and **endorsements** of products or services that you think they might enjoy (e.g. a **stable** that boards and rents horses also sends out flyers to the people on its mailing list describing a non-toxic, fly control system, offered by a local company). These sales could already be happening or you might, on behalf of your clients, negotiate a deal where they get a certain percent off their first purchase.
- **Heads up** on cool events, products or services that your list would love (e.g. a Spanish **restaurant** has regular lottery draws from customer entries for tickets to local flamenco dance performances; or how the partners in an **events organizing** company alerts all their clients and prospects to a wine-tasting at a local vineyard; or how a fancy **clothing boutique** calls the people on its list to tell them about a luncheon fashion show). If they’re getting their taxes done with you because of their relationship troubles and you start to see that this is true for many of your clients, couldn’t you arrange to get them tickets to a relationship workshop? Send a book on relationships? Partner with a relationship coach and endorse his services to your list for a cut? If people are buying your pottery to commemorate certain moments, couldn’t you put together a “Commemoration Package” that included other services? Couldn’t you also recommend portrait painters, photographers, etc., who might be able to help (and receive a cut from that)?
- **Links to other content**, like blog posts, podcasts, Facebook posts, videos etc., or recommending a cool resource or website.

- **Book reviews, excerpts, and summaries.** If you read a book that you think is immensely relevant to your people, why not write a review of it on your blog or a distillation of they key points? Note: If the thrust of your review is to summarize the content that's already in the book, then you're *curating* content. If the thrust of your review is to share your personal reflections on it and point of view about it, then you're moving into the realm of *creating* content.
- **Examples of people doing cool things in your industry:** Is someone in your industry doing something inspiring, trendsetting or remarkable? Why not share the news. Be the connector of everything your community needs to know about, e.g. product recall updates.

2. CREATE CONTEXT (part of the 80%)

So, the first two things you can do to add value for your clients is to create and curate *content*. Most people are incredibly grateful to get advice that helps them. But *content* (e.g. “Here’s what to do!”) is only one part. Another part is to offer people *context* (e.g. “Here’s why you’re struggling so much!”). People are deeply yearning for context in their life, for someone to make sense of why things are the way they are, and why their problems won’t seem to go away no matter how hard they try.

It’s an awful thing to suffer. It’s even worse to have no idea why you’re suffering.

It’s rotten to have problems. It’s worse to have no idea why those problems are there.

To state it another way: Mysterious symptoms are the worst because you are utterly hamstrung in what you can do about them.

And yet another: No diagnosis means no prescription.

If you can help your clients and potential clients understand why they’re struggling, and the background and hidden dynamics behind their suffering, they’ll be incredibly grateful to you.

Be an illuminator and educator for your people on the kinds of issues you specialize in. You’re more of an expert in your industry and scene than they will ever be. Context is the behind-the-scenes of their symptoms. Context is where we start to get into a topic that I wrote an entire book about called *Point of View Marketing*. I won’t delve deeply into it here, but to give you a small taste, context can be: the chakra systems, five elements of Chinese medicine, the four directions, etc. Context gives them a larger and more detailed map for where they are, it gives them more information than they currently have. It helps them understand why they’re struggling.

Four ways to create context:

1. **Rant on something topical:** Comment on pop culture, current events or news items.
2. **Share your expert knowledge** in digestible ways, like by **filling in the blanks** to make these examples relevant to your work:
 - “Ten truths about _____”
 - “Five myths about _____”
 - “The top ten blunders in _____”
 - “The secrets to _____”
 - “The seven reasons people can’t seem to _____”

- “The underlying causes of _____”
 - “If you’re struggling to solve _____, it’s not your fault! Here’s what makes it hard.”
 - “Did you know _____ about _____?”
 - “What frustrates me most about my industry is _____.”
 - “I’m hearing a lot of people talking about _____. Here’s my take on it . . .”
 - “People often ask me how and why my product/service works. Let me show you . . .”
 - “When I look at my [industry], treating this [issue/achieving this result,] here’s where I see things going _____.”
3. **Quizzes and self-evaluations** with results. These can be huge for helping people get a sense of where they are in their business or life or psychological state, whatever is relevant to your work.
 4. **Review something** that others in your industry do or that your clients do. I used to take photos of ads I’d find for people who do what my clients do and offer my commentary on them as a way of helping people understand my take on things using a real-world case study.

3. ENGAGE CONVERSATIONS (part of the 80%)

Staying in touch doesn't have to stay online. If you work locally, I would urge you to either go to the events where your clients (or their hubs) might be or to host your own events and parties that bring your clients (or their hubs) together.

Can you bring your clients together to connect with each other in ways that are meaningful to them? Can you host them?

I think of Canada's much-loved company Mountain Equipment Co-op (similar to REI in the States) where you can get a lot of climbing gear, outdoor, and camping gear. Their store, passively, just by existing, is a hub for that whole outdoorsy scene. But, on the active side of things, they also host workshops, group outings, and once a year, they do a Gear Swap event where people get a table in a parking lot, bring their old camping and hiking gear, and swap it with each other. They create an opportunity for their community to get together.

There's a superfood elixir bar and restaurant in Edmonton that's down the street from me called Noorish. They have a yoga studio downstairs, and raw and vegan superfoods upstairs. Passively, within a week of opening, they were already the hub for the yoga, holistic scene in Edmonton. But, they also host talks and dance parties.

I was in Red Deer in the Summer of 2016 doing a marketing workshop and discovered a new organic grocery store called Pure Earth. It was the first organic grocery store in town. By being there, Pure Earth is now a hub. When I was talking to them about marketing, I spoke about a more active approach they could take, "You've got to do a launch party. Then even before the launch party, you have to do a VIP party where you do the hub mapping, and you invite the VIPs in town. I'm talking about people on city council, the mayor, all the leading yoga teachers, leaders in the holistic healing, local food and permaculture scenes. Invite the VIPs. Invite the ones who know they're hubs. You invite them there and you have a special opening for them, a special treat for them. Then you give them all a 10 per cent discount towards their purchase on their first visit. Maybe you give them coupons they can hand them out."

There's a woman in North Vancouver who makes vegan gluten-free desserts. When we talked, I said, "Okay, that's very clear. What you do, the niche is very clear." And so we just went right to the hubs database and started there. How could she become a hub? She could host a gathering of all those hubs in her database that we built together and feed them her desserts.

Passively, a New Age bookshop will become a hub for the New Age community. But if they want to be active about it, they could host book readings, social events, or a reading club to delve into particular books that are popular.

Passively, a flooring supply store is already a hub. But, I heard about one flooring supply store that became an active hub by noticing that their most important customers were the contractors. People

hire the contractors to build the houses and do the construction jobs. It wasn't the DIY people. It was the contractors.

And so, they did this unthinkable thing and built an office for these contractors in an old, unused, loft space. It was a beautiful space with leather couches, a fax machine, a photo copier, coffee machine, internet. They invited the contractors to be a part of a club that would allow them to use this as a place they could bring their clients for a meeting or stop by to do some work during the day.

If you own a shop that sells fabric, patterns, needles, and thread, you'll become a hub, just by existing, for people interested in sewing. But, if you have your ear to the ground, you might just realize that some of your customers are passionate about dress-making. You could have a "Wednesday Dressmaker's Club." You might let them use a back room and provide some light refreshments. You might attend the sessions and teach them dressmaking techniques. You might bring in guest speakers. This is actively working to be a hub. If you did this, you might notice that you start attracting people who were not previously customers who want to join the club. As the size of the club grows, you'd likely notice people buying supplies they need to make dresses from your store. You might even create several dressmaking bundles you could sell.

If you owned a bookstore that specialized in selling mystery books, you might host a "Sleuth's Circle." Members might get discounts and further discounts if they refer new members. They could bring in better-known mystery authors and get signed copies of popular books for their members.

A camera shop might host a photography club.

A cafe might run a "Drink of the Month" contest where customers submit ideas and recipes for drinks and, each month, one is selected and featured.

Luna Bar, a natural foods bar, was the first major food bar to be targeted towards the unique nutritional needs of women. One way that they brought women together was the Luna Film Festival – films by and for women. They also sponsor productions of *The Vagina Monologues*.

Thomas Leonard was a life coach and created one of the largest coaching websites in existence at the time in the late 90s and early 2000s): coachville.com. He did this by giving away free memberships and involving the members in developing a ton of new content.

Long & McQuade music store created their own university. "Long & McQuade is thrilled to once again present Long & McQuade University, a series of 13 free career-enhancing seminars, clinics, and showcases specifically tailored to the needs of musicians, songwriters, producers, and home studio enthusiasts. There is something for all professional musicians and hobbyists of all levels and at all stages of their careers . . ." They offered: Metal Guitar, Vocals 101, Basics of Audio and MIDI Computer Recording, Coming Soon to Your Living Room: How to Organize House Concerts, The

Art and Craft of Songwriting, Hand Drumming, Self Marketing 101, Drum Circle 101, Computer Music Production 101, Audio 101, and a Drum Clinic.

If you don't have a retail space, you could host a regular Meetup group on a topic aligned with your business.

If you're a marketing coach, it could be a Meetup for marketing professionals or entrepreneurs. At each meeting, you could speak on a different topic and, possibly, bring in guest presenters.

If you're a relationship coach, you could host a similar kind of group, or you could host singles outings.

If you were a doctor of sports medicine, you could host a Sunday Morning Jogging Club.

If they're coming to your yoga studio because they want conscious community, do you think that there are other things you could do to meet their needs beyond your classes? Perhaps a movie night? An open mic night where you sit on the floor in a circle and sing songs? Perhaps a picnic? A potluck dinner? A games night? Etc.

The website patientslikeme.com is an online community for patients to support other patients who share the same chronic illnesses.

If you're going to play this role of fostering conversations, you can ask a lot of questions on social media or via your email list. But only ask questions you're really curious about. Your role can be to be a provocateur, engager, and student of your community.

Here are three quick thoughts on engaging conversations:

- Ask a provocative question (e.g. when is marketing gross? When are workshops gross?)
- Ask for feedback on something you're working on (e.g. which headline do you like better? What should the topic be for my next workshop?)
- Reply to comments and posts. Respond to people's comments on your own blog and make it a two-way conversation. This doesn't mean post a blog post, have someone comment on it, and that's it. It means your post has the potential to be a full conversation. Show your commenters you respect and appreciate them by responding back to them.

4. REVEAL YOURSELF (part of the 20%)

Though you mustn't let this dominate your communications with clients, being willing to reveal parts of yourself can help those following your work to know you personally a little bit. It lets them know that you're human. This helps them relate to you and know that you're not just another huckster trying to make a buck. There are many ways you can do this, but here are a few:

- **Share a *past* struggle:** Sharing a story of somewhere you were struggling and feeling “not perfect,” or not living up to what you teach, and then the “aha” you had about that. If you are willing to be vulnerable about your questions and even invite the support and guidance of those following you, a more genuine connection may be fostered.
- **Share a *current* struggle:** Share a vulnerable struggle you're having now, where you're not perfect and not living up to what you teach, and ask for support. I recall a mentor of mine who was a well-known figure who'd done so much good for so many for years who lost all of his money in the Bernie Madoff scandal. He reached out to his list and told them the story. The money came pouring in to support him. Imagine that you feel like your website is feeling “hyper” but you don't know how to fix it. You might reach out to your people and ask them for their candid and kind advice. You'd be amazed at how people will step up to the plate for you.
- **Apologize and make amends when you screw up:** I had colleagues of mine who I hosted a workshop for years ago. They screwed things up by making a hard sales pitch right at the end and I didn't hear about it until a month later. I was upset and reached out to them to talk. I wanted them to make a video apologizing to my people for what had happened. They refused. I haven't spoken with them since. Note: Don't start your apology by saying, “We're going to be vulnerable here.” Don't perform it. Just be vulnerable and real about where you weren't conscious. You're not doing this for a hero biscuit.
- **Send them an update on your life:** Every once in a while, you might just send out an email entitled, “Not About Business: Just An Update On My Life.” And have it simply be that. Those who aren't interested won't read it. Those who are, will. And those who do will feel a closer sense of kinship with you as a result.
- **Share your hobbies and nerdy interests:** I heard about a realtor who was an amateur photographer and, in every email newsletter, he would send one of his most recent, favourite photographs he'd taken. I heard of another service provider who was a foodie and would always include a favourite recipe. If you do woodworking, keep them posted on a recent project you're doing. If you're a songwriter too, include a song. If you love to travel, you might share a story of people you've met, things you've learned, and places you have visited — if you can tie these into the themes of your work, that's a bonus.

- **Share something you found entertaining:** You might include a joke, a video, or a song of the day. Every once in a while, share something just because you think it's cool.
- **Share a dream or a goal you have that you're working towards:** For example, "I've always dreamed of moving to Greece and I hope to go next year."

Note: Beware of featuring your kids in conjunction with sales promotions. I've known of two examples of people using their kids or a new birth in a promotion, and neither worked. One got some really negative feedback because people were appalled that someone would use their children as a prop in a promotion. Not everything has to be an opportunity for a sale. Sometimes you can just share to share.

5. TAKE A STAND (part of the 20%)

In my mind, as a hippy, too few entrepreneurs do this.

I think we have a moral obligation as conscious entrepreneurs to take a stand for something bigger than our bottom lines. We have a responsibility to leverage whatever privileges we might have to affect social change. There are a number of ways we can do this and inspire those following us (as well as make it easier for them) to do something to make the world better.

The most respected entrepreneurs I know see themselves as advocates, defenders, and protectors of their people.

- **Advocacy and activism:** If there's an issue coming up that you think your people would want to know about, consider giving them an update or a way that they can make their own voice heard on the issue (e.g. "natural health products are being threatened in Canada," or "comment on proposed development of Edmonton's river valley," or "Sign this petition on _____").
- **Write an open letter to _____:** For example, an open letter to workshop leaders, white men, women of colour, life coaches, massage therapists etc. Share what's in your heart to share with these people.
- **Write a manifesto:** A manifesto is your core point of view. It's a sort of mission statement. It's a condensed articulation of a larger stand that you're taking in the world.
- **Boycott:** If there are certain companies you think your people should know to stop buying from, tell them.
- **Buycotting:** Is there a company, local or online, that you think did something brave and important? Consider letting those who follow you know so that they can reward them with their dollars.
- **Get people on the streets:** Is there a protest, action, or mobilizations coming up? Get your people out there on the streets with you.
- **Industry critiques:** Is there an area where you feel like your own industry is out of integrity? Why not share this?

6. SHAMELESS PLUGS (part of the 20%)

If most of what your clients are getting from you is free, relevant, and valuable information, they'll be very open to receiving the occasional pitch from you. Here are a few thoughts on ways you can do it that go beyond your basic promotion.

- **Updates on products or services:** Are you launching a new product or service? Are you upgrading something? Keep them posted on this.
- **Special “first dibs” offers:** If you're a restaurant, you might offer those on your list (especially your best clients) the first chance to book tables for the holidays. If you're a retail store, you might hold a closed-door sale just for them. You might email your list and say, “Before this goes on social media, I wanted to tell you.”
- **Sales and special offers:** Why not have the occasional sale? This might be seasonal or tied into some event. On my birthday, I often offer 50 per cent off all of my products for 24 hours. Maybe you're planning a trip and need a bit more spending money, why not have a sale? (And tell them why you're doing it).
- **Feature a product or service:** Don't assume that everyone on your list knows about everything you have to offer. Some people have joined your list not knowing much about you and haven't explored your website at all.
- **Launch something:** Maybe you've got a new product, service, or event that's coming up. Tell them!
- **Affiliate products:** If you have a colleague that's launching or offering something amazing, why not tell your people about it and receive money for doing so?
- **Ask them to hire you:** Are you wanting or needing more work? Why not just make them an offer and be clear about the kind of work you do?
- **Offer Upgrades:** I heard of a man who manufactures handmade chairs and who, after a sale, sends a letter to each customer inquiring about their satisfaction with his product. He also recommends a special, hard-to-get, finishing oil he uses and offers to sell it to them at a substantial discount. If someone buys a DIY version of your home study program, after a couple of months, you might email them with an offer for some personal coaching to help them integrate what they're learning.

“People will do anything for those who: encourage their dreams, help take the shame out of their failures, articulate and confirm their deepest experiences, niggings, wonderings and suspicions, allay their fears and offer encouragement, help them effectively address what’s threatening themselves, their families and their communities.”

— Anonymous

Eleven Tools To Position Yourself As A Hub

A hub is, by definition, at the *centre* of something. So, how can you position yourself as the centre of a network?



1. **Give out awards:** This is a very powerful move psychologically. Everyone is trying to win awards for their business. But, the unstated dynamic here is that those giving the awards have more status – status that they bestow on others through their awards. What if you became the bestower of awards. So long as your selection process is legit and relevant, you could quickly build up a reputation.
2. Host a **press conferences** on industry issues where you challenge the industry to raise its standards.
3. **Lobby on behalf of your people.** Lobby the government on behalf of your industry or niche, on behalf of issues that matter to your clients. Fight for policy change that could help them.
4. **Create a trusted publication** full of relevant and valuable information from credible sources (e.g. a magazine, trade journal, directory, etc.)
5. **Apply for an award:** There may be a number of local or international awards for which you could apply. You might be surprised at the increase in attention you get when you win. Some cities have local 40 under 40 awards. There are awards for books. There are awards for podcasts. If you aren't sure what kinds of awards there might be, just ask around. Post on Facebook and ask, "What kinds of awards do you think myself and my business might be eligible for?"
6. **Online listings:** List yourself on key online directories. Put a yelp.com or coachexp.com (or other online listing relevant to your field) icon on your page and say "Find us on _____." This will encourage people to find you there and give you a rating. In your email newsletters, instead of asking for reviews, you might say, "Look at what so and so said about us on yelp!" This could encourage, without asking, others to do the same.
7. **Become a trusted advisor to the media:** This can be huge. If you can position yourself as a reliable source of newsworthy information, context, and perspective on the issues that surround your niche, especially if you can comment in a way that isn't just self-serving to you, the media will often reach out to you. You can tell them, "I'm a resource on these issues and this specific subject matter."

8. **Regular coffees with hubs:** Once a day or week, connect with a hub who's important to you over coffee or Skype (or both). This regular practice can yield surprising rewards.
9. **Observe your hubs before approaching:** Social media makes this easy. If there's a hub that's important to you, don't rush it. Try observing them for thirty days on social media to see if you can get a feel for who they are and let your approach be informed by this.
10. **Throw parties:** One day, I'll write a whole ebook about this idea. But, simply put, if you throw good parties at your local business, you will build much deeper and more meaningful connections with your local clients. I know of many businesses who have developed a reputation for throwing the best shindigs where you can catch up with all of your favourite people at once.
11. **Feature hubs you admire:** If there's a hub you genuinely admire, talk them up in your email newsletters and on social media. You might feature them and their work on your blog, on Facebook or Twitter, or in your workshops. Consider writing an appreciative note on their wall or interview them for your website or newsletter. These good vibes have a way of coming back to you and, if you feature someone worthy of featuring, your people will be happy to be introduced to them.

Connect Your Hubs

First, we map them.

Second, we meet them.

Third, we *connect* them with each other.

Remember your hubs are not going to come for *you*. They're coming for the networking. There are certain examples of companion planting, certain plants that grow really well together. A really typical companion-planting example is corn, beans, and squash, all grown together because the beans give nitrogen to the soil which the corn and the squash need. The corn provide a stalk, a trellis on which beans can grow. And the squash offers big leaves that give shade in the beginning to the other two plants, which they desperately need.



Corn, beans, and squash grow better together, and businesses are the same. We all grow better in partnerships with one another. We're all stronger together.

Host a gathering where you bring a bunch of hubs together. Phoenix Rudner (the dog-loving realtor) could say, "Hey, as a realtor, people are always asking my opinion on trainers and shops to go to and all that. I imagine you're in the same position. If you're a trainer, you still need to refer out for walkers, breeders, and all this. It just makes sense that we should all meet each other. I was thinking it would run on _____ [date] from 1-4pm. From 1-2pm we'll just eat and mingle. I'm going to cater it, and then from 2-3pm we'll do a go-around circle, 25 of us, two minutes each, everyone just saying, 'Here's what I do. Here's what I need. Here's what's coming up next for me,' and get to know each other. And then, from 3-4pm we'll mingle some more." He is the host of that event. The guests will not all remember each other, but they will all remember him.

Throwing events like this is actually responsible for a surprising amount of how I've built my business. By bringing hubs together you become a hub of those hubs. So, in addition to creating your own hubs database and having weekly meetings with hubs, consider throwing a gathering. If it's virtual, you can do a Google Hangout. You can do something online where you bring people together. The point of this is to connect with the hubs and introduce them all to each other.

Imagine if I went to you and said, "Hey, those ideal clients you want? I know 20 people who are all super-connected to those people and I'm having a potluck at my place with them. Do you want to come?" Is anyone going to say no to that?

I've done these kind of events a few times. I realized there were certain people who were hubs, very well-connected people, who I had never met. These were people I had never actually connected

with even though they had heard about me and I had heard about them. So, I sent out an email saying, “Hey, we’ve never met. I know we know about each other. I thought it would be great for us to finally meet in person. I’m hosting a little gathering from 1pm to 4pm.” (I think this one was actually a potluck, but I suggest catering it. If you spend \$300 to \$400, that’s better than an ad in some magazine that doesn’t get you any response. \$400 to connect you with all the best hubs? That’s money well spent.)

I said, “From 1-2pm, we’ll just mingle and eat. From 2-3pm, we’ll network and introduce ourselves. Everyone will have two minutes for their own formal introduction. From 3-4pm, we’ll just mingle and hang out some more.”

The best part is that you do not need to pitch yourself. You welcome everyone as a host. You take two minutes to introduce yourself like everyone else, and that’s it. Why? Because every conversation at that gathering will begin with, “How do you know Tad? How do you know this person?” You’re already the centre of the conversation. There’s no need to pitch anything. What you’ll find is after that round of intros, you’re going to find who you want to talk to more based on their vibe, and what they talked about. It’s very organic and natural to go up to them after and say, “Hey, we should go out for coffee,” so you can do the coffees after in that way.

If you work globally, you can say “Hey, you 20 folks are all amazing. I want to have a call. We’ll start at 1:00 pm sharp. Everyone just gets two minutes to introduce themselves. You’re all so great. I just want you all to meet each other.”

Your attendees will not all remember each other but they will all remember you. If you want to take this to the next level, what you do is create a secret page on a website, the RSVP page, and when people RSVP, you put up their photo, their bio, and their website and maybe their Twitter handle. Then, when you invite people, you send them to this page which has all the RSVP details, plus the list of who is coming.

These gatherings can also turn into the type of thing where you do collaborative workshops or events. There’s a woman in Nova Scotia who sells cloth diapers. We were talking a lot about workshops. She’s like, “I can’t do a workshop for cloth diapers because you either have them, use them, and love them, or you think they’re disgusting and why would you go to a workshop about this disgusting thing?”

I said, “They may not, but what if you did a workshop on natural parenting where you collaborated with a bunch of other people who offer how they do infant massage, how to feed your baby healthy food, how to get rid of the toxins in the home, how to communicate with your spouse when you’ve just had a kid. What if you did that and everyone involved promoted it? Everyone wins. Everybody potentially walks away with new clients.”

Remember: People aren’t coming to this event for *you*. They’re coming because the promise of networking is so good. If you can show them, “Here is who is going to be there,” and if it’s a good

list, they're likely to say "yes." Due to time constraints, I wouldn't recommend any more than 25 people per gathering. And anyways, 25 is all you need.

So this is the basic three-part plan:

- You map out your hubs.
- you start meeting them.
- Then you can connect them.

Of course, you could just skip directly to connecting them. You don't have to meet with them all individually.

If you want 25 people there, you're going to have to invite at least 50, maybe 100, but focus on the ones that you really want and make sure to follow up with them personally. If your list of hubs is big enough, you could do this once a quarter. This doesn't have to be a one time and never done again exercise.

Pro Tips:

- If you create a Facebook event, then before the event happens, email everyone who is coming and invite them to introduce themselves with a few paragraphs and their website. These introductions will entice other people to want to come. Plus, in doing this, you start building community before the event in a way that benefits more people than just yourself.
- You can make a bio and headshot page on your website to help people learn about one another and match faces and names before they even walk in the door. Here's an example of one of my attendee bio pages: marketingforhippies.com/toronto-party

The Team 100 Approach

Eric Brown, who did massage work in Toronto, realized there were ten people he would always refer his clients to for different conditions.

So, he created a directory of those 10 in a document with photos, bios, and contact information (note: these days, I would recommend creating a secret page on your website). Eric emailed those in the directory and said, “Hey everyone, just so you know, you’re all people I refer my clients to. You don’t all know each other but you really all should know each other because you’re all awesome. I refer to you all without any fear, with total trust. You should all refer to each other, and I’ve made a little list of who you are and what you specialize in so you know what to refer to each other for.”

Then he said, “Also, if there’s somebody who you think should be on this, who you refer to, who you absolutely, utterly trust, you can email me, I’ll add them on. Please refer very carefully because your reputation is on the line, too. If this person ends up being a jackass, you’re on the hook for their behaviour. If they’re no good, that reflects on you.”

Very slowly, by building a circle of trust, he connected some of his existing hubs.

I interviewed Eric years ago about this and the concept he pioneered, not surprisingly called Team 100. Here’s a transcript of what he said:

The other thing I would suggest is developing a strategic networking plan or referral system. This can be done online or offline or a combination of both. This is what I call my Team 100 approach.

Basically, the idea is that you want to develop a referral network of 100 professionals or 100 businesses in your neighbourhood that will get to know you over time and which you can get to know over time.

Basically, you will elect yourself as mayor over this network. You are going to head up the network, so everybody in the network is going to be very tightly tied to you. You are going to have a leading role, a role of authority in this network.

Choosing the professionals you invite to this network is very important and it should be by invitation only, people whom you know and trust. You just want to invite people who have very high standards of care for their clients, that you know really care and that can perform well whatever service they do.

You will basically develop a little directory. It could just be on paper. It could just be their name, their profession, a short description of the services they offer,

how they can help people, and contact information. Circulate this to your network group on an ongoing basis. You want to update it on a monthly basis.

Send your network a letter, or if you do it online, an email once a month with the updated list where you explain, “You are part of my team and I want to make sure you have this directory. Everybody on this directory has been specifically selected by me because of the high level of care they offer their customers as well as the high quality of work they perform. It could be a list of photos, bios, and contact info on a secret page on your website.

“This is the personal list I use and you really should not have any doubts about referring anybody to any of these providers. If you have any recommendations, if you know of anybody you think should be on this list (here are the professions I am missing), please let me know. I am dependent upon people giving me strong recommendations of people to put on this list.”

Along with that letter, you can profile some of the people on your referral list. You are doing something for them. You are promoting them to this list of 100 people and this creates a sense of reciprocity. The people whom you are promoting will want to do something for you in return.

In each letter you send out, or each email you send out, tell them a little bit about your practice and what you do, the people you have helped. They can then have a better understanding of what it is you do and who you can help, so they can refer to people in their network.

It is likely that each of these professionals on your list probably knows 300 to 1,000 people as a business owner that they interact with. By connecting strongly with those 100 people, you just opened a network of 30,000 potential referrals or more.

That is a way of networking. I know a lot of people do not like selling themselves. You go to these networking events with your perma-grin, your smiley facing, you are shaking hands. It is not always comfortable for everybody.

This is not everybody’s cup of tea. For the extroverts among us, they might thrive on that kind of thing, but for the majority of people, you are in an uncomfortable situation. This is a way to connect.

I like the Team 100 approach in that you can connect with people very strongly. You do not have to meet any of these people in person, although that certainly helps the relationship. You can keep connected with these 100 people on an ongoing basis, on a regular monthly basis.

“Build a good name. Keep your name clean. Don’t make compromises, don’t worry about making a bunch of money or being successful – be concerned with doing good work and make the right choices and protect your work. And if you build a good name, eventually, that name will be its own currency.”

— William S. Burroughs, advice given as recounted by Patti Smith

Seven Dynamics To Consider As A Hub

1. **Beware of Doing Favours for Friends vs. Serving Your Following:** It happens like this: you start to build a following, a friend of yours notices and asks (since you've got such a big and loyal email list) if you might be willing to plug their new product or service? It's not really relevant to your people. So, what do you do? In reality, more times than you should, you'll probably share it. But it will cost you. You will lose trust from your people as they begin to see that they can't trust the quality or relevance of the content you send. Be transparent about who's a friend and who's a colleague. Sometimes they will be both but be clear about the difference.
2. **Recommending Carelessly vs. Carefully:** When we first begin, it can be tempting to be wooed by folks who seem more successful or who come at us with a compelling pitch and offer us a lot of money on some sweet affiliate deal. But suffice it to say that endorsing and sharing your colleagues must be done thoughtfully and with care. A few poorly chosen recommendations can do deep damage to your reputation. Years ago in Toronto, a local hub invited two people to a party I hosted. They stuck out like sore thumbs. The man was lecherous and his wife was spiritually condescending and aloof. I sent her an email afterwards expressing my dismay at the conduct of this fellow and the vibe of his wife. I explained my confusion about why she thought they would be a good fit and that my trust in her had dramatically diminished.
3. **One Time vs. Relationship Building:** Some people have the idea that they're going to put out some marketing (e.g. a website, billboard, poster, ad in a magazine etc.) and that their ideal customer will see it and just instantly want to BUY NOW. You're much more likely to succeed if you see marketing as a natural process of building trust and familiarity over time.
4. **Immediate vs. Organic:** Many entrepreneurs live in silent hope that the impacts of their marketing will be immediate. They hope that every time up to bat they'll hit a home run on the first pitch. You're more likely to succeed if you realize that relationships develop at their own pace. That your potential clients need to be given space to decide when and how they want to interact with you on their own terms. And that sometimes this process is slower than we might hope.
5. **Urgent vs. Patient:** Many entrepreneurs have this fear that, "If I don't pitch them right now and promote myself, I'll totally lose this opportunity forever!" But that sort of desperate attitude turns people off. You're more likely to succeed if you can focus on building a real, "feel good" connection with them, and trust that it will evolve naturally as it should.
6. **One Directional vs. A Larger Conversation:** The old style of marketing basically can be summed up as "talking at" your potential clients. You put up a billboard and they read it. You place an ad – they read it. You put an ad on the radio – they listen to it. But they can't talk back. This is largely old news. You're far more likely to succeed if you see marketing as a

conversation, not a monologue. So, marketing is about creating a conversation between you and them. But also helping them to communicate with others in the scene. This could take the form of online forums, parties you host, a blog you write that people can comment on, etc.

7. **The Agenda to Sell vs. The Agenda to Serve:** Have you ever given money to a non-profit and all they ever do is ask you for more money? Or added a Facebook friend and all they do is send you self-promoting stuff? Or gotten on someone's email newsletter (likely without even asking to be) and been barraged with pitches for their services? This kind of marketing is going the way of the dodo. You're more likely to succeed if you follow the 80/20 rule where 80 per cent of your communications needs to be about adding value. Giving without asking for anything in return. When you do this, you become seen as a source of good things. You are earning people's attention. If you don't, you risk being "hidden" on Facebook or having mass numbers of people unsubscribe from your newsletter.

“Among the elders, there’s a council of ten that takes care of the rituals and other village concerns. They’re a sort of committee within the larger group of elders. What you have to understand is that elders are not attracted to being part of this council, because it involved a lot of work.

You work for the whole community and you are not like a person in power who decides everything. People can come any time of the day to get you for help. You can be sleeping, somebody will knock on your door, and then you have to work. You don’t have a choice.”

— Sobonfu Somé, *The Spirit of Intimacy*

The Shadow Side Of Becoming A Hub

There are a lot of ways that becoming a hub can go wrong. As much as it brings new possibility, it brings new challenges to contend with as well. In modern day culture, it seems like everyone wants to be seen as a “leader of their tribe.” This is sold as a purely positive thing with no downsides. But, in traditional cultures, I’m not so sure that most people who became chiefs really wanted to. Sometimes, I think that the obsession with being a chief should be the first thing that disqualifies you from becoming one. Being a chief in most cultures means more responsibility with very few perks. More responsibility, but not much more power. Being a hub in business does come with some immense perks, but it comes with large demands too.

Some feelings and instances you might encounter as a hub:

- **Feeling Overwhelm:** It’s not all roses. Being a hub can feel like you are constantly disappointing people. It can feel like you’re never doing enough. It can feel like you are the hub of the wheel and that it’s all you can do to hold the wheel in place. You will need to find strategies to manage people’s expectations in how long it might take you to get back to them. As you become a hub, expect to deal with more emails and messages coming to you. Expect to need more time or to need to hire more support to deal with it all. It can be that everyone wants a piece of you – everyone wants you to be involved in their project, everyone wants your input, your help. And almost none of this, unless you set it up this way, pays. It can mean you become overcommitted and risk burning out. It can mean you get called on a lot. It’s appropriate that it’s so, but it doesn’t make it any less overwhelming.
- **Having to Say “No” When You Want to Say “Yes”:** It’s hard having to turn people down and tell them, “I can’t promote your stuff,” because you don’t have time. But, more and more, you’ll find yourself needing to say “no” and, at a certain point, not even being able to respond to people. When you care about people, that’s hard. But if you respond to every request, you will utterly burn yourself out.
- **Being Pulled Off Centre:** Hubs are an incredible blessing to a community. They help provide connection, structure, and shape to things. This asks a lot of you as a hub. This asks you to develop an inner posture of stillness, centredness, and sovereignty. This can be incredibly hard to maintain.
- **The Five-Minute Favours:** Most of your saying “no” won’t be to big requests for your time. It will come in the form of “Hey, can I pick your brain for five minutes?” or “Hey! Do you know anyone who _____?” or “Do you have some quick thoughts on this _____?” These will start coming more and more often and you will have to choose how many of them to reply to and in what way. Sometimes, they will come from someone who is “family” and you’ll be happy to make the time. Often, they’ll come from acquaintances or clients. When I get the latter type

of request, I'll send them a quick email saying, "Good question. I'd be happy to chat with you. My rates are here _____. Let me know if you'd like to book some time to discuss." Simple. Sometimes they agree to pay. Sometimes I never hear from them again.

- **Loneliness:** This is one I didn't expect. Being a hub means that, at a certain level, you are more popular. You have achieved a certain notoriety. And it is inevitable that people will assume that you have a lot of friends, or that people call you all the time to invite you out. You can be a well-connected hub professionally and deeply lonely personally. People will assume you have more friends than you do and that you're okay. I remember, years ago on Christmas Night, I found myself alone at Remedy Cafe and my friend Jag said, "I'm surprised you're here!" I was the only one there. He thought I'd have somewhere to be with all of my Facebook friends. Being a hub can mean a broad but shallow social life.
- **Being Used:** You might notice that people start wanting you for your "hub-ness" and what you can give them and less and less for who you are personally. Sometimes this will be done courteously. Sometimes it won't. It can leave one feeling deeply unseen. I've had a number of moments where I thought I was being asked on a date, but I was being asked to participate in something and then to help spread the word about it.
- **Jealousy:** You can also expect some professional jealousy from your colleagues. I wish it weren't so but, sometimes it is. Some people will silently tell themselves that it should be them in your shoes, that they deserve the popularity more than you.
- **Vulnerability:** The bigger a hub you become, the more exposed you are to attack, projection, and judgment from others. This can be source of immense growth . . . Or damage. It depends on how solid your foundation is and how strong your support system is. The deeper your roots, the wider you will be able to grow as a hub. You will likely discover that there is a real need for boundaries. If you don't practice those, you will start to resent it. Being a hub asks a much deeper spiritual practice of you. If you don't have this, it can turn you to ashes.
- **Fame:** How could fame be a shadow side? Isn't this what most people want? It may be, but fame has a scorpion's tail attached to it. Fame, even being well known locally, means that every flaw you have becomes fodder for gossip, too. It can mean you get dehumanized by people and it's hard not to take that to heart. So being a hub is a profound spiritual path in a way because it can ask you to dig deep, but it's vital you have boundaries around yourself. It's vital you are surrounded by people who love you and see your goodness. It's vital you're not entirely accessible all of the time. It's good to know that you don't have to be well known to be well paid. And it's important to know that you can be very well known and broke. The two are not the same. And it might suit you better to be under the radar, with a small list, but make lots of money. Russell Brand has some fine words on fame here: [youtube.com/watch?v=0qdNBrzAQjo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qdNBrzAQjo)
- **Attacked:** I recall a comment from one woman on a Facebook post who said (and I've left the spelling and punctuation for full effect), "*Why are you picking on Hippies, we are usually not*

consumers, immuned to marketing etc. Pick on someone else, you are not a Hippie! way too young and (((ugh))) yuppie scumish.” Of course, the idea that hippies don’t partake in marketing is immediately proven moot by the Grateful Dead, sales of tie dye shirts, and weed drug dealers. But she felt like she had to spill her bile on me. And it will affect you. You aren’t bulletproof, although many will assume that because you’re a hub, you are. I deleted her question and she came back, overflowing with entitlement: “HEYYYY what happened to my question you yuppie scumbag!!! Quit using Hippies for your warped merchant mentality!!! You will be very disappointed in toronto,.. that is a Hippie city,.. i live there,..:-) Yeah, and that’s the Hippie way right,.. you yuppie scum,.. stop saying you are a Hippie, we resent it and we are not a flavour of the month for you. we are trademarked and genuine!”

- **Approval Seeking:** If you desperately needed the approval of others before you became a hub, expect that only to magnify as your popularity grows. It doesn’t diminish. If you were needy before, you’ll be more needy now. We can become obsessed with the reflection of how we’re seen by others, wanting everyone to see us as a best friend and wanting to be a part of every inner circle. This can be a part of what drives people to be a hub but, there’s no bottom to it. You can satiate your needs for popularity and still be lonely.
- **Suspicion that you’re only in it for the money:** I got this email a while ago: “Hi Tad, this weekend sounds wonderful, however untouchable by women like myself, who is trying to get my business started. it looks like a great way to help my business but due to the expense it is not at all possible for me to attend. i find it very unfortunate that these things are so expensive for the business entrepreneur who would benefit greatly from the knowledge, i’m desperately looking for help like this but like i said haven’t got the funds. so i guess once again the person giving this info benefits more than those receiving. sincerely jan.” The workshop was a pay-what-you-can workshop. But, I’ve seen it over and over again that as soon as someone becomes popular they will become criticized. Assumptions will be made, incorrectly, that they are getting rich doing what they do. I could tell you story after story on this example.
- **The Perils of Pre-Selection:** One of the ways you can get people to trust you is to associate with trustworthy people. However, this shortcut could be perceived as a deeply untrustworthy person trying to sneak into a group under the radar. Dating and pick-up coaches who work with men will sometimes give them the advice to show up at a club surrounded by beautiful women. “If you do this,” they are told, “the other women in the club will all assume you’re safe because you are trusted by other women. You’ve already been selected by this group of women as a good person and so they will assume you’re a good person too. You’ve been pre-selected.” And, of course, this is true. After all, why would the women be trying to trick other women? And why would they be hanging out with this guy if he isn’t safe to be around? There might be many answers to these questions. You can use this “pre-selection” to get yourself in the door of a house you have no business being in. I’ve done it myself in business and found myself in over my head and out of my depth.

Part Five: Affiliate Marketing

The Tricky Business Of Affiliate Marketing

Over the years, I have promoted a number of my colleagues.

Sometimes I have done that as an affiliate (I was paid something for anyone who signed up) and sometimes I've done it without receiving any money.

For the most part, it's felt good. And from time to time, it's felt bad to be promoting.

I thought I'd share with you the set of guiding principles that I've come up with when I find something worthy of promoting and have the opportunity to be an affiliate because, as you grow your business, you will be presented with many opportunities to promote others and to receive money for those promotions.



What has felt good about affiliate marketing:

It can seem “hip” these days to dismiss affiliate marketing in the conscious business scene as if there is something less evolved about it. It can seem more spiritually evolved or astute to take a stance against it. But there are reasons that it still feels good to do.

- **Email attrition:** The reality is that, every time I email my list, I get unsubscribes. I get more unsubscribes when I'm promoting a colleague. So, when I do a colleague a favour and endorse them, my list shrinks. This means I make less money. It can have a negative impact on my livelihood. So, to receive some money to compensate for this reality feels good.
- **I can't do everything.** There are so many aspects of business in which I have no expertise (and have no interest in becoming an expert). My job is to share content that is relevant and trustworthy to my people, thus saving them a lot of time in trying to sift through the mountain of information that's out there on the internet. I'd be a fool to think I know everything and selfish not to point people to the best resources I know that do a better job of explaining. I recently had a moment where someone booked a half-day session with me to look at their package offerings. I suggested that, before our time, they check out Rebecca Tracey's program Hey, Nice Package! A few days later I got a sheepish email letting me know they were cancelling the session with me because her program had worked so well for them. I was thrilled.

- **I get to promote my friends.** Many of these people –Rebecca Tracey of The Uncaged Life, Carrie Klassen of Pink Elephant, Corrina Gordon-Barnes from the UK, and Mark Silver of Heart of Business, and more – have become dear friends in whom my trust is entire.
- **It's helped to financially sustain me.** Up until this point, I haven't had many of my own online programs or products. I don't work with people one on one very much and touring is exhausting. Having the extra income from affiliate deals has meant the world to me – especially given the fact that the vast majority of my efforts over the past decade have not gone into creating products but into free content for people. I have over 600 blog posts up right now and my guess is that there are likely about 5,000 pages of content there. For free.

What has felt bad about affiliate marketing:

As much as I appreciate the benefits of affiliate marketing in my business, there have been downsides. It brings its own challenges that must not be ignored.

- **Financial fuzziness.** When I first started sending out affiliate emails about colleagues, it always felt a little off, like I was being sneaky or something. The link in the email was an affiliate link but I wasn't saying it. Some people would understand what it was. Others would have no idea. Would it change how they felt if they knew? Was it worth explaining it to them or was that my own neuroses about it? It didn't feel right not to say something but I also wasn't sure how to talk about it without it feeling weird.
- **It's all "Six-Figure" this and "Seven-Figure" that.** I've had to say "no" to some colleagues I otherwise adore because their levels of glitz, glam and "get rich quick" was too much.
- **Hype.** I've looked at some of the sales letters for programs I've been asked to promote and cringed at the level of hype I've seen. There were a lot of exclamation marks. The claims felt inflated or unrealistic (e.g. "Guaranteed to transform your whole life!" or "Eliminate _____ problem in five days!" or "World's leading authority in _____!")
- **The launch formula.** Almost every affiliate promo I have done is for a "launch." A launch means introducing a new product or service into the marketplace. But the way this is done in my field is often with something known as the "launch formula" created by Jeff Walker. There are a lot of parts to it, but a central one is that the product or program is only available for a limited time or in limited numbers. Sometimes this scarcity is legit (e.g. you're running a group program and it only has 100 spots and you only do it once per year) and sometimes it's bullshit (e.g. "Only 200 copies of this ebook!"). Regardless of the veracity of the scarcity, it means that it's a time-sensitive situation. I need to share it in a certain window of time. The other model is the "evergreen" model in which a product or program is available forever and whenever. I personally prefer it when colleagues have evergreen, homestudy versions of their materials as

well because sometimes I want to refer people to them and there's no way to do so. I have to wait until the next launch. Launches make everything so urgent (which is why they work), but because of this, they feel like more pressure.

- **Unsubscribes.** The reality is that people unsubscribe from my email list with every email I send out. Every time. If the email is free, useful content, then less people unsubscribe. If it's a pitch for my own stuff, then more people unsubscribe. If it's an *affiliate* pitch, then even more people still unsubscribe. That's just the reality.
- **The free promo content is terrible.** One of the ways people will promote their work is to offer free teleseminars, webinars, eBooks, etc . . . as a way for people to get familiar with the work they do. Sadly, I've promoted so many colleagues whose promotional calls, webinars, and content were hyped up as being so useful only to find that what they were offering had little value. The free call was presented as a "high value, content rich call" but ended up being mostly a pitch to buy the rest of their stuff where they didn't really cover the promised content. This experience has been heartbreaking. I recall asking to read an eBook a colleague of mine was offering as free content during a launch and when I read it my heart sank, "This is utter shit . . ." I thought. "I can't believe I almost shared and promoted this . . . It's not an eBook. It's a sales letter with a book cover on it." I was so relieved I hadn't emailed my list encouraging them to get this eBook. It would have been such a waste of their time.
- **The product, service or program itself is not useful.** This is a whole other level of heartbreak. Sometimes I have found out that what I am promoting is actually no good at all. Sometimes the promo content is very good and high value and people are so impressed that they sign up, only to discover that what they signed up for doesn't live up to the hype. Or sometimes it's what I call, "good content but bad context" meaning that what they're teaching is sound, practical, and useful but the *way* they're doing it is schmarmy or salesy or overly hyped up. Sometimes the content is good but the course is structured poorly and tries to cover too much and so it's way too much content too fast, and students are made to feel like failures. There are a lot of ways it can go wrong.
- **Sending so many emails.** Many of my colleagues, when launching a product or a program, ask me as an affiliate, to send out a lot of emails. I tell them I can't send out all of the ones they want and usually send out half the amount other affiliates did, but it still feels like a lot. This is the inner conflict for me: in the course of their promo, they are often providing a lot of very real, tangible value. Perhaps they are offering a book, a white paper, a series of educational videos, or webinars then I'll send out a few more emails. I want to make sure people knew about them, because hey, free value! But I can't send too many emails about things that aren't my own. People joined my email list to hear *my* thoughts, not to be promoted to multiple times about someone they've never heard of.
- **So many emails from other affiliates.** Over the years, I've realized that many of the people on my list were also on the lists of other colleagues promoting the same things. This means that

some people on my list might be getting three or four people all sending out multiple emails promoting the same thing. Oh man — so many emails.

- **So many emails from the person I'm promoting.** This was the straw that broke this camel's back. I finally realized that not only were the people on my list getting multiple emails from me, they were getting multiple emails from colleagues about the same promotion and they were getting emails (often quite a lot) directly from the person I was promoting. So. Many. Emails. The people on my list were getting it from every angle.

And then there is the negative feedback . . .

This has been one of the hardest pills to swallow.

In promoting colleagues whose work I believed in but whose selling tactics were . . . not the ones I'd choose to use, I learned a lot. I once asked my list for feedback on the people I'd promoted as affiliates. Here are some of the negative responses I got.

- “Checked them out – not so helpful, and at times offensive. As a group they seem to be one step removed from your hippy marketing as communication, non-gross vibe – and some of them were so close to the usual vomit marketing stuff I came very close to opting off your list. The worst was the guy – already blanked out his name – talking about how to convince your clients they deserve to pay – they owe it to themselves to pay the high prices for things and how they could afford them. His example was a story about someone who decided she could give up her two Starbucks a day and walk or ride a bike to work. That's all well and good for people who are spending excess that way, but for people who are struggling just to pay for groceries, it's offensive. It's cruel. I don't want to study from someone who is teaching people to treat prospective clients this way. People who are doing great work deserve to be paid well, and when prospects are in a position to be able to afford the products and services, that's awesome. What bothers me is when they try to get that money from people who don't have – encourage people to use their credit cards and go into debt to purchase the product or service, and then when the client doesn't get the promised results and struggles to pay off that charge the marketer is either nowhere to be found or has the audacity to try to sell them something else.”
- “The next lead of yours that I followed was [name removed]. I wish I hadn't. Her sales page and videos were so compelling, and I was in so vulnerable a state at the time, that I spent \$1,000 on her 3-day “virtual retreat” on marketing. She was very knowledgeable and very successful at what she does, which is sucking vulnerable people like me into committing impulsively to spend large amounts of money on her product – which is a too-fast-paced course in wording and structuring sales pages (better known as “squeeze pages” as I have subsequently learned) and videos that result in maximum income for the seller of “leveraged” online “info products.” Her written course materials are very brief (three documents of about 20-30 pages each). Most of her

material is delivered online as live and recorded audio. About half of that is “group coaching” where she has a series of 10-minute chats with other students about their sales page wording and content. I got on once, and she helped me a small bit. Her teachings on niche are much weaker than yours, and her section on technology amounts to recommending the friends she has outsourced her technology to.”

- “I checked out [name removed]. I got on his mailing list, and came to the conclusion that his program might be a fit for me at some time in the future, but not now. So I clicked a link at the bottom of one of his emails that said “if you want to get a lot less email from me, click here.” When I still kept getting an email every day from him, I complained, but they kept coming. On the last day before the program closed, I got two emails, and I sent another bitter complaint. Obnoxious marketing practices.”
- “Thanks Tad for asking about the promotions . . . the first time I signed up with you I checked out [name removed]. That was useful. I did not sign up as I was going away for an extended period of time. From then on her stuff was self promoting and going down hill and affiliate marketing news. I checked out your other “colleagues” and even more self promoting, salesy . . . a person can use the words, socially conscious entrepreneurs, soul centred this or that like Kraft can use All Natural or gasoline companies can talk about mother earth and green wash. It is all upselling. I wondered what has happened to my sweet lad Tad . . . has he completely John Doe’d himself? Is my friend hungry? Does he need money? Does pay-what-you-want not work? For a bit I was getting so many colleague things from you I was opening them up and checking them out and getting sick to my stomach. But because I respect you, I would keep opening them and find nothing but ‘increase your revenues to six-figures promises’ (with huge disclaimers at the end of course). The cynic in me thought, Hey why stop at six-figures, why not promise seven figures and low and behold, the next day, there it was, increase my revenues to seven figure and now seven is the new number. Lately I have been getting so many ‘colleague’ letters from you that I have considered hitting the unsubscribe button because I thought you were out of business and into affiliate marketing. I like your stuff. One day after having opened an affiliate thing from you I got so sad . . . I went looking for an early Tad Hargrave YouTube . . . I sighed . . . happy to see the earnest young man . . . eager, compassionate and so trusting in himself and the world. Don’t let the John Doe’s or anyone like him rob you of your light.”

The Four Ways I've Come To Treat Affiliate Marketing Decisions

A while ago, while promoting someone I really admire, I began to really think about the upsides and downsides of affiliate marketing. I needed to come to some conclusions about how to move forward so that I could reconcile with this aspect of what I do.

I hope the following takeaways might be of some use to you in the future.

Affiliate Decision #1 – Giving the non-affiliate link

This has been my policy for years now.

The nub of it is this: when you send out an email promoting someone using an affiliate link, then include, usually in the P.S., an explanation. This explanation can say that the link above is an affiliate link and that if that feels off in any way, there is a non-affiliate link option below.

Like so many good things I do, I do them because someone else did it to me and I noticed how good it felt. I can't remember when or who but I was reading an email from someone and they were promoting someone else. At the end of the email they told me, "Hey! This is an affiliate thing, click the link below if you don't like it and I won't get any money."

It was so refreshing. I felt respected. And I noticed, compellingly, that I was actually more happy to click on the affiliate link to make sure they got the money. Ever since using this approach, I have felt a world better and have received emails telling me how much people felt the same way I did when I got my first email like this.

One good fellow said, "Congratulations on your transparency about the affiliation, and your providing of the alternate link. Although I am not doing anything with your stuff right now because I am drowning in developing a new website (plus teaching college). However, the likelihood that I will not delete your emails and will actually read them when I get through the next 2-3 weeks has increased exponentially."

Another person said, "I really appreciate your transparency at the bottom (in your P.S.), nice! Thanks for the openness. P.S. I forwarded your email to someone who may be interested. He appreciated that P.S. too. :)"

But one time I got some feedback from someone on my list saying basically this approach didn't land for him. I was grateful for his honesty, and the time he took to be really clear on why it didn't work from his perspective. Here is what he wrote to me:

Hey . . . I really like your stuff, the content, and your ethos. Refreshing mix of marketing and community values. Just one thing, feedback. I have NO problem with you doing the affiliate thing. Why not, its all part of the mutual benefit. I really appreciate your disclosure of it. But there's just a bit of cringe factor in the way you do it . . . like you can't quite own it. Hey dude:

"p.p.s. Full Disclosure: This is an affiliate arrangement with George meaning I'll make some amount of money (I actually haven't checked how much) for everyone who signs up from the call. And it's not why I'm promoting it. I hope you'll dig it."

Ok, heres the critique. Firstly, you bend over backwards to make it clear you don't really care about the money, and you are just doing it cause you want to support him and us.

Drop it, please. Your casual (don't know how much I will make) sounds weak, and defensive.

Secondly, its a muddy mix of self-interest and generosity. You are trying to separate out the two by the disclosure, but the way you put it actually is confusing. Again, it's kind of defensive around your self-interest. There IS, somewhere, your own profit (if not money, then your own career) motive in your promoting him. Maybe only .1%, but so what. It IS partly why you are promoting him. By somehow trying to make it less, you sound like you are trying to make it go away, rather than what you are ostensibly doing, which is owning it.

Hey, I do the same thing in my representations about my generosity. My wife, who knows me so well, always pulls a face and asks, yeah, but what's the cost?

So, small point, but hey, don't like to see you mar your marvellous work.

I took this gentleman's thoughtful and brutally honest feedback into consideration and came up with the following:

Transparency statement: when George profits, so do I. I love it – I get to promote people I think are excellent, like George. If you like him as well, he gets more business, you get a benefit. And I get a kickback :) Everyone wins.

Well, thats a playful version. A straighter version could be:

Transparency statement: if you like George's products its win-win-win. You benefit, George's work grows, and I get a percentage as an affiliate. All the best."

So what exact wording might you use?

Here's an example of the kind of thing I've come to over years of tweaking my wording:

P.S. I have been incredibly impressed with the nuts and bolts, practical nature of Marisa's work and have learned something from every conversation I've ever had with her. And clients I've sent her way have thanked me. The above link is an affiliate link, meaning you signing up with her also supports me financially. If that doesn't feel right for you for any reason, you can click on the following link and it will take you to the same page but I won't be tracked as an affiliate. liveyourmessage.com/training/130930/replay.php Whichever link you click, I urge you to check out her brilliant work."

An important note: In many countries, you are *legally obligated* to let people know if it is an affiliate link or not in any of your promotions. Make sure you know what your country's regulations are.

Affiliate Decision #2 – Personalize

When you agree to become an affiliate for someone, you'll get some swipe copy from them. Meaning, if they're smart, they will send you some prewritten sales copy to promote their stuff.

In my experience (as a result of it being difficult to write about one's self objectively and with a lack of understanding around how to write sales copy without hype), prewritten copy is not usually that good or useful. It does, however, give me the raw material I need to work with to write something of my own.

One of my colleagues wrote me his thoughts on this whole tangled mess of affiliate marketing:

I think the subject of endorsing is one that is on a lot of people's minds as we see more and more affiliate marketing between people. It's funny – sometimes I find I don't like the feel of it, and sometimes I do. When you do it, I like it. When John Doe does it, I don't seem to. And I have no idea why. No idea. Like anything, my guess is that it is not this "activity" that's the problem ever, but how it is handled and communicated. For some reason, just off the top of my head – I notice that I love how you write about other people.

It always comes from your perspective, and why you feel it's important. Though it's more work for you, this feels great! It's different entirely than the emails that are clearly written by someone else, or just come across super hype-y – which I do find is more the norm. If I'm on someone's list, I prefer to have the feeling that the endorsement (commission or not, does not matter to me) is coming with a clear feeling as to why it's important for "me," and how it fits into my being on the person's list. Relevance.

Maybe I like it when it's communicated with the feeling that the endorsee is really doing this for "me" and can clearly explain why. In that case, I am fine with there being a commission involved – I like it even – and I think that most people are. If I join Mailchimp or a John Doe program because of someone's recommendation, I love using their affiliate link to do it. Makes me feel good that they are getting a commission for it. It's like "thank you for telling me!"

Maybe my underlying feeling is that I love it when people earn great money from their own work and Joint Venture (JV) commissions, but my expectation is always the feeling that they have my best interests in mind when they speak, lead, endorse. And it's ok with me if they're unsure as to the value for me, to change the wording to reflect that. "This *could* be very interesting for you." That works just fine for me – again it's all in the communication.

But many lists I'm on I can sense another way of endorsing, where there just isn't the same level of care for "me" communicated in the message. And this feels emotionally not as nice. I find I get a low level annoyance happening with this. You're one of the very few that I've never had that feeling about, ever. Not that I'm so difficult to please, I don't get tied up in knots about it, I just choose to ignore many other "teachers" when they do these more flippant feeling joint venture endorsements. I put up with it, and then resume my interest when they get back to "leading me."

The takeaway: It will feel better to people if you personalize it.

As my own understanding of marketing has evolved, I've found the swipe copy to be less and less useful because it's written to get people to say "yes" rather than to help them understand if it's a fit for them or not.

To deal with this, I have recently created a form I now ask all colleagues to fill out if they want me to be an affiliate for them: marketingforhippies.com/affiliateform

Affiliate Decision #3 – One-email policy

This is my most recent learning.

From now on, if a colleague asks me to promote them and it feels like a fit to me, I will only send one email out about it (with a good possibility of sending a reminder to those who clicked on the link in the email a day or two before the end of the promotion if I don't get any negative feedback from their promo).

After wrestling with this for years, I was reminded about how Jay Abraham promoted the first major marketing workshop I ever attended.

His initial email said:

I've got this amazing seminar coming up. I'd love for you to come. But of course I think it's amazing. It's my program. So here's my proposition. I'd like to get your permission to market this program to you and make my case for why it will be in your best interests to attend it. And, during the course of that promotion, I will give away more free content than most people give away during their actual seminars.

He was, in essence, asking for people's permission to market to them.

It was a brilliant approach during which he genuinely gave away an incredible amount of value.

What I loved about it was how respectful it was (if you didn't opt in to be marketed to that was the last you ever heard of it) and, if you did, you got a bushel full of useful marketing tips. And it was so direct. No beating around the bush.

And so, just a few weeks ago, it dawned on me that this was how I was going to approach affiliate promotions for the foreseeable future.

Instead of sending out four emails during the course of a promotion, I will send one.

Instead of telling my list about every free piece of launch content they're offering, I will tell them about all of them in advance and encourage them to give their permission to be marketed to by the person in question. I will make my best case for the program and be as clear as I can about who it's a fit for and who it's not a fit for.

I can't even begin to tell you what a relief this has felt like to me.

What it means is that I will earn less money from affiliate deals and likely be less attractive to colleagues. It means I likely don't grace the promotional leaderboards (where they keep track of whose made the most sales) with the nimble agility I used to, but, it will also mean less clutter in your email inbox. It will also mean I feel more peace in my heart about this whole thing.

A few years ago, I sent out a promo email for my colleagues Jesse and Sharla's Client Attraction Mastery Home Study Course. I spent ten hours crafting the email. You can read it here: bit.ly/2t9eOQ4

Someone replied to the email and said, "I can't help but to send you a note to say thank you for putting this email together. It's the best affiliate marketing [AM] promotional email I've ever seen! It's done with so much heart, I'm amazed. Thank you for being a shining example of how to do AM with authenticity. While I don't think I'll get this product now, if I ever do, I'll definitely get it through your link even though some other people I follow are also promoting this."

Affiliate Decision #4 – Disclaimers

Finding someone to promote who you are 100 per cent behind is rare.

Sometimes you'll love them personally.

Sometimes you'll love their style.

Sometimes you'll love their content.

Sometimes you'll love how they market themselves.

Rarely will you find someone where all of these are true. Very seldom will you find an utterly perfect fit. That's just how it is.

But, when it's not perfect, it can be good to speak to that directly in your sales copy.

This can mean:

- letting people know you've never met them in person.
- using the word "colleague" instead of "friend" in your sales copy.
- bluntly stating where and how you disagree with them. I recall reading a book review that said, "I think most of this book is garbage but it's worth 1,000 times the price of the book for the content in chapter three."

A client once wrote to me and said of this very topic:

I do think, also, that those of us who consider you a mentor understand full well that we will be dealing with different businesses and personalities. Maybe a simple stock sentence to that effect might help. You're much better at that sort of wording than me, but something like: "You're used to me, and I'm "this way" . . . I will promote people I feel have a really important piece to share on "something," it's something that I can't do very well for you, even though I'd love to . . . and know that these works come in various personality packages . . .

This brings an unexpected gift. It helps us navigate how we want to show up in the business world. Of course my way isn't the only way. As a matter of fact, while you are learning from their particular genius, thank them for this, and also notice how they are doing business, notice how they are doing their intros, their content, etc. And as well as taking in the genius of what they're great at, notice what you will do differently to find the way of doing *your* business. We are all

trying to figure out just how to package and deliver the gifts we have, and these people will help you see how they've done it. Notice what works for you . . .

Bonus Thoughts:

- **Blog Posts:** A few times, I've wanted to share the work of my colleagues, specifically their evergreen products, so I interviewed them about their work for my blog. This felt better than just emailing a straight up promo for their product because the people on my list were getting some immediate value and the affiliate code was embedded in the blog post. In these cases, I've not bothered to give the non-affiliate link since the trust of the email wasn't about getting them to sign up for anything. It should be noted that, in the short term, this approach will not get as many sales but the blog post can be recycled over and over via social media and, if you structure your website right, you can guide people to it from other blog posts and link to it in future emails. I wrote posts after interviewing Rebecca Tracey about her brilliant work on helping people create packages for their work and with Carrie Klassen about her genius ebook on how to write a lovable homepage.
- **Resources Page:** For evergreen products, you can also create a Resources Page on your website where you give links to useful resources, affiliate and otherwise, that your clients might find of interest.
- **Some great blog posts on this topic:**
 - Steve Mattus of Heart of Business has written a wonderful piece on this called Getting Tangled Using Affiliate Links: heartofbusiness.com/2015/subject-getting-tangled-using-affiliate-links
 - George Kao shares his thoughts on why he's stopped doing affiliate marketing: plus.google.com/+GeorgeKaoCommunity/posts/VcKBVHDbRoJ
 - Honesty in Search Results: Why We Decided Not to Offer an Affiliate Program: blog.meetedgar.com/honesty-search-results-decided-not-offer-affiliate-program
 - My Stance on Affiliate Marketing – Julie Wolk: juliewolkcoaching.com/blog/my-stance-on-affiliate-marketing
 - Why I Don't Do Internet Marketing, Ever – Charles Eisenstein: newandancientstory.net/why-i-dont-do-internet-marketing-ever-2

Part Six: Creating Movements & Communities

“There was a farmer who grew excellent quality corn. Every year he won the award for the best grown corn. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it.

The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbours. “How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbours when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?” the reporter asked.

“Why sir,” said the farmer, “Didn’t you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbours grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbours grow good corn.”

So is with our lives . . . Those who want to live meaningfully and well must help enrich the lives of others, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all . . .”

— Stephen Kaczor, Facebook post

On Creating Movements & Communities

Judy Wicks is the embodiment of what I mean when I talk about becoming a hub.

I had the chance to meet her at a number of conferences and, like most, fell immediately into deep admiration of her.

In 1983, she founded The White Dog Cafe in Philadelphia.

She had worked with the Zapatista revolutionaries in Chiapas, Mexico, in the early nineties, which led to her being one of the earlier adopters of fair trade coffee at her establishment.



But locally, she saw many small scale farmers struggling and so she began to offer them business loans. She found one farmer who wanted to set up a more humane pen for his pigs and so she helped fund this and then purchased her pork from him to support him on the other end. She did similar things for other farmers who were ethically raising eggs and dairy. And she only served sustainably harvested fish, and fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate, vanilla, and cinnamon.

The White Dog Cafe began as a tiny muffin shop, but over the years has transformed into a 200-seat restaurant featuring fresh local food that pays their employees a living wage, mentors inner-city high school students, recycles and composts, uses solar heated water, eco-friendly soaps and office supplies, and that buys 100 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources (the first business in Pennsylvania to do so).

But it didn't stop there, in 2000, she founded fairfoodphilly.org as a way to help connect local family farms with the urban marketplace. In 2001, she founded the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia and co-founded the international Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, which is a rapidly growing business network with over 30,000 local businesses in the United States and Canada alone.

All of this came out of a vision Judy had that her whole life has been in service to: a global economy made up of a network of self-reliant and sustainable local economies connected by small-to-small fair trade relationships.

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With increasing frequency, I am hearing colleagues say things like, “Don’t market yourself. Create a movement.” I love the intention of this but I disagree with the analysis.

If you can create it, it’s not a movement.

The myth of popular movements is that they were created and led by a single, charismatic leader. This myth is naive. Martin Luther King Jr. was not the leader of the civil rights movement. Gandhi wasn’t in charge of India’s movement for independence from the British. Nelson Mandela didn’t run the anti-apartheid movement. They were spokespeople for a movement that was much vaster than them. They played a role in it but they weren’t “it” and they, certainly, did not *create* the movements.

To put this another way, you don’t create a movement, you support a movement. You can act as an advocate for, or a defender of, a community.

To put this in yet another way, if there isn’t already a community there, you’re hooped. As Seth Godin put it in his book *Tribes*, “Fox News didn’t persuade millions of people to become conservatives, they just assembled a tribe and led them where they were already headed.”

To put this another way still, if it would collapse without you, it’s not a movement. It’s a business.

So, what is it that you are trying to accomplish or help happen that is bigger than your business?

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Seth Godin explains more in his book *Tribes* when he says:

A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader and connected to an idea. A group needs only two things to be a tribe. 1 - A shared interest and 2 - a way to communicate. A crowd is a tribe without a leader. A crowd is a tribe without communication. Most organizations spend their time marketing to the crowd. Smart organizations assemble the tribe. Crowds are interesting, and they can create all sorts of worthwhile artifacts and market effects. But tribes are longer lasting and more effective. Tribes are the most effective media channels ever, but they’re not for sale or for rent. Tribes do not do what you want. They do what they want. Which is why joining and leading a tribe is such a powerful marketing investment. The new marketing involves: Assembling a large and influential tribe of people who look to you for leadership. We are drawn to leaders and their ideas, and we can’t resist the rush of belonging and the thrill of the new (we want to belong not just to one tribe, it turns out, but to many). People want to be part of something that matters. As the ability to lead a tribe becomes open to more people, it’s interesting to note that those who take that opportunity (and those who succeed most often) are doing it

because of what they can do for the tribe, not for what the tribe can do for them. This is the heart of the matter: Every leader cares for and supports a movement. A movement like the free speech movement at Berkeley or the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square or the civil rights movement in Mississippi. Or maybe a movement like the obsession with hand roasted coffee in Brooklyn or the worldwide collection of people obsessed with tattoos. Today, you can have a narrow movement, a tiny movement, a movement in a silo. Your movement can be known by ten or twenty or a thousand people, people in your community or people around the world. And most often, it can be the people you work with or for, or those who work for you. The web connects people. That's what it does. And movements take connected people and make change. What marketers and organizers and people who care are discovering is that they can ignite a micro movement and then be propelled by the people who choose to follow it.

But again, Seth isn't suggesting you can create a movement. He's saying that there are already communities out there with shared passions and that you can contribute to them. And you might be able to create a platform that makes it easier for them to be a part of something greater.

An immense role that we can play for movements facing some serious external threat (which is often the heart of any movement) is that of being a hub. We can bring people together. We can facilitate the flow of information. We can help articulate the cause to new groups.

Thomas Leonard, one of the founders of the modern life coaching movement often spoke of the way that people seemed to need to find their unique personal vision; a sort of "My Vision TM." He offered up the possibility that we could look at a vision as something we're a part of, not something we *create*.

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I was recently at a workshop with the good Kenton Zerbin about permaculture and community. I share these thoughts, inspired by that workshop (and other things) here.

What is community? I think that, in this day and age, we see community to be one of two things.

One way it is seen is to be simply a collection of individuals. And so the health of the community is then about making sure each individual is healthy. Somehow, the invisible hand will use all of our selfish motivations in service to some greater good that we hope exists. This kind of community is driven by a focus on each person getting what they want (at the most shallow level) or getting their needs met (at a deeper level). But, even if everyone works to get their individual needs met, and does, it doesn't necessarily mean the community will be healthy.

The other way it's held (often in New Age and holistic communities) is to mean the same thing as unity. A sort of hallelujah chorus of "we're all one." This is often driven by an ignoring and denying of our own and other's needs.

But neither of these seem to work. Neither of these seem functional or satisfying.

It is instructive if we look at the etymology of the word *community*. Its Latin root "communitas" tell us something important.

"Com" means "with," or "together." "Munis" means "the exchanges that link." "Tas" indicates a state of being. And so, taken together, "communitas" – or community – tells us something about the local exchanges and sharings that link us together. The word whispers something to us about relationships.

Community, in this way of understanding it, is about the fostering of good and strong relationships between the members of the community. It tells us that the health of the community can be found in how well things are connected, like the mycelial networks and roots (under the ground and unseen) that keep the forests and grasslands alive and support the sharing of food and information. And that the root "tats" is in there is telling as well. Small connections. Many of them. Not just one connection to tend to.

It speaks to all of our obligations (a word hinged around the root word "lig," which suggests something that ties or connects things and brings them into *alignment*, like a *ligament* does with our bones) so that they can better co-exist and interconnect. It suggests that health will be found, not so much in taking care of ourselves (like dots on a connect the dots page), or by trying to unify everything (like mashing all those dots together into one "superdot"), but rather by drawing the lines of connection between them to see the picture of health and resilience that emerges.

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And yet, I see it all over the place. People want to start "revolutions." I get it. It's inspiring rhetoric. It feels "big." And yet, what it feels like from the outside is the opposite of a humble service to a larger cause and more like people are inflating their sense of self-importance. Inflation that causes a divide between themselves and the community they claim to want to serve.

It's easy to be seduced by that desire for fame and status. But being a hub, in the end, isn't about status at all. You may find that your status drops but that your stature grows. And I mean stature both in terms of how you stand and your deeper standing in the community. The latest teen, pop sensation has status but someone like Nelson Mandela had stature.

John Heider writes about this in his book *The Tao of Leadership*:

It is a great mistake to believe that a great leader is above others. Paradoxically, greatness comes from knowing how to be lowly and empty and receptive and of service. Imagine that the life force is like water in the river and in the sea. The sea, greater than the river, lies below, open and receptive.

Michael Newton, in his book *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlander*, writes about the role of the chief in clan society:

Although the office of the king or chieftain was sacred, the man who filled it was not: he was subject to regulations and obligations and expected to act in the interests of the clan as a whole. The clan council and members of high office offered him advice and criticized him if he did not fulfill his role as protectors, provider and patriarch. At least for as long as chieftains derived their positions from within Gaelic society and not from the king, they were dependent upon followers for their power and were no stronger than the will of the people to follow them and no more wealthy than the people made them. Many Gaelic proverbs attest to this: 'Is treasa tuatha na tighearna' ('The common people are strong than a lord'); 'Is àirde tuathanach air a chasan na duine-uasal air a ghluinean' ('A commoner standing on his feet is taller than a nobleman on his knees'); 'Far nach bi nì, caillidh an rìgh chòit' ('A king will lose his rights where there is no wealth.') . . . the clan chief was accountable to his clan and was expected to seek the advice and consent of the [wise ones] on clan matters. There were chiefs and chieftains who were deposed and replaced because they did not execute their duties properly.

Whenever I meet someone and they introduce themselves as a shaman or an elder, I know right away that they likely are not one. When I hear someone speak about themselves as a leader, I know right away that they are not one. Real leaders don't announce themselves like this.

It's a particularly modern sort of vanity to imagine that we could start a movement on our own and appoint ourselves as the leader of it. And as I've said before but I think this bears repeating: *I've often thought that the desire to be in charge, to have power should be part of what might disqualify you for the job.* Too many of those in positions of power in government and corporate life are psychopaths and children who should never have been let anywhere near the levers of power.

I recall getting an email from a colleague: "Tad, I want to start a revolution . . . A NEW way of doing things that isn't so sales-y . . . What can we do? Do we just "be the change we wish to see?" Will we be successful if we do this? Gosh I hope so! :)"

I replied, "A wondering: maybe revolutions aren't things we can start. Maybe they're just things we get to find a role in. When you said, 'I want to start a revolution . . .' I noticed a pull back inside of myself because it feels as though everyone else doing this work and wondering about this gets discounted. As if their work doesn't exist or isn't good enough. I've been wondering lately if this

whole ‘let’s start a new movement’ thing isn’t actually an expression of the old movement. The irony is that our desire to start something new can become a part of the old immediately because it’s the same colonial idea. I see so many people talking about creating movements, but in practical terms, it ends up being about ‘creating a list.’ I see people appointing themselves as leaders of movements that they’ve created and it all feels so contrived and arrogant. I’ve been to conferences for groups where the leader says, ‘I believe that this is the group/network that will change the world!’ What feels clear is that you are noticing this is all happening – the frustration with marketing, the annoyance with the pretense and then wondering, ‘What role can I play in all this?’ – knowing our role will be small. Movements are so big. There is so much work to do. It’s poignant that here we are still willing to wonder what our contribution might be. And maybe your role is to help to articulate these frustrations and to help people not feel so alone in it. Sometimes movements can exist for a while without even knowing they’re a movement. Everyone thinks they’re the only one feeling these things. Maybe this will be your role.”

Too many people I see aspire to be like the latest marketing guru out there. They see the apparent success that guru has managed to build and imagine that they have to be just like that flavour-of-the-moment guru in order to succeed themselves. I’d rather see them aspire to be like Judy Wicks, with her White Dog Cafe, who was working for positive change in the world, not her own self-aggrandizement.

As David Orr wrote in his 1992 book *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World*:

The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. And these qualities have little to do with success as we have defined it.

“The goal of the revolutionary artist is to make revolution irresistible.”

— Toni Cade Bambara

Conclusion

Hub marketing has been the core of my approach to marketing since the early days of my career.

It's an approach that works better: it's ultimately faster, and it feels better for everyone.

I can't tell you the levels of relief I've seen on the faces of clients' faces when they realize that they don't have to do the same old pushy, aggressive sales tactics they've seen or been taught. "I could just build relationships with people?" they say. It seems too good to be true. It seems too easy.

Of course it isn't easy. hub marketing asks a great deal of you.

Hub marketing asks that you be very clear on your niche.

Hub marketing asks that you develop a well-articulated point of view you can stand behind.

Hub marketing asks that you develop products, services, and packages that do the job and actually help people. It asks that you become so good at your work that, when I refer my clients to you, they make a point to come back to me to thank me for sending them your way.

Hub marketing asks that you carry yourself well and with deep integrity and transparency in your business dealings with others.

Hub marketing asks you to make amends for your missteps and mistakes.

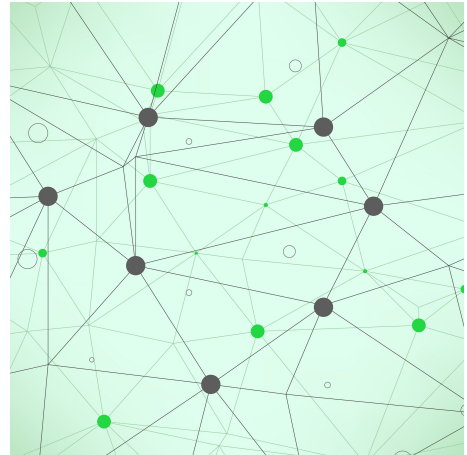
Hub marketing asks that you prioritize tending to your business relationships in ways you may never have done before.

Hub marketing asks that you don't be lazy in your communications but that you craft them with care and clarity so that people's time isn't wasted.

Hub marketing asks you to be willing to slow down.

Hub Marketing, in every possible way, asks you to be a better business person and human being.

And perhaps that's the best reason to do it.



Bonus: Hub Marketing Mini Coaching Sessions

Note: These were taken from the transcript (and lightly edited) of my hub marketing Teleseminar call, July 7th, 2016.

Question: “How do you see being a hub different than having joint ventures?”

I would say it's the same idea. Strategic partnerships, joint ventures, being a hub. Although I say that a joint venture is a specific iteration of it. A joint venture is a specific agreement. When we say we're making a joint venture, we're saying we're going in to some kind of business together so it's a much more formalized arrangement that often includes the exchange of money.

I'll promote you to my list and anyone who signs up for my email, you're going to send me some money or vice versa. I see that as a joint venture, a specific business arrangement. This whole idea of hub marketing is just acknowledging that there are certain people that are hubs that you can partner with. This may involve money, it may not, but it's the same basic idea.

On the one hand, it can feel slimy to pay people to promote you. That's the easy one to arrive at, but on the other hand, it can be the height of entitlement and selfishness to not offer to pay people. They're helping you, after all. They're spending time and social capital. If we're just taking, taking, and taking, that's not sustainable. After a certain point people notice the flow is really one-sided. It can come off as freeloading. It turns into taking advantage of people and trying to not have them notice by being so charming. It can become not really caring for the needs of others because we're so desperate to get our own needs met.

So, the rule here is about courtesy and graciousness. Sometimes paying people will be appropriate. Sometimes it won't. Sometimes you can afford it. Sometimes you can't. Sometimes they'll want to be paid. Sometimes they won't.

I remember a colleague sharing with me how she didn't offer her affiliate program to everyone. “My affiliate program is not a ‘right fit’ for people. It's a privilege. It's a sign that our relationship has matured to a point where that makes sense.”

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Question: “Finding hubs in small geographic areas?”

All right. Deirdre said, “I'm finding that Ireland is not as tubbable as perhaps a larger country might be, perhaps due to influence of history or the geography of being an island. It would appear from doing the worksheets that we are a bit more generic. Have other people found that in other countries, or do I just need to keep searching?”

Yeah, so if you're in a small town of 15,000, that is smaller, for sure. "Total population – 4.4 million," she replied. Yeah, so a smaller geography's going to be a bit more broad, and sometimes the hubs are just hiding. Sometimes we need to just keep digging and keep looking for who those hubs are.

You don't need a lot of hubs. I asked an acupuncturist colleague of mine, "Where do you get your business?" He said most of it actually just came from two hubs, two sources.

One was a New Thought church where he'd given a talk. The talk went really well and everyone just loved him and wanted to work with him. The other was a physiotherapist, who I guess really likes his work and would send him a lot of clients.

It's easy sometimes to get overwhelmed with hubs, and be like, "Oh my God, I need a tonne." But you only may need a few. Deirdre, for you, I would just focus on five. Who are the five best sources of clients for you? What a lack of hubs might be showing is the potential for you to create that kind of hub. If it doesn't exist already, and there are other people in your boat who are offering complementary products or services to the same target markets, then it might make sense to actually create a hub.

Maybe it could be a Meetup group? Maybe it could be an annual gathering or conference? Maybe it could be a newsletter, a website, a blog? So there's the potential for that, to create a hub. If you're looking around, like, "Man, there's no hubs," you may be right.

Like when I was starting off, I did workshops for . . . this was, man, 20 years ago, doing workshops for high school students, student councils, peer support teams, and stuff. I kind of understood this idea of hubs a little bit, but when I looked around, I realized there weren't any. There was no place that the student council advisors hung out, at all. It didn't exist, and so if it was going to exist, I was going to need to create it.

And I started doing that a bit. I started doing workshops for the student council advisors to bring them together. If I had kept going, I would have created a quarterly meeting for student council advisors, or at least an annual get together for student council advisors. That would have been hub. I would have created it.

Facebook wasn't around then, but these days, I'd have created a private Facebook group for all the student council advisors in the city, where they could share and swap notes with each other. I'd maybe even have weekly calls that they could be a part of, that type of thing – create a group meeting once a month, et cetera.

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Question: “What if your community is very spread out and your business is completely online-based?”

That’s a good question. It’s good to note there are two different types of community that have hubs. The first kind of hub is a geographic hub, meaning people who just live close to each other geographically are a hub. And then there are communities of affinity and they create a hub.

Communities of affinity mean that they share an interest or share a set of needs or something, and those do not have to be geographic. You can of course have overlap within a city. You could have a certain community of affinity where they share certain experiences and needs, desires and problems, but those are basically the two different kinds. It’s always going to be a mix – a bit of a spectrum.

If you’re really just serving the local community, you’re the local yoga studio and you don’t have any niche beyond that, but you’re the one that everyone goes to because you’re the only one there, that’s a geographic hub. You might be thinking, but “I work specifically with people with menstrual pains.” Sure, that’s going to be half of the women on the planet. That’s a community of affinity.

In a community of affinity, there’s a shared problem or experience. In my book *The Niching Nest* I talk about communities of affinity vs. communities of geography, or the inverse law of geography, which means the broader the geography is, the narrower your niche is going to have to be – the broader the geography, the more narrow the affinity.

If you’re trying to market online to everyone on the planet, just saying something like, “Hire me, I’m a life coach,” is not that compelling. But, if you live in a town of 100, you can’t afford to be too niche because there’s only one person in town who has that issue in need of hiring you. This approach won’t sustain you.

If you’re living in a very small geographic area, you’re going to have to be a bit more of a generalist and that’s just the reality.

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Question: “What if you’re an introvert?”

If you’re an introvert, here’s the thing. What makes hub marketing work is relationships. Thank God for the internet because you could do this all online. You actually don’t have to meet people in person. You could absolutely just email people and say, “Hey, I’ve heard about your work, and was curious about this.” You could just have the conversation over email at a pace and way that works well for you.

I suggest meeting in person just because I think that fosters more trust but not 100 per cent necessary. In terms of hosting an event, if you're an introvert it may not be your thing, but you could just do the online directory where you say, "Hey, here's who I refer to," and you could be the host of that. You could be the hub who holds that list. If you're an introvert, you could do those kinds of things. There's that.

Also, you might have somebody else who can host the hub gathering and you're there, but they're the one who is hosting it and running it. You just introduce yourself when you have to. You could do that.

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Question: "How much will one of the mixer events cost?"

It's not a lot honestly. If you have a living room you could host it in, do it there,; if you have access to somebody else's living room, do it there.

If you have one of those rooms in a condo that you can use for meetings, it doesn't have to be over-the-top fancy. It could be at a community hall. It could be at a church. I really recommend that if you know somebody who has a home or a living room, doing that. It's so much easier and it's a way for you to all meet each other.

For food, I don't know. It depends. You can just get stuff at Safeway or Save-Ons, just some platters. You could do the potluck. I recommend catering it just because it's classy. This is your marketing. You're spending money on it. You get to keep the leftover food anyway. It doesn't have to be over-the-top.

If you're trying to reach corporate CEOs, then maybe, sure, you upscale it a little bit, but then the money you make from that crowd would offset what you're going to spend.

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Question: "I'm relocating to another city. Would you say that I would have to start over from scratch?"

Yes, that's probably true unless you're working online, but if you're doing work that requires you to be in person, then you are starting from scratch.

If you're starting from scratch, I would start with a hubs gathering. The first thing you have to do is map out the hubs. I would just start asking around. Who do I talk to? Who are the hubs around this niche? This is where niche becomes so important, a niche meaning I have a particular kind of work I specialize in and/or there's a particular group of people I specialize in helping, a particular problem I work to solve. There's something different and unique about your business.

Yes, you would be starting over but if you have a niche that's workable or even if you do a lot of things, pick one niche to start with that you can focus on. You can start by getting known about this kind of work, and then branch out. Then you host a hubs gathering and get those people together for that.

You can say, "Hey, I'm new to town. I'm wanting to meet people but I thought it would be good if we all meet each other too." I would just leap in with that. Start at that hot level, and you'll build the warm relationships with all these hubs by doing it. Katrine was just noticing she may have a niche problem, a niche opportunity let's say. There's a chance to refine a little bit more. I hear you. It's just hard, this whole niching business.

Katrine, the thing I'd really suggest is just to pick something. It doesn't have to be the niche forever but just when you move to a new place, what would I specialize in. What could I focus on? Out of all the work that I do, if there was one thing I could get known for, what might it be? Just pick that.

What could it be? Have that one particular thing and just focus on that. Know you're going to be able to expand it as you are in that town, and people will hear about the other kinds of work that you do. If you're just starting somewhere, yes, I would probably niche down a little bit. If you open with that, if you start with a hubs gathering, you would be amazed at how fast your business can grow.

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Question: "Where do you host a mixer (for free with benefit to the location owner)?"

It's a good question. First of all, it's your living room. If it's that, problem solved. If it's somebody else's living room, problem solved, but maybe there's a venue.

Let's say Stacy Jean wanted to do it for this gardening thing. She wanted to do an in-person one. She might go to a gardening centre and say, "Could we do it here?" Do you think that gardening centre is going to be thrilled about having 25 people who all should be shopping and referring people there? Of course they would be thrilled.

Or menstrual pain, if there was a women sex toy shop or women's bookstore, or that type of thing. Of course they would be thrilled to host it because they have their own selfish interest in it. You could do it at a park outside if the weather is nice. Noise is a bit of a challenge hearing each other, depending, but you could absolutely do that.

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Question: “How do you create a mastermind where the hub leaders are a part of it?”

That’s a really good question. Honestly, for a lot of these hubs, just the chance to get together and stay tapped in with each other, a lot of them never get to see each other because they’re so busy.

Sometimes, it’s just that, just the chance to catch up, just a chance to hear what’s happening in the scene. I would say it depends on what the scene and the community is, but that’s why there are so many Meetup groups. In Edmonton, we host a green drinks, which is in 650 cities around the world. It’s not unique to Edmonton but it’s once a month, a gathering for folks in the sustainability scene in Toronto.

I’ve heard about foodie drinks. In Edmonton, we did indigo drinks, which is like a holistic mixer. There’s that. Sometimes hubs like to be a part of something that’s a little more VIP and exclusive, the same kind of thing.

One of my colleagues, Rob Sinclair, has a business called ConsciousBrands.com. He does this thing called spiral tables. Vladi, you might want to check that out because it’s an example of what you’re talking about. He works with industry leaders in the organic food and beverage industry, and they host monthly 90-minute calls for these groups of six – really brilliant stuff.

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Question: “What would hubs be for CEOs of food banks nationally?”

The hubs are really easy. There’s going to be an organization that they’re a part of. I imagine that for the national food bank thing there are conferences they get together. Just going to those conferences and hanging out, you can do a lot worse.

Having a booth at those conferences – boom. Speaking at those conferences, you’ve got it set. That’s an example of hubs. Oh, these food banks, the cold approach would be to drive around the country to all the different food banks, say hello, and introduce yourself cold versus going to an event where they’re already there together.

It’s a warm social setting. You start to meet people. Maybe you speak at it. Maybe you volunteer to just start connecting with people and building relationships. Things naturally go from there.

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Question: “What do you offer a hub if you’re just starting out and you don’t have any clients to refer?”

You can be honest about that. I had a guy named Lucas Coffee in Edmonton reach out to me at the beginning of a project of his. He sent me an email and said, “Hey, I have this project starting up. I’ve been asking people who I should talk to about it and your name has come up three times as this hub in Edmonton, somebody I should connect with.” He said, “I want to take you out to lunch.”

I was like, “Wow.” He’s doing this right, taking me out to lunch. Here’s the thing, hubs know that they’re hubs. That’s really important. They get it. That’s not lost on them. It’s no mystery to them that they’re hubs. In reaching out to me in this way, offering to take me to lunch, he’s acknowledging that I’m a hub and I have something of value.

I said, “Yes, I would be delighted.” We go for lunch. He does the second right thing, which is asking me, “Who should I talk to?” He explained his project. I start giving him names, and he starts writing them down, which is huge because I can’t tell you how upsetting it is to me when somebody asks me for help, I start giving them ideas, “Here’s some hubs,” and I see them nodding, “Uh-huh, yes, that’s great, thanks.” That makes me angry and think to myself, “You asked for my help and you’re not writing it down? I know you won’t remember this.” I just want to be say, “Get out of here. Stop wasting my time.”

But Lucas is writing it all down, taking really good notes. I’m like, “Also, say this to this person. Mention my name, mention this thing,” and he keeps writing. That’s the second thing. Write down the details that a hub offers you.

The third thing is I get an email the next day from someone who follows my work saying, “Thank you for connecting me to Lucas Coffee. He’s the best.” I’m like, “This dude is crushing it. This is exactly what you do with a hub.”

Now, wouldn’t I have felt cautious sending Lucas Coffee to my people without knowing if he delivers quality work?

You know, it was 100 per cent his vibe. It just thought, “I like you. Your vibe is really solid. You’ve got hustle.” He’s young. I know my people. I trust them to also take care of themselves basically.

They may or may not want to support him but I liked him. He just had a really solid vibe and I just went on that. A lot of hubs will do that. They’ll just go on the vibe they get from you and make decisions based on that. Now I want to give you some stories and some examples of this. I’ll stick around a little while after the call, because I know we’re almost at an hour and a half somehow, to answer questions.

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Question: “How to reach out to people without making it sound like you’re trying to pick their brain for free?”

Well, are you?

It depends on what you’re reaching out for, the nature of that request. Sometimes you’re just starting out and you really are just being like, “Hey, can I? I’m just starting out and I’m looking for mentorship. I could use some advice. Can I take you out for lunch? Can I clean your drapes? Can I rake your yard? Can I pay you back in some way?”

So much of this is about graciousness and about courtesy. If I get the sense from the manner of somebody’s approach that they do not value me and my time, they don’t value the inordinate number of years I’ve put in to building these relationships, learning these things, and they’re just like, “Hey, can I just pick your brain? I just have a quick five-minute question.”

I was at a workshop of mine on Salt Spring Island. There was a woman there who at lunch said, “Hey, there’s this thing that I really want to go to” – and the workshop went from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. “There’s this thing that I really want to go to at 3:30 so I was just wondering if I could pick your brain right now on what’s going to be happening this afternoon before I leave.”

I just looked at her like, just the lack of courtesy in that, the lack of graciousness of saying to my face, “Yes, I’m going to go do this other thing, not your workshop. That’s more important. I don’t really value being here enough to stay but I value it enough to just get this for free and take up your time during lunch.” I just shook my head.

I was like, “Wow, I’m not sure I’ll have time.” Then I totally went and answered somebody else’s question whose approach was so much more gracious. When I get the sense that somebody is really honouring who I am and what I’ve put into my work, I’ve got all the time in the world for them. That’s a huge part of it is just the manner of approach.

Sometimes it’s just humbling yourself and saying, “Hey, can I take you for lunch? Can I do something?” Even saying take you for lunch, it’s me saying I know your time is valuable and this is a small way that I can – you’ve got to eat, can I feed you? It’s my way of paying back.

That’s if you’re just starting out. Sometimes that’s just how it is. You’re humbling yourself, asking for help, but if it’s a colleague who has been in it for a while then I’m genuinely like, “What do you do? Who could I refer you out for? Then here’s who you could refer me out for,” and it’s just a collegial trying to get to know each other because you’re more effective at what you do if you have people to refer out to. Those are my thoughts about that.

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Question: “I get stuck on the initial approach. What do I say?”

I get it. What’s the exact wording? I’ll just repeat what I said earlier, which is if you send them an email, something like, if it’s a colleague, “Hey, I just heard about your work from blank” — saw it in a magazine, heard about it from a friend. “It sounds like really great work. I often need to refer out for people who do what you do.” If that’s true.

“I was wondering if I could meet you because I would love to get more of a sense of your business, more sense of who your ideal clients are. I would just love to connect with you to get a sense of your work, and would love to share what I do too. If there’s any fit, maybe we could support each other and work together, that’s great but no pressure.” It could just be something like that.

Or, if it’s that you think you can’t send them business but they could send you business, you could just tell them that. Say, “Look, I think your people might like what I have to offer. Can I take you out for coffee, 20 minutes to make my best pitch?” It could be that direct.

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Question: “What if your hubs are gov’t organizations that don’t recognize businesses or individuals?”

First of all, it’s good to remember that these government organizations are still staffed by people. If you can build relationships with those people, sometimes exceptions can be made, or at least they can get you in a room in the right places. Those hubs are still going to be hosting events and maybe you can go to those events, either by volunteering or having a table, or just being a participant and buying a ticket.

You can still be in that scene because those conferences are amazing hubs. It’s connecting with those people to break it down from being this big institutional thing.

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Question: “Does having a giveaway or a discount freebie really sweeten the deal for a hub?”

So, if you have a gift certificate in a fancy envelope for a free consult for an intro class that the hubs could give to referrals, is that a good idea?

Yes, that could be great.

This is the thing, it’s got to be a win for the hubs. Part of it, the win for the hubs, is they seem more hub-ish. They’re a better hub. If they can pass something on that’s a deal that only their people are getting and nobody else is getting, and their people are getting it because it’s on that list or whatever, for sure, that’s a benefit.

If the hub trusts that it's going to be of benefit to their people, they're not just going to be like, "Oh yes, something free I can give to my people, sure." People reach out to me all the time and are like, "Hey, can you promote me?" and I'm like, "No, I don't know you." You still have to build a relationship with the hubs.

This is where just going to a hub and saying, "Hey, do you want to promote me?" is not a solid approach. This is why the hubs gathering is so important, or that kind of a slower approach where you get to know each other. Go out for coffee, meet them, have a conversation with them where you start to build the relationship slowly.

People approach me all the time who do kind of what I do. I say, "Well, I do that basically so why would I promote you to my list?" Alternatively, people who come up to me and say, "Hey, I help people write their bios," then I'm like, "That's great, I don't do that." Like my colleague Rebecca Tracy helps people come up with packages for their businesses. I'm just like, "Great, I don't do that." When people are trying to come up with packages, I'm like, "Yes, go get her thing." There's something I'm not doing and a natural fit there. I already knew her and liked her personally before that. Sometimes I'll come across somebody and I don't know them that well, but I check out their stuff, it's a good vibe and it's focused on something that I'm not focused on. Sometimes I'll send people there and be like, "Hey, I don't know them that well but it looks good."

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Question: "What are the best ways to approach non-profit groups using hubs?"

It's the same thing with all of these. Where do they hang out? What are the conferences? What are the newsletters or things that they read? Who are they already hiring and spending money with? It's that type of thing.

There is a whole other conversation to be had around packages and coming up with good offers for them, which is a whole different thing but you start to figure out your sales funnel and what is going to be the initial thing that's going to grab them. If you help non-profits to make fundraising videos, you might want to do a workshop on how to fund your fundraising video, how to make money for it or you might want to do a workshop on how to make your own fundraising videos with your iPhone, and then you teach people everything that goes into making one of these videos.

At the end, they're like, "Gah, it's so much, we'll just hire this person." There's that kind of stuff. Again, with non-profits, who is the person to reach out to in their group? Is it the executive director? Is it the treasurer? Who is it?

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Question: “How to deal with one-way referral relationships?”

Right, so you would not refer to them but they could refer to you. Would a referral or an affiliate fee be a good idea? Would that be expected or frowned upon?

That’s something just to work out with that person. I would say most people would probably appreciate it and say, “Look, if you refer to me, I’ll give you this amount of money and I’ll keep track of that or we’ll track it in this way.”

If somebody comes to me and is just like, “Hey, can you promote me?” I don’t know you. Sometimes, out of the goodness of my heart, sometimes, it’s nice to be compensated for that or at least to have that offered. Sometimes people will say no but it’s nice to know you would be willing to do it because it’s a sign of how much you value their time, influence and the esteem you hold them in.

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Question: “How to get an SEO agency to pass some of their clients to me?”

Note: The person asking this question also mentioned this: “I have mixed success offering fixed conversion of one of their most hopeless clients for free.”

That’s interesting. You go to them with an offer, saying, “Hey, give me your most hopeless client, and I’ll help them. If it goes well, we’ll take the next step in the conversation. Let me prove myself to you.” I think that’s a solid approach. I like that because you’re taking the risk on yourself.

You’re saying, “Hey, let me take on the risk. Let me just show you what I’ve got.”

Mary is asking, “What is it that creates a good vibe?”

That’s a bigger conversation than what we can have right now. I’m working on a book about that. It will probably be out in a year. Mary, there’s a blog post I wrote about it. If you Google Marketing for Hippies collapsing posturing and composure, that has some thoughts on the topic.

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Question: “How do you determine the amount of affiliate fee to give to hubs?”

It depends on the industry. In some industries, 3 per cent is a typical finder’s fee and some, it’s like 50%. It really depends on what the back end is going to be for you.

Here’s the reality. The more you offer them, the more likely they are to refer you. If you don’t have much of a back end, if you just work with people once or twice and don’t work with them again, you can’t afford to give very much, but for some people, for every client that comes in, they know

they're going to make \$3,000 in the back end so why not offer \$100 instead of just \$30 as a finder's fee, for example.

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Question: “How to create a community when your yoga clients only meet through the studio you teach at?”

Right, technically, they are the studio's clients. Right. So, you're in a situation where you're a teacher in this place and the clients belong to the studio, not to you. I think if you were to host some special event, and you wanted to let the students know about that, I think it depends.

I don't know your relationship to the studio or how strict they are with the rules about gathering the contact info of the students. However, I think it could happen very organically and very naturally and slowly, where you start to just host cool events.

You also might be able to host events through the yoga studio, as well. Maybe you could be helping to foster their community and, while you're doing that, also building these more personal connections and saying, “I'm going to be hosting other events. If you'd like to find out about the events I'm hosting outside of this yoga studio, sign up for this here.”

So, I think there's a question of the ethics of that, in terms of what arrangement you have, but then it's just a question of the best way to get their contact info. That can be just a clipboard that you pass around during the class.

Or, if you're doing events at the studio, you could ask that registration also asks for permission to be included on your events email list. That type of thing. It's hard to say without knowing more about the details.

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Question: “Do you have any further support to offer for us or any newsletters? It seems like a big area. I'd love some support here.”

Yes. Check out ClaireCommunications.com. She helps folks with their newsletters and such. I'll post this on the chain here. She's the main person I know around that.

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Question: “How quickly should we expect to see your results if we're on the right track?”

I think it's a bit of both. If you're not seeing any immediate results, I would question what or how you're doing what you're doing; but it's not all going to be immediate. For me, when going to

Toronto, sure, my marketing might be good, but the fact that I've been there for so many years really helps. And by the time people come to my workshops, they've usually been hearing about me for years from people they, in turn, love and respect. That's a real dominant force. So, I think it is both. It's a Tortoise and the Hare sort of situation.

I would also say that the more tightly focused the niche is, the faster you're going to see results. So, the more clear a niche project you have, the faster things are going to turn around. When it's really broad and trying to reach everybody, I would expect that to be slow, period. I think you should see some results right away. If you're not getting any results – nobody's signing up for anything – then that's definitely a challenge.

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Question: “Are there any hubs or collaboration ideas you would recommend of online in Canada or beyond my niche of nutrition, touring with singer songwriters?”

A lot of the folk alliance, those conferences, I would get your butt to one of those. Any of those conferences where musicians get together.

I think they have them provincially. There are also music award nights. Those conferences are probably going to be the biggest ones for you, though, because that's where you actually meet people and connect with people. This is where you can do some research and be like, “I've got this idea. What do you think? What would you want? Do you want to be in it or not? How much would it cost, and price point?”

You could just be talking with people. You would be surrounded by musicians all the time, being able to ask them questions. If you could do a tour of those conferences, then there it is. Then in terms of online, I don't know. I don't actually know that scene very well or well enough.

There are probably Facebook groups that these musicians are a part of. Or their agents, of course, the booking agents, the promoters. You could build a database of these.

Gratitude

My chief thanks must go to Dominic Canterbury, who I met in Seattle many years ago. He introduced me to the idea of “hub marketing” (and also the ideas of “*niche*,” “*paths*,” and the triune of *relevance*, *credibility* and *value* and the importance of well crafted offers). His simple and direct ways of thinking about marketing have stayed with me ever since. I haven’t been able to wash off the scent of his genius and generosity since and I don’t imagine I’ll ever try to.

My second thanks must go to my assistant and old school mate Susan Kendal without whom this book would have proven utterly impossible. One gets to a point in writing these type of thing where one is cross-eyed with the material. It’s made worse when one has been teaching the content for a decade without really writing it down. To have Susan’s sure and steady eyes on *Hub Marketing*, making it stronger, has made all the difference; and to have her to take this book the next step when I could do no more with it has made it possible. She lovingly went over *Hub Marketing*, added the images, shaped the table of contents, checked on my Latin, and brings this book to you in a far more useable and beautiful form than I ever would have had the patience to do. But this book is just one of the small wildflowers of my business that it blooming because of Susan’s attention. I doubt I would have much of a business or any quality of life, without this good woman by my side.

Thirdly, I must offer up thanks to the many good colleagues of mine from whom I have witnessed and learned about hub marketing, though they might have called it something different. Some of them – Eric Brown, George Kao and Robert Middleton – are featured in this book.

Fourthly, to everyone who approached me well or poorly as a hub, I must thank you. Your poor approach helped me understand what it was like from the other side of this exchange. And your strong approach has made my work life more rich, joyous, and faceted.

Thanks to Tova Payne for granting permission to reproduce her excellent blog post: *Slimy vs. Classy Marketing and Sales* in this book.

Thanks to Brittany Duggan for her smart editorial eyes and excellent questions that undoubtedly made this book more concise and clear.

And, of my course, my deepest gratitude to you for buying this book and sustaining this extremely unlikely situation that has become my business and livelihood. May it help you sustain yours.



About the Author: Tad Hargrave

Tad is a hippy who developed a knack for marketing (and then learned how to be a hippy again.) For almost a decade, he has been touring his marketing workshops around Canada, bringing refreshing and unorthodox ideas to conscious entrepreneurs and green businesses that help them grow their organizations and businesses (without selling their souls).

Tad does improv comedy semi-professionally, co-runs Edmonton's progressive community building network TheLocalGood.ca, founded streetcarshows.com, indigodrinks.ca, socialyogiyeg.com, and the Jams program of yesworld.org. He speaks Scottish Gaelic and helps to run novascotiagaelsjam.com and is also a huge Doctor Who nerd.

Tad currently lives in Edmonton, Alberta (traditionally known, in the local indigenous language of the Cree, as Amiskwaciy (Beaver Hill) and later Amiskwaciwaskihegan (Beaver Hill House) and his ancestors come primarily from Scotland with some from the Ukraine as well. He is drawn to conversations around politics, history, ancestry, healing and how those all intersect.

You can learn more about Tad and his work at marketingforhippies.com and nichingspiral.com