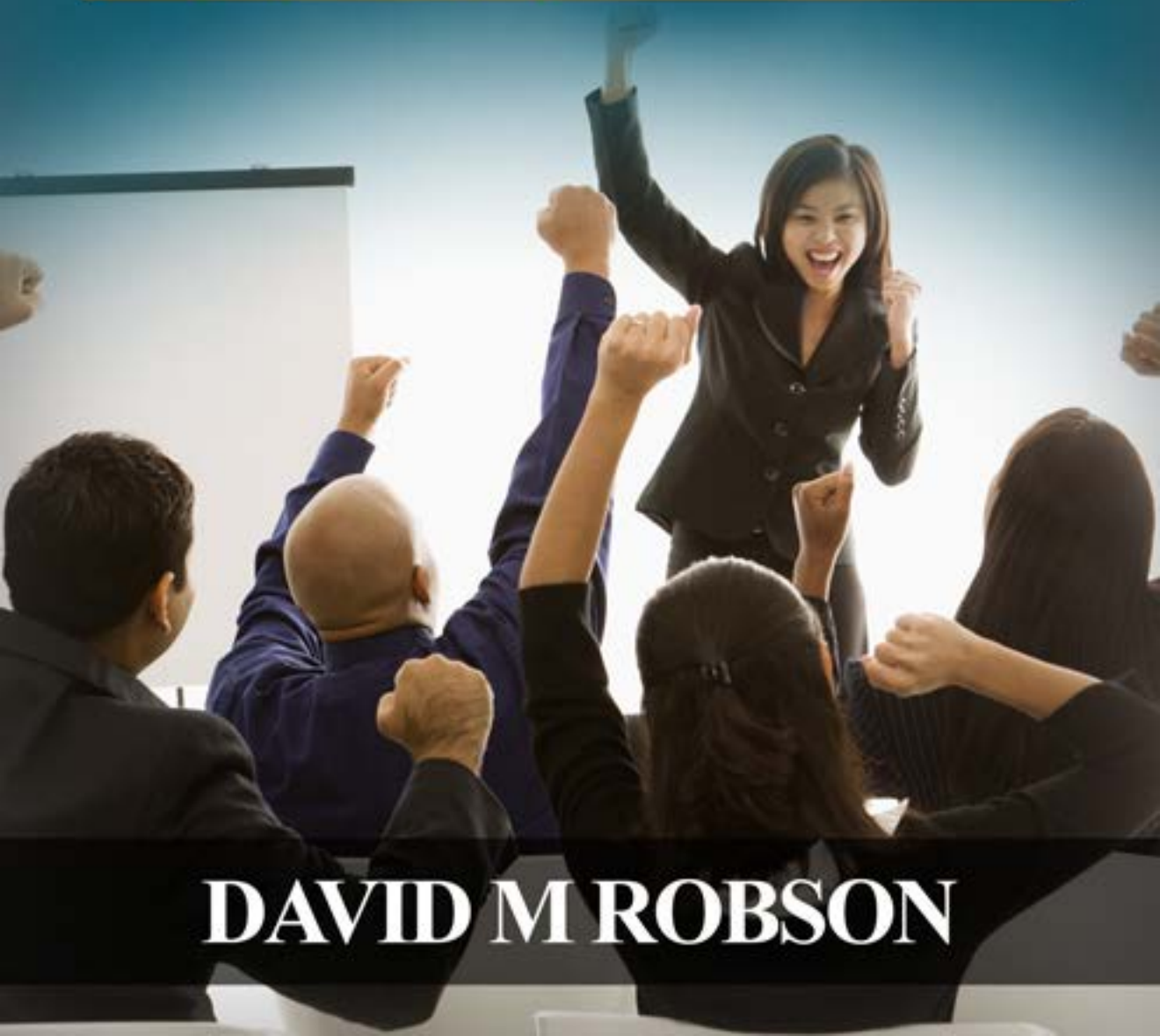


Don't Sell Yourself Short

GET THE ATTENTION YOU DESERVE

A guide to identifying the best way
to successfully market your product or service.
A thought provoking topic with a bonus checklist.



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It's no secret that without customers a business is doomed to fail. As the marketing environment changes it becomes increasingly more difficult to keep new business coming in the door. When was the last time you picked up a phone book to research a business? The newspaper publishers are struggling with the increased use of online news sources. A significant amount of research is done online these days.

It doesn't matter if you are the best accountant or chiropractor in the area, if you can't get the attention of consumers the experience and education doesn't help. What is a small business owner to do? If you choose to continue marketing as you are today it may continue to work, but chances are that eventually you will see diminishing returns. I'm assuming if you are reading this eBook that things may not be going as smoothly as you hoped. You could work with one of the number of companies that promise results that sound too good to be true. And chances are good that you will not see the return on investment. I would suggest a combination of old and new techniques that we will cover in this eBook.

With that being said where should you start?

Know Your Customer

A fundamental mistake is not understanding who your customer is. You will need to determine who you are targeting. You will also need to determine what it is they need. If you aren't offering what they are looking for it is most likely they won't discover you. You will also want to know where they are in the buying process. It is much easier to sell to someone who has a need versus one who doesn't realize they have a problem.

Once you have identified the target prospect you need to figure out where to find them. As an example, if your target prospect has a hobby in arts and crafts you would be more likely to find them on Pinterest than you would on Twitter.

Leverage Your USP

If you haven't determined your USP it is time to do that. What is a USP? It is your unique selling proposition. It is the thing that makes you different from all of the other businesses just like you. You should focus on a positive trait that the prospect will respect and help them determine you are the right fit for them.

Create Your Message

The biggest mistake you can make is crafting a message that is strictly about your product or service. Your message in fact should be about the prospect and demonstrating how you can satisfy their need and transform their life. They will be more receptive to a message that helps with the pain or problem they are suffering from.

The content should be engaging and keep the readers interest. They are less likely to get bored and move on if they are engaged and are more likely to be receptive to your offer.

In terms of online content, your content must be good and serve a purpose. There are several reasons this is critical. One of the ways that search engines (especially Google) rank the quality of your website is based on the quality of the content on the pages. Good engaging content will increase the chances of ranking better in organic search (non-paid) results. Another reason it is critical, as previously mentioned, if the reader gets bored they will go on to the next website in search of a site that better meets their need. Let's not forget that the content on your website is also a tool to demonstrate why the reader wants to do business with you, it builds trust.

Build Trust

This can be a tricky one. A consumer who is familiar with your abilities typically will not hesitate to do business with you. That's fine if they already have experience with you, but if this is a new relationship it will take some work on your part. A lot of how you accomplish this is driven by the situation and the product/service. As the price tag increases it becomes more important. If the total cost makes the consumer uncomfortable it is crucial. If possible you should take the risk by offering a money back guarantee or provide some other mechanism to remove that barrier. The key is to getting the prospects trust, they are more likely to do business with someone they like and trust.

When dealing with the prospect you should be positive and smile, even if you are on the phone because your body language has a huge impact on the first impression. A pleasant conversation will leave a lasting impact.

In terms of online content, don't be afraid to give information that is valuable. I'm not suggesting you give away everything, but as mentioned previously the content is important.

The message should be written to the specific customers need. If there are multiple types of prospects, you should consider crafting unique messages for each type of prospect. This is important because you can focus on language that the prospect will relate to.

Word of Mouth

An often overlooked strategy is tapping the experience of current clients/customers. A referral from a satisfied customer is worth its weight in gold and best of all it's free. Another consideration that shouldn't be ignored is online testimonials and product reviews. This is an opportunity to have satisfied customers influence the decisions of people they don't even know. These have also become factors used by search engines to deliver results to the user that are relevant. It is worth taking the time to develop a strategy to request referrals and testimonials. These should be organic and not forced to ensure they work correctly.

Work Your Customer List

Have you considered your existing clients/customers? Do you have a complimentary product/service that an existing customer would be willing to buy? Do you reach out to existing customers for those items that have an expiration? It is much easier to sell to an existing customer because it takes less effort to make the sale. Of course if they had a bad experience with the original transaction you will need to address any pain points in your current process to ensure an atmosphere that promotes high client satisfaction.

Make a Plan and Be Organized

Once you have identified your prospect, crafted your message(s) and determined where to reach the prospects, you need a plan. First, layout exactly what you are offering to sell and what the terms of the sale will be. Consider offering free bonuses to encourage the transaction.

Next you should create a plan. Identify what your marketing strategy is and how you will get your message to your target audience. Determine your budget and stick to it.

Don't be afraid to change the plan if things aren't working. Think of it like driving to the office, if you encounter traffic you have the ability to take a different route.

Stay organized. If you promise the prospect something make sure you follow through. If there is a delay in you delivering your promise just be honest. The quickest way to turn a customer away is to tell them what you think they want to hear. They will not be tolerant to lies and broken promises.

Measure Your Results

A marketing plan is only really affective if you understand how it's working. You don't have to spend hours working on bar charts and statistical analysis, unless you really get into that. If nothing else it is beneficial to know what works. The alternative is to go open the window and throw handfuls of money out the window, I'm guessing you dislike that idea as much as I do.

Keep track of how each new customer/client found you. This isn't always as easy as it sounds, if I had a dollar for everyone that said they found me on the internet, but had no idea what site. There are tools that can help identify how online traffic occurs like Google Analytics and PPC advertisers. This won't be perfect, but it will get you closer to an answer. There are also tools that can be used to find out what topics people are searching for online.

Having a marketing plan is only part of the battle, you need to have a handle on the effectiveness to get the full benefit. The biggest reason for failure is failing to plan. The second biggest mistake is failing to measure the results. Follow these steps to ensure success: plan, execute, measure, evaluate, adjust and repeat.

Marketing Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate your marketing ideas while working on your marketing plan. Create multiple lists if you have multiple message/products.

Who is my prospect?

Where do these individuals hang out (online and offline)?

Which of these will be the best place to reach these individuals?

What do they need, what pain are they experiencing?

How can I help with their pain?

What am I offering them?

How will I deliver this to them?

Will my offer include a guarantee, free bonus(es) or upsell opportunity?

Are there similar products/services on the market? How does my product/service compare?

What is my Unique Selling Proposition?

What will I charge? Is my goal to be a commodity or will I be a value provider (is the price going to be market price or a premium)?

What is my marketing budget (either a dollar amount or percentage of sales)?