



**The Inspired Market-her's Digest**  
**10 Great Articles for Inspired Market-hers**

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Hobby or Business? .....	6
Beyond the Marketing Message.....	9
How to Reach Thousands of Your Ideal Clients & Customers and Skyrocket Your E-mail List .....	14
5 Critical Mistakes Most Coaches and Consultants Make .....	17
An Email Signature That Really Holds Water .....	20
10 Keys for Cultivating Relationship .....	23
7 Steps to Launching a New Product, Program, or Service... for TONS of Sales .....	26
Prove You Deliver Results .....	28
A Simple Sales Strategy: What to Say When Asked for a Discount .....	30
Are You Playing to Win – or Are You Simply Playing Not to Lose? .....	32
BONUS: 5 Great Books!.....	34
BONUS: 12 Great Links!.....	35
More Resources from the Inspired Market-her .....	36

# Introduction

I didn't know it when I started coaching professionally in 1997, but I had an excellent marketing system in place from the very first day. You see, at the same time I was getting serious about launching my first coaching practice, I was also working full time at the Academy for Coach Training.

I was in front of a classroom or on a telephone bridge line all the time, teaching people how to coach and facilitating personal growth workshops. I was so immersed in educating, training and facilitating that I honestly didn't have time to think too much about marketing my own coaching practice.

I didn't promote myself or try to sell people on working with me. I didn't bring any marketing materials into the classroom or give away free special reports (or even my business card!). I didn't know anything about on-line shopping carts, auto-responders or info-products; I didn't even have a website at the time.

I just showed up and coached my tail off, and my private coaching practice thrived.

You can see why I might have mistakenly thought that being a successful solo-professional was a piece of cake.

The truth is, I wasn't really a solo-professional until AFTER I quit my full-time job at the Academy.

For a while, everything was great. When I struck out on my own, I had a wait list of people who wanted the next available spot on my calendar. I brought some new clients on and used the rest of my "free" time (now that I wasn't teaching any more) to do the kind of marketing that I enjoyed doing: I worked on my website and my newsletter and puttered around in my business. Occasionally, I'd send out something to my mailing list to let them know I had an opening for a new client or invite them to a seminar.

Gradually, I noticed that business was tapering off. New clients weren't showing up as often. The wait list wasn't growing—in fact, it was shrinking. I soon realized that if things continued as they were, eventually my business would slow to a trickle.

In hindsight it's easy to see what the problem was: I needed a new marketing strategy. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say I need A marketing strategy!)

As soon as I realized what was missing, I got busy. I hired a marketing coach and immersed myself in learning how to market myself as a solo-professional. I read everything I could get my hands on; I joined discussion groups, did market research, took classes and asked A LOT of questions.

I learned that there are three things that my marketing must do for my business:

- **Get new customers** - My marketing must help me to consistently show up, connect and build trust and credibility with prospective customers.
- **Keep my existing customers** - It must help me to communicate that I understand exactly what they want and that their trust in me is well-placed.
- **Grow the lifetime value of my customers** - It must reflect that I'm growing right along with my clients and am creating new solutions, products and services that continue to exceed their expectations.

And then I put my learning into practice—sometimes successfully, sometimes not so much. I've experimented with different niches, different messages, different packages; I've re-worked my business plan, my strategic marketing plan, my business systems, all of my materials and my website.

And I've come to understand and appreciate that marketing is much more than just a series of tasks; it's a system. Things have to fit together and coordinate seamlessly to be effective. I think good marketing is one of the higher forms of service that a business can provide.

The whole business has evolved into something very different than what I envisioned in 1997 when I started my first private practice.

I used to offer just one item: coaching. It came in a plain vanilla package, with few options and not much structure. I was willing to coach just about anyone who wanted to work with me; back then, I believed that the wider the net, the more fish I'd catch.

I now know (first hand!) that a deep niche can be far more lucrative than a wide net.

My new mission is to be an indispensable source of business advantage for a very targeted but highly responsive niche market. And by "highly responsive", I mean that new clients are showing up, existing customers consistently say "WOW!", and people are not only snapping up new products and packages as I create them—they're also spreading the word to their friends and colleagues.

This digest is a collection of some of my favorite articles from marketers and solo-professionals who I've come to respect and admire. I hope the information and wisdom you glean here helps you get the best of *yourself* in business.

Enjoy!

*Kathy M.*

**Kathy Mallary**  
**The Inspired Market-her**

**"The coach to call when you want to get the best of yourself in business."**

# Hobby or Business?

*By Mark Silver*

We'd all love to make a fabulous living doing what we love to do. And often it's really possible.

Yet, I was speaking with someone who wanted to make a living as an artist. This isn't any particular person, because I've had this conversation with folks numerous times. And, it's not always about art. Sometimes it's about coaching.

Sometimes it's about cooking. Sometimes it's about walking dogs.

They spoke to me at length about how much they loved doing art, and how it fed their soul, and how important it was to their well-being. Very inspiring stuff, and it felt great.

But, when I asked them, "How do you want to help other people with your artwork?" they couldn't answer me.

"It's art! It exists for its own sake. It should have value in and of itself."

This person was right. Art does exist for its own sake. And it does have value in and of itself. But, there is a difference between doing something purely to please yourself, and doing something with a consciousness that you are giving and serving others.

While there are many reasons to start a business, there is only one essential reason that allows it to thrive: helping people with some challenge they are facing. Income in a business only comes from customers. While funding may come from loans, or angel investors, or venture capitalists, eventually the allowance runs dry, as we saw in the 1990's with the dot-com bust.

Customers only buy when you are helping them with their needs and challenges.

We humans are complex creatures, with many needs and desires that have to be met in order to have a fulfilling life. I'm aware right now of my needs for creativity, truth, fun, adventure, love, intimacy, friendship, community, provision, food, shelter and heat (it's winter!), contribution, spiritual connection- I could go on and on.

When you're self-employed, especially when you are in the resource intensive phase of a start-up, it often seems that your business encompasses your whole life. And, this can

lead you down a treacherous path of trying to get all of your needs met through your business.

If you try to take care of these kinds of personal needs only through your business, you will probably sink it, because you might unconsciously make decisions to soothe yourself, rather than really serve your business and your customers.

But, if you don't take care of these very legitimate needs at all, you will be performing a slow form of suicide.

Are you trying to make a business out of a personal need that has nothing to do with your desire to contribute to other's well-being? Are you neglecting your personal needs and killing yourself, your business, and your family?.

### **Keys to Living the Dream**

*\* If you truly want to make it a business, then you'll want to focus on these four things:*

- 1. Get crystal clear** on the problem you want to solve, and what it's really like for those who are facing the problem, and apply your creativity in providing a solution.
- 2. More than just the solution**, how will you deliver the solution so that it can be most easily accessed and used by your customers?
- 3. More than providing and delivering the solution**, how will you reach those people so they know the solution exists?
- 4. More than reaching the people**, and providing and delivering the solution, what does your business itself need so that it can continue to do, and improve upon, the first three, so more and more people get help?

*\* If you aren't sparked by any of those four things around an activity, you may have something that you prefer to keep as a hobby.*

1. A hobby doesn't necessarily solve problems for others.
2. It's primarily for you and your enjoyment and growth.
3. It's less important whether you reach other people, unless you want the social aspect.

Although enjoyment, self-growth, education, and socializing can and should be met through business, the primary enlivening influence in a business is one of service and

contribution. And, if you are having trouble sticking with the four business focuses, try this Action Step:

*\* Identify your needs. Especially ones that aren't being met.*

Marshall Rosenberg, author of *Nonviolent Communication*, lists many, many universal human needs. The Center for Nonviolent Communication has a list of needs here:

<http://clicks.aweber.com/z/ct/?D3V6A4DOHHzVSEXcmF9bSg>

If you can scan through the list and identify any particularly strong needs you have that aren't being met, you'll have a clue as to where you might be unconsciously trying to use your business to soothe yourself.

Example: I have a need for creativity, and one way I love to meet that need is in cooking. A day in the kitchen really does it for me. But, I decided long ago that I didn't want to be a professional chef, and instead treat it as recreation. Very satisfying. When I'm feeling that particular urge for creativity, I don't try to make my business do back flips, I just take some time off, and spend it in the kitchen. Bon appetit!

Once you begin to meet those unmet needs, look back at the four business focuses, and unleash your creativity. Your business just may end up as a very useful, and thus valuable, work of art.

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#### **About The Author**

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<http://clicks.aweber.com/z/ct/?XUGj4bI1nqoDIvM6YnvN5w>

# Beyond the Marketing Message

*By Robert Middleton*

This week someone on the InfoGuru Support Forum asked the question: "How does an Audio Logo differ from a meme, from a sizzler, from a tagline?"

I answered and I thought my response would be a pretty good eZine that really gets to heart of marketing your professional services.

So... How does an Audio Logo differ from a meme, from a sizzler, from a tagline?

Here's my definition of these terms.

## **Audio Logo -**

An Audio Logo is a problem-oriented, attention-getting statement that you use when someone asks you what you do.

*"I work with harried HR managers who have too many demands put on them by upper management."*

An Audio Logo does not contain a solution. It's about the problem. And it clearly targets its audience. The purpose of an Audio Logo is to "hit a nerve" and get a "that's for me" response. You follow it up with an Ultimate Outcome (see below).

## **Meme -**

A meme is pretty clearly defined in the InfoGuru Manual. A meme is an idea that can be expressed simply and communicated easily. So an audio logo can be expressed as a meme. It's a core idea, something that is so clear that people get it right away. Read about memes in Geoff Ayling's remarkable book *Rapid Response Advertising*.

## **Sizzler -**

That's a budget steakhouse. I don't use this term in marketing myself. :-)

## **Tagline -**

The way I use this is as an addendum to a business name.

Unlike an Audio Logo, taglines usually work better if they are expressed in a positive way:

*Action Plan Marketing - Helping Independent Professionals Attract More Clients.*

*HR Solutions - Making HR Work*

*Nike - Just Do It*

A good tagline is a meme. A bad tagline is not a meme.

Also an important term I use:

### **Ultimate Outcome -**

This is what a client actually gets as a result of using your service.

It's the mirror image of the Audio Logo and it's very close to the tagline, only longer. It's the answer to the question: "If I work with you, what will I really get?"

And the answer had better be a bottom-line result they really want, or you've missed the mark.

*"We help you attract all the clients you'll ever need."*

*"We help HR managers get the recognition and resources they need to do a brilliant job."*

With all of these, the key is making sure the idea connects with your potential client. They all need to answer the question: "What's in it for me?"

Great ones are very compelling. A Tagline, Audio Logo, Ultimate Outcome, etc. all express the heart of your marketing message.

They are not just clever throwaway lines, They really mean what you stand for. They are what you deliver. There's a whole value system and philosophy behind them. So you have to go beyond clever words.

You also have to be careful about obscure marketing messages. Ones that sound clever but really don't mean anything to anyone. They are not memes and they are not good marketing.

If you hear or read a marketing message and the reaction is "Huh?" then it probably missed the mark!

A good one results in more of an "Aha!" reaction. It speaks to a real need you have and you instantly want to know more.

In developing your marketing messages, test people's reactions, not their opinions. Does it result in a "Huh?" response or a "Aha!" response?

### **What are the biggest mistakes people make with marketing messages?**

- 1. They are all about process, not solutions:** "We prepare your taxes with the X100 auditing protocol." Sorry, but nobody really cares.
- 2. They are just too general:** "Profitability and productivity will increase." Ho hum. What else is new?
- 3. They are unbelievable:** "Your profits will increase faster in one month than they have in the past twelve." Good if you can really deliver. But you'd better prove it or lose all your credibility.
- 4. They are too convoluted:** "Our management approach utilizes an effective strategy that optimizes ten key factors in the throughput of primary marketing initiatives with bottom line measurability." Say what???!###

So just speak English. Tell what your clients get. Don't be afraid to be bold, but make sure the message is above all clear, meaningful and interesting. That will draw prospects closer, wanting to know more.

But you also have to remember that your marketing message isn't everything.

I keep talking about the game of "Marketing Ball" where people are expecting the Audio Logo to literally win the game for them.

Admit it. You don't just want to get to first base with an Audio Logo, you want to hit a home run! When you deliver your perfectly crafted Audio Logo, you want people to say: "WOW!!! that's what I've been looking for all my life! I have half a million dollars to spend on this. Is that enough?"

Get real!

You should be thrilled if your Audio Logo gets you onto first base, and generates some sincere interest. That's a great start, and that's real.

What's even more important is everything that stands behind the message - the actual Ultimate Outcome you really deliver and the Experience of delivering it.

Look, if you produce extraordinary results for clients and they love you and you love working with them making that difference and it's a passion for you, I promise that it won't be hard to deliver your Audio Logo and other messages that get through, that grab attention and get interest.

"YOU" as a complete brand need to be authentic, need to be the real deal in order to take anything past first base. If it's all about the perfect phrase, the perfect follow-up, the perfect article, the perfect whatever, you're missing the point.

I recommend everyone read Tom Asacker's gem of a book, *A Clear Eye for Branding*. I think he brings this point home very well. He emphasizes that there are no perfect marketing techniques. The thing you want to put more focus on are the feelings, experience and results that clients get when they work with you.

Another way of saying it is "The message is YOU." Everything you say, your Audio Logo, the questions you ask, your authenticity, your web page, your eZine all need to shout out the message that you have something great to offer, something extraordinary.

This takes more work than crafting a perfect Audio Logo, it's crafting a perfect brand, a perfect business that hits the mark every single time you communicate with, and interact with, your prospects and clients.

It's easy to identify companies who do this well (although they are few and far between). Apple comes close; Nordstrom is great at it; Hertz is pretty darn good. Certain restaurants you go to have it.

They all have a congruent brand that is way beyond the marketing message. As a result they are enormously successful.

So, in crafting your Audio Logo and Tagline and Ultimate Outcome, think about all of this stuff. What do you really stand for? What are you going to deliver? What does it mean to the client? How will they be better off after working with you? How will they feel working with you?

Then your marketing messages will go beyond the words, beyond the sound bite, beyond anything you can imagine.

### **The More Clients Bottom Line:**

Marketing messages are very important, but they are only a reflection of something bigger and deeper in your business. Find that thing, the thing that delights clients and makes a true difference to them. And then marketing won't be something you do; it will be your whole business.

How are you communicating "beyond your marketing message"? Please share on the More Clients Blog.

<http://www.actionplan.blogs.com>

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#### **About The Author**

By Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Please visit Robert's web site at <http://www.actionplan.com> for additional marketing articles and resources on marketing for professional service businesses.

# How to Reach Thousands of Your Ideal Clients & Customers and Skyrocket Your E-mail List

*By Alexandria K. Brown, "The Ezine Queen"*

One of the questions I'm asked the most by my clients is, "How can I most quickly build my e-mail list?"

My answer is, find someone who's already reaching your target market in droves, and use THEM to build your list! How? With these three easy steps:

## **STEP 1: Determine exactly who your ideal client or customer is.**

The more descriptive you can be here, the better. For example, don't just think "men". Think "men ages 18-40 who like sports and working out". Don't just think "small business owners". Think "women owners of professional service businesses that do less than \$1 million a year".

Can you take on clients or customers who fall outside of this description? Of course! But you need to know who you're going after.

Example: About six years ago, I spent a romantic summer week on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts. My beau was wonderful in letting me decide most of the activities we'd do each day. But there was one thing he definitely wanted to do at least once - go bluefishing!

Now I'm not sure if you could have guessed this, but I'm not really into fishing. ; )

But hey, I'll try anything once, so off we went to the docks. Now, I figured we could go on any boat with any captain and do this. But no ... we went with "Captain Dan the Bluefish Man" (who smelled like his specialty). Dan took us on his special boat to this special place off the island where the bluefish were, and we even used special bait that the bluefish liked. And we had great success - they just kept biting!

I realized that if you know exactly what you're going after, you're much more likely to get it. The same goes for reaching your target market.

**STEP 2: Find other people, companies, or websites that are ALREADY reaching your target market en masse.**

Sit down with a cup of coffee this weekend and do some online research regarding your target market. What sites are they already visiting? What newsletters or magazines do they already read? For example, if your target market is stay-at-home moms, find the most popular sites they visit. Find the most popular e-zines they read.

Come up with a list of your top five websites and top five ezines that are already reaching your ideal client or customer.

**STEP 3: Contact these websites and ezines and see if they will:**

--> REVIEW your book, products, services, or ezine for their readers. If so, send them a review copy and follow up a week or two later. Request that when they run the review they mention your e-zine and direct people to your website to sign up.

--> accept guest ARTICLES. If so, then submit one of your best, with a short bio that links people back to your website to sign up for your ezine.

--> SWAP ads or recommendations for each other's websites, products, or services. If you have an ezine that reaches the same target market they want to reach, this is a great win-win.

--> do a CO-REGISTRATION deal. If you already have a good amount of e-zine subscribers and website traffic, they may be open to adding your e-zine to their ezine signup form if you do the same on your part. (Ideally folks should just check a box to subscribe to the additional e-zine automatically.)

--> run a recommendation or ad in exchange for a COMMISSION on resulting sales. For example, you give them the ad to run, tagged with a link that lets you know if any sales come from it. (This is easy for you to do if you have an online affiliate program.\*)

--> accept PAID advertising. Banner ads, text ads, and other paid placements obviously cost you money, but if it's your only option and you really want to reach these folks, go for it. But be sure to track your results so you can see if it's working. (You'll need a link tracking program to do this.\*)

And these are just a FEW ideas to get you started!

Remember, your #1 goal is to get people back to your site to sign up for your e-zine or other email list, because THAT is how you guarantee the chance to market to them repeatedly!

(\*I use and recommend [www.QueenCart.com](http://www.QueenCart.com) for automating your affiliate program and tracking all your ad links.)

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**About The Author**

Online entrepreneur Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," publishes the award-winning 'Straight Shooter Marketing' weekly ezine with 20,000+ subscribers. If you're ready to jump-start your marketing, make more money, and have more fun in your small business, get your FREE tips now at [www.EzineQueen.com](http://www.EzineQueen.com)

# 5 Critical Mistakes Most Coaches and Consultants Make

*By Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero, Expert Copywriter*

Think you have what it takes to be an consultant or a coach? I wasn't so sure I knew when I first started in 1999. All I knew was I desperately wanted to work from home to raise my two sons after my divorce. It took a lot of trial and error to get to the stable and profitable business I am running now in 2006. There are some things I learned along the way I wish I knew much earlier in the game.

One thing I learned is that writing is a very small part of being a successful entrepreneur. Don't get me wrong. You DO need to know how to write. But your success depends largely on your savvy as a businessperson. How do I know? Because I've played it from both sides of the street. And I didn't begin to enjoy success until I started doing some very distinct things in my business.

Please let me share with you some of the mistakes I made starting out so you can avoid those pitfalls yourself...and catapult to success much faster than it took me.

## **Mistake #1: Don't attract new clients**

When I first started out in 1999 I had exactly one client. He kept me very busy...for awhile. Then, without warning, he suddenly shifted his business to 100% offline and began using a copywriter with more experience in that area. I floundered for 10 months before I got back on my feet again from that blow.

**Solution:** *NEVER stop marketing yourself. Even if you have a full practice, don't stop getting the word out. Write articles and press releases. Do interviews whenever possible. Start an ezine and/or a blog so your name is always out there. Don't get caught flat-footed.*

## **Mistake #2: Don't effectively manage your clients**

At first I was so grateful to have any clients I let them call all the shots - regardless of what was in my best interest. It took me a long time to realize every client is not a match for me. Sometimes they were unreasonable in deadlines. Other times they would call me at all hours...including 6 a.m. and even on the weekends. (Until I learned to communicate better there were even a few clients I had to fire!) Bottom line is you can never have enough communication.

**Solution:** *Have the client fill out a detailed questionnaire to open up lines of communication or have a long phone interview (which you record). Get a feel for his or her expectations. Add an extra cushion to your deadline. If possible, get a gatekeeper (assistant) to set up schedule so you can focus on what you do best - writing.*

### **Mistake #3: Poor time management**

Eager to please, I often did not give myself enough lead time for an assignment. I'd say, "I'll do it!" before I looked at the reality of my schedule. So I'd have to pull all nighters or miss important family events. I was incredibly stressed and not a lot of fun to be around.

**Solution:** *Schedule your daily schedule BEFORE you go to bed at night. Turn off email until you've made some headway with your copy. And use a kitchen timer to work in increments of 35 minutes (studies show after that frame your mind craves distraction). When the ding goes off, get up, stretch and clear your head.*

### **Mistake #4: Not getting paid enough**

Face it...in your business you do a lot more work than most people realize. You have to do deep research in your industry, around your competition, and with your own target market. You have to attract leads. Then you have to write powerful copy that crawls inside the head of the prospect and leads them to a specific action. You should get paid what you are really worth - no exceptions.

**Solution:** *Value yourself enough to get paid what you're worth.*

### **Mistake #5: Don't invest in yourself**

I have read the classic "Think and Grow Rich" 16 times. Every time I read it, I learn something new. I have watched the motivational movie "The Secret" 6 times to date. I go to seminars (even when I've heard the speakers before). Because I learn something new every time. I have a huge marketing library of books, binders, home study courses, CDs, DVDs, MP3s and I listen to them over and over. Again, every time I take in material, whether it's new or old, I learn something new.

Successful people in all walks of life invest in themselves. It's one of the keys that separates them from the less successful. (Trust me, at times it hurt to part with the massive amounts of cash I've laid out for this education. But the payoff happens every time. Just do it.)

**Solution:** *If you're looking to attract more money into your business, start by investing in yourself. Think LONG TERM. As the old adage says, "If you're not growing, you're dying."*

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#### **About The Author**

International copywriting trainer, author and speaker, Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero has been a freelance writer and journalist for over 25 years. Her words have made her clients hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now she focuses her vast experience on teaching others the skill of copywriting. Lorrie is the author of a highly acclaimed copywriting course, creator of the Red Hot Copywriting Bootcamp and founder of Copy Campus, a unique membership resource site designed to support copywriters and entrepreneurs on all levels. Visit her site to learn more at [www.red-hotcopy](http://www.red-hotcopy) .

# An Email Signature That Really Holds Water

*By Mark Silver*

You know that little dangling thing-a-ma-jig that hangs on the end of your emails? Your email signature? I bet you don't pay it much attention.

But, all the same, you're kinda counting on it doing its job. You're counting on the perfect person reading it, clicking the link to your website, and becoming the perfect customer.

Unfortunately, most email signatures just don't deliver.

Why not?

**Email readers have been getting a workout.**

Have you ever spent time in the gym, or jogging, or just out having fun in the sun, and gotten really thirsty? You know, -really- thirsty?

I exercise hard about three times a week, and let me tell you, during and afterwards I'm drinking a lot of water. If you want to ask me a question when I'm parched like that, I'm more than likely going to stop you in mid-sentence, "Hold on- I gotta get a drink."

Anyone I know who has email is getting a work-out. There is a LOT of email coming through. People in the midst of an email workout tend to read it, answer it, and move on to the next! Right? Isn't that what you do?

So what happens when you see a signature that looks like this?

**Spiritual business healing**

**Mark Silver**

**Heart of Business**

**503-282-3037**

**<http://clicks.aweber.com/z/ct/?c1zUWOHXBN037VcDaEu8TQ>**

That's right- you zzzzip! right past it, onto the next email. Chances are, unless you get a rare intuitive hit, you aren't going to click on it.

It's even worse if you participate in an online forum. At least if someone has emailed you, there's already a relationship happening. If you are posting something in an online forum, or in a yahoo discussion group, you want people to click through your signature to your website. But they don't.

### **Give the poor email reader a drink of water.**

What you want is the signature equivalent of a drink of water in the middle of a hard workout- one that actually gives your email reader something useful, right now (just a click away). They aren't hard to write, and I think you'll have fun with them.

Ready to write some signatures that deliver a cool glass of water on a hot day?

### **Keys to Serving the Water**

#### ***\* Don't go home.***

Your home page, even when it's written effectively, is meant to connect with people. But it doesn't necessarily give immediately useful information.

Instead, link to an article you've written. And, if you need a format for an article that works, I've got a link at the end of this article that will help you.

#### ***\* Be polite, and ask before you give.***

The key here is asking. Most signatures are statements.

But, by asking a question, and especially a question that is relevant to what's true for them: "Are you thirsty?"

It's hard for the reader not to engage with you- by clicking.

Then, once they click through, you have a strong action step at the end of your article: ask them to subscribe.

Because they've just gulped down some of your water, they'll be more likely to sign up for a regular dose from you.

Which is what you were hoping with your original, 'home-page' signature. Right?

#### ***\* An example:***

I wrote an article about how to hand off your most hated business tasks. So, I created an email signature that links to that article:

**In running your business there are things you love to do, and things you don't...Wondering how to hand off your most hated business tasks? Read this article: <http://clicks.aweber.com/z/ct/?WHFhqSABkrQKREewEfmnVg>**

Notice I had a one-sentence summary of the main problem the article solves, and then I asked a question. And then the link. Very simple.

**\*\*\*Important Note for Links\*\*\***

Always include the 'http://' in front of the 'www' - that ensures that nearly any email program will automatically turn it into a clickable link. Without the 'http://' your link may just be plain text- and no one will click - because they can't click.

Here's another one:

**No matter how much, or how little, your business earns, it always seems as if there's just enough... Is it ever possible to go from 'just enough' to extra?**

**Profitability: How to get from 'just enough' to having extra.**

**<http://clicks.aweber.com/z/ct/?qSMXt8tfCA2WvjfzflHag>**

Go ahead and click through on either of those links to see what's at the end of the article.

And then write some new, thirst-quenching signatures, and go get those thirsty email readers some water.

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**About The Author**

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# 10 Keys for Cultivating Relationship

*By Kathy Mallary, Inspired Market-her and Coach*

Wouldn't it be great if all it took was a couple of visits to your website or a few easy conversations to get people to buy?

Unfortunately, that's not likely to happen too often. A customer's buying-decision process requires more than a chance collision between opportunity and impulse.

Even more importantly, your goal is not simply to make a sale; it's to build a relationship based on excellent service and honest, respectful communication. If you do that, in time you may have a raving fan who gladly shares the secret of her success (you!) with others who have the same challenges.

The problem is how to bridge the gap – how does a customer go from being marginally aware of your services to being a first-time buyer, much less a champion for life? Don't make the mistake of believing that all you need to do is provide a product and a shopping cart. Your customer needs more than that to jump into business with you. You've got to show up and deliver value over time, consistently and persistently.

The path from window shopper to raving fan looks something like this:

**Conscious > Curious > Captivated > Compelled > Confident > Convinced**

To move with a customer (you can't make them move; you can only move with them) from one stage to the next requires patience and focus. Your task is to stay in touch and add value with every interaction.

**1) Conscious:** you're a blip on her radar screen. You need to keep the blip on the screen by continually showing up as an expert on her issue. Show up in online discussion forums, publish articles and reports, and get a buzz going (word of mouth marketing). Your name should pop up every time she looks for help with her problem, but don't cross the line – don't spam her or add her to your mailing list without her permission.

**2) Curious:** she's decided to give you permission to be in touch with her; for example, she's joined your mailing list or signed up to receive your free report, etc. Your strategy at this stage is to simply be consistent, helpful and genuine. Don't just send her promotional materials that promise value if she pays for it; start delivering value right away. Be generous and show that you trust your relationship to grow.

**3) Captivated:** you've got her attention; she is watching closely to see how you operate and how you measure up to her criteria. She might want to ask some questions or observe you in action, for example on a teleclass or by listening to an audio product. Be accessible and responsive to her requests; make it easy for her to satisfy her curiosity. This is also an opportunity for you to find out more about her and what she's looking for. Listen more, and when you talk, speak her language.

**4) Compelled:** she's motivated to take things to a new level; she's ready and willing to act. This is a key turning point in your relationship. Make it safe for her by removing all obstacles; address her considerations and reverse the risk for her. Help her take action, but don't rush her.

**5) Confident:** she's satisfied with things so far, but she's still watching to see how well you deliver on your promises. It's important to be consistent and responsive; make it as easy as possible for her to tell you what she likes and doesn't like. Pay attention to her feedback and always deliver more than she expects. Go for the WOW!

**6) Convinced:** you've proven yourself to be deserving of her loyalty. She didn't just buy a product; she owns the brand. Make it easy for her to refer others. Help her share her success story and make sure that you treat her referrals particularly well, because what you do now reflects on her. The loyalty of a raving fan is more precious than gold.

## 10 KEYS FOR CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIP

**1) Never, ever spam anyone.** Use an opt-in email list. For more information about how to avoid spamming, visit

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.htm> or check with your email provider.

**2) Make it safe and easy to opt-in and opt-out of your mailing list.** Make sure your privacy policy is prominently displayed near your sign-up form on your website and in your printed materials, and set up your mailing list so that your customers can opt-out at any time. Don't try to contact customers who have permanently opted-out. Keep her information, including her email address, private.

**3. Be a great listener.** Ask questions, check for understanding and don't make assumptions. Answer her questions honestly and succinctly. And then stop talking and listen some more.

**4) Fetch, filter and inform.** Chances are, your customer is a very busy woman, so go out and get information for her, filter out the extraneous stuff, and make sure the pertinent information gets to her while its hot. One way to do this is through a blog. For

more information about blogs and how to set one up, visit <http://www.buildabetterblogssystem.com>

**5) Be ready to help, but stay out of her way.** Give her several options instead of just asking her to decide between yes and no. Don't make her hunt for information or have to figure out how to navigate your website.

**6) Respond to inquiries promptly and personally.** Get back to her within 24 hours, even if it's just to let her know you received her message and you're researching her question. A hand-written note is a nice touch when a thank you or an apology is in order. For affordable note cards with your company logo and information printed right on them, visit [http://vistaprint.com/vp/ns/consumer/splash/notecard\\_combined.aspx?xnav=left](http://vistaprint.com/vp/ns/consumer/splash/notecard_combined.aspx?xnav=left)

**7) Eliminate risk.** Make a strong guarantee of satisfaction and take pains to remove as much risk as possible. Make your business policies easy to find and understand.

**8) Be transparent, genuine and accessible.** Put your contact information on every page of your website. Don't hide behind your business or make your marketing materials too formal; let your customer know she's talking to another woman who owns her own business. Above all, be honest.

**9) Take feedback seriously.** Accept feedback graciously, without defending yourself or justifying your reasons. Let her know you appreciate that she's taken the time to tell you what she wants, and tell her what you plan to do as a result. Strive to find a win-win solution.

**10) Don't take customer loyalty for granted.** Create a referral system that makes it easy and rewarding for clients to tell others about you, and say thank you in ways that delight and surprise them.

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#### About The Author

Kathy Mallery (aka, "The Inspired Market-her") is a marketing strategist, facilitator and coach who specializes in working with solo-professionals who are creating an exceptional brand with a signature coaching program. To get free articles, marketing tips and resources for creating your own signature coaching program, visit Kathy's website: <http://www.spiritspring.com>

# 7 Steps to Launching a New Product, Program, or Service... for TONS of Sales

*By Alexandria K. Brown, "The Ezine Queen"*

When I teach one of my Online Success Blueprint Workshops, the section that gets my attendees most excited is when I walk them through an actual product launch.

What's a launch?

It's when you release a new product, program, or service for the first time to your mailing list. A launch is a super opportunity to rack up a TON of sales in a short amount of time.

I basically have seven steps to a launch. In my workshops, I walk through them in great detail and include actual examples and results. But to get you started, here's a brief description of each step and how it works. You can do a launch for any service, product, or program, but for the sake of this article, let's assume we're talking about a product.

## **1. Drop hints in your ezine beforehand.**

Before your product is even ready, start getting your readers curious and excited! Drop hints that something big is on the way and what the benefits are. For example, "I'm working on a brand new product that could help you easily double your sales this year. I can't say anything about it just yet, but you'll know the full story on October 1."

## **2. Create your sales letter and thank-you pages.**

Again, you can do these steps even before your product is ready. In fact, many experts recommend you write your sales letter BEFORE you even create the product. (For my own step-by-step formula to writing a web page that SELLS, see my quick-start guide.) After your sales page, you will need a page to send people to once they purchase -- the "thank you" page -- where they can also download your product if it is digital.

## **3. Set up the product in your shopping cart.**

Log-in to your shopping cart program and set up your new product name, price, and the thank-you page URL. Don't forget to add on shipping or sales tax if applicable. I hope you use a shopping cart with all these capabilities! (I use, love, and recommend QueenCart.com.) Then stick the product link on your sales page.

#### **4. Send out a solo mailing to your customer list.**

When everything is ready, it's time to start your promotions! The first people I alert about any new product are those who have already bought from me. It's my most responsive list, and this will be your most responsive list, too. Keep this email short and sweet. Your only objective is to drive them to your sales page, where they can get the full story. (For my own step-by-step formula to writing an email that SELLS, see my quick-start guide.) To make your customers feel special, give them a special discount or bonus that's just for them. And give them a deadline to respond by.

#### **5. Send out a solo mailing to your ezine list.**

I do this a few days after I promote to my customer list. Same idea, different list. Got it? Good. : )

#### **6. Let your affiliates know how to promote this new product.**

After I launch my product to my own lists, I let my affiliates know that I have a new product they can promote! Send them an email with the details, their individual affiliate link that gives them credit on any referred sales, and even ad copy they can paste into their ezines or websites. Don't forget to mention how much commission they get per sale. (I do this all through QueenCart.com.)

#### **7. Promote in your ezine on an ongoing basis.**

Once your launch is over, don't let your product wither away and die! Keep the momentum going. Make sure you highlight it on a regular basis in your ezine via ads or articles, and that it's also easy for visitors to find on your website.

#### **BONUS TIP: Give them a reason to buy today!**

People are so busy these days that they will put off ANY decision possible. So, you will ALWAYS get more sales when you give people a reason to buy NOW and not later. For example: Put a time limit on your offer or have a limited quantity available.

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#### **About The Author**

Online entrepreneur Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," publishes the award-winning 'Straight Shooter Marketing' weekly ezine with 20,000+ subscribers. If you're ready to jump-start your marketing, make more money, and have more fun in your small business, get your FREE tips now at [www.EzineQueen.com](http://www.EzineQueen.com)

# Prove You Deliver Results

*By Robert Middleton*

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This past week I've been giving feedback to several people who purchased the "Take Your Business to the Top" program. The core of this program is how to write attention-getting letters that will get you appointments with top executives.

As a bonus to the program I set up a discussion group where I'm giving feedback on the letters people are developing.

This is an eye-opening process.

It became very clear to me that it wasn't the components of the letter that were the most important. It wasn't just the attention- getting opening, the proof-points or the call-to-action.

The biggest thing that either got or lost my attention was the ability or inability to declare that a service actually produced a valuable, tangible result.

After reading some of the letters, I could only come to the conclusion that many people are offering a service that promises no more than, "I'll try to do a good job for you."

That is, there was little clear communication that said: "I have a service that will deliver XYZ important benefits to you. This service will impact your business in the following ways."

It doesn't get more fundamental than that does it?

Instead, the tendency is to be vague and amorphous. "Well, we really can't tell you what you'll get specifically, it's pretty intangible, but I assure you that your employees will get a lot of value from this process."

The interest level of a potential client for a message like this is very specific: Absolutely Zero.

Ultimately, every professional service needs to provide an answer to some kind of problem, issue, challenge or predicament that a client is facing and is worrying about. Your service not only needs to address that issue, you need to boldly declare that you can solve it (and then prove it).

## How do you do that? Let me count the ways!

- 1. Be Specific** - Tell exactly the kind of results your clients can expect to receive if they utilize your services. To persuade them, outline plenty of believable, understandable advantages.
- 2. Be Clear** - Generate attention and interest with every word of your message. Watch out for cliches and generalities. "We help our clients increase productivity" doesn't hold a candle to, "Our program guarantees our clients will meet their key financial targets every time."
- 3. Quote Statistics** - You strengthen your position if you can give specific numbers. Measure actual client results and report on those. How much more did they make or save using your service?
- 4. Cite Studies** - Prove that your methodology works by utilizing third party studies. Your credibility multiplies if your approach is the same as that cited in the studies.
- 5. Tell Stories** - Well crafted case studies that explain the original client situation, what you did for them and the results you produced, are very persuasive.
- 6. Use Testimonials** - You'll increase credibility and establish trust by using the actual words of a satisfied client. Make sure the clients tells about the specific results they received.
- 7. Be Confident** - Confidence comes when you have produced real results and you know you can produce them again. Don't undersell yourself; let your prospective clients know they can expect the same results if they work with you.

**The More Clients Bottom Line:** The most important marketing activity you can implement is proving conclusively that you can produce the outcomes your clients desire. If you can't do that, you have absolutely no foundation to build your marketing on.

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### About The Author

By Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing. Please visit Robert's web site at <http://www.actionplan.com> for additional marketing articles and resources on marketing for professional service businesses.

# A Simple Sales Strategy: What to Say When Asked for a Discount

*By Tessa Stowe*

Has anyone ever said to you, "Your price is too high and I'd like a discount." In this article I outline two approaches for responding to this. One of the approaches even has the potential for you to make a bigger sale than you originally anticipated. Curious?

First off, giving discounts in the right way may well be the most appropriate thing to do. Conversely, giving a discount in the wrong way can not only lose you a sale but could lose you all possible future sales from a potential client. Read on to see what I mean.

Just suppose you say "yes" and immediately give a discount. What do you think this potential client now says to themselves? They might say:

- *You seem desperate for the sale.*
- *I wonder how far you will lower your price. Mmmm, maybe I should ask for an even bigger discount than I was originally thinking of.*
- *The price you originally offered was not the real price. Are you trying to trick me? Can I really trust you?*
- *You don't set a very high value on your own services if you are prepared to discount so quickly.*
- *You agree your price is too high. This is a worry.*
- *Next time I come to buy anything from you, I should ask for a discount again.*

The problem with just giving a discount by itself is that you have given something away and have asked for absolutely nothing in return. You've just created a win/lose situation. The potential client has "won" a discount amount and you have "lost" it. Also just because you've agreed to a discount doesn't mean you'll get the sale, in fact, quite the opposite. You may have damaged your credibility to the extent this person no longer trusts you or wants to do business with you.

Just suppose now that instead of giving the discount you ask them, "Why do you want a discount?" The response will help you understand what is behind the request. Then, depending on how they respond, you could use one of two approaches.

## **Approach One**

This approach is useful if money really is an issue. Instead of giving a discount, you lower the price by taking out something of value. This is a win/win choice. They get the lower price and you still maintain your price for a certain value bundle. You could say, for example, "If price is more of an issue for you, then I suggest that we take out X product/service." (Suggest taking something out of high-perceived value). The person needs to see that in order to get the discount they have to give up some of the value from your offer. Alternatively you could ask them for suggestions for what they'd like to take out. Or maybe offer a couple of suggestions. Your potential clients need to understand that there is a price for reducing the price!

## **Approach Two**

You agree to give a discount provided they give you something in return. In exchange for a discount you ask them to give you something which is important or of value to you. That's another win/win choice. For example, suppose you offer consulting at \$200 an hour, and someone asks for a discount. You could say, "I am prepared to reduce my rate from \$200 to \$180 an hour if you agree to an initial 100 hours of consulting." The client will receive the discount and you have received a commitment for 100 hours. Another example is giving a discount based on the client buying from you by a certain date, which is an important date for you (e.g. tax year end). The important thing is to ensure that whatever you do, it is a win/win situation and that the person is perfectly clear as to why you are prepared to give the discount.

I was once involved in a very large sale worth several millions of dollars. As per usual, I was asked for a sizeable discount. I agreed to the discount provided the client made a commitment to purchase some other services at the same time (which they needed). As a result of being asked for a discount and the way I packaged my response, I ended up with a much bigger sale, double in fact!

I hope you're starting to see that when people ask for a discount, there is a great opportunity for you.

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### **About The Author**

Tessa Stowe helps Coaches, Consultants and Self-Employed Professionals who are struggling to sell their services. Her Sales Conversation newsletter gives simple, practical tips that will help you sell more services just by being yourself. Sign up now at <http://salesconversation.com/>

# Are You Playing to Win—or Are You Simply Playing Not to Lose?

*By Kathy Mallary, Inspired Market-her and Coach*

As the saying goes, it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game that matters. How are you playing the game of Life? Are you playing to win, or are you playing not to lose?

By playing “not to lose”, I mean living life defensively--trying to survive and keep from losing what you've got. Playing to win means letting go and taking in everything that life is giving you--going for it. Playing to win is about thriving (or thrival, as I like to think of it).

Take money, for instance. Are you afraid you don't have enough money? Do you worry that what you do have won't be enough? Are you holding onto it tightly, afraid to let it go—for example, do you hate to pay bills or put off buying things that you know you need or want (health insurance, home repairs, a vacation)? Or maybe you're letting money slip through your fingers, spending it faster than it comes in while you sink deeper and deeper into debt. Either way, prosperity is not flowing freely around you. These are all symptoms of playing not to lose with money.

What would you do or how would you be if you were playing to win, instead?

Playing to win takes courage and surrender. If you want to be more courageous about money, your first step might be to let go of something—an idea, belief or judgement, perhaps—that blocks you from being fully engaged.

One of my clients knew she hadn't been playing to win when she realized she had a belief that she wasn't smart about money. She didn't even know that she held this belief until we started talking about what was stopping her from growing her business.

She had this little voice inside that constantly reminded her that she had NO BUSINESS handling money; she wasn't good at math; she didn't understand bookkeeping. This belief was so strong that she was afraid to even ask for help, because she thought she wouldn't know if someone was giving her bad advice.

She had been holding onto the appearance of being a confident, competent business woman, even though in her heart, she didn't believe it. She was trying to bluff her way

through so she wouldn't lose respect and credibility. Meanwhile, she had no freedom to grow her business and couldn't even enjoy the success she already had.

The paradox of playing to win or playing not to lose is this:

**When you're playing not to lose**, the best you can hope for is "not losing." There is no way to win when you're playing not to lose.

**When you're playing to win**, there is no such thing as "losing"; the worst that can happen is that you keep playing.

Since playing not to lose was costing her the very things she wanted most in life (freedom and joy), she decided to try playing to win.

First, she admitted that she wanted more freedom and joy in her life. Second, she reminded herself that she was bright, capable and resourceful. After all, she had managed to teach herself everything she knew about business up to this point; she could easily learn whatever she needed to know to about money.

She also realized she needed to relax a little and give herself permission to enjoy the freedom that she sought—and risk making some mistakes along the way.

She took an honest look at what she did (and did not) know about money, and then she got into action. She set some goals, did her homework and got some help. Did she make some mistakes? Of course! But she stuck with it and worked to turn each stumble into a learning experience.

Over the course of a year, she more than doubled her income and paid off two of her credit cards. Interestingly, there were also a number of spontaneous, synchronistic "gifts" that showed up just when she needed them.

Perhaps most importantly, she now has something that money can't buy: the freedom to choose how she's going to play the game today.

How are *you* choosing to play the game today?

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#### **About The Author**

Kathy Mallery (aka, "The Inspired Market-her") is a marketing strategist, facilitator and coach who specializes in working with solo-professionals who are creating an exceptional brand with a signature coaching program. To get free articles, marketing tips and resources for creating your own signature coaching program, visit Kathy's website: <http://www.spiritspring.com>

# BONUS: 5 Great Books!



[Jan Zobel - Minding Her Own Business: The Self-Employed Woman's Essential Guide to Taxes & Financial Records](#)



[Lisa Johnson & Andrea Learned - Don't Think Pink](#)



[Martha Barletta - Marketing to Women](#)



[Michael Port - Book Yourself Solid](#)

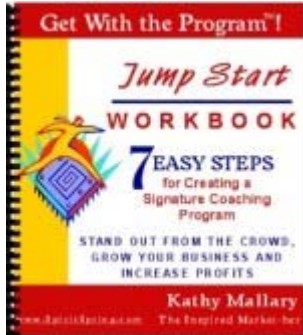


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- [AudioAcrobat.com](#)  
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Free content for your autoresponders and web site.
- [CafePress.com](#)  
Create and sell your own products - without having to mess with the inventory or shipping/handling.
- [Coaching Toys](#)  
"The BEST place on the web for creativity, play and spirit in personal growth and professional development." Ideas, training and resources for creating products.
- [FreeConference.com](#)  
Get a free bridge line for 25 callers for up to 3 hours with their free reservation-less standard option; the free web-scheduled standard option give you up to 100 callers. Other options and services available for a fee.
- [HeartofBusiness.com](#)  
Small Business Owners: Make a profit without losing your heart. Mark Silver's website – a true oasis for anyone who has hit a patch of desert in the journey towards success.
- [Instant Niche Emails](#)  
Lisa Preston, the creator of Instant Niche Emails, is a genius! This is a great way to easily create an 'evergreen' newsletter -- and it virtually writes itself. (Affiliate link)
- [Professional Cart Solutions](#)  
I use Professional Cart Solutions for my e-commerce system (shopping cart, online customer management and email auto-responder/broadcast service) (Affiliate link)
- [Resources for Women Business Owners](#)  
SCORE has assembled a list of hotlinks to useful Web sites for women entrepreneurs
- [Templates for eBooks](#)  
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The Inspired Market-her**

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