

The Meantime: Low Hanging Fruit



By Tad Hargrave

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Introduction

your sales funnel – the big picture strategy on the low hanging fruit

There are only three ways to grow biz.

You can get more clients. They can spend more money per transaction. They can come more often.

More clients. More money. More often.

That's really about it.

This ebook is designed to support you in exploring possibilities you might never have considered for not just getting new clients, offering more to them (and in ways you might never have considered).

The possibility for the other two (more money and more often) come, largely, from your sales funnel or business model. A provocative but true thought: Marketing makes you no money. Marketing just gets people to show up. What makes you money (or not) is your sales funnel (or lack of it).

When you're in The Meantime, we want to expand our focus beyond simply hustling for more clients but also looking at what else we could offer our existing clients or, if we're already getting a lot of web traffic but little business from that then looking at what free offers you could create that might make it safer for people to take a first step towards you.

So let's talk more about this all, starting with the notion of a strategic free gift.

A few questions for you:

When people hit your website, do they stick around?

Do they sign up to your email list?

When you meet someone at a networking party who is curious about your work, do you have a way to give them a taste of what you do that doesn't involve giving away your time for free?

When you host a teleseminar or are interviewed, do you have an incentive to offer people to go and check out your website?

Does your business card get you any business? I mean really?

Do you have things your clients can pass onto their friends to get them interested in what you do?

If you don't, then this might be the most important blog post you've read in a while. A lot of people make the mistake of seeing marketing as about trying to change minds rather than seeing who naturally resonates with what they offer.

Or they expect people to jump into the deep end of their incredibly profound work without any shallow end of the pool to explore. They expect people to sign up for their full weekend intensive workshop without knowing anything about them or their work. They have a booth at a craft show with everything flat on the table and wonder why no one approaches them.

Or they just give out a tonne of business cards and brochures and expect people to sign up and buy.

Everything above is all about the same thing – the same blunder committed by countless entrepreneurs.

What we eventually find is that safety is incredibly important in marketing.

The first thing marketing needs to do is get the attention of your ideal client.

But then we need to lower the risk of them taking a first step in working with us. We need to make it so easy for them to check us out to see if it feels like a fit.

So, the main idea is about the importance of creating a free gift you can offer to people to help them figure out if your work is a fit for them.

I first really got this from reading PinkSpoonMarketing.com. It is a colleague of mine, Andrea Lee, who is a lovely, lovely lady.

She is the one who introduced me to the idea of a sales funnel and the “pink spoon” in marketing.

You will notice the image here is like an ice cream store. You have the pink spoon (the literal little pink spoon that gives you a sample taste of ice cream), an ice cream cone, a little bucket of ice cream, ice cream cake, and the calendar which is like for some ice cream stores, believe it or not, have a club you can join where every month you get mailed a coupon for a new delicious flavor of ice cream. It costs a bunch of money because it is really rare, but that’s what you get.



There are different levels of the funnel. You will notice that it is wider at the top and narrower at the bottom. Wider at the top is of course more people are going to try the free thing; less people will try the cone, less people will get a gallon, and very few people will go for the club.

Think of it as a yoga studio. The pink spoon would be a free class. The ice cream cone might be a drop in class. The bucket of ice cream might be a ten pass or a monthly pass. The cake might be a weekend workshop. The club would be the teacher training. Interesting fact, if you take out the teacher training at the sales funnel of most yoga studios, they will collapse within six months to a year. They will just totally not last. It is that important.

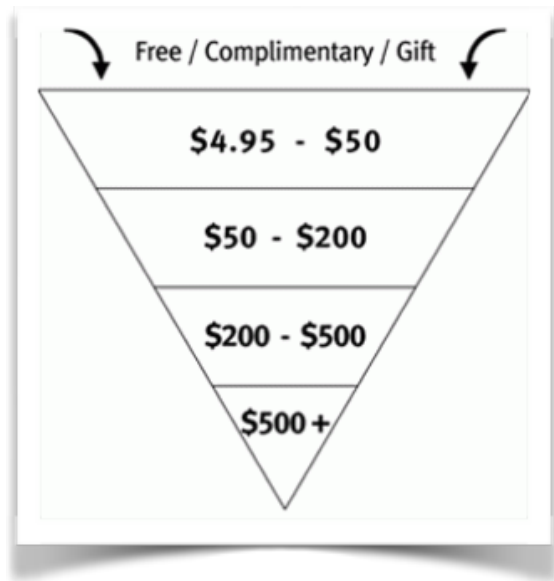
There is the bronze, silver, and gold sort of levels. You have seen this all sorts of places. You will see the image below and it gives you a sense of what the price points might be. The pink spoon is free. The next level is anywhere from \$5 to \$50, then \$50 to \$200 for the level after that, and then \$200 to \$500, and then the bottom level of \$500 plus, as an example. It may vary.

The important thing is having levels.

There are a few reasons this matters so much.

First of all, consider the impact of trying to remove levels from the sales funnel. Think of it as just pink spoons. Cover with your hand the whole sales funnel and all you have is the pink spoons. You are kind of popular for awhile, but you are broke at the end and you have no ice cream.

And it is actually really frustrating for people who then discover a flavour they like and they want more. You tell them they can have another little sample, but that is all they can have. Eventually, that gets very frustrating for people.



But, on the other side of it, a yoga studio would collapse without the teacher training because that is where most of their money comes from. The yoga studio actually doesn't make that much money from the regular classes because the teacher needs to be paid, there is overhead etc. Teacher trainings are thousands of dollars so that is where they make most of their money.

Imagine covering the sales funnel, except the calendar at the bottom of the funnel. That would be like walking into a yoga studio and saying, "Hey, I was wondering if I could do a drop-in class?"

They would say, "We don't do that, but if you would like to sign up for our \$3,000 teacher training you can." You get what a huge leap that is. You walk in to a studio where you don't know the teachers, you don't know their philosophy, you don't know anything about their platform or who they are, and they are immediately expecting you to make that kind of a leap.

Here is the really compelling piece that will just nail some of you. Take out everything, cover up the pink spoon, cover up everything below the ice cream cone. I would suggest that the situation most holistic practitioners are in, most holistic practitioners are in is a position of just selling ice cream cones.

That sounds like this: “Hey, thanks for coming in for the session. Would you like to book another session?” and then when they come back, “Would you like to book another session?” And figuratively, it is just selling ice cream cones.

I want to submit that that isn’t as safe for people as you would think. You don’t know if they want to try a whole cone. They just want to try a sample first. So it is not safe for them and it is not that sustainable for you.

Now you are stuck just trying to get new people in all the time, trying to rebook people, having that uncomfortable conversation. Having a sales funnel makes it much safer for people to engage at the level that feels comfortable for them. It also makes your work much more sustainable for you.

I will tell you a bit about my personal experience with this. When I first started off I was just doing workshops. I had no pink spoons. It was kind of hard to get people in my workshops. I had one workshop, this one weekend workshop called the Radical Business Intensive. Then I started developing some pink spoons.

I came up with my Niche Workbook. I came up with The Horrible Hundred, the Radical Business 180, these early diagnostics that are a part of the eBook that you can download on my Web site. I had those and those were great.

Then I had this intro workshop that I was doing. One day, I thought, I just need to record this, get it transcribed, so I can offer it as a pink spoon as a free thing on my Web site. I had that. People immediately loved having that. It didn’t make me any money but it helped me grow my list.

I combined the quizzes plus the transcript of that plus a few other things into this 200 page eBook (which is overkill). You don’t need that much content for a pink spoon. It might be too much, but a lot of people say they love it.

My blog has become a huge pink spoon. The great thing with the blog is that I am getting to a point where I can take some of those posts from my blog and move them into products. I take them off my blog, turn them into a product that I can charge for, but I got to share it and it got to be useful for people in the meantime, which I feel really wonderful about.

Then I noticed that I was getting a lot of people who were holistic practitioners. I created this workshop, Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners. That was another revenue stream. I had this other sort of more green business thing and the holistic practitioner workshop.

Then I created the “How to Create a Free Gift on Your Website”, basically, how to create the pink spoon on your Web site. That was a little bit additional revenue.

Then I was seeing that I had so many of my favourite clients who were just never going to come back to the same old workshop – so I designed a workshop called The HotBox which was invite only for my favourite clients. Five clients per workshop. 100% based in “hotseats.” Each person gets an hour of the groups time. I’ve done three of them so far and the results have been really powerful. I charge a sliding scale of \$250–\$500 for it.

Then I got this crazy idea to turn my weekend workshop, the Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners, into this six-week online course, which I have been enjoying so much, and that you are a part of. That has been really good financially, sustainably, etc. I charged \$200 for a basic level and then offered the group course plus an hour of coaching for \$300 and six coaching sessions for \$700. I made \$8400 or so. That’s more profitable than most weekends I’ve ever done (no costs for venue, travel, accommodations etc.).

Then I led a Niching for Hippies virtual course. The first time I led it, I charged \$300 per person and got about 45 people. So, that was about \$13,000 when it was all said and done. I did it again six months later and charged \$600 for it and got 45 people. In the end, that was about \$23,000 of profit.

My situation used to be, “I’m broke. I need to hit the road and do some more workshops.” But now I am actually hitting the road with money in my bank instead of the tank being dry.

As my sales funnel has become more robust, I can’t tell you the relief it is. It feels like the boat is getting so much more solid. It is not leaking as much. Again, not just being safer for people to check me out, but to uphold me. Also, I created a bunch of these case studies that are on my Web site for free.

But, it all starts with the pink spoons. It all starts with the free gift you can offer people. This is not a new idea. Ice cream stores do it. Bakeries do it. Grocery stores do it. Authors do it with “free chapters” of their books and blogs. You should do it too.

It starts with giving people a way to sample what you have to offer with no risk, at no cost and that take zero time from you.

There’s nothing I know of that will help you build your list, deepen trust, connect with people and develop a following that having a thoughtful, well put together pink spoon.

If you’d like some help in creating one for your website, check out the “How to Create a Free Gift on Your Website” on my products page. I think you’ll love it.

Bottom line: if you are in The Meantime, something is not working about your sales funnel. Your sales funnel is likely a leaky bucket. Sometimes plugging the holes is a faster and more sustainable approach than pouring in the water harder.

In reality, this whole ebook is about your sales funnel. The key question during The Meantime is, “What levels could I most easily and quickly add to my sales funnel to bring in more income right away?”

If you’re getting a lot of attention and traffic but no business, consider adding a pink spoon. If you feel like you’ve maxed out your list and they’ve already bought everything you have to offer, consider offering them a higher level.

Worksheet

Draw out your *current* sales funnel below:

Worksheet

Draw out your *ideal* sales funnel below:

The Low Hanging Fruit



1) Do More Of What's Worked In The Past

A simple idea. Ask yourself what you've done in the past to bring in sales and income. And then do more of that.

That sounds too simple. I get it.

But, it's often a profound moment when I ask entrepreneurs, 'How did you build your business when you first got started?'

And they tell me.

"Are you still doing that?"

"No." they reply.

"Why not?" I ask. And the answer is usually just that they got busy and it fell away. But, almost always, it's something they could do again (at least as a short term fix).

Worksheet

How did you build your business when you first got started? Describe the process below:

2) Do More Of What's Working Now

A twist on the last one. You are likely doing things that work to bring in clients right now. You could likely double your effort and focus on those things and create better results.

Worksheet

What's working to bring in clients and money right now (and how could you do more of that):

3) Raise Your Prices

So many people are undercharging.

And by undercharging I mean they're charging amounts that both don't honestly feel good to them and don't genuinely sustain even their basics.

You might be shocked at how positive the response is that you get if you raised your prices.

By how much should you increase it?

It could be anywhere from 10% to 50%. If you choose to do this, it can often be a good idea, especially if it's a big price hike, to educate them as to why you've done this.

You can also do what's called "grandfathering people in." That's where you give your clients (or a segment of them) a heads up that, in three months, your prices will be going up for most people but that they'll have access to the old rate for another six months.

You can also offer a package deal (e.g. "If you want to book ten massages now, you'll get them for the existing price even if you use them after the price has gone up.")

The assumption would be that the more expensive something is, the fewer people would buy it. But that's not always true. Many people are shocked to find that their business actually increases after they raise their price and/or that the quality of their clients increases.

You might also be shocked to find out that some of your clients have been thinking of stopping their work with you because they feel so guilty about the deal they're getting from you and they feel like they're taking advantage of you. True story.

4) Upsells & Downsells

This is such a simple and almost always overlooked tactic that can add money to almost every transaction you make.

There are two ideas here. The Upsell and Downsell.

The Upsell: at the point of transaction, when they're about to buy, you offer them an upgrade of some sort.

The Downsell: if they can't afford what you've offered, you offer them a more affordable version.

Example: I used to run a series of day-long, leadership workshop for high school students across Alberta called The School Revolution. It was, if I recall, about \$50 per student to attend. So, let's say that the school wanted to send six students. That's \$300. While I was getting registered, I'd make them an offer. "We have these two ebooks about how to run a more successful student council – one is focused on the organization of it and the other is a listing of over 250 student tested and approved events. We normally sell them for \$50 each but, when schools are coming to our workshops, we offer them together for \$80, would you like us to add that to your invoice?" I think people said yes about 90% of the time.

Now, let's say they couldn't come because foolishly I had scheduled my workshop around Halloween when their Halloween Dance was going to happen. Instead of making no money I would express my regret on my scheduling and make them the same offer. It went from my making no money per transaction to making \$80 about 90% of the time.

Another way to look at this is to offer to extend the clients session length. If they've booked a 60 minute massage and you happen to have some extra time, why not offer them a 90 minute massage? If they say "no" it's no big deal. If they say "yes" you've just increased your income by 50%.

Worksheet

What else could you offer at the point of sale?

List your ideas on this page.

5) Ask Clients To Rebook

During my interview with Eric Brown we discussed the notion of asking people to rebook. We didn't agree on the exact approach but we both agreed it was important. Our conversation about it follows.

Tad: The other important thing is that when we ask it is like giving them the opportunity. It is asking, but without the assumption to it. There is a real difference between, "So what time next week are you going to book?" with this assumption that you will book or there will be consequences, and a very open asking without the assumption that they are going to say yes.

It is just like, "So, would you like to book your next appointment next week at the same time?" and keeping it very open.

Eric: I would actually disagree with you there.

Tad: Oh, really?

Eric: I understand what you are saying, but I think you do have to make that assumption and we want to push for it. We know that it does not matter what modality you practice. People are not going to get the best benefit out of just one visit or one treatment. We know that for most holistic therapies, the benefit really comes with ongoing care.

Tad: Totally.

Eric: It is cumulative. The more you get the better results you get. I think we have an ethical responsibility to our clients to educate them to that fact and let them know they are doing themselves a disservice by not rebooking, by not coming in regularly and getting on some kind of a structured plan.

As uncomfortable as it seems in terms of asking things of our clients, we need to ask them to take some action for their own

benefit. It is not a selfish request, but if you really do care about your clients, you are going to ask them.

Really, one thing you always want to do is to ask people to rebook. Just asking, “Shall we book your next appointment now?” is going to get you a result. Ideally, though, you want to systemize that process and educate people about your processes, what happens over time, and the benefits they are going to see.

In literature they would call this “foreshadowing.” I refer to it as “future pacing.” Throughout your interactions with a client, you are going to assume that they are going to come and see you regularly. As you are talking to them, you are going to outline what is going to happen to them over time with these subsequent visits.

If I am massaging somebody I say, “I know this feels tender right now. I can see you flinching a little bit, so I am going to ease up a little bit. What you are going to find is that over the next four visits, as we start to stretch out your muscles, as they become more relaxed and the circulation is normalized, this is going to start to feel less and less tender with each visit.

“In four to six weeks’ time, I should be able to go into your muscles relatively deeply and, instead of hurting, it is going to feel good. That means we are getting things back to a normal state for you.”

Again, I just call it future pacing. I do not know what else to call it. You always want to be talking about the future with your clients.

Tad: You want to paint them a picture of what it could be.

Eric: Yes, and outlining the benefits for them, as well. “You are going to see this kind of improvement, these improvements in your range. Within this number of weeks, you are going to be able to do this activity or you are going to feel this way.”

Tad: I think that is a really important thing to let people know what can be coming. If all someone has known is that tension and they have never experienced anything else, it helps to paint them a picture.

I think one of the cores in business is holding a vision for our clients. It might be even better than the vision they hold for themselves. We might know what is possible whereas they do not. They might say, “My shoulder has always been locked up. I am always this sensitive to touch.” You might know where you can take them, but they may not know and it is important to have that conversation.

It is interesting. I think all of us and anyone listening to this call would have no problems with not selling people more than they need ethically. We would never, ever sell somebody something they do not need. We’re fine with that.

However, what about this question of selling people less than they need? If your friend was about to cross the Sahara Desert and they said, “Hey, I’m fine. I have a glass of water,” you would not say, “Okay.” No, you would say, “Hey, idiot. Let’s go for a walk for half an hour and see how we do,” and at the end they are like, “Gosh! I am so thirsty!”

To me, it is not necessarily a pushy thing. I think Eric and I are coming from slightly different places in terms of the level of assumption. However, I think the core of it from which we are both coming is that it is really coming from this place that your job is to help them get a result. They came to you for a result. Maybe that result is that they are going to feel better. Maybe the result is just a nice massage or that the muscles are going to relax.

Whatever it is, our job is to help them get that result. Our job is to be a partner with them, and it really is a disservice if, because we are so meek, we say, “Oh, no.” We never ask instead of having an honest conversation of, “Hey, look. Here is what I am noticing in your body. I really think it is going to take about this much work and I think we can create these fabulous results with this.”

It is engaging them in a real conversation about taking them the whole way instead of just giving them a massage. There is a real difference between being pushy and abrasive and having a real, honest, heartfelt conversation with them and a practical conversation about how we get them to where they want to go.

Eric: Exactly. What you are bringing up here, too, is what I would call a treatment approach. Chiropractors and medical professions do this very well, but holistic practitioners would never hear about this or typically do not think this kind of way in schools, at least in my experience. Even where they are trained, massage therapists do not always practice it.

You are an expert and you have a sense of what this person needs to get the result that they want to get. Again, it is your obligation to sit down with them at some point on that first visit and say, “This is where you are now. You are telling me that this is where you want to be. These are my recommendations.”

Tad: Totally.

Eric: “You need to be in here weekly for an hour visit so we can do this kind of work. You should see a result with that kind of schedule in about six weeks. Then we can reevaluate you and see what other treatment is required if any.”

They know exactly what they need to do. They have some strong recommendations.

Tad: As long as you are genuinely okay with them saying no or yes, it is about having the conversation. Sometimes we are so afraid to manipulate and we are so afraid to push, that we do not have the conversation.

I think this happens in people’s personal lives, too. It is so important. They came to you for something; they came to you for help. In this context, you probably know more about certain

things than they do. They know more about a lot of things in their life, but you may have some perspective they do not have.

They came to you for that perspective and they are paying you for it. They are not paying you just for the manual work; they are also paying you for your understanding. They are not just paying you because you have hands that you can touch them with. It is because you know what to do with those hands in the case of massage.

There are so many more things we could talk about, but I really want to actually flag some of your products. There is the one we talked about earlier and then there is this one called 60 Clients in 60 Days.

In my experience of working with a lot of holistic practitioners, there are a lot of really important, interesting, and incredibly profitable conversations about what you do with your existing clients. This is another whole thing. However, I see that most practitioners are in a place where they need more clients, new clients, right now.

This is hands-down the best program I have ever seen or come across in terms of how simple it is. Do you want to say anything else about it? We already touched on it.

Worksheet

What wording might you use at the end of a session to see if someone might like to rebook that would feel good to you both?

6) Follow Up With Those Who've Expressed Interest In The Past

If you've been in business for a while, you've likely had people express interest and tell you that they'd love to work with you. Why not shoot them an email to see if it might be a good time to work together? One of my colleagues does this once a year. He sends anyone who's expressed interest and email saying, in essence, "Is this going to be the year we work together? I've got _____ spaces available in my calendar."

Worksheet

Who can you think of who it might be worth following up with? Try to list 10 of them below:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

7) Reactivate Dormant Clients

My guess is that you have a number of clients who used to see you regularly who you haven't seen in a while.

Now, maybe it's because they no longer need what you offer. That's possible.

But it's *also* possible that they just got busy, got caught up in the moving parade of life and have been meaning to do something with you for a while and haven't gotten to it.

So what can you do? You can reach out to your past clients who were *already* interested in you and what you had to offer. You can make them a special deal, saying, "I miss you! It's been a while. I'd like to offer you 25% off if you book this week."

A local video store used to do that. They sent out a postcard that read like a junior high, angst-ridden love letter saying, "We miss you! Was it something we did? Don't leave us! We love you!" And it offered a free rental. It was super charming.

So often, when people are in The Meantime, they think that the only path forward is to get new clients. But, usually, the fastest approach is to see if you can get existing clients to come back more often or spend more money per transaction.

Later on, you'll learn about a strategy for giving out free 30 minute sessions (and how to turn those into ongoing clients). This is just the kind of thing you could send out to clients who've been dormant for a while.

8) Improve An Existing Product Or Service & Relaunch It

Let's say you've got an ebook on your site. And you love it but you've had a lot of ideas on how to improve it since you've written it. Why not take a day or two and really focus on how to make it better? Why not add all the new exercises, case studies, quotes, images and thoughts you've had since writing it originally and then re-launch it as a 2.0 version to your list? You might be amazed at how much better you're able to make it.

Maybe you could add another modality to it.

If it's an ebook, could you add video or audio to it? Could you add writings and articles of other people (with permission and attribution) to buff it up?

If it's a video, could you add a transcript of the video plus a workbook?

If it's some audio, could you create a ten minute video to introduce some new ideas you've had since the audio? etc.

Worksheet

What's a product or service you could improve and relaunch? Do some brainstorming below:

9) Repurpose Existing Content

Do you have material that could be repackaged in a different way?

Turning my live weekend workshop into an online program is an example of that.

Another example is the *So You Think You Can Niche?* contest which I ran in 2014. 126 people submitted a meme (image with text) of themselves with their niche described in 120 characters or less. These niches were then rated and commented on by those on my list (over 2500 comments in total). I gave a personal rating and commentary to every single one of them. That's a lot of work. But then I cut and pasted all of into Niching Case Studies that I posted at NichingSpiral.com — one per blog post. Each post shows the contestant's niche, their average score, my comments and the most useful comments from others, plus I gave them all a chance to redo their niche based on the feedback received and to share what they learned from the process.

Another example: I have a three hour intro workshop I run called Marketing for Hippies 101. In April of 2014, I had that workshop professionally videoed and edited. That video will be turned into a product that people can buy for \$40 on my website (plus a few other bonuses). But, even more than that, it's something I could give as a bonus. If I ever do the six week online version of my weekend course, I will give this video as something participants must watch before the course begins so I don't have to go over the same content.

But there's more. The content I go through in that intro course is the exact same content and in the same order as the official, published Marketing for Hippies book that I am writing. So, I will get it transcribed and the transcript will form the skeleton of that book. It will be fleshed out with other transcripts I have plus a few dozen of the blog posts that I've written over the years. This is all existing content that can simply be reorganized and edited into something that could be very useful for my business.

I have over 500 blog posts on my blog as I write this. Over the coming years, many of those will be taken down and turned into products (other than my book) that I can sell.

Some people have a lot of small products that could all be put into a basket together and sold as a package to greater effect than if they were sold separately.

Sometimes you don't need new flowers, you just need to find a different vase to put them in to arrange them as a beautiful bouquet. Sometimes $1+1=3$.

Sometimes you can reframe or reposition the same content with more punch. Maybe you offer a variety of modalities for holistic healing and you put together a "Migraine Relief" package or a "PMS Relief Package." Get creative and you might be surprised at the response you get.

Sometimes just changing the name of a product or the headline describing it can get a wildly different response. Sometimes you don't need to change the content at all, only the wrapping paper.

Of packaging Tara Gentile says:

If you're a jewelry designer, you might try to package up a necklace, bracelet and pair of earrings. Simple, right? But the result is a greater value than the sum of its parts; it's now a night-on-the-town kit. If you're a health coach, you might try to package a recipe book, coaching program, and one-off session with you. Again, simple. And again, the result is a greater value than the sum of its parts; it's now the method, the accountability, and the day-to-day information you need to succeed all-in-one.

Have you run a live workshop for years? What if you turned it into a 6 week teleseminar series? I did this with my weekend workshop that I'd led for over a decade. I offered it for \$200 to my list as a six week virtual workshop where each week they'd participate in a 90 minute call, participate in a private Facebook group and get homework in between. I had 40 responses and made \$8000 on content I'd already been teaching for years. The best part? People were so happy! They knew I was never going to be bringing my workshop to their area and they'd always wanted to work with me. Here was a workable chance finally.

But you could just as easily do the opposite. If you've been leading workshops virtually, why not create a live version of it? Maybe a weekend intensive or one live class per week?

What if you recorded it all into a product people could buy? (e.g. a series of videos, webinars, audio and/or workbooks).

Some people like to read things. Some like to listen to audio while they drive. Some like to watch videos. Some like to learn live in a classroom. Some want to just apply things. There are a lot of different learning styles and learning approaches that may suit different moments.

If you're wanting help with creating an online program, I commend my colleague Brad Morris to you: bradleytmorris.com

Worksheet

What's a product or service you have that you could repurpose and how would you do it?

10) Ask People To Work With You

*“You could have anything in the world you wanted
if you were willing to ask 1,000 people for it.”*

— Byron Katie

This one is so simple that it’s easy to miss.

Just ask people to work with you. Ask people to book a session. Directly. Now, of course, there are ways to do this that are crass and ways to do it that are more graceful.

The basis is making sure that there is some genuine connection in place before you ask. And then the ask might sound like, “Would you be open to exploring working with me? I think I might be able to help. Could we grab coffee this week?” It can be that simple.

While in the UK in 2012, I hosted a party to which I invited my favourite clients from my last trip there and people who I thought might make really good hubs for me in the future. There were about 30 people there. Throughout the party, I connected with some new folks, guests of either my clients or the local hubs, with whom I resonated. “Are you coming to my workshop this weekend?” I would ask them.

“Weekend workshop?”

“Yes. It’s a weekend marketing workshop for hippies. It’s pay what you can. I’d love it if you came.”

They were flattered to be asked so directly. I got their info and sent them an email later that night with the info they needed. I think all four of them ended up coming. They never would have if I hadn’t made myself vulnerable and asked. If they’d said “no” that would have been okay too.

Sometimes there may be people in your life who you’ve known for a long time and you can lovingly harass them more casually and lightly with, “Will you just book a session already? I love you. Let me help you.” Or you might give them a free

certificate for 30 minutes of your time (more on that later) as a gift and invite them to use it. Or you might invite them to a free workshop to learn more about you. But ask. Invite people to take a step.

11) Reduce The Risk

If I had to pick one tactic that could significantly increase the response to existing offers it would be this: identify and eliminate the risks that people perceive.

You might think that if you just offer people what they want that all of your problems are solved. Not so. You can offer people exactly what they want but, if they think it's too risky to invest money and time into it? They won't.

I imagine it like a wall in between you and your client. Sometimes they really, really want to get over the wall to get to you and spend money on you but the Wall of Risk is too high.

Your job is to reduce the size of that wall (at a minimum), eliminate it (as a goal) and even reverse it (ideally) so that, in the place of the wall between you is now a gentle downward slope leading them to you.

For over a decade, I've led my day-long and weekend workshops on a pay what you can basis. People attend the entire workshop and then, at the very end, pay me whatever they want to pay me. Is it a risk for me? Sure. But it's a calculated one. It makes the promotion of my workshops so much easier and the time and effort it saves me is more than worth it. I still make really good money, people get access to something to which they might not normally get access.

The core of your business's success is your ability to craft irresistible offers. That is: offers that are easier for your ideal clients to say "yes" to than "no." Offers that make people think, "I'd be a damn fool to pass this up."

The way you do that is not only to add things to your offer but also to take away some things that people worry about.

What is the most important thing to remove?

Risk.

Why?

Anytime two people enter into a transaction one of those people is being asked to take on some of the risk, all of the risk or MORE than all of the risk. And if it's a buyer and seller, who carries the lion's share of the risk?

The buyer.

"According to a survey by the public relations firm Porter Novelli, only 37 percent of the public considers information that comes from a software or computer company "very or somewhat believable." If you're with a pharmaceutical company, the number is 28 percent. Car manufacturers rate 18 percent, insurance companies 16 percent. And can we blame people for being so skeptical? Think of your own experiences as a customer. How many times did you feel misled or disappointed?"

— The Anatomy of Buzz by Emmanuel Rosen

That may be a mildly interesting indictment of the marketplace, but here's what should be of profound interest to you: This is no secret to the buyer and you can't believe how much business you lose simply due to risk. More accurately: you can't believe how much business you lose because your prospects and clients merely perceive risk.

Who Would You Buy From:

What follows is an example often given by marketing genius Jay Abraham in his workshops.

Imagine that a man had a young daughter for whom he wanted to buy a horse. Of course, he would shop around.

The first person is selling their horse for \$500. They tell him that it's great horse.

The second person is also selling their horse for \$500. But they tell him that if he buys the horse before the end of the day they'll give him 10% off.

The third person is also selling for \$500 but they tell him that he can bring the horse home and keep it for a month – at no charge. After a month, if he likes it, he can pay.

The fourth person looks him straight in the eye and says, “My horse is loving, kind and wonderful with children. Of course, I would say that. It’s my horse. So, here’s what i suggest. You let me bring the horse to your land so that your daughter can try it out for 30 days before you even think of making a decision. I’d also like to furnish you with a month’s supply of hay. I will also send my groomsman out once a week to show your daughter how to groom and care for the pony. I would like your daughter to ride it each day to make sure that they get along with each other. At the end of the thirty days, I will come to your place and if your daughter has fallen in love with the horse as I predict, then I will ask to be paid. If not, I will take the pony back and have my stable hand clean up the barn so that you will never have known that it was there.”

This fourth man is charging \$750.

Who do you suppose he bought the pony from?

What is Risk?

Risk is a simpler way of saying, “the fear of loss.” They are afraid that, if they give you their money, they will lose something.

There are financial risks. Emotional risks. Time risks. Safety risks.

They’re hesitant towards purchasing any product or service – especially major purchases – and they really don’t want to make the wrong decision.

So, if you can overcome that hesitation to take action by offering to guarantee their purchase and reverse the risk of buying, you’ll get a lot more business. Common sense but not common practice.

For example, people are afraid they might:

- Lose money
- Waste their time
- Feel stupid
- Be embarrassed
- Be laughed at
- Lose face with friends
- Become trapped in a long-term relationship with you
- Feel stressed
- It'll require a tonne of maintenance
- It'll take too long to learn to use
- If they don't like it they'll be forced to reject you and say "no" to working with you again. Most people can't say "no" without feeling overwhelmed with guilt. People hate having to say "no." You must do everything in your power to make it easy for them to say "no" to you. You must give them an escape route that makes sense. And you must never do anything to put them in a position where they have to say "no." That's what the creepy guy at the bar does, he keep pushing and clinging onto women so that they feel like they have to tell him guy to leave. They may not enjoy it, but what other option is left when the guy won't take a hint? If you add a client or a potential client to your email list without their permission, now they're in the position of having to email you and ask to be removed. It's both a hassle and it's uncomfortable. Always remember this: the absence of a "no" is not the same thing as the presence of a "yes."
- They'll be intimidated and feel pressured or bullied if they call you for that "free consultation." The fear of pressure is a major risk. (Note: Pressure is always present in buyer/seller interactions – one of the most powerful shifts you can make is to be seen as a trusted advisor vs. a salesperson. You've reached this when they cease to question your intent. When they know that you hold their needs as highly as your hold yours.)

Your marketing must lower the risk of taking the first step.

Once a client walks in the door and spends their money for the first time, chances are that they will come back in a number of times and spend more money over the years. Right? But if you can never even get them in the door, if you can't even engage them in the first transaction, you not only lose that sale (maybe \$50) — you've lost all the potential money in revenue that would have come from them for a lifetime (maybe \$600).

Imagine what would happen if instead of 3/10 prospects buying that it jumped up to 5/10 prospects simply because you actively and forthrightly reduced the risk of working with you? Do you know what even a moderate 20% increase would mean to your bottom line? Think about it.

Now there are a lot of ways to reduce risk:

- payment plans
- warranties
- pay for results
- free support
- try before you buy
- better than risk free offers
- triple your money back
- pay what you can/want pricing
- strategically getting business through referral and word of mouth

But one of the most time honoured ways to address risk is to offer a solid, no funny business, iron clad guarantee.

“By turning the tables and taking all the risk off the buyer and assuming it yourself, your sales proposition is so much more powerful, appealing, and embraceable that considerably more customers will break out of their paralysis and take advantage of your offer, since there’s no risk on their part to do so. If you are the first company in your field to assume the risk for the customer, you gain an incredible advantage. Most businesses de-emphasize the guarantee. But make sure you state a long enough term within which the no-risk guarantee is in effect so that the customer feels very secure about his purchase. If you emphasize the no-risk guarantee for a comfortable amount of time and give customers something valuable as a bonus, you’ve probably got a sale.” – Jay Abraham

A few examples of risk reversal in action:

Personal Best: A seminar company in Calgary, Alberta decided to give away 1500 spaces at their Level 1 weekend seminar for free. They would normally charge \$1000 for the weekend, so they were giving away \$1.5 million dollars of real value. But, of course, many of these people decided to go onto Levels Two and Three.

Lee Valley Tools: (they sell tools to serious woodworkers and gardeners) “We pledge you the best service we can provide and personal attention for every order you place. We will always try our best to give you the fastest delivery possible and the best values. If, for any reason, you are not completely satisfied, just return your purchase within 3 months by ground mail. You can choose to either exchange the product or receive a complete refund (including our regular shipping charges); we will also refund your return parcel post costs at the ground mail rate.”

Vitamix: (a high powered blender) We Guarantee Your Vita-Mix Super 5000 Will Run Trouble-Free For 7 Years in Household Use Or We Will Fix It For FREE! Quite simply, there is nothing that compares to the power, performance and versatility of the Vita-Mix machine. And no coverage that comes close to our 7 Year Limited Warranty. Far beyond the scope of the typical kitchen appliance warranty that merely covers defects in workmanship, we guarantee that your Vita-Mix machine will perform like new for a full seven years from the date of purchase – or we will fix or repair it for FREE. When you invest in a Vita-Mix machine, you are getting the highest-performing, longest-lasting, most user-friendly appliance available – along with a warranty that has truly met it’s match.

Eco Friendly Painting Company: A friend of mine Selah Koile in Halifax who decided to target leaders in the environmental community for paint jobs. Why? Her business is an eco-friendly painting business. Their endorsement will mean everything. Their endorsement will massively reduce the risk that people perceive and experience.

A **TV-set distributor** offers to buy back any sets not sold by his retailers in the first 180 days.

A **consultant** agrees, in writing, not to cash any cheques until his clients tell him they're satisfied with the work he's done.

A **prominent builder-developer** guarantees the development costs to his clients. If he goes over budget he pays the costs, not his clients. He's the only person in his area doing this, and he gets most of the business because of that.

A large **power-equipment company** in the South that has built a multimillion-dollar business by telling clients they have five working days after they take delivery of any large piece of power equipment to bring it back for a 100 percent refund – no questions asked. They've have three people in the last five years ask for a refund, which is the negative side. But they've had a 300% increase in business, which is the positive side. And every piece of equipment that was returned was sold almost immediately to someone else – with the same guarantee.

How else can you reduce the Wall of Risk?

It's a bigger conversation but here are some more quick ideas to get you started.

- **Offer them a solid pink spoon:** a sample of your work so they can feel more confident about what they're buying. marketingforhippies.com/pink-spoons.
- **Get and use testimonials** from happy clients.
- **Share stories and case studies** from clients you've helped.
- **Be endorsed by a significant hub** (more on that later).
- **Build up a systematic way of getting referrals.** People referred by friends will trust you more.
- **Walk them through the process** of how your product or service works so they can feel confident about the process of working with you.
- **Offer payment plans!** This simple idea can have an incredibly profound impact. Imagine you're offering a package for \$1000. If you, instead, offered it for three payments of \$335 or five payments of \$200, I can promise you that you would get a much larger response. Some people want to pay full price — by all means keep that option — but most people would prefer a payment plan.
- **Offer a big incentive if they pay in full.** If you would rather get all the money upfront (and why not) then can you make sure you offer a really compelling incentive for them to do so?

Worksheet

What do you imagine are the top five risks people see in doing business with someone like you? List below:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Worksheet

What specific things could you do to reduce, eliminate or reverse the risk on all five of those things? List below:

Risk #1:

Risk #2:

Risk #3:

Risk #4:

Risk #5:

12) Hustle For Money: Sell, Collect, Rent, Borrow Or Refinance Things

A simple one. If you're in a real cash crunch and the situation is desperate, then sometimes desperate measures are called for.

On a very simple level, could you always keep a jar into which you put spare bills and coins, to save and use only when needed?

Could you sell your car? Your house? A boat? Jewelry? Books you have? Something else that could bring in a fair chunk of cash quickly? This isn't a desirable thing to do but, in The Meantime it's important not to take any options off the table.

Could you refinance your mortgage to free up money?

Could you rent out a room in your home for six months to a year? Or could you put up a room in your home on [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and rent it out for a bit more whenever the timing works for you?

Could you move in with family or friends for a few months and rent out your entire home during that time for a small profit?

Could you get a bank loan or a line of credit?

Could you borrow money from friends and family?

Could you use your credit card and get the limit raised?

Do you have friends or clients who owe you money? This is a good time to follow up on that. You never know, they might have it for you.

None of these are perfect solutions. They all carry some measure risk. But in a crisis, they may need to be options you consider. I would strongly recommend that you don't act on any of these immediately. Read the rest of this ebook first as it may give you the ideas you need to avoid these kinds of extreme measures and their potentially unpleasant side effects. But, it's always good to remember you've got these options in your back pocket in case you hit truly dire straits.

My dear friend and colleague Antoine Palmer of sustainival.com shared his experience of hustle when I told him about this product:

Not sure. Short term money solutions are pretty person-specific. For me it might be lining up a consulting gig or just reaching out to people with growing businesses and letting them know I have free time. More likely it would be using credit for awhile and putting a real estate deal together with a finder's fee to tide me over. That all takes having the skill sets and networks in place already. Like dormant parachute businesses. In the past before I had any of that in place, I have resorted to getting a job on a couple of occasions. I have also purchased products and sold them door to door or even on the street in the past. For example, when I was a monk and we opened our cultural centre in Dijon, we raised awareness and funds at the same time by handing out flyers and selling incense on the street for a couple bucks apiece. We would make 300 euros in a 6-hour day with a 90% margin.

Edmonton colleague Dana da Ponte shared this early story of hustle:

I remember how courage helped to attract clients in my start up days. At the time, I was giving angel readings and when Edmonton was having an art walk on Whyte Ave (where my shop was located), I dressed up as an angel and greeted people on the street. This was effective and surprisingly fun (even though this was way out of my comfort zone).

The main thing is that the motto of The Meantime is W.E.I.T. (What Ever It Takes) but without, as my colleague Sarah Juliusson of birthyourbusiness.com pointed out, resorting to desperation:

Not having enough money coming in is Hard. Heartbreaking, even. Self-esteem crushing. I could go on . . . There are lots of creative quirky ideas to help bring in short-term cash, such as a flash invented holiday sale, bonus offers for referrals, or a special workshop collaboration with a key supporter, but the biggest lesson I've learned in my years of self-employment and business coaching is that panic does not sell. Instead, nurture yourself with a simple retreat day. Unplug the internet. Clear your desk. Reflect. Dream. Be Wildly Creative. Get Real. Some of the best results happen when you ask yourself . . . "What If?"

This article below gives more thoughts on possibilities of selling your stuff for money: collective-evolution.com/2014/04/24/sell-your-crap-pay-off-your-debt-and-do-what-you-love-this-makes-it-all-possible/

And my colleague Anastasia Netri shared her story of “How I got money to grow my biz when I didn’t have any” in the six-minute video at this link: anastasia-netri.com/how-i-got-money-to-grow-my-biz-when-i-didnt-have-any/

Meantime alum Mike Craig shared his experience, “One thing that comes to mind is just actually **sending out the invoices and collecting**. I had to come up with \$5000 a few months ago to pay a visa bill, and i drummed it up all based on work I had done but hadn't collected or invoiced for.”

And, in desperate situations, you can always **declare bankruptcy**. Here are some words from a Meantime alumnus:

I'm putting this in because this has come up for me. I'm classifying it under creating space, and I'm pretty sure that no one else mentioned it. My husband and I are probably going to file for personal bankruptcy. The weight off my chest with this as a possibility is enormous. We don't have much debt, in the grand scheme of things, but enough to be hugely stressful when there's also almost no income. To be trying to launch a business when there's already debt has been devastatingly hard. I'm feeling so relieved. AND there's huge space around my business.

13) Crowd Funding

What if you were to set up a crowd funding campaign to fund the purchase of something critical to the success of your business? Maybe you need a laptop. Maybe you need some more education. Maybe you need a vehicle. Maybe you need to make a video of a workshop so you can sell it as a product. Is there something that's operating as a bottleneck in your business where you think, 'Man. If I just had that one thing, it would help me get over the hump?'

Whatever it is, could you run a campaign to raise funds for it using tools like gofundme.com or indiegogo.com or kickstarter.com?

If you want to learn more about crowdfunding, then I recommend connecting with ianmack.com on how to do it.

But you might be shocked at the incredible amount of financial support that's there for you if your friends can see that having this one thing will really make a difference in your ability to create a right livelihood for yourself.

Important: There may be folks who want you to succeed but don't want to buy from you.

14) Your Wish List — Ask, Barter & Trade

Worksheet

Make a list of everything you need that isn't
more money or clients.

Worksheet

What are the things you need that would help make your business more attractive and sustainable? Make a list below:

Now that you've made your lists, consider the possibility that you may not have to pay for any of these things. Could you, in fact, trade products and services for them? Maybe you really need a laptop and you could trade twenty massages for one. Or you need a new camera but you don't really need your old beater of a car, so you make the trade. Get creative with this. There is an entire economy based on barter and trade and some people do incredibly well it it.

How well? Read this: [one red paperclip](#).

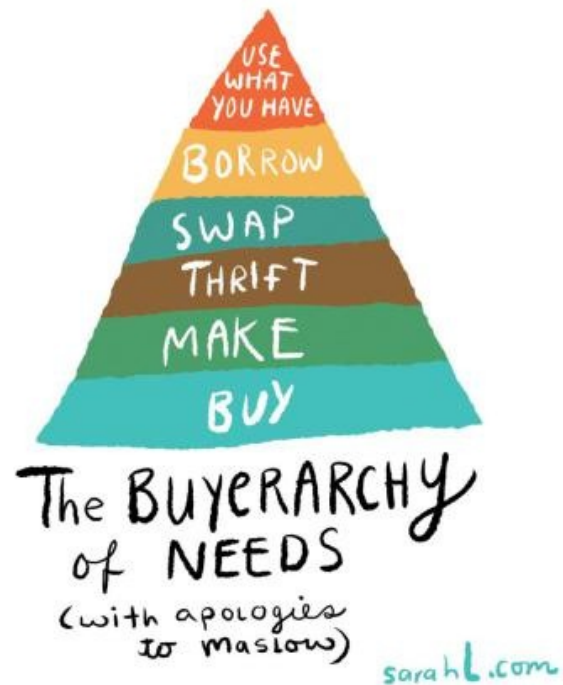
Once you really open your mind to this, you might be amazed at how many things you can get using only barter or trade.

My dear colleague and friend in Toronto, Tracey Tief is one of the most resourceful people I know and has come up with some ingenious ideas over the years.

A spiritual community I hung with in my teens had a saying that stuck with me: "The last way you should pay someone is with money." So in my present growth-cash crunch state, I am exploring using Gift, sliding scale rentals, barter, volunteering, Work Exchange and Apprenticeship at anarreshealth.ca

Because I am connected to a communal organic farm, because I am an aromatherapy practice using lots of organically farmed botanicals, and intensively organically farm my back yard, I am able to have WWOOFers volunteer 6 hours/5 days a week in exchange for room & board in my home. www.woof.ca

Because I have space that is unused when my shop is not open, it's no skin off my back to offer sliding scale event space. (Okay, so it does involve cleaning before and after, but I do that work.)



Instead of placing ads, I use Facebook, Craigslist, referral incentives and Google Ads, which cost but never more than the business gained for me and are paid after I've earned.

When I needed tables for my space, I put out a call for them in exchange for a two-hour Workshop.

I've had Time Exchange cards made up in business card format to make these exchanges easier and feel more valuable.

Finally, instead of paying people to promote me, my clients who are keen and honest promoters receive 20% of pre tax sales they bring me. That way, I have the money in hand to pay them with! This only works because my margin is 40%.

So, take a look at your wish list (above) again.

Are there things on it you might be able to find for free on a website like freecycle.com or using an app like yerdle.com?

Or maybe for cheap on websites like craigslist.com or kijiji.com?

Or maybe you could just put up a post on Facebook asking for donations of the things on your wish list? You never know! Someone might have an old laptop and be wondering what to do with it and be thrilled to have it go to someone they love.

Also, does anyone owe you some big favours? Maybe you have no need for their help now, but maybe you know someone who does? Let's say that you helped out a friend in a big way and they said, "I owe you," and they're an electrician. Now maybe you don't need their services, but . . . perhaps someone who has the massage table you desperately need is in need of an electrician. And you could make that connection.

See how it works?

Worksheet

People who owe me big (and what they have to offer). Make the list below:

15) Get A Part Or Full Time Job

For some reason, this feels like failure to a lot of people.

But it's not.

Sometimes you just need to get a job to tide yourself over. And sometimes people realize that being an entrepreneur isn't for them. Which is a huge relief. I've seen a number of clients let go of their ideas about being self employed, go back to a job and watched them experience an immediate increase in happiness, financial stability and overall well being.

In the personal growth and conscious business scene, I've seen "getting a job" belittled and made fun of over and over again. As if it's a less evolved way of being. Like the only reason you'd have one is because you're scared and not good enough at manifesting or that you don't trust the Universe enough. Whatever.

Getting a job when you need it isn't failure, it's self care.

In fact, here's a fascinating article about eleven celebrated artists who didn't quit their day job: <http://bit.ly/1f0wj9W>

And sometimes it's just a matter of timing and you need to get a job and slowly build your business on the side until it's at a point you can invest more. Sometimes you just need to let things steep.

If anything, I see people put themselves into crisis mode by leaving a job before they've really gotten clear about what there business is about, if it's viable. They jump off of one boat into the ocean and try to build it while they're swimming. It's a very stressful approach. Sometimes slowing things down just a bit and giving yourself the space you need is the best way.

My dear friend and colleague Jennifer Summerfeldt of midwiferyforthesoul.ca shared this"

As a stay-at-home mother for 11 years, I thought I could take my passion and turn it into a living (overnight). It has now been a solid 15 years that I have been an

entrepreneur at heart, however, none of my attempts have earned me a magnificent living (not yet, anyways).

Sure there are many reasons why I haven't turned my brilliant passion into a raving income and I am constantly working on this.

However, when I was faced with a huge financial need: Needing to earn an income to take care of my children after a separation, I swallowed my pride and re-entered the work force. I always thought I would have to choose between one or the other-work or business-but to my surprise I get to do both.

What a concept!

Am I busy, yes. But what mother is not busy.

During the day, when my day job is slow, I build my online business. I write blogs. I email potential clients. I organize and market workshops. I edit my book. I even have time to bring my children to and from school. Now, I am paid reasonably well, to work on my passion. This has alleviated so much stress.

One of my huge needs was to obtain a mortgage so I could protect our living environment and build roots for my new family. I knew I was not going to be able to do this as a self-employed, sort of paid, mother. Opening up to working in the work force, even if temporary, has brought me a freedom I did not have working solely on my business. The irony is, now, with less time on my hands, I am producing a higher return on my services (not high enough to quit my job yet).

Here is my take on this: If you have a passion and you are following your heart, big money may not happen over night (or in a couple of years) it takes time to really embody your message, skill to “market” your service, patience to work out all the kinks, money to invest in business support, and courage to step powerfully into your craft.

Good ideas and passions don't always guarantee a fast return on your time investment.

I know that there are different ways you can grow fast. There are many online business marketing models out there that, if followed, can turnaround your cash

flow at a quick rate. In my experience, however, without a huge money investment upfront, this fast approach just isn't the case.

There are jobs out there that are flexible and might even benefit from the skills you have developed as an entrepreneur. With the extra cash flow you can start to invest in your business, without having the stress of wondering where the next dollar is going to come from. This way you are not putting “needy” energy into your next workshop invisibly saying things like: “OMG I need for you to commit because if I don't get 10 of people I won't be able to feed my kids” rather you can sit back with ease and say things like: “It would be awesome to fill the spaces, curious to see what will happen this time.” You know what I mean?

It feels really liberating not being “needy” for clients. It feels liberating to choose wisely who I want to do work with and who I want to refer onwards, because I no longer need that income. It feels great knowing that I can do both: work at a day job and build a business. It feels empowering to be able to purchase an online business course, pay for it, and apply the teachings. It feels even better knowing that if I am working with a client in need, I can reduce my service fee substantially to meet his/her need without hesitation.

My colleague Sabrina Ali has come up with the most practical and useful of worksheets for those looking for their ideal job and a thoughtful blog post to introduce it. If you know someone who hates their current job, is un or under employed, dreams of a their dream job etc. send them this so they're ready for it when it shows up. makebelieveforreal.com/get-ready-write-ticket/

And you should also, if you're drawn to this, check out Pam Slim's article about developing your “side hustle.” <http://www.escapefromcubiclenation.com/2010/04/02/whats-your-side-hustle/>

16) Hold A 24 Hour Sale

Another simple idea. If you need money fast, then give people a tight timeframe to respond. Offer an existing product or service on sale for 24 hours. You might be surprised at the response you get.

Sometimes there are people who see what we're offering and think to themselves, "Man. I want to try that out sometime soon." But never get around to it. They just get caught up in life. But then they get this offer from you and think, "Oh! I'm glad I waited. What a great opportunity!" And they buy it.

On November 5th, 2014 I sent out an email to my list announcing a 24 hour sale since it was my birthday. The offer was 50% off everything in the store. I wasn't sure how much might come in from it. In the end? \$2400. It was more than I thought might. And this was with only six products which were, at the time, a bit underpriced (I have since raised the prices). I'm confident that, next year, when I make a similar offer, this number will go up as I will have more info products and also higher prices.

17) Host A Living Room Session

This is something I have done and continue to do. It's so easy and brings in money fast. I was reminded of it by Elizabeth Purvis of marketinggoddess.com:

Another idea I love – again, not my story, but it's an idea that I've passed along to my clients that they have then implemented. Some of them do it to launch, others have done it to get new clients / renewals. It's pretty simple – host a house party or retreat at your home; offer great content and at the end, make a very soft offer for consultations. I've got something new coming up and would love to talk to you about it' kind of soft.

Cirque du Soleil had a strategy they used for years to build up their audiences. They would start their run with a small tent which was easier to fill up. They'd start selling it out and the buzz on the street was that this troupe had sold out shows. Then they'd put up the medium size tent and keep filling them up. And finally, they'd open up the Big Top tent.

But the key is that they started small.

And some people are scared to start small. They resist and brittle against the idea of humble efforts. I see this a lot in the workshop world.

One of the hardest parts about doing workshops is finding the venue. It's often the most expensive part to. But my living room is available whenever I want it (I live alone) and it's free to use.

Over the years, I've hosted many marketing workshops in my living room. They run from 10am 'til 5pm (so I can literally wake up at 9am, tidy a bit more, shower and be ready to go). I charge a \$25 deposit via eventbrite.com (which I can't recommend highly enough) and then they pay me whatever they want to pay me at the end of the day. My living room fits about 12 people and I make around \$1500 for the day.

I've also hosted three hour, \$25, Non Violent Communication workshops. So those make me about \$300.

I've also done an event called The Hotbox in which I've invited only my favourite clients – these are clients who are already very savvy in their business. It's a sliding scale from \$250 to \$500. Only five people are allowed in. We begin with them each having 20 minutes to clarify the issue they want to focus on. Then the rest of the day is them each getting one hour of the groups undivided attention to help solve the issue. They have five minutes to articulate their issue. Then there are 30 minutes where there is no advice allowed, only clarifying questions or reflecting what we're hearing to make sure that it's on track. And then there are 20 minutes of advice. Lastly, five minutes to wrap up and write down any notes. A very simple format, easy to promote and brings in \$1000 - \$2000 every time I do it. In someone's living room. Easy.

Here's a fun variation on the theme from my Toronto colleague Tammy Cunningham:

I did a free afternoon at a Starbucks for singles. I invited them to bring their laptops and smart devices and gave them feedback on their online dating profiles. I invited existing and past clients. And one of them signed up for my big workshop. So that afternoon, generated \$1000.00 sale for me for the MASTERY of Self Expression.

18) Do A Seasonal Promotion

Elizabeth Purvis of marketinggoddess.com shares this gem:

On a recent call with my Goddess Business School Alumni, one of my longtime awesome clients asked me, “Is December a good month to launch my program, or are people all checked out for the holidays?”

Answer: December is a fabulous month for creating income!

There is a myth that “everyone checks out” for the holidays. Nothing could be further from the truth. (Don’t believe me? Take a day and check in on Facebook and Twitter a couple of times. ;))

One simple yet powerful way to boost your results in any promotion is to be a part of the conversation that is already going on in people’s minds. For better or worse (read: regardless of how you feel about the holiday shopping phenomenon), money is flowing in December.

Plus, your most high-achieving clients will be thinking about lining up coaches, mentors and teachers (like you!) to support their success in the new year.

All this means that you have the opportunity to make December one of your best income months of the year, while being of service in the highest way.

You could host a teleseminar right after Christmas and before New Year’s (when things have slowed down, peeps are just chilling and getting caught up – they’re paying attention!); offer Breakthrough sessions or a new program.

But it’s not just December. Think about Valentines Day, Mother’s Day, Independence Day etc. Think of the big holidays in your country and what they symbolize for people and see which holidays might be aligned with what you’re offering. You’ll have a stronger chance of success with your offer if the river is already flowing in that direction.

Elizabeth continues:

Have a holiday sale of any home study courses, past tele seminars or recordings you have (hint: include trainings “hiding on your hard drive” – not currently available on your site – and make them available for that sale only).

Racheal Cook of theyogipreneur.com had this to say about seasonal promotions:

There's no doubt about it – the last 6-8 weeks of the year are the biggest for businesses across almost ALL industries. People are spending money on gifts, on food, and anything holiday party related . . . and big box stores and chains are creating insane amounts of noise to ensure they get a piece of the pie.

You know people are looking to spend {and looking for a bargain too!} during the holiday season. But you DON'T want to feel like you're cheapening yourself or your biz, jumping on a holiday bandwagon, or pandering to a different crowd {you know . . . the discount seeking Groupon seekers who never turn into amazing long term clients}.

How can you – the heart-centred entrepreneur – join in the holiday fun & boost your holiday biz?

Here are 3 ways to MINDFULLY tweak your business during the holidays that won't leave you out in the cold ;)

1. Be STRATEGIC with your discounts & special offers.

The truth is – the minute you attempt to compete with others on PRICE, you're asking for bargain hunters and coupon clippers. In other words - people who will ONLY visit your store if they get a deal. If you're goal is to be known for high-quality, high-service, high-end service & programs, people will expect that comes at a premium. Offering discounts {and depending on discounts to make sales} can dilute that.

If your marketing strategy looks like Walmart {lowest discount price} - you'll never attract Nordstroms clients {who value service, experience, and high value}.

Holiday Plan – So instead of discounting your value, ADD value! Introduce a luxe version of your best offering during the holidays.

If your top package is 6 private yoga sessions, add a new luxe package that includes the 6 sessions PLUS an at-home-yoga kit complete with mat, blocks, and a soothing lavender eye pillow for savasana.

If you're a health coach, instead of just offering a one month 1x1 program, maybe during the holidays you also bundle it with a pantry makeover and weekly shopping lists {so people can actually REACH those resolutions they will set during the New Year}.

The best part about using this strategy during the holidays is that people are looking for gift opportunities, and a deluxe offer will attract people only want the best of the best for their friends.

2. Build and nurture relationships with your community!

When you're a heart-centred entrepreneurs, your clients feel like family. This is a great time of year to reinforce that you're more than just a business - you're a hub, a gathering place, a connector for like-minded souls.

Holiday Plan – Host an event! I'm talking a client-appreciation, bring-a-friend open house, holiday party, or even a virtual event (one of my favourite clients is planning a online holiday yoga class).

This is a fantastic time to invite your current clients to get together with their favourite people (friends, colleagues, partners) and one of their favourite things . . . Allowing you to introduce yourself to new people and expand your community. Make sure you're collecting contact info so you can follow up with new faces!

3. Be the voice of calm!

For so many, the holidays are a time of insanity. Juggling family obligations. Getting all the shopping done. Attempting to keep everyone happy. As healing & helping entrepreneurs, we have a unique opportunity to help others remember the importance of slowing down & taking even just a moment between the chaos to find inner peace.

Holiday Plan – How can you help your community slow down and ENJOY more of the holidays? A special series of inspirational emails? Healthy holiday recipes? Tips on enjoying the holidays with their kids (no toys needed)?

Remember that mindful marketing is about both attracting community and clients ~ and NURTURING them!

19) Do An Event In Partnership With Others

Partnerships can be so powerful. Maybe you partner with one or more complimentary businesses and throw an event, workshop, training, etc . . . that is better than anything you could have done individually.

And all of you make money!

Maybe there's someone in your professional network with whom you've been dying to collaborate — why not drop them an email and go for coffee? You never know where it could lead. And maybe you could partner with a few people to co-produce an event that's better than any of you could have done separately.

Here are some examples.

- I learned about the following example in Chip Conley's excellent book, *Marketing That Matters*. Moon Dance Painting was the first nontoxic, low-odour painting contractor in the Bay Area. When they founded it they knew that lots of customers would, given the choice, prefer an environmentally sensitive painting contractor. Yet very few of these customers would actively search for a company like theirs. Why would they? It was so new. No one even knew it was an option. They knew that their company's success was predicated on making sure that the eco-friendly customer knew that Moon Dance existed. But their marketing budget was, like many of ours in *The Meantime*, extremely small. So, here's what they did. They got in touch with the local Whole Foods Market community relations representative and suggested that the store could sponsor a "Green Home Series" in which a green designer, builder, landscaper and painter would come in and make presentations on how people can "green" their homes. The end result? They were all able to connect with their perfect niche of customers — all without spending more than one hundred dollars on marketing. And of course, each speaker in the series endorsed the others during their talks. Genius.
- If you sold cloth diapers, could you put on a workshop about Natural Parenting and invite others who could teach topics like: infant massage, how to make healthy food for your baby, how to communicate with your spouse, maybe have a midwife or doula speak etc. You all promote it. You all win.

- If you're a Chinese Medical Practitioner with a passion for natural treatments for cancer, maybe you could bring together an MD, someone who focuses on the emotional side cancer, a nutritionist and a body worker, etc. Again, you all promote it to your own lists, and you all win.
- Make it a one time, small scale event so you can get to know each other with the roles of who does what being clearly defined.
- A key with this (and we'll go into more detail of this later in the section about a five-step process you can use in section 24 just up ahead . . .) is to make sure that you have a follow up offer ready to offer those who attend the event. If you don't, it could be a big waste of time.

20) Host A Pay-What-You-Can Workshop

Ok. This is a personal favourite of mine. There's a lot to say here about the ins and outs of pay what you can workshops (am currently working on a whole product about it) but here's the basic idea.

You invite people to come to a workshop for which they are charged a modest deposit when they RSVP (e.g. I tend to charge \$25 for a daylong workshop and \$100 for a weekend).

Then, you deliver the best workshop you possibly can.

At the very end of the workshop, you invite them to pay you whatever they felt it was worth based on what they can afford.

Here's why to try this: it is much easier to market a pay what you can workshop than a full price one. Much. Let's say it was a weekend workshop. You could run free or affordable intro sessions where people get a chance to sign up for the weekend.

Some wrinkles to help increase the amount you get:

- **Envelopes:** give them envelopes into which they can put the money. Make them nice envelopes to add more ritual and intention to it.
- **Multiple payments:** Consider inviting them to make payments via multiple cheques.
- **Payment form:** Consider making a postcard sized form where they get to write their name, email and how much they're paying you to formalize and ritualize it a bit more.
- **Offer:** You might make an offer for a more in depth coaching program at the end and tell people that, if they sign up for it, the weekend (minus the deposit) is your gift to them. Then your workshop becomes a way for them to feel into if you're a good fit for each other.

- **Take your time:** Don't rush the end. It's a big blunder of pay what you can workshops where they mention the money in the last two minutes of the workshop in a rushed way.
- **Context:** Make sure people know, as they're signing up, what the market value of what you're offering would be so they have some context of what to pay.

You won't make as much per person as you would if you charged full rates but you'll likely get more people than you would have which might just result in more money in the end.

21) Email Your List Promoting The Most Popular Product Or Service You've Got

It can be easy to assume that everyone on your list knows about everything you have to offer and has tried it at least once.

That's very unlikely.

You might be shocked at how many clients and potential clients in your sphere have never heard about the best thing you've got to offer.

Most of your client don't open up every email from you. Even those who do might not read it carefully. Even the ones who read the email in which you mentioned that product might not have bought it. Maybe it wasn't the right time, maybe they intended to and then lost the email and forgot.

And there are likely new people on your list now who weren't on it last time you promoted it.

There's also a good chance that your sales letter could be improved or that you could come up with a better headline that last time.

You could offer it for full price, or you might offer it on sale for a limited time.

Remember: your best selling product could be as simple as a life coaching session or a massage.

A number of times, I've emailed my list offering coaching sessions with me. Sometimes at full price and sometimes at a discount. They almost always fill. The truth is, these people know I do sessions. They could have called me at any point. But they didn't . . . until I made the offer. Yes, people know you do massage, but if you emailed your list saying, 'I've got ten spaces open in the next two weeks, who wants them?' You might be surprised at how quickly they fill.

22) Create A “Beta Test” For A Next Level Product Or Service You’ve Been Sitting On

“I know you: you’re sitting on a great idea. You haven’t figured out how to make the time, find the money, or craft the sales process for that new product or program you have in mind.” – Tara Gentile

Don’t you have one or two really good ideas you haven’t done anything with yet? If so, start simple. Don’t worry about mapping everything out. Tara Gentile suggests that you just sit down and write a from-the-heart letter to your people where you share all the ideas you have so far, why you think it would be useful and what you imagine would be included.

What if it didn’t have to be totally perfect for the launch? What if you could put out a beta version, a trial version where you could do the refining as you go? This product might even be created from a bunch of materials you’ve already written. Some people have written so many articles and blog posts and then realized that, with a bit of polishing up, they could be woven together into an ebook they could sell. Very little effort required!

But if it’s not ready, how could you charge for it? You don’t charge full price. You offer it at a steep discount because it’s not totally figured out yet – and you let them know that. This is the bargain: *they* get a lot of value at a more than reasonable price and *you* get feedback and the chance to improve your offering. It doesn’t have to be perfect. You can let people know that you’re doing it at a lower rate than you eventually will in exchange for feedback. Do this and you’ll be several steps ahead when it comes time to actually do the big, official launch.

In 2012, I tried a new program. I realized that I had a number of people on my email list who were just never going to be able to come to my workshops because it cost too much to come to where I was leading them and because I was never going to go to Chicago, New England or Israel to lead a workshop. It occurred to me that I could take the content from my weekend workshop and turn it into a six week program that I could offer over the phone. I charged \$200 for it. I had about 40 people sign up. Suddenly, I had \$8000. It was content I already knew incredibly well. I was able

to basically copy the sales letter from my weekend for it. It took very little effort to put together and it only took me 90 minutes a week to do the calls plus a few hours a week to be active in the Facebook group.

The Niching Spiral grew out of running my Niching for Hippies program three times. I had 40 people per class on average. And, every time I did it, it changed. I learned something. It became better. My first course was \$300 for six weeks. The next time I did it, it was \$600. The next time, \$900. Each time I got about 40 people. And, as of June, 2014 the next one will be \$1200. I am so glad I started small and let it grow. It gave time for my own point of view to ripen and mature. Now it's turning into my new book and program at NichingSpiral.com with a homestudy version and a three month mentorship program. But it was far from perfect when it started. I'm so glad I didn't charge anything higher on my first program – charging less allowed me to test out my ideas without any sense of guilt that I was overcharging.

In the Summer of 2014, I decided to start putting out a lot more products. Many of which were already 75% done or are products I've been thinking about for years and years. As of writing this, in June of 2014, I've released three new ones which have already brought in hundreds of dollars more.

Is there a next-level something that you could be offering your people that you haven't because you've been waiting for it to be perfect? Or you're not totally sure what's needed? My guess is that you are sitting on at least one great idea that your people would love.

Business coach Susan Liddy offers this:

Yeah, some of my clients can have a really tough time with this. if they can't "get to it" by thinking it through, with inner exploration and empowering questions then I just coach through creating something that they feel inspired to develop . . . like a free gift or a signature talk . . . at some point during that process, the lights typically come on.

You might not even need to share it with your whole list. Maybe you just share it with a few clients you think it would be the best fit for. You might email or call them personally and invite them to be involved. They'll be delighted you thought of them.

A further thought: you might market and sell this program before you're even done creating it. This is vital. Sometimes you need to create the program as you do it. It's not ideal but I know that's how I created The Niching Spiral. I led three different six week coaching programs where I was coming up with the content as I went through it. Each time it got much better.

Elizabeth Purvis of marketinggoddess.com offers a wealth of ideas:

Pre-sell a teleseminar course, home study program or group VIP day and include a 30-minute Breakthrough session with you (perfect for making a high-end offer). Or open up just 1-2 spots for high-end private mentoring/coaching with you (6 months or 12 months). Create and offer a quick 30-60 day program, to start at the beginning of the year (include a special bonus session or ½ VIP day as a bonus for clients who sign up early). Offer a VIP Day workshop, either in person or virtual (again, focused on a specific pressing problem). Reach out to past teleseminar, group or workshop clients and offer a VIP day or shorter program. Call past and current clients to present an additional service, such as a VIP day or ½ VIP group workshop.

One of my colleagues, Aruna at youngyogamasters.com shared the notion that you can sell your beta program before it's done:

I recommend taking a chunk of a big project and selling it in advance, rather than waiting for the big project to be finished. For instance, I was working on a 95 hour kids yoga teacher training course and started selling shorter, digital pieces of the training before the launch of the big course. It was really helpful because it helped me get feedback as I was in development rather than waiting for the end. It also brought in some money. I recently re-purposed some of that material to create a freebie, that ended up selling some product for me.

My dear friend and colleague Carrie Klassen of pinkelephantcommunications.com shared the following:

That has certainly been true for me with most of my programs. I always have a certain amount ready to go, but, every time I do a program, there's something more. I'm always improving on it and building on it. And the thing that's helped me improve it the most? Doing it. If I'd sat at my laptop trying to make it perfect before I began, I never would have gotten started.

In November 2010, I was in a village in southern India, teaching English and computer skills to girls in a shelter for abused women. I had saved up enough money to be away from my business for my volunteer term but what I'd forgotten to anticipate was what it would be like when I got home, without any prospective clients immediately lined up.

For the first time in my life, I couldn't pay my rent. I was broke as a beetle.

But my trip to India, which in its way caused my personal financial disaster, also gave me my financial salvation. I'm a quiet gal, you see. An introvert. I'd never call myself a teacher, but that's because I'd always had this idea that you had to stand up at the front of a room and bellow. You had to give monologues and you had to entertain. But in India, I sat in a circle on the floor and I asked the girls to teach me the Hindi words I was speaking in English. We shared the books I'd brought. I showed them pictures of my family and they taught me to tie a sari. In a circle, on a floor, I felt so comfortable sharing what I knew. I realized that teachers can look lots of different ways.

So back to my rent situation. I had an idea . . . What if I did here what I did in India with what I know? I now knew it was possible for me to teach – as me – in my quiet way. So the next question I had to answer was What could I give that would be most valuable to my community? I work with self-employed people and small business owners. Many have more time than money. Many would like to be able to do their own writing and marketing, to save costs, but with a bit of guidance so they feel confident they're doing it right. I knew from experience that a lot of small business websites have absolutely terrible home pages. My most popular service – the thing I know best – is website writing and marketing. If I could teach non-writers and non-marketers to write really effective home pages, that would be the most value I could provide. It's the smallest thing they could do to make the biggest difference in attracting great clients (and revenue).

I reserved a room in a cafe because I wanted a casual, warm atmosphere, and I chose a place that didn't charge a rental fee in order to save that expense. The workshop would be three hours and I charged \$140 per ticket, a fraction of what I'd charge to write it myself. (If it were just a lecture-style session, I'd have charged much less but because participants would leave with their most important website content, this was a great deal.) I used Eventbrite to sell my tickets online so it

would be really easy for people to buy them. I had an early bird discount to thank registrants for their enthusiasm. My only expenses in advance of the workshop were for print-outs and for the journals and pens I gave as gifts. (In a pinch, I could have asked participants to bring their own notebooks and pens, but I found these great recycled paper books with elephants on the cover and couldn't resist. A portion of proceeds went to fund education in developing countries too.) I sent a note to my community and I posted about it on Facebook, and ten people signed up. My rent payment exactly. And the ideal number for a first run of this workshop.

That day, I sat at the table with my "students" and took them through a series of writing exercises. At the end, everyone shared what they'd written, and I was so awed by their talent and their generosity in supporting one another, that after they packed up and left, I wept. And promised myself I'd do this again. And it became a significant source of revenue for my business, but it also introduced great people to one another, and built ties between creative, sensitive spirits who might otherwise have felt alone with their business challenges.

23) Become An Affiliate For A Program You Believe In & Promote It

But what if you have no products, no ideas for products and no desire to create one?

No problem.

What if you were to find some other products you liked and became an affiliate for them? For example, and this isn't something I've personally done yet, Constant Contact (the email newsletter service I use and love) offers their members a chance to become affiliates meaning that, if I were to email my list with a link about them and people were to sign up with them and pay, I would get a small percentage of that money.

Many of my colleagues have programs they sell, info, products and workshops for which I have been an affiliate. I email my list to let them know about it. If they sign up, I get a small percentage of that money.

I can tell you that, since I've started doing that, it's likely brought in at least \$20,000 in income. That has made my life so much more sustainable.

There are some people who's entire business model is being an affiliate for other people's things. They find the products they believe in most and negotiate a deal by which they can be compensated for being a non-salaried sales person.

24) Follow These Five Simple Steps To Getting New Clients

I was recently listening to an interview with my colleague Bill Baren. He was speaking about how central niche is to getting new clients and he laid out his five step system for getting new clients. It struck me how similar it was to what I've done and to the pattern I've seen with so very many of my colleagues (e.g. Mark Silver, George Kao, George Huang, etc.).

Five Steps to Getting More Clients

You must do all of these five steps. Bill points out that each of these steps is like a stop at a train station. But if you try to skip the step it's like you get stuck at that station until you do it.

1) Identify who you serve and what results you offer them.

I wrote about this the other day in my blog about Bill's seven step niche checklist. And I've written about it in my blog about Island B.

Identifying who you want to reach is always the first step.

Examples:

- Perhaps you're a Life Purpose Coach focused on professional women who've lost a sense of purpose and have lost their energy because of that.
- Perhaps you're a meditation teacher who focuses on people who are depressed and helps them find joy and peace in their lives again.
- Maybe you're a yoga teacher who really focuses on the activist community and helps them deal with the overwhelm and burnout they feel.
- Maybe you're a money counsellor who helps single dads get back on their feet again after a divorce.

Whatever it is, choose something.

2) Create your compelling packages.

This is a vital step that so many people miss.

Most people have misdirected drive in their marketing. The drive is to “get their name out there.”

Let that go as the drive. Make your focus, “How can I sustain myself while sustaining the community.”

Before you do any outreach you really want to think about your container. Before people find you, you want to ask yourself, “And what happens when they do?”

I’ve seen people do lots of intro events and talks only to have people clap politely (even standing ovations) and they end up with no clients. I’ve seen people get tonnes of media exposure and PR . . . and still be clientless.

Keep your eye on the ball. You want clients who are a fit.

And you don’t just want them for one session. Or two. You want long term clients.

But the critical mistake that most people make here is to book people in for one session. And then to (maybe) offer them another session and then (maybe) offer them another session and so on.

This is so much work. And it’s not much money. And people often don’t even get the results they came for.

What if you created a package of multiple session (and perhaps throw in some products, live workshops, teleseminars, etc.) that could really help people make the journey?

What if you created a contract for a whole year of coaching?

What if you offered an ongoing monthly contract that they could stop at any time?

What if you offered them a 90 day program? A ten session package?

Get creative.

You might be thinking, “Nobody would go for that. Or they’d be offended.”

You'd be wrong.

In fact, many will say “yes” (if you share it in the right way) and most will be so thankful.

Examples:

- Life Purpose Coach creates a year long coaching program called Life Purpose Breakthrough Program: Seven Steps to Creating a Life of Power, Purpose and Passion.
- The meditation teacher for depressed people creates a nine month program called Healing from the Darkness: A Nine Month Program to Transforming Depression into Peace, Strength and a Gift to the Community.
- The yoga teacher for activists creates an ongoing monthly program called Occupy the Present: A Monthly Program for Becoming a More Powerful, Resilient and Loving Force for Positive Change.
- The money counsellor for single dads creates a program called The New Life Program: A Year Long Program for Single Dads to Make Their Finances a Source of Pride and Strength.
- I created my Niching for Hippies program: A Six Week Virtual Course on How You Can Make More Money, Get More Clients and Work Less by Figuring Out Your Niche.
- Bill Baren created his Master of Enrolment program on how you can get all the clients you want without doing any selling.

Most of these are all off the top of my head, but they give you the idea.

And then you can charge a good amount for these – enough to make sure you don't resent the time. An amount that feels genuinely wonderful and has you excited about doing it and being fully present with the people who are hiring you. Stop offering a single session. When it feels like a fit offer a more complete package. You'll be shocked how many people say yes and are excited.

But before offering it – just design it.

Talk to people in your niche. What would they want in this kind of a package?

What would help them more than anything? Create a package you're proud of. If you're niching around your own wounds, then create the package that you wish you'd had when you were going through the troubles.

You might consider having a bronze, silver and gold level of the packages so people can opt in at the level that feels right for them.

3) Creating opportunities to reach people in your tribe.

So, at this point you've got your niche (the beginnings of your platform) and you've got a package you want to offer them (the container).

That's huge.

But no one in your niche knows about it yet. So, you've got to let them know somehow. You've got to make it really easy for them to find you.

And there are plenty of ways to do that: there's writing articles, PR, online video, blogging, speaking, being interviewed, networking, hosting events, etc. And they can all work.

But let's focus on speaking since it's one of the easiest ways.

You create an introductory talk that gives people a genuine taste of what you have to offer. It gives them a strong sense of:

- why the topic matters so much
- your story of how you came to it
- your point of view on it
- some case studies and examples of people you've helped

This kind of presentation gives them a chance to raise their hand and say they're interested.

Examples:

- Life Purpose Coach creates a presentation called Create a Career You Love and

delivers it to groups of professional women.

- The meditation teacher for depressed people creates a presentation called, Happy Again: The Seven Reasons We Get Depressed and How to Turn Them Around.
- The yoga teacher for activists creates a presentation called The Sustainable Activist and delivers it at activist events and conferences.
- The money counsellor for single dads creates a program called Cleaning House: The Three Biggest Blunders Single Dads Make That Keep Their Finances an Embarrassing Mess.
- I created my Niching 101 for Hippies: A Ninety Minute Webinar on How You Can Make More Money, Get More Clients and Work Less by Figuring Out Your Niche.
- Bill Baren created his program called: How To Enrol New High-Paying Clients Without Doing Any “Selling” (So that your ideal clients say “YES” to gladly investing in your services, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE!)

4) Offer them an initial consultation.

During your presentation, offer them a free, thirty-minute, initial consultation.

It’s a sort of discovery session where you’ll both find out if it’s a fit to work together and they’ll get some help.

Life Purpose Coach names her session The 30 minute “Discover Your Life Purpose” discovery session” and delivers it to groups of professional women.

The meditation teacher for depressed people names the session The 30 minute “Identify the Roots of Your Sadness” discovery session.

The yoga teacher for activists names the session The 30 minute “Burnout Be Gone” discovery session.

The money counsellor for single dads names the session The 30 minute “Clean Up Your Money Mess” discovery session.

I've offered a thirty minute session called The Hilltop Sessions: step back and get perspective on where you're at with your marketing.

A portion of the people who hear your talk and resonate with what you have to say will take you up on this consultation.

And then you will book times to speak with them and do it.

5) Powerful consultation where you enrol people into your program.

If you do this right, you'll have them asking you at the end to tell you about what services you offer that could help them.

But beware of making the Three Classic Blunders most people do in these initial consultations. Bill Baren of BillBaren.com discusses these here:

As a business coach, I get a LOT of questions from very diverse business owners.

One of the most frequent questions is this:

"I'm very good at what I do . . . so why aren't people hiring me?"

Is this happening with you?

If so, I am going to share with you three of the biggest mistakes people make when they are having an enrolment conversation with potential clients. And let's see if I can help you have a breakthrough.

(By the way, "enrolment conversation" is another way of saying "initial consultation" or "sales conversation")

Take a look and see if any of these are happening to you:

MISTAKE #1 – Promoting your services before your potential client gets clear on what they REALLY want.

The consultation is about your potential clients and their needs, and not about you. So be sure to take a substantial part of your consultation to ask questions to understand you potential client's needs before you offer solutions.

*** When you understand their deepest wants and needs – and I mean what’s keeping them up at night – then you’re in a great place to offer your services as a solution.*

[IMPORTANT TIP: If you aren’t establishing the “Gap,” you’re going to have a hard time getting hired! The “Gap” is the frustration that potential clients feel about the chasm between where they are now and where they want to go with their life, business, health, website, etc. I explained my powerful formula to Close The Gap in my telecall yesterday.]

MISTAKE #2 – Trying to solve the potential client’s problem during your initial consultation.

The consultation is not the time to help your prospect solve a micro-problem they are currently having. It’s an opportunity for them to see much greater opportunities for themselves and for their business and to establish you as someone who can help them close the gap.

Here’s why this is a mistake. Often when you give them 1/20th of a solution to their problem, they think they’ve already received the solution from you and go off to implement it on their own – without hiring you.

This is not the best way you can be of service to them, since only a fraction of their problem is solved. And it will certainly not land you the client.

And this isn’t just an issue for coaches – it’s often true whether you are a web designer, business consultant, healer or holistic practitioner, professional organizer, etc.

MISTAKE #3 – Not using a consistent system for your enrolment conversation.

When you’re having a conversation with a potential client about working together, is it something you do spontaneously, without a script or agenda? Does it feel kind of random, and you’re uncertain if your conversation is going to work? You may even feel like the conversation with your potential client is going well, but then they don’t hire you. And you don’t why.

If this is the case, I have to ask you . . . Do you have a “system” that you are using in every sales conversation?

I am not a systematic guy by nature. In fact, I have often been allergic to systems.

But after a while, I couldn't deny that when I developed a system for enrolling clients during a one-on-one consultation, used it every time, continually made it better – the results spoke for themselves. My results jumped from a 0% success rate to a place where now 8 out of 10 prospective clients hire me.

The goal of the session is for both of you to see if it might be a fit to work together further. Can you help them? Do they want to be helped by you?

The best summary I've ever seen of this comes from my dear colleague Corrina Gordon-Barnes from the UK in the piece below. Her blog is full of brilliant bits like this. I recommend checking her work out more at youinspireme.co.uk:

WHAT TO ACTUALLY SAY IN A CONSULTATION

"Every consultation feels like a first date," bemoaned Rachel, "so I'm not enjoying the process of trying to get new clients."

Can you identify? You don't know what to say in your initial conversation with a prospective client; it feels awkward and bumpy, the other person is hesitant and unsure. It feels like the stakes are high because this could be the start of a beautiful relationship, or it could lead to a sense of failure or rejection.

Is there a magic formula for a perfect consultation?

Well, from guiding hundreds of consultations, here's the closest to perfect I've found. Let me take you behind the scenes and walk you through a format that takes away the guesswork and enables you to easily enrol the clients you're best suited to help.

Ready?

SET A TIME LIMIT

I put aside 30-45 minutes for an initial free consultation. This is enough time to get your important questions answered and allow the other person to ask theirs. Make it your job to keep to time. One effective strategy is to reiterate the allocated time upfront: "I'm looking forward to finding out as much as I can about you in

half an hour". If you lose this timeliness, you lose the structure and momentum that characterize a good consultation.

NOT TOO MUCH CHITCHAT

You're not finding out if this person is your new best friend, you're establishing whether you'd have a productive working relationship. So, welcome them warmly to the conversation and ask them just a question or two to establish rapport. I ask where they're located and how they heard about me – both useful pieces of information.

WHERE THEY ARE NOW

To decide if you can help this person, spend time discovering their current situation. So, my questions are: what motivated them to train (as a coach/massage therapist/acupuncturist etc), what they're most passionate about in this area of work, what sense do they already have of their niche, package, pricing and marketing methods, and what are their main challenges.

What would be your version of these?

WHERE THEY WANT TO BE

I then ask three questions which lie at the heart of the consultation:

"What would it be like for you if this business never got off the ground?"

Your version might be ". . . if this pain never went away", ". . . if you never met your soulmate", ". . . if you never wrote your book", or ". . . if you remain this stressed forever."

You want to find out why addressing their current situation matters to them. Then,

"What if you were fully successful – what's the big dream?"

You want to get a sense of where they're ultimately aiming at. Then, reel the big vision back to a realistic timeframe; for example, I ask:

"Where can you see yourself at the end of three/six months?"

This is to calibrate with the length of support you're offering and make sure you're on the same page, with realistic and achievable expectations.

JOIN THE DOTS

You've heard where they are and where they want to be. You could jump in and tell them how you'll get them from A to B – but there's a more effective way of doing the same thing. I ask:

“As you're considering where you are now and where you want to get to, how do you imagine this group programme / 1-1 coaching will help you get there?”

This is the most useful question in the whole conversation. It gives them the chance to tell you what they've understood about your service so you can confirm that they've understood correctly, or tidy up any misunderstandings. It also helps you understand what elements of your service are most appealing to them so that you can emphasize these in your work together (e.g. accountability, objectivity, bespoke attention).

Do you see how this question removes the need for you to do any “selling”? I'm imagining you greatly relieved by this! By answering this powerful question, they make the link between the journey they want to take and the support you offer. Introducing this one question into your consultations can help you relax and enjoy the process a whole lot more.

Once they've explained what they hope to get from the service, I finally ask:

“Why not just do this with a friend / on your own / with a book?”

Again, I'm checking which features of the service they most value and I'm checking this is the right level of accountability and professional support for them.

SUM UP

I pause to look back at my notes and check in with my intuition because I want to be authentic when I say, “Yes, I can help you” or “I'm not sure this is the right match”. I'll probably highlight one or two aspects they're looking for and explain exactly how I'd hope to help – for example, “You're not clear on your niche and would like to be so we'll start with an exercise called Two Islands that gets you a lot of clarity about this; people are often amazed at how quickly they can identify a profitable niche when they do this.”

THEIR QUESTIONS

Once I've shared my perspective on whether I think we're a match, I'll then ask how it all sounds to them and invite their questions. Trust that if you're the right match for this person, your honest answers will delight them.

So, that's as close as you can get to a "script" for a perfect consultation. You'll see this allows you to get the information both you and your prospective client need to decide if you'll take this journey together. You don't have to reinvent the wheel with each new person you speak with, and that doesn't take away the magic of each unique interaction.

Do these five steps and you will get clients.

Three Key Lessons to Take From This:

LESSON #1: NICHE — But . . . notice how these steps all hinge on step #1. The niche itself. If you don't have that figured out, all the other steps fall flat. But with a solid niche you might just be shocked at how well this all works.

LESSON #2: NO PACKAGES = YOU GO BROKE. You go broke if you remove step two, then it turns into you doing a bunch of presentations (for free) and then offering a follow up consultation (for free) and maybe getting people in for a few sessions. Having the packages crafted and designed in advance turns this whole model from one of struggle to one where you can create a lot of income fast.

LESSON #3: NO SESSION = NO PACKAGE. If you do a 45 minute talk and try to pitch them on your \$1500/month package . . . good luck with that. It's likely too much too soon without enough trust. The consultation is vital.

Clayton Makepeace of makepeacetotalpackage.com has some important thoughts about the packages you offer:

Depending on what you're selling, determining how many purchase options you offer the customer can be a thorny decision to make. The key is to offer a low-end

price point that will get you maximum numbers of new customers, PLUS one or more higher price points to increase your average sale and return on investment.

In the newsletter industry for example, we typically offer a one-year and two-year subscription. (As a rule, the two-year subscription costs somewhere around 1.8 times more than the one-year subscription. That gives prospects a strong incentive to choose a two-year subscription.)

On some occasions, a three-year option is also offered, usually as an impulse item: "Join me for two years for just \$179 and get a third year for just \$19.95!"

When selling nutritional supplements, I've found that a maximum of three quantity options is generally best. Prospects may be invited to order a one-year supply, a six-month supply or a three-month supply, for example.

The key here is to avoid presenting prospects with too many choices. Your chances of losing the sale increase with every extra second your prospect spends trying to decide which offer to go for.

Mark Silver of HeartofBusiness.com shares his thoughts on this process in a recent blog post he wrote called *Why free sessions don't sell – and how they can:*

In the world of practitioners, coaches, consultants and other service providers, the "free session" holds a strange position.

On one hand, it seems like an obvious thing to do to bring potential new clients in. On the other hand, so, so many people have had bad experiences in providing free sessions, with very few people converting to paying clients. Painful.

We here at Heart of Business have used free sessions extensively and teach them to our clients, who have great success with them. However, you can't just do free sessions willy-nilly. There needs to be a method to the madness if you want paying clients out of them.

But first, let's me explain what's going on with free sessions gone bad.

Why They Don't Work

Typically in a free session you just work with your client however you work with them: coaching, acupuncture, hot stone massage. Whatever your modality is, you do it.

The client typically gets some relief. Then leaves. And that's it.

The reason? If they are struggling with something, often the pain of that struggle has brought them to the point of, "Oh my God, I've got to do something about this."

The free session then provides relief. Not enough to actually solve the problem and move the client into a new place, but just enough to take the edge off.

I'm not against giving people some relief, however, it doesn't actually serve someone to give them relief without giving them the big picture, including how to really transform what's going on with them.

Example: Someone has back pain, so they get a free massage session. The pain is relieved, but not the underlying stress patterns. They feel good, but a few weeks (or days) later they are in pain again. And they think, "That didn't help at all."

Instead of understanding how they might have truly been helped, they are left thinking working with that practitioner, or maybe any practitioner, is not actually useful. Oops.

What to do instead

Instead of a treatment, try seeing a free session as an assessment. The real focus is finding out what's going on with the client, and doing your best to determine what will really help them in a more permanent, long-lasting way.

Then, the session ends with maybe some helpful pointers, or a small amount of treatment that can help relieve some pain temporarily, but it's in context. "I'm going to give you a little massage to reduce the stress on your back. Without getting at the underlying patterns, the pain will come back, but you should feel better at least for a few days."

What's more, by performing an assessment, the client can finally understand what's going on. "Oh, my back hurts, but really it's the tension in my legs that's causing it!" You can give them insight into what's causing their problems, and you can outline what it will take to really solve the issues.

Which, naturally, organically, would include working with you.

Why this is not bait and switch

This is not an underhanded, manipulative technique (although it easily could be), because you will tell folks that the free session is an assessment session, with some treatment. You will also let them know that you will have recommendations on how to solve what's going on, which may include working with you, as well as things they can do on their own.

Furthermore, don't underestimate how incredibly wonderful, powerful and valuable people find assessments. The potential client wants relief, absolutely. But when she's been struggling with something for some time, to finally, finally understand what's really going on and what it will truly take to solve it is priceless knowledge, especially if she has been feeling clueless and stuck.

The spiritual truth behind it all

In Sufism there is a saying attributed to God, "I yearned to be known, and so I created the creation in order to be known." Because the Divine lives within our hearts, we all carry that spark of yearning, we all deeply want to be known.

If you do a real assessment on someone, truly seeing them with compassion, love and insight, it is incredibly healing. The experience of being witnessed touches on how we access a feeling of Oneness in our lives.

The experience of being witnessed allows us to access a feeling of Oneness in our lives.

Knowledge and insight is extremely empowering and inspiring. And that empowerment and inspiration can help them step right into working with you.

Which is a good thing, because that means two things: (1) you get paid and (2) they get the help they need.

Try it out. See what happens.

25) Give Out Gift Certificates For 30 Minutes Of Your Time (& Then Offer An Upgrade)

A few years ago, I interviewed my colleague Eric Brown about one of my favourite strategies of his for getting more clients fast.

Eric: One strategy I love is what I call “The Gift to Get Strategy.” You have mentioned a program I have online at BodyWorkBiz.com that is called 60 Clients in 60 Days. I think there is this myth going around. I call it a myth.

People think that it takes years to develop a successful practice. I think it can be done relatively quickly. With that particular program, we aim to get you 60 new clients in 60 days. I do not think that is too high of a goal. It is very, very doable.

Tad: When you say that, I can just imagine some of my clients hearing that and thinking, “That’s bull. It is unrealistic. It is hyperbole. It is marketing and sales hype.” I know the content of it and I don’t want to make you give the whole thing away, but can you talk about the rationale behind it?

There are people who say, “I have not had 60 clients in six years.”

Eric: It is true. It is absolutely true, but it sounds unbelievable. I can tell you that this strategy works because it is one I have used in the past. If anyone knows me, they know that I test and I track numbers to make sure things work.

When I first launched this program, I did it with a group of about 40 therapists. They did the program initially with me. Part of their involvement in the program was that they would do reporting for me. I got to see numbers from people that, unlike me, do not have a lot of training in marketing. I got to see what they would do with it. Certainly, it is very achievable and very doable.

The basic strategy is what I call the Gift to Get. Basically the idea is that you want people to experience your service firsthand, whatever it might be. Maybe it is a product. It is not a new concept. This is samples in a grocery aisle; it is the same type of idea like when you are walking through Cosco or wherever. The Book of the Month Club is exactly the same kind of strategy, the same kind of model.

You make an offer that people cannot refuse.

Tad: Yes, like “Take the puppy home for a month and if you do not want it, bring it back.”

Eric: Yes, exactly. It is the puppy close. You basically give away your service. I am going to use the example of massage. If you are not a massage therapist or massage practitioner, if you are practicing some other kind of holistic modality, just put the name of your modality in place when I say massage. Exactly the same thing applies.

As a massage practitioner, what I would do is to give away samples of my massage because I want people to experience it firsthand. I just want to give away samples. When you go down the aisle at Costco, they do not give you a whole chocolate cake. They give you a little bit or a little piece of something on a toothpick. It is just enough that you have an understanding of what it is about and how good it is.

When you offer something free like this, like massage, the only people that are going to take you up on that offer are people that enjoy massage.

Tad: They are preselected.

Eric: They are preselected, exactly. They are the most qualified or most ideal prospects. These are the people that are willing, in the case of massage. They believe it is going to do something for them; otherwise they would not be there in the first place. They are

willing to take their clothes off for you if you do table massage. These are exactly the people you want.

Whenever I say “give away a free massage,” people say, “You cannot do that. You cannot just give away a massage.” You have to do it strategically. There are ways to monetize this or make money with this.

Because we are just giving away a sample, so in the case of massage, for example, I might suggest that people give away a half-hour massage if they normally do hour massages. Have them give away a half-hour massage and then, when the person takes you up on that offer, offer them an upgrade right away.

If you have given them a half-hour massage, when they call to book their appointment, you can say, “Would you like to upgrade that to a full hour for only \$30 more?” We have found very consistently that when you do this, about 80% of people will take you up on that kind of offer.

Again, I am just going to use the massage example. If you think you are giving away a half-hour of your time, the average massage therapist makes \$20,000 a year. This means they make on average \$10 an hour, so if you are giving away a free massage, you are basically investing \$5 of you time.

I do not think you could get a customer into your practice through any advertising medium for under \$5. In terms of the amount you are investing, it is really nothing.

Right away, again, 80% of those people will take you up on your offer. If you are charging \$30 for an upgrade, then the average person is paying you \$24 to get a free massage. That is not bad. That is not a bad start. It is certainly better than \$10 an hour.

This is what I would suggest in terms of giving something away. Do not give away a coupon. I would suggest that you frame it as a gift certificate. Make it look good; make it look like it has value. Do

not do half off. You will not get nearly the response with that even though it is the same thing as somebody getting a free massage and upgrading.

Tad: Even worse is 10%. People do all of these 10% deals and nobody responds to that. It is so meaningless.

Eric: Exactly. In the case of massage in Toronto now, it is probably about \$70 or \$80 an hour just to go into someone's office for an hour massage. If somebody has that kind of money to spend on a regular basis, this is a prime prospect for your services, then saving \$7 or 10% on their first visit is really not going to get them really excited like, "Woo-hoo! I can go buy a coffee at Starbuck's now!"

Tad: You give people a gift certificate worth a free half-hour massage. They call to book it and you say, "Would you like to upgrade for a full hour of massage for \$30?" and 80% of people say yes. What happens then?

Eric: That is one way we can make money on the very front end just by doing that offer.

The other money we can make is what I call the back end or after they visit you for the first time. The primary way this happens is through getting them to rebook. Ideally, this is why you are getting people to come in. You want them to use massage on an ongoing basis.

Really, just ask them to rebook. It is as simple as that. You got them in the door, so get them to rebook.

Tad: Is there a wording you recommend or suggest? I know that this is sometimes where people stumble. They get to the end and they do not want to push people. They are so sensitive and it feels like such a sacred thing. They just had this massage and they are in this vulnerable spot and they feel really funny about asking. They do not know what to say. Are there any words you recommend?

Eric: Absolutely: “Would you like to book your next appointment at the same time next week?” That’s all there is to it. You just have to ask.

I remember the very first massage I did. I never even thought about asking anybody to rebook. It did not enter my consciousness that I would do something like that. I think it was literally the first massage I did professionally. The massage went great and I was excited about it.

The guy came out to the counter and paid his money. He stood there for a moment in this sort of awkward silence and he said, “Can I come back again?” Duh! Of course you can.

You have to ask. I saw statistics from one consulting company. They estimate you can increase your sales by 60% simply by asking people to rebook. I have tracked this as well with my therapists. I can tell you that the difference in terms of rebooking is about that level. It is about 60% between therapists that consistently ask clients to rebook and practitioners that don’t.

Tad: It is interesting. There are two real distinctions I want to flag for people here and then we will move onto questions fairly soon from anyone who is on the call.

One is that it is consistently doing it. If you do this once in a while, it does not work as well. Just imagine what would happen if every single time you gave people that opportunity to rebook or to book some other package and it was every single time.

What if it only increased it 10%? What do you make? Let’s say on average it is the \$20,000. Just asking every single time puts \$2,000 in your pocket, just for taking that second to ask.

Eric: That is an annual vacation to Mexico.

Tad: Really. That is like a month off for most people. You could take a whole month’s vacation just by this one thing. It seems so simple,

and it is probably more than 10%, almost guaranteed, like Eric was saying.

It might seem risky to give out a bunch of gift certificates for free time with you. And, in a way it is, but, done correctly, it's a very well thought out risk.

Giving away your service can be a powerful way to leverage business because it generates future income and costs you little to provide. This turns dead time into live customers. One beauty salon I heard about from Jay Abraham placed ads that said, "Free facials, limited number." Since the salon was empty anyway at the beginning of the day, they would just give away the facials free. But here's why it worked: Fifty percent of the people who came in bought at least a hundred dollars worth of product. And if someone bought their program – which is six facials at a 33% discount – they would give them four referral cards good for free facials. They put their client's name on the back of the cards, and they give these to their friends. And for every friend who comes in, we give our client another free facial if the friend bought their program. They also did that with all the women who worked in the department stores who sell skin care and cosmetics. And when the cards come back through, they tracked back to who had gotten it and they notified them. And anybody who sent in a referral, they got a nice note saying "thank you for the referral." And if they sold a program, they got a different version of the note saying "you have a credit toward a free facial."

Here's another example I came across years ago:

154-Year-Old Hometown Jewelry Store Spreads Holiday Spirit – and Attracts 3,127 New Customers in Just 4 Days With a \$90 Marketing Promotion

(TYLER, TX) – Since 1850, Murphey the Jeweler has faithfully served its local Tyler, Texas customers with fine custom and stock jewelry as well as repairs and service. But, this holiday season, store owner Shannon Murphey saw signs of slumping sales and knew he needed to do something fast to jumpstart his business.

In a dramatic and risky move, Murphey dispatched a fax to local business owners and managers offering to provide free \$50.00 gift certificates they could give to all their employees as holiday or end-of-year bonuses. Response to the fax was immediate, and overwhelming.

“We couldn’t answer the telephone fast enough,” says Murphey who adds that he has never seen this kind of response in the history of his company. “We had no idea people would react so favourably.”

Within just four hours, Murphey and his staff fielded calls from more than fifty-six local business owners and managers requesting the gift certificates. Requests totaled more than 1,700 employee gift certificates on Thursday, the first day of the promotion. The next day, calls kept pouring in and continued on Monday after the weekend.

By Tuesday morning, Murphey had seventy-four businesses requesting more than 3,000 gift certificates.

Based on average sales information, he expects the certificates to bring in more than \$1.5 million in new business for his store, all from a \$90 promotion.

“People are puzzled at how Murphey the Jeweler can afford to make this offer,” says JP Maroney, a business strategist who advises Murphey, and masterminded the promotion. “In fact, many are skeptical, because it sounds too good to be true. But it’s really simple. We examined three key areas of his business; The lifetime value of a customer, the dollar amount of his average sales transaction, and his profit margins. We then determined that the promotion would pay off above and beyond the risks.”

Shannon Murphey is a sixth generation Murphey the Jeweler storeowner. He and his brother, Rick, each independently own their respective stores in the Tyler, Texas area.

26) Ask For Referrals

This is such a low hanging fruit for most businesses.

If your clients are happy with the quality of products and services they're getting from you, this may be the fastest way to get more clients.

This can be as simple as letting your current clients know you're opening spots for 1-3 new clients and ask for referrals (you'd love to serve clients just like them).

Because your clients, almost certainly, know other people who could benefit from what you're offering. And over time they will, almost certainly, mention it to those people. However, if you're in The Meantime, you may not be able to wait that long and wouldn't it be nice if we could make that all happen a bit faster?

Fortunately you can.

The simplest approach to this? Just ask for them. This article by marketing strategist Dan Kennedy of gkic.com says it better than I could:

The Easiest Strategy For Getting Referrals — Ask For Them

Before we move on from our topic of different referral strategies, I want to talk to you about what is perhaps the most effective, yet underused referral strategy that I know which is to . . .

. . . simply ask for them.

Many business owners and professionals and even sales people have all sorts of mental hang-ups about asking for referrals. However, most of those hang-ups are invalid and I find that those who ask get!

Now here's a secret about customers or clients who refer that can be worth a great deal of money to you. Understand that the person who refers once can and will refer many more people, many more times if motivated to do so.

You should know that massive research by major to consumer direct sales companies and organizations indicates that the average person has an immediate circle of influence of fifty-two. Fifty-two other people. The typical executive, for example, knows about fifty other people at a similar executive level in his own or

closely related industries. This number tells you that each customer or client who comes through your business could bring you as many as fifty other customers or clients.

You should also know that research by the American Management Association indicates that the average satisfied customer only tells three other people about the satisfactory experience. Moving that person from telling three to telling fifty does require some definite action on your part. That action needs to focus on the giving of recognition and appreciation.

When a satisfied customer sends someone to you the sender should immediately receive some recognition and appreciation. Possibly a quick thank you note or telephone call at bare minimum. That should happen right away. Subsequently some type of thank you gift is usually appropriate and effective.

We send steaks, books, clocks, calculators, small electronic items, knife sets, all sorts of things. I recommend gifts that you do not ordinarily sell and a different gift each time the person refers. You will really be amazed at the positive results from this kind of action.

You'd also be surprised, incidentally, at the negative results of not doing this. The client who refers once and fails to get recognition and appreciation will probably never say anything to you, but to himself and often to a friend or associate he does say, "Can you believe it? I sent that guy a customer and never got as much as a thank you." And then he never refers again.

Again it's interesting to note that a basic success principle often discussed in personal development context is also a marketing strategy. It's called the, "Attitude of Gratitude."

Finally, if you want to even more directly stimulate referrals from your customers or clients you might want to consider the second party gift certificate idea. Here's how this works:

You're a satisfied regular customer of a clothing store. The owner of the store says to you, "John as you know, most of our customers come as referrals from other customers and we appreciate that and try to encourage it. This month we're doing something interesting that you might want to help us with and be able to do a favor for your friends too." The store owner then gives you a ten dollar gift certificate negotiable only by a second party that you, the customer, addresses to and sign it

over to. This idea works extremely well for just about any kind of retail business, service business, home products business, restaurants, stores, beauty parlours, carpet cleaning companies and so on.

If you'll use this idea, you'll again want to follow it up with recognition and appreciation to the customer who does pass along a coupon that is ultimately redeemed by a new customer.

The Fear Of Asking For Referrals

What if you're nervous to ask for referrals? If so, that's a very human thing to be afraid of. Asking for referrals (and help in general) is a very vulnerable thing to do because they could, of course, say "no." Jay Abraham of abraham.com has some thoughts on this:

Some business owners hesitate to ask for referrals because they feel it is somehow "inappropriate." They fear that customers will see it as overstepping their bounds getting too personal. Don't make this mistake! There's no reason to be embarrassed or timid or unduly sensitive about asking your customers or clients to direct other customers to your door.

In fact, it's not only appropriate and ethical, it's your benevolent obligation. Let me explain . . . You've got to remember that the vast majority of your customers or clients or patients really do have a bonded relationship with you. They trust you. They trust your company. They trust the product or service they acquire from you. They have grown dependent on realizing a high level of results, satisfaction, protection, prestige, enjoyment, experience, well-being, or whatever else your product or service provides them with.

And you owe it to everybody that your customers know to at least arrange the opportunity for those people to make your acquaintance, to experience your business philosophy, to get your best perspective on their need, their opportunity, their problem and how your product or service can help fill it. Every satisfied customer, patient, or client you have is in a position to know, live with, live next to, hang out with, do business with, buy from, sell to, or otherwise associate with an abundance of people or enterprises that are prime target prospects for your business.

But you cannot expect your customers, on their own volition, to be responsible for or even aware of the opportunity they have to bring their friends, neighbours, coworkers, employees, employers, church members, club associates, and colleagues into your business for you. You've got to help them and help them benevolently, not self-servingly."

What To Say When You Call Referrals

When you're calling someone who was referred to you — it's an odd thing. They don't know your name and they're probably not glad you came. Because you were referred by their friend you have a grace period of a few more seconds before you're simply a telemarketer. But not as much as you might think. If you start to pressure that person to buy, if you're pushy, not only will you lose that sale, but they'll tell their friend who referred you and you may lose them as a client too. At the very least they'll never refer you to another person ever again.

But if — in an attempt to avoid pressuring them — you don't get to the point fast enough, you'll be equally annoying and they'll feel frustrated because they think you're wasting their time.

What to do?

The key is to go directly to the problem they're facing but to do it in a way that in no way communicates the idea that you think you are the only one to help them. You must come across low-key, humble and open. If you sound totally certain and convinced that you can help them — they will likely push back.

Here's one suggestion: *"Hi there. Mary Johnson suggested I give you call. She thought I might – or might not – be able to help you with _____ issue and . . . I'm not sure I can but . . . I thought I would give you a call to explore the possibility because she asked me to."*

You're not calling to sell them. You're just calling to see if it's a fit.

If you open the call like this, you'll likely have a lovely conversation. At the end of it you can off handedly mention a risk free offer they can take advantage of — something that will help to educate them in a risk free way.

Then offer them a risk free option for finding out more about you: a free report, an article you wrote, a free event, an online video they can watch, a free 30 minute session or if it feels right, a sit down, no obligation meeting with you to see if it's a fit or not. You really have to feel it out to see what makes the most sense in the situation. They might not trust the person who referred them that much and their problem might not be that bad so they aren't highly motivated to act and they're suspicious of you. For others, they might worship the opinion of the person who sent you their way, be desperate for a solution and instantly click with you in which case it might make sense to just book a series of sessions with them then and there. Trust your gut on that.

But generally, a warm, non-assumptive phone call followed by a free offer that helps them get to know you better with some simple, gentle next-step built in seems to work the best.

Whatever you send them or invite them to must have an irresistible offer enclosed in it that entices them to take the next step. And ideally, you get permission to add them to your email/ mailing list.

For example, if you send them a link to a video to watch, at the end of that video, there should be a prompt for the next step they can take.

For more thoughts on how to take the pressure out of your sales conversations I can't recommend the following website strongly enough: unlockthegame.com

A Five Step Process for Directly Asking for Referrals

Here's a simple five-step process you can follow, regardless of whether your referral request is being done in person, over the telephone, or via letter:

Step #1: Identify Your Best Clients

Who are the clients you enjoy most? The ones who you feel most respected by? The ones who show up on time, pay you on time without fuss and refer you a lot of business? Make a list.

Step #2: Appreciate Them

Tell them that you enjoy doing business with them more than any other client you work with. And tell them why. Be specific. Tell them exactly what they do that you love so much. And tell them that you realize they probably associate with other people like themselves who mirror their values and qualities.

Step #3: Open Up The Possibility

Tell them that since they obviously know the exact people you prefer working with, you'd like to extend to them the opportunity of referring their valued and trusted associates to you. Tell them you would prefer their referrals to any other source of customers or clients. And explain to the customer why generating a continuum of referrals is integral to your ability to keep doing business the way you have. It enables you to invest more time and money into the appropriate staffing, products, services and other business aspects that ultimately benefit the customer. "I think we'd both rather I spend my time on making my business better and working with clients rather on marketing it."

I recall Jay Abraham speaking about one company that overcame their clients' reluctance to give referrals by showing them that it was in their own best interest to do so. The broker he was working with in the company told him:

Clients are often hesitant to give you referrals. They fear that you might not do a good job for a friend of theirs. Or their friend may lose a lot of money – even though you've made money for them. "So, once or twice a year, I go from A to Z to every single one of my clients. And I say to them, 'Almost my entire day is spent managing your money and taking care of your investments and keeping track of what's going on with everything you own . . . and then disseminating that information to you. I don't really spend a lot of my time bringing in new customers. By referring someone that you really feel would benefit from my service, I will have more time to spend doing what I do best, which is servicing your money.' Then I ask, 'Who do you think would be in the league that you are in, or higher, who would benefit from the type of service that I provide?' And people just start giving me a list. The quality is phenomenal and the closing ratio is extremely high. Now, the guy who just reads names out of a Rolodex isn't as valuable. A lot of times I don't convert more than one out of ten. But the guy who gives you just one or two

referrals, well, I close a higher percentage of them because they're more qualified. The average commission per client per year, worst case, is about \$3,500 – take home. So it's definitely worth my while to go through this process.

Step #4: Help Them Identify Possible Referrals

Then help the customer or client see a clear picture of who in their lives could benefit most effectively and naturally from your services or products. Tell them what kind of person or business it might be, where they are, what they are probably doing and why they'd benefit by doing business with you. Show them what that person or entity would be doing or buying right now so that the picture is vivid.

Sometimes it can be wise to schedule a time with clients when to call them and ask. This one may seem obvious but it's often overlooked and, because it's so direct, puts people at ease.

When talking with a client who represents your ideal you can say, “Look, can I ask for your help in something? I feel a bit awkward about it. The way that I grow my business is by referrals. The more referrals I get the less time I need to spend on marketing and the more time I can spend helping people like you and improving my craft by educating myself. I want to ask you for referrals. And I was wondering if we could schedule a call for next week because maybe the names aren't all at the tip of your tongue right now. And what I'm going to ask is that you take 15 minutes before our call to go through you database/contact book and really think if there are any people who might find what I do useful. I'll give you a sheet to help you clarify folks you know. If no one comes up, that's absolutely fine. But if someone does I'd love to learn a bit about them from you and discuss the best way to approach them. Now, I imagine the call will take 15 minutes or so, so that's 30 minutes of your time. And I'd like to compensate you for that in _____ way. Would that be alright? Yes? Great. When would be best for you next week?”

The Direct Ask – An Example:

Let's say you've really set the stage and you directly approach it with a client.

“Look,” you say. “I feel a bit awkward about this but I'm wondering if I could ask

you for referrals. Would you mind if we took five minutes to see if there's anyone you know who might find what I do useful? There may not be and that's fine, but it would be a big help to me and, I hope, to your friends. I find that the people who come to me from existing clients are usually the best quality who I most enjoy working with. I'd rather get clients from sources I trust rather than from ads where they may or may not be a fit. Would that be okay?"

They say "sure!" And you sit down to think about it.

Now, the best place to start is with this:

"Do you know any _____ sorts of people who are suffering from _____ sorts of problems?"

EXAMPLES:

- "Do you know any conscious, green, ethical, holistic or small business owners who are struggling with their cash flow, not attracting enough clients or who keep putting off their marketing because they have such mixed feelings about it?"
- "Do you know anyone who's trying to put on a conference but doesn't have a foggiest clue on how to follow up with the participants and really harness their energy?"
- "Do you know anyone who makes their living doing sales but just hates doing cold calls?"
- "Do you know anyone living in the Edmonton area whose car is always breaking down, they hate it, they know they need to buy a new one but they keep putting it off because it's such a hassle?"
- "Do you know any single mothers who are struggling to get healthy and lose some weight but can't seem to find the time?"

Starting in this way is incredibly powerful. It instantly clarifies the two key pieces of information in their mind:

1. The type of person you're looking for. 2. What problems they are facing. Starting the conversation in any other way is likely the long way around.

Step #5: Make Them An Offer They Can't Refuse

Then extend a totally risk-free, totally obligation-free sales offer. Willingly offer to confer with, review, advise, or at least talk or meet with anyone important to that customer as a service to that customer. In other words, offer to consult their referral without expectation of purchase, so your customer sees you as a valuable expert with whom they can put their friends or colleagues in touch.

This is very different than making this same offer to anyone who comes across you on the internet (which I would strongly advise against). This is sitting down to help out your client's friends who have been referred to you from a sense of real clarity that they might be a fit.

The best part is this: even if that person doesn't end up becoming a client, you've made your client look good to their friend by going to bat for them for which they will be incredibly grateful.

Here's some more reading:

thrive-academy.com/how-to-ask-for-referrals-authentically/

20 Specific, Real-World & Proven Referral Case Studies

The following case studies were ones I learned of through Jay Abraham whose work I can not recommend highly enough. You can learn more, and find a lot of free things, at abraham.com.

1. **Summary: Making a referral source prove you are wrong is a clever way to get referrals.** I get names and addresses of people who have bought the product, and then I call them and ask how they're using the materials. After listening, I'll make a comment like, "Well, I don't suppose your senior management would be interested in any of this." And usually they'll say, "Oh, no, they really would." And then they start selling me on the referral. This is an easy and non-threatening way to get referrals.
2. **Summary: A real estate marketing specialist reveals how he mastered the art of getting referrals from people who attend his presentations.** I train Realtors on how to do personal marketing. What I discover at the end of my presentation – which is, in essence, a sales presentation – is that they are excited about what I do. Then I say, "Guess what, I'm still in the area. I'd love to visit some more people. Who do you know who'd really enjoy this presentation?" I make them look good to their peer group, because they're able to say, "You've got to hear this!" Usually, I get between two or three referrals out of each person. If I get a person who is that excited about what I do, they feed me into other people. I pick up the phone and say, 'I talked to so and so. They told me to call you. They were really impressed. Let me tell you what I'm doing.' And it goes on from there. This is how I build my audiences everywhere I go.
3. **Summary: How a golf course uses simple business cards to generate all the referrals they can handle.** We give our customers business cards with the words "FREE RANGE TIME" printed on the back. And they put their initials on these cards, and we encourage them to give out three or four at a time, because people like to come with their friends or their family. In addition, we let our members bring 24 guests a year at no charge. Of the 24, probably one-third end up becoming members. And those who don't buy memberships just pay as they go and we make more money on that anyway!

4. **Summary: This surprising goody a furnace company gives their customers after the deal is finished is a great way to generate leads.** We walk our customers through a process that's very orchestrated, very scripted. We show them testimonial letters and we explain to them exactly what we're going to do for them with their heating and air conditioning system. As they're looking at these referral letters, we say to them, "Now isn't that the type of letter you'd be willing to write if all of the things that we're saying are absolutely true?" And, of course, they answer yes. At the end of the presentation – after we close the sale – the last thing we do is we hand them a business card and say "Thank you. Now, we have a surprise for you. You were referred to us by so and so. Therefore, you get fifty dollars off of the price that you've already negotiated – and that you thought was a good price. And furthermore, if you do this with one of YOUR friends, we'll be paying you fifty dollars for the referral. And we'll also give fifty dollars to your friend. Would you like to do that?" They always say yes, and this is what has helped us build our business to the very successful level it's at today.
5. **Summary: Educating customers from the beginning about his referral system helps this real estate broker get tons of referrals.** Referrals are the best way I've ever found to get clients. I educate my clients right from the first appointment how important referrals are to me. And I let them know that when they list their house what typically happens is a sign goes on their house the next day. And they're going to go to work and tell their co-workers that they're selling their house. And they're going to come home and their neighbours are going to ask where they're thinking of moving. And their friends are going to ask the same kind of questions. Ultimately, they're going to run into other people thinking of buying or selling real estate. So what we've done is we've been asking right from the first interview for referrals, and we ask all the way through the process. Not just at the end of the sale. And we're usually getting at least one referral from each one of our listings, because now they know how important it is. And we do give them something to thank them after the referral, which is good. We give them a 500 minute calling card, good to call anywhere in North America. We don't tell them that until after the referral, then they get the gift.
6. **Summary: An optometrist describes how he thanks his patients who have referred other patients to him.** People are really not accustomed to being acknowledged, much less thanked, by their doctors. So when you do it, it

creates a huge impression on people. So I send hand-written thank-you notes to any patient who refers another patient to me. I get so much positive feedback from this, it's incredible. And, I get MORE referrals! So doing the unexpected, positive thing really pays off for someone in my profession. I get even MORE referrals when I send someone one of these thank-you notes!

7. **Summary: Taking a client out to breakfast or lunch on their birthday is a good way to generate referrals.** I would have meetings with my clients on their birthdays, and I'd either take them out to breakfast or lunch. And in those meetings I'd sit down with them and ask them to tell me how they started their business. "What makes it different? What are some of the things that are different about you? What makes it great?" I'd say, "Tell me one or two things I could do to really improve my business. Who would you call on if you were in my position? Do you know two, five, ten, or a hundred people?" And they start listing people. "Tell me about them." What happens is you end up with an awesome referral list. And of course, you just keep working with this technique, because it never wears out.
8. **Summary: A dentist found a painless way to extract referrals from his clients.** "We wait for the compliment before we do any type of asking for referrals, because if we do it any other way, it's pushy. And so, we have our referrals in holders at every work area and every room on the counter at arm's length on both sides. And when the patient says, 'Gosh, that didn't hurt at all,' we say, 'That was very nice, thank you for the compliment.' And we reach and we get a card. And we put it in the patient's hand and we just clasp the hand. And we say, 'You know, we do no advertising. It's only through word of mouth that we get real nice patients like you. If you have a relative, friend, or co-worker that you'd like to refer to this office, it would be real nice.' This works great!"
9. **Summary: Putting referrals first grew this health club very rapidly.** "Fifty percent of my business is based on referrals. When I sign up a member, I sit them down and sell them on service and results. I say, "There are two things I ask of you. First thing is that you come consistently to the club and use it. And the second thing that I ask of you is that when you talk to your friends, make sure you refer them to me so I can take care of them." After I get clients the results they want, the key thing that I ask from them is, "Can you write me a letter of recommendation? Can you take five minutes of your time? I've taken

my time to make sure you get your results, right?” Out of a hundred people, fifty people will do it. And this has proven to be a very useful sales tool.

10. **Summary: Using case studies helps generate referrals for this successful plastic surgery clinic.** We send out letters quarterly to our old patients, and in there we describe a case history. We tell them about one of our patients who’s had a particular type of surgery and how they felt about it. And then we enclose a certificate for them to give to a friend, good for a free consultation. We get a lot of people who come in to see me about a particular cosmetic procedure because of this very low-cost, easy marketing effort.
11. **Summary: A chiropractor reveals how he learned to get referrals out of the many, many satisfied patients who otherwise don’t refer.** Most of my practice is referral. I haven’t treated a patient in four years myself who hasn’t been directly referred to me. I have associates who treat the ones we get from other things. But what we have found is that you can have many, many satisfied patients who simply don’t refer. To overcome that, we heavily emphasize patient education. We start by educating them on a topic that we cover specifically for the first fifteen times we see that patient. And we take them through a whole bunch of things.

We modify it to the patient and the situation. But the essence of it is to build their confidence in us.

By the time we have that accomplished, we’re ready to ask them for referrals. By then, they know exactly what we do and they have confidence in us, so they feel more comfortable telling their friends about us.

We ask for referrals when the patient says, “Boy, you’re busy today!” Normally a doctor kind of downplays it. He doesn’t want to look too busy. Well, my line immediately is, “Yeah, I am. You know I’ve got lots of great patients just like you. And they’re constantly sending in their friends and their family. Is there anyone you’ve been thinking about sending in?”

They say, “Well, I’ve been talking to my neighbour.” Or, “I’ve been talking to so and so.” Or they’ll ask a question, “Well, do you treat headaches?” But they always have someone, because we’ve raised in their mind the idea that we really appreciate referrals — that our patients get a lot of attention for referring. And

they want recognition. They want attention. They don't just want to be helped on a health basis. You'll have to be extremely consistent. You've got to never stop looking for a chance to ask, or what I call "plant a referral seed."

You've got to be so excited about what you do that the patient also feels that excitement — that it's a natural occurrence to want to ask them to send other people in. You've got to be so excited that you couldn't possibly feel bad about asking them for a referral. In fact, they should feel great about referring people to you. But if they don't feel that from you, they're not going to do it.

12. **Summary: Marketing for Hippies Intros.** Sometimes, it's not about asking people directly for referrals one on one but making it really easy and obvious where they can send people. When I'm new in town and don't have someone well known to endorse me, I used to do free, three hour intro workshops. What works best is for me to do a series of them in a row. That way word of mouth spreads and people send their friends to the next ones. Key points: add the folks who attended to my email list (with their permission) and email them afterwards to remind them of the dates on the next events. Also have handbills for the future workshops that I can give them to give to their friends.
13. **Summary: A massage therapist sent a letter to her favourite clients telling her how much she loved them and specifically why.** She enclosed a free gift coupon for them for 25% of their next session and three coupons offering a free session that they could give out to their friends. They were coloured differently and she asked them not to use them for themselves but to give them away. The coupons were only allowed to be used during slow days and times that were specified and had to be used within 45 days. I think she'd have gotten a better result with a 15 day timeline. There was a space for the client referring their friends to write their name so that the massage therapist would know who had referred them. But why wait until Christmas? What if you made a system to send out a letter to every client who saw you who you thought was going to be a good client saying, "I don't send this to everyone who sees me but I like you and would love to work with you more. I bet I'd also like your friends. So, here's three free gift certificates to give out. It's on me."
14. **Summary: Investment Company hosts regular free lunches.** No such thing as a free lunch? Not true. An investment company in Iowa hosts regular free lunches for their clients. They bring in speakers to share their opinions about

the financial markets, investments and issues related. The information is incredibly valuable. The clients are allowed to invite a limited number of guests to each event. They are educated as to who the ideal client is. At the lunches, they get people's contact information and permission to follow up.

15. **Summary: A window cleaning company uses an endorsement letter to sell your neighbours.** Imagine this – you hire a window cleaning company. They come and do just a fabulous job. At the end they say, “We have a deal for you. If you’d be willing to write us a letter endorsing us to your neighbours, we’ll give you your next job for free.” So you sit down and write out the letter. The cleaning company then goes around to your neighbours and say, “We’re working with your neighbour down the street. They’ve been thrilled. Here’s a letter they wrote for us.” This sells like crazy.
16. **Summary: A car dealer uses balloons to generate referrals.** Imagine you just bought a car. A few days after buying it, you get a huge, beautiful, helium balloon package delivered to you from the car dealership. Your friends ask you who sent it. They need to because there’s no advertising on those balloons at all. You tell them it’s from the car dealership and tell your friend what a great experience you had with them. What if within 9 months the business referred by clients of the car dealership rose by 58%? True story.
17. **Summary: A large apartment complex told its clients that it hated having empty rooms.** They were like festering money pits that killed their profitability. They tell you how very hard it is to find good tenants. They express their frustration around having to kick out bad tenants – the emotional and financial cost involved. They tell you how much they appreciate you as a client. They tell you that they figure you must have friends who are of a similar caliber. They share with you that friends of tenants are always so much easier to deal with, more friendly and more reliable with their rent. And they tell you that, for every friend you recommend who ends up moving in, they’d like to say thank you by taking \$100 off your rent. They’ll do that all the way up to \$900 (their maximum rent). If you happen to refer more, they’ll start taking it off your next month’s rent. Not a bad idea at all. But then they took it one step further. In the letter it says, “If you should ever leave us (sob) – and you weren’t evicted – we’d like to offer you a lifetime referral fee of \$150 cash for every person who you refer that moves in.

18. **Summary: Musical artist Jason Webley uses “mystery gift” if you bring a friend.** While I was in Eugene, Oregon visiting a friend, one of her favourite artists, Jason Webley, was coming to town. He’d emailed in advance and offered a “special surprise: to anyone who brought a friend to his upcoming concert. It turned out to be a CD of songs about his favourite number – 11. It was just a fun, low cost, cheeky gift, but the mystery of it got some people excited.
19. **Summary: A holistic practitioner in Calgary educates her colleagues about who to refer.** One day, she realized that she was referring a lot of business to other practitioners and but had never asked them for referrals in return. But she also felt very awkward about asking them directly. Here’s what she did. She sent them a letter saying, “Hey there. I just realized that I have been referring you business for years but had never asked you directly who your ideal kind of client is. I want to make sure that I’m referring you the right kind of people. Could you send me an email to let me know what kind of clients you’d like me to send you? And I realized I’d never told you what an ideal referral would look like for me.” And then she described, very clearly, her ideal client.
20. **Summary: Marketing guru uses viral marketing of an e-book to build business and email list.** I recently got an email from Bob Serling – marketing genius extraordinaire. He was sending me the link to a PDF e-book he’d just finished. It was a collection of interviews with the best marketers in the world. He asked them the simple question, “What’s working best for you right now?” It was over 100 pages long. He was offering it for free.

Here’s his email:

I have a special gift for you today – no cost, no strings, no obligation. I’ve just put the finishing touches on my new “10-Minute Marketing Success Interviews” ebook. If you heard the original audios, I’ve added 5 more interviews and had them all transcribed and put into pdf format.

In these interviews, I asked 21 leading experts the question, “What is your favourite marketing technique that’s working really well for you and your clients right now?”

Even though everyone was asked the same question, each expert had their own unique and extremely valuable answer. I've personally come up with a list of excellent ideas for my own business by reading these short, powerful interviews.

Here's the list of all 21 experts, in alphabetical order: Bob Bly, John Carlton, Sean D'Souza, Michel Fortin, Randy Gage, David Garfinkel, Steve Harrison, Shel Horowitz, John Jantsch, Paul Lemberg, Clayton Makepeace, Perry Marshall, Robert Middleton, Paul Myers, Brad Petersen, Raleigh Pinskey, Bob Scheinfeld, Bob Serling, Yanik Silver, Joe Vitale and Jeff Walker.

Wow, that's some lineup! If you'd like to get your own copy of this ebook, as a gift from me with no cost and no obligation, you can download it by clicking here.

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I hope you enjoy it! Also, because I'd like to make this one of the most downloaded ebooks ever, I'd appreciate it if you'd tell your friends and business associates about it.

However, for people who aren't subscribers to my ezine, please tell them to use this link: [A DIFFERENT LINK.]

27) Create A Program For The Clients You Hate The Most (Or Refer Out)

Here's a provocative idea.

My guess is that you may have clients who come to you with issues you aren't excited to help them with.

For me that was actually clients who came to me in a financial cash crunch wanting immediate help. Ugh. It wasn't my favourite way to work. But, over time, I wondered if there was something I could offer them that would be helpful. And The Meantime grew out of that.

If you help people with relationship issues could you come up with a Relationship Crisis package?

If you work with people around holistic health could you create a 'How to Survive a Health Crisis' package?

Another way to look at it, when clients aren't ready for you, could you create something that might help them *get* ready to work with you?

And, if you've got no energy to do that, could you find someone who is excited to do that — or does it already — could you create a business relationship with them where you pay them for referrals of clients they have made ready for you?

Maybe those situations with clients are only frustrating because you've never thought about a system on how to deal with them.

28) Host Vip Days

VIP days are an incredible way to deliver value for clients and make good, fast money yourself. The best expert I know to go to to learn more about this from is Elizabeth Purvis of MarketingGoddess.com.

But the essence of it is this. A daylong experience that focuses on a hyper specific result your clients are craving.

For example, I might lead a VIP day on helping people figure out their niche. It might be a VIP day where you work together to help them write a sales page, their bio or a homepage for their website.

It might be a VIP day where you help them make a game plan to attract the romantic partner of their dreams. It might be a VIP session where you pick a very particular emotional issue with which they are stuck and, over the day, you help them get unstuck.

The key here is to really hone in on a particular issue and avoid the temptation to give everything you have and overwhelm them. Pick the thing you feel most confident you could help them with.

There are three main ways you could run an experience like this.

Option #1: One on one over the phone. In this case, you would talk for maybe 30 minutes, give them an assignment to do (something that takes 30-60 minutes) and then talk again on the phone. You'd do that maybe 5-7 times walking them step by step from point A to point B. While they're working on one piece you could be working on another. For example, while they're working on step two you could be reviewing their work from step 1 in more detail. The key idea here is that the process is made simple and easy. Easy is the new free.

Option #2: One on one live. Same basic deal only done in person.

Option #3: Live with a small group of 5-7 people. You're walking a small group through a very particular process and making sure they all get feedback.

With both live options, consider adding catering and make sure you're in a venue that has zero distractions.

The power of a VIP Day is that people can leave with something tangibly done - a real result has been achieved. If people have a goal they need to accomplish quickly (they don't have time for a six week teleseminar program, or to go to a generic workshop to figure things out for themselves) then this kind of an experience can be a godsend.

Of course, central to this is that you need to have a well thought out, considered and explicit system through which you are working them. You really want to have a plan for the day. What are the steps through which you are going to be taking people? The better a system you have, the more powerful and consistent your results will be. I would advise against 'winging it'.

How much could you charge for a day like this? I've seen anywhere from \$500 to \$20,000. You might do a few at a lower rate to get experience and testimonials and then raise the rate later. A great question to ask yourself comes from Morgana Rae, "What would it take to make this workshop worth \$1000 to them?" and then only charge \$500. The key is, design the VIP Day to be worth at least twice what you're charging.

At the beginning, it's important to really ground the session with a question like, "Why this day? Why now? Why does this result matter so much to you?" and then to make sure you're both clear on what the goal of the day together is.

Once you've done that, then it's good to review how the day will flow to make sure they understand and feel safe about the process.

At the end of the day, tie down the value they got by asking them, "So, what are you pulling from this day? What's different now than when we started? Any aha's or breakthroughs?"

And then to make them any offers for continued work with you that make sense.

To add more value:

- you might consider recording the audio of the VIP day so they can listen to it later.
- create a “kickstart” assignment that they complete before showing up for the VIP day so they can hit the ground walking.
- make sure you help them create some clear and powerful next steps to do as homework at the end of the VIP Day.
- schedule a 15-30 minute accountability session for 30 days after the VIP session to check in with them on how it’s going.
- create some sweet bonuses (e.g. additional reading, videos to watch, checklists, “done for you” templates and fill in the blanks exercises).
- catering with snacks and drinks during the day.

And, of course, these steps you use for the VIP Day could also be turned into a teleseminar series where you walk a large group through the same steps and they don’t get the same level of feedback from you. Once people have done that, they might want to opt in for a VIP session to take the content deeper and get your feedback.

Here’s another twist on the VIP Day. My colleague Donna Santos in Toronto has, from time to time, run Headshot Days where she’ll do ten headshot sessions in a row. She has a make up and hair person there to make sure you’re ready. You get about an hour with her and, for an affordable price, you get your head shots done. It’s an efficient use of her time as it’s all done at her studio and, if she can get a few hubs to host it so that they do the marketing for her (e.g. I hosted one and filled it with my very grateful clients).

Another way to think of these VIP Days are as Makeover Days.

If you were a stylist this could include a day of shopping and then coordinating outfits to figure out the look they want. It might include make up and hair being done too.

I've seen dating coaches who work with men for a daylong intensive where they get coaching and are also taken out into the real world so they can see how they might approach a woman and give them the most honest, tangible feedback they've ever gotten in their life.

A nutritionist might do a day where they figure out goals, clean out their kitchen and pantry and then go shopping to restock it with good things and cook a meal together.

I've been working on NichingSpiral.com and it's occurred to me that I could craft a very powerful VIP Day focused on helping people get moving on their niche in one day.

Be creative. The key is to get them a specific result.

My colleague Morgana Rae had this to say about VIP Days when I asked her:

Yes, I do offer them. Not often. My focus is to work with very few people and give them all I've got, and that leaves a big hurdle for people who want private coaching with me for an immediate breakthrough without a long term commitment.

So I offer a VIP day for those people who email me about "booking a private session." A single, one off private session with me is my VIP day. And I price it to DISSUADE customers, because I'd really rather work with people for a whole year, so I can take care of them as stuff comes up.

And the work we do in that one day is fucking hard! But the effects are so deep and transformational that it's worth it to me to keep it on my menu of services.

One last thing, I typically offer a VIP 1/2 day. Cause, the way I work, it's really the first 4 hours that give them what they came for.

I GIFT a full day VIP day to my year long clients. I put them up in a swanky hotel, cover their meals, and establish relationship for the coming year.

29) Run A Teacher Training

Falling fast on the heels of the idea of the sales funnel, what if you ran a teacher training?

If you've been in business for a while and have a following, do you think there might be people in your sphere who might like to learn how to do what you do? I'm guessing yes.

My colleague Erica Ross led her DanceOurWayHome.com workshops for years and finally, after being asked a number of times about it, decided to offer a teacher training where she took people behind the scenes on how she did what she did. It brought in an incredible chunk of income (I think around \$10,000).

This strategy is the core of what keeps yoga studios sustainable. It's the main income generator for them.

I've been working on my new website NichingSpiral.com and designing my sales funnel for it. At this moment the basic sales funnel will be this:

- Free: Online Niche Assessment + ebook addressing main Niching Fears + series of articles on niching by colleagues
- \$20: Niching Spiral Book
- \$199: Niching Spiral Homestudy Course
- \$1600: Niching Spiral Mentorship Course

But, recently, I've been realizing that there may be a small but lucrative market where I help marketing and business coaches learn my approach to helping people sort out their niche. Teaching the teachers (and those who might want to be teachers).

30) Create On Ongoing Group, Mastermind Or Inner Circle

Here's an idea that very few people consider.

Certainly you can do one time workshops and events, but what about creating a small group that meets more regularly. That could be weekly, monthly or quarterly.

There are a lot of ways to do this.

Liz Garret of harmonybydesign.ca in Edmonton runs a monthly circle for entrepreneurs where she walks them through a journey of growing their business in a conscious way.

Rob Sinclair of ConsciousBrands.com in Calgary, runs what he calls Spiral Tables for leaders in the organic food and beverage industry which he describes in this way on his website:

Spiral Table is a program dedicated to developing mastermind groups for sustainability champions big and small. We take 6-8 people from similar industries and/or seniority and/or organizational roles, and put them together in a monthly, facilitated dialogue dedicated to solving problems and conquering the complexities of sustainability. Think of it as the ultimate collaborative leadership development program in sustainability and the new economy – and everyone's an instructor!

In the Spiral Table model, Rob's role isn't to be the expert in the issue (although he knows a tremendous amount) but rather to bring experts together, facilitate their conversations, take notes, to do research on pressing issues between calls and make sure everyone gets those notes. Sometimes people come to you for expertise but sometimes the result or gift you can be offering is to arrange to bring the right people together and facilitate a productive conversation. It's something people often crave but are too busy to do themselves and then often lack the skill to facilitate it.

Do you have a group of clients who might enjoy getting together on a regular basis to learn more, go deeper, support each other? Could you run a beta version of this?

Another variation of this is what my friends at Authentic World do – which is a **Games Night**. Their workshops are all about more authentic ways of relating with each other and so, once a month or so, they host a games night where they come together and play what are, essentially theatre or improv games and use them as a way to explore and learn about the way they relate in the rest of their lives. Their core premise is “how you do anything is how you do everything.” It’s a chance for their community to come together on a regular basis but also a wonderful way for people who’ve never been to any of their paid events to check them out.

31) Redo Your Sales Copy On Your Most Promising Product Or Service

This one is so simple that it often eludes people.

This one is for you if you've got a lot of people checking you out online but no one is buying. If you're getting traffic to a page selling something and no one's buying it's a sign that one of two things is wrong.

- 1) It's a bad concept. The idea just isn't that strong. You're offering a thing that nobody really wants.
- 2) The sales copy is off. The thing itself is awesome but your sales copy doesn't convey that. As Mac Ross once said about marketing, "Marketing is about establishing the value beyond the immediately apparent." If it was immediately apparent, on the surface, how often your work was, then more people would be buying it. But it isn't.

Often times, this is because the sales copy is too full of jargon or doesn't get to the point fast enough.

I once worked with VergePermaculture.com from Calgary on marketing their Permaculture Design Certifications. They were getting traffic but not many sign ups. As soon as I saw their page, I suspected why. The sales page was full of big words that only hardcore permaculturists (who don't need what they're offering) would understand. We spent hours reworking it and made it much stronger.

Sometimes just this one thing can make a profound and immediate difference in income. Just changing the name of a workshop, changing the headline, rewording the write up . . . it can be shocking how much of a difference it makes. There is absolutely a reason why top copywriters get paid such exorbitant fees. Because they know that the right words make all the difference.

You can read more before and after case studies for free at this link: marketingforhippies.com/free/274-2/

You can read about a dozen blog posts on sales letters at this link: marketingforhippies.com/category/sales-letters/

And you can check out my favourite workbook on writing kind, respectful and warm sales letters at this link: pinkelephantacademy.com/how-to-write-a-sales-page-the-sweetly-selling-workbook

32) Call Or Email Past Clients

This one is the simplest but perhaps the scariest for most people because it involves a direct conversation and the potential for a direct ask.

But it could also be done with great success over email.

Recently, I was promoting a workshop in Edmonton, where I live, and I made a list of local people I thought might be interested. Then I sent them a brief message via email or Facebook saying,

“Name, can you come to this? i think you might dig it and I would personally love it if you were there. not 100% sure its a fit for your situation but i think it might be. <https://marketingforhippies.com/mrx/>”

I didn’t hear back from everyone, but I did from some. One lady signed up and told me, “see. this is what I like about you . . . you can send a message selling something . . . and it doesn't feel like pressure . . . it feels like you are doing me a favour . . . thats how “ want my marketing to feel.” And then she referred two other people to come to my workshop.

Lisa Manyon of writeoncreative.com had the follow excellent suggestion:

Once you've refocused your energy I highly recommend a simple formula to connect with your current clients, past clients and colleagues.

You see the majority of our business should be coming from repeat customers and key referral sources. This is true for almost every business model. This is also the marketing piece that many fail to incorporate into their schedules and that's a big mistake that is costing your business to miss out on cash flow.

Building lasting relationships is key to generating more sales. This doesn't mean calling people and pitching them. It means having conversations to build those relationships in a reciprocal way. The bottom line is communicating with your clients and colleagues in a genuine, consistent way will increase cash flow. This doesn't mean you should start sending massive emails too frequently or pitching people in way that feels desperate or frantic (people pick up on this energy). What

it does mean is you can consider incorporating a simple formula to generate cash flow fast.

Here it is.

Call: *Pick up the phone and call your contacts. Be strategic about this. AND be genuine. WHO do you need to connect with that can help? How can you help them?*

Connect: *Don't immediately pitch your offer. Have a collaborative conversation and ask what THEY are focused on right now and what would help them the most in accomplishing this goal. Offer suggestions to help (again not pitching what you're doing – the solution could be something you don't offer but that you can connect them to).*

Then share what your focus is and ask for referrals. i.e. "Currently I'm trying to accomplish XYZ (insert your big mission that is a result of whatever you offer) and I'm hoping to connect with XYZ (insert number of clients you're looking for). Do you know of anyone you can connect me with who this might benefit? Is this something you're interested in?" Based on this conversation, it's clear you want to connect, be of service and have people referred your way. All too often we fail to ask and when we don't ask, nothing happens (just like marketing, no effort equals no results). Extra bonus here for sending a card after the conversation (these do make a difference and it's another way to show appreciation and deepen the connection).

Continue: *Making calls to people you're already connected with is FUN. So, continue this cycle on a regular basis. Often the solution to your cash flow woes is just a phone call or Skype conversation away. Don't allow yourself to be paralyzed by the current situation and need for funds. Move past that and pick up the phone again. Consistency is important here because not everyone will be available at the time you call. You may need to set appointments with them. Just make sure you're setting appointments with yourself to make the calls.*

The bottom line is this. We often make things far more complicated than they need to be. We each have the gifts and skills to communicate and in my opinion, collaboration is the new currency. Try it.

33) Add These Seven Offer Intensifiers To Your Existing Offers

Once you've got your basic offer figured out, consider adding some of the following "offer intensifiers" to it to make it more attractive.

Offer Intensifier #1 — Scarcity: If there is already a genuine scarcity of what you're offering, make sure people know that. Only so many spaces in your workshop? Tell people. Only so many spaces for your coaching? Make sure people know. Pretending there is scarcity where there isn't is not ethical but where it's there, people want to know. This can also include offering a certain number of early bird specials where people who respond by a certain date get a lower price. This is also a kindness to yourself. For my first Meantime program we had 116 people sign up. And 70% of that was in the last 24 hours. That makes a lot of work for us right before the program starts when I should be focusing on getting the program ready not dealing with orders.

Offer Intensifier #2 — Contrast: if they have a number of options they can choose from, show them the more expensive item first. In a clothing store, a good salesperson will show the expensive suits first and then show you the sweaters - because, in contrast to the suits - those sweaters seem cheap. But if you started by showing them T-Shirt and then took them to the sweaters - the sweaters (in contrast with the T-Shirts) would seem expensive. The point is - if you have to show multiple things - be smart about the order you show them in.

Offer Intensifier #3 — Price Increase For Perceived Value: sometimes by increasing your price you create the impression of greater value. This one is a bit riskier but it's worth adding here because people often have the assumption that a lower price will result in more sales and that is not always the case.

Offer Intensifier #4 — Give Your Rationale: the word "because" is one of the most important words in marketing. It's very powerful to not only make an offer but tell them *why* you're making the offer. As Clayton Makepeace of makepeacetotalpackage.com puts it: "Great offers begin with a clear, credible explanation of why you're about to give away the farm. Maybe it's a "Special Introductory Offer:" You're so sure that once the prospect experiences the benefits your product provides, he'll be a customer for life. Or, maybe you're so worried about a current or impending crisis in his health, finances,

happiness, – whatever – that giving him all this good stuff is the only ethical thing an ethical person like you could possibly do. Whatever your rationale for the amazing, astonishing, truly spectacular offer you're about to make, put it up in lights! Better yet, use it to position yourself as a concerned advocate and your new customer's greatest champion.”

Offer Intensifier #5 — Offer A Discounts: There are several considerations to hold in mind when offering a discount. Many people do this all wrong and it comes across as desperate.

The key is to make sure you give your rationale as to why you are offering the discount. And it's okay to be very honest about it.

Again, Clayton Makepeace has some very lucid thinking of this topic:

FIRST: It's important to establish your regular price and make it seem like a really good value. To make your regular price believable, specifics are crucial. Tell your prospect where your product has been offered or sold for full price or even how many thousands of folks have paid the full price for the product. (In his Internet promotions, one of my buddies even includes a link that opens a separate web page on which the product is offered at full price!) Then, demonstrate why even at full price your product is a screaming deal. Show how your product will save them or make them many times your regular price.

SECOND: Present your discount in a way that dimensionalizes your role as your prospect's advocate and champion. After stating and justifying the regular price, I often say something like, “But it's so crucial that you get this help now, I don't want you to have to pay that much . . .” How BIG a discount should you offer? In cases when my client allows me to establish pricing, I always go for the 50% Introductory Discount. “You SAVE HALF!” and “HALF-PRICE OFFER” and “HALF-OFF!” have great visceral appeal. Anything else feels kind of stingy ~ anything more strains credulity.

THIRD: Take the time to marvel at the piddling amount the prospect will pay. Here again, comparisons will serve you well. When possible, quantify the monetary benefits the product will deliver and compare it with the almost insignificant price. Break the regular price down to a daily or weekly figure and compare it with something far more trivial that they spend more on without even thinking about the expense: A gallon of gas, a cup of Starbucks, etc.

Offer Intensifier #6 — Offer A Payment Plan: Let's say that the price you're offering something at feels high for your potential clients (even though it feels like the right price for you and you couldn't bare to charge less. You might consider a "ThreePay" or "FourPay" offer where they can spread the total amount out over three to four months. This one approach can massively increase the response you get.

Offer Intensifier #7 — Premiums, Freemiums and Bonuses: Why not consider adding something to the purchase to incentivize them to say yes? This idea takes the types of things you might have used as a pink spoon and turns them into something that makes an existing offer even more appealing.

I write more about how to craft these pink spoons in my ebook *The Free Gift!* which you can find at <http://bit.ly/1LLbPIq> but the key idea here is to have something you can add that adds real value to the offer, takes none of your time, adds no risk to the offer and adds no cost to the offer. That really leaves you with online video, audio, ebooks or special reports, online quizzes or assessments and an email auto responder series.

But there is a Golden Rule of Premiums: never give away anything you wouldn't otherwise sell.

Your free prize is not about what a person needs, instead it is about what a person wants. It can be fashionable or fun or surprising or delightful or sad. But, it rarely delivers more of what we were buying in the first place. It delivers something extra.

Ask yourself — do people want the fortune cookie or the fortune? What separates a product that grows for the ages from one that just grows and crashes is the ability to appeal to both worlds — the folks that want the fortune and the ones who want the cookie.

Some Examples of Bonuses from Dan Kennedy of gkic.com:

- **Insurance** — a free review of your coverage. A free home safety booklet just for setting an appointment. A booklet of ten free car washes when we write your auto insurance. Guaranteed handling of your accident claim in five days or a 10% cash bonus on the settlement.

- **Real Estate** — a free home appraisal. One hundred heavy duty moving cartons and boxes free when we list your home for sale. Buy your home from us and we'll get its carpets steamed cleaned free before you move in.
- **Automobile Dealers** — glove box sized first aid kit free with every test drive. A free loaner car with warranty service for one year. Instant financing approvals this Saturday. The banker is right here in the showroom. Buy and drive the same day.
- **Clothing Stores** — A free necktie with any suit or sport coat purchase. A red tag sale. A frequent buyer program. Three new suits in a 12-month period and you get a sport coat free.
- **A Furniture Store** — a free decorating plan for your home or any room in your home. A huge lamp sale — two for one on all lamps in the store. Free delivery with purchases. A free portable television set given away every half hour all weekend long. Enter the drawing when you come in to browse and be present to win.

Combining a 10-day “Early Bird” bonus PLUS an extra bonus to incentivize folks to order can be extra powerful.

34) Offer In-Field Coaching

I first heard of the notion of in field coaching in the realm of dating coaches who would actually go out with their clients (mostly men) and give them feedback on how they were being when they approached women they were interested in. Because the feedback was essentially real time, they learned much faster than reading something in a book. The dating coach could notice they had literally stopped breathing as they approached, that they were speaking way too fast, that they'd made the conversation all about them instead of the girl they had just met. Things that, until they were pointed out, were unseeable by them.

I've also heard of speaking coaches who would go to their clients speaking engagements and take notes during the event to discuss immediately after. And this could be for any kind of performance.

Or what about my friend Victoria Laine who organizes trips to the grocery store where she, in the field, answers people's questions about the foods there.

If there's any way you can make yourself present while your client is doing their work to give them feedback, this is an incredible gift.

Variations could be having them record themselves during a coaching call and reviewing it with them afterwards.

35) Let Your People Know You Have Last-Minute Availability

Send out an email to your past clients letting them know about openings in your schedule for the week ahead.

Example: *“Feeling stressed? need a massage? i have three slots open in my schedule this week. Just reply to this email with the time you want. for helping me fill my schedule this week I'll give you ten dollars off.”*

And you don't have to use a discount. You could do this once per week, month, quarter or just once a year during your lean time. You can post things like this via Twitter or Facebook too.

Some additional resources for you on your journey through “The Meantime”

Free Inspiration: The link below is to a page of inspirational and heartwarming quotes, images and videos for when you feel stuck in The Meantime with no way out.

When you're in The Meantime it's important to keep your vibes high, fill yourself with laughter and wonder and to keep your emotions flowing. You might need to be lifted up or to have a good cry. Let this page be a well you can dip into for fresh water whenever you need it.

marketingforhippies.com/meantime-inspiration

*

Facebook Group: Join the conversation amongst others who are working their way through The Meantime in our Facebook group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/335198476638002/>

*

Twitter: Feel free to tweet me a question at any point at:

twitter.com/TadHargrave

*

Products: Over the years, I've created a number of products to help conscious entrepreneurs on various aspects of their marketing. You can learn more about them at the link below.

marketingforhippies.com/products-services



My Last Request:

If you try something and it works,
please send me the story at:

tad@marketingforhippies.com