

10 Money Making Strategies **I Dare You To Steal**

**Double Your Sales Today With
Monkey Bizzness's Top Rainmaking Strategies**

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Introduction

Hi there, and thanks for taking this opportunity seriously. You have now *officially* separated yourself from all the “part timers” and unsuccessful internet marketers that are in your industry right now. Like myself I’m sure you saw a huge opportunity when you first got started.

Building a business you could control from the luxury of your own home, spare bedroom, or even closet was an inspiring dream. But quickly the visions of money rolling into your bank account before you sent your first e-mail campaign vanished and, just like myself, you were left confused and curious as to how these “gurus” are doing it so effortlessly.

Maybe you just didn't know the right people. Maybe you shelled out big bucks for that “guru” to do it for you. Maybe you threw countless hours and more twenty dollar bills towards every marketing “diet” you could find. Or maybe you threw in the towel completely.

Like many of you, I was frustrated with my current financial situation. But then I started to come to grips with the stark reality that so much has changed in the past decade. I finally realized that true financial independence and job security now lie in my own hands. That can be scary for some people, but let me tell you, don't panic... because financial independence isn't as hard as it sounds.

I'm going to share my story with you and I'm going to start by saying that early on I was so determined to make my marketing schemes work that it wreaked havoc on my relationships with family and friends. I didn't *have* resources like this to help me, but I'm writing this book today to tell you that if a guy like me, Joe Schmoe down the street, can make this happen, then with a little bit of commitment and dedication you can too.

So I graduated college in 2001 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and started applying for jobs left and right. I couldn't find a single gig, though. Reminiscent of today's employment woes, huh? I finally moved back in with my parents and settled for anything I could get my hands on because I was ready to start making my own money.

I found a gig at a local sign shop where I learned the sign business. Definitely NOT the most exciting company in the universe, but I knew it was the only game in town

for a college student like me.

At the time my boss owned several retail locations he was running and offered me a management position at one of his smaller shops. I quickly accepted it and found myself in love and energized with the thrills of managing a small business.

Well, all good things must come to an end and “the boss man” put my location up for sale. He said he was getting spread too thin running back and forth between various locations and wanted to stay at the store that was making the most money. I jumped at the opportunity! I was in college only about a year or two ago with NO experience and now wanted to buy a small retail store from my boss. Yes!

I was determined and wouldn't take “no” for an answer. I quickly found help in the form of a small business-consulting firm that guided me through the process of what it was going to take to purchase the shop. To be quite honest, the consultant kind of laughed at me. But nonetheless, I hired the company to close the deal on the shop. The number on the price tag was \$70,000. How in the world was I going to get all that money! Even now, the thought of investing that much money all at once sends me reeling!

To make a long story short, I scraped together the capital, with help from my Dad no less, and closed on the purchase of the shop within a few months. I was just a naive kid going up against counter-offers from more experienced, deeper-pocketed competitors. The whole experience was both terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. By the time I actually closed the deal I was ready to put my name in the history books and call it a year!

Well, things didn't quite play out that way. The shop was in trouble and we needed to get more business or my new investment would prove to be a disaster. One would think that getting hold of working capital from family took the pressure off, but in this case it was absolutely agonizing. Having my dad be the principal investor was a huge source of stress for me.

The shop had been pretty badly managed before I came into the picture and there were a lot of loose ends to tie up. Meanwhile I was hoping we could survive off the current business while trying to attract new customers. There were a whole bunch of things we tried doing to kick-start the business. We designed a new website and launched a Google AdWords campaign, but we just couldn't drum up enough customers to break even.

The problem was that I knew nothing about online marketing and thought if I had an interesting site listing all the different products and services it would be enough. Man was I wrong about that. Then the marketing campaign we launched was expensive and returned poor numbers. Being an independent business owner I had to run the marketing efforts while still trying to manage the day-to-day business. Every night after closing out the register I would sit there in the back office trying to figure out how we were going to stay in business.

You see, the problems I was having were the same that every business owner faces. It doesn't matter how big your business is, you've got to drive web traffic, attract customers and generate new business. Period. Those are the things that matter to every venture. Without customers who are willing and able to buy your product or service, any business is going to be a sinking ship.

So I came to realize that after three years of trying profusely to keep the company out of the red, well... sometimes you have to know when to fold. Once I did that I was left searching for what exactly went wrong. Was it the location? Was it the "new management"?

As disappointed as I was, I realized that this was my time to close the first chapter of my business. However not by a long shot was I through. After closing the shop I dedicated myself to studying the nature of attracting customers and maintaining their loyalty for a profitable return on investment.

Looking back at this experience, my friend, everything *does* happen for a reason and it took my every ounce of determination to turn things around. I spent hour after hour examining what went wrong with the shop and researching the art of business. I picked up a tremendous amount of knowledge. It stirred an astounding desperation in me to actively seek new and improved ways of attracting daily web traffic.

Even though I had a wife and two small children and home, and was getting low on cash, I forged ahead with what my friends were calling my "unnecessary research." I knew the information was out there and I knew that when I found the right solutions I could take things to the next level. I could combine the best of the best and engineer a marketing system that would make my *next* business explode!

How to Use This Guide

As of me writing this in 2010 it's been four years since the shop closed down and I've since started several thriving businesses by applying 10 very specific strategies that have allowed me to excel in everything I touch.

These 10 new strategies have given me the "Midas Touch." These are the absolute "best of the best" in marketing and sales tactics. And I've compiled them in a very clear, concise and understandable manner with ease of implementation, deployment and success. I wish you the same level of excitement, knowledge and profit these tactics have generously provided for my family.

Lastly, I encourage you to read this product with the understanding that you will be required to put forth effort in order to make these strategies work for your business. These aren't plug-and-play, "instant cash" strategies. You *will* have to put some thought and effort behind every one of my AMAZING strategies. So... are you up for the challenge? I dare you...

Strategy #1

The Follow Up

Most sellers and entrepreneurs focus their time and energy on picking up new customers, yet they overlook huge sales opportunities by failing to follow up with sales prospects. Many business owners even neglect the the follow up opportunities from customers who've already bought something from them!

Most businesspeople fail to follow up for a few basic reasons. Oftentimes they simply aren't aware of the power of the follow up. Maybe they're just too busy with daily distractions and haven't given the subject much thought. Or maybe they think following up with customers will be viewed as obnoxious and don't want to risk alienating them.

The truth is that following up with customers is one of the most important activities you can do for your business and should be an absolute priority as soon as you have that first contact with the customer or make that first sale. Many of us get caught up in the day-to-day grind of running a business and put off the follow up, but you absolutely **MUST** make it a priority. And concerns about follow ups being too pushy are almost always wrong. Don't assume your customer doesn't *want* a follow up, because usually they do! In fact, most customers will wait for a follow-up telephone call, e-mail or mailing. They're much less likely to call you or visit your website themselves, so take the initiative!

Think about it, by the time you've made one pitch to a customer, you already know that he or she is fundamentally interested in your product or service. To be a successful seller, you should start out by approaching the issue in a systematic way. Consider drawing up a basic flow chart that illustrates the various steps you'll take in different scenarios. This will make it much easier to visualize the way your business interacts with its customers.

The key is to be consistent and plan out your follow up strategy beforehand. If you're selling products online, consider setting up your e-mail auto-responder to follow up every few months. The fact is that many sellers incorrectly assume that customers consider follow ups to be obnoxious. In reality though, making a follow up offer to a prospect is almost never a problem as long as the offer is delivered in a polite tone and is relevant to what the customer is looking for.

So how can you plan out your follow up process? Well, you *should* have a plan for the customer who doesn't purchase your product or service after the first sales pitch or website visit. Start out by thinking about reasons they might not have purchased your product and set up a series of e-mails in which you overcome those objections. You could create a “sequence” of five or six different follow up e-mails and set them in your auto-responder to go out to that customer once per week.

Here's a sample follow up sequence:

-  **E-mail 1** – In a friendly tone, suggest that the customer may have accidentally not ordered your product and show her how to complete her order.
-  **E-mail 2** – Show your customer how your product represents a great value proposition.
-  **E-mail 3** – Mention some feature of your product that differentiates you from the competition.
-  **E-mail 4** – Point out to your customer that time is running out. Create a desire to order that product right away!
-  **E-mail 5** – Give your customer one last opportunity to order the product. Tell him he may miss out forever if he doesn't order now.

Those are just a few ways you can create a sequence of follow up e-mails. If you're calling customers via telephone or making in-person visits, you can still create your own pre-scheduled sequence of follow up contacts.

And you should also think about what you'll do *after* a customer purchases your product. Consider sending him an e-mail with a detailed offer for another product you sell. Consider the customer's needs: Once he buys one product, is there something else you can sell to him to build upon the value you offer. The customer who has already bought your product once is incredibly valuable to your business, so make the follow up a top priority. After all, this customer has already taken a bite of the apple. Now it's your job to sell him an entire bushel!

Strategy #2

The Up-sell

So we've talked about the value of customer follow ups, now let's explore the up-sell. What is an up-sell? That's when you convince your customer to buy a more expensive product or purchase an add-on feature. Up-selling is all around us, even if we don't always realize it. Ever bought a stereo or new TV and been offered the extended warranty? That's an up-sell. Have you been offered the premium leather seats at the car dealership? That's an up-sell, too.

There's no reason your business shouldn't be using the up-sell right now! It can be tremendously profitable for you because once you have a customer ready to purchase your basic product, the up-sell itself costs you virtually nothing. So any revenue from the up-sell represents pure profit for your business!

So how do we make the up-sell? When it comes to selling products and services online, the best place to make your up-sell pitch is at what we'll call the thank you/confirmation page. After your customer clicks on the order button and submits his credit card information, he then goes to a thank you/confirmation page... where we're going to do a lot more than just say "thank you!" This is your big chance to offer the up-sell. After all, he's already buying from you, so you're not risking losing the sale, you're simply offering him something he's likely to want.

So now that you know *when* to make the offer, you need to determine what the offer (or offers) will be. First you need to think hard about your customers and your products.

Consider your customers' needs and how you can meet them:

- Think about the **objections and concerns** they might have had before purchasing from you. Are they likely to be worried about the product's longevity? Were they concerned about your product's features or specs compared to the competition?
- Think about how they're going to **use your product**. Is this the type of product that they can use only once (such as travel offers)? Is it a product that could wear out or require maintenance? Is it a product that requires some type of refill (such as cleaning products, razors and air fresheners)? Is it a subscription-based service where the customer pays a monthly or annual fee?
- Is your product **delivered** via shipping or is it downloadable?
- Could your customers benefit from detailed **instructional materials** or is your product simple and self-explanatory to use?
- Are there **features** that your customer could add that would take your product to the next level?
- Is the **price** of your product or service likely to increase in the future?

You should go through all those questions about the nature of your product because they'll help you determine what kinds of up-sells to offer. Of course the perfect up-sell really depends on your individual business and the needs of your customers, but here are some common up-sells that you should consider offering:

Warranties

Customers these days are used to seeing warranties, so they're an easy sell and there's no up-front cost for you to offer them. Plus long-term warranties can help you build a long-term relationship with your customers. If your product could ever require

repairs or maintenance, then you should definitely consider offering a warranty plan to your customers.

The “Gold” version

This is another common up-sell where you originally offer your customers a basic “silver” version of your product with only the basic features, and then up-sell them on the “gold” version that comes with more features or functions. This works especially well if your customer base includes a group of people who absolutely must have a certain product feature. In that case, make sure you price the up-sell high enough! After all, the people who don't need that feature would never spend the extra money anyway, and the ones who do need the “Gold” features won't flinch at paying a higher price.

Add-ons

Ever notice how Amazon.com is always trying to get you to buy some combination of two or three completely different products? That's a form of up-selling, too! It's important to think about your customer's relationship to your products here.

For example, if you're selling DVDs that teach people how to play the guitar, your first-time customer is probably going to order your most basic DVD to learn the really simple stuff right away. But once they do that, where do they go from there? Instead of just selling them the basic DVD, include an up-sell offer of the “intermediate” DVD and an extra songbook. This has a few benefits: You're likely to increase the average order size of your first-time customers, which means more profit for you. Also you don't have to spend more money down the road marketing your intermediate DVD and songbook to that customer. And you now have a customer who's vested in your product line. He didn't just dip his toe in the pool, he dove right in!

Subscriptions

The up-sell is a great opportunity to take a customer who plans to buy one product from you and convert him into a paying subscriber who will buy from you every month (or at whatever interval best fits your products and customer base). Obviously some types of products and services won't work with the subscription model, but give it some serious thought. Maybe you could create an e-mail newsletter for customers of your product. Make that a subscription and bill their credit cards each month! The great thing about the subscription model is that while it's a very small initial purchase for the consumer, it can generate excellent cash flow for your business. A typical customer might balk at spending \$240 on your product, but that's exactly what a \$10-per-month product will generate over two years!

Price guarantees

This is an up-sell that definitely won't be a good fit for every type of product or service, but you should consider it nonetheless. The price guarantee is an offer where the customer can lock in a certain price for an extended period of time. In many states, natural gas suppliers offer these types of plans where customers can pay a slight premium and then are able to lock in a set rate for the next two years. They don't call it an up-sell, but that's exactly what it is!

So how can a typical small business implement this? This type of up-sell works best for products that tend to fluctuate in value or where customers reasonably believe that the cost of the product will go up in the future. The expectation of a future price increase is a huge benefit for you because it allows you to offer a price guarantee that protects that customer against future increases. So by giving your customer the opportunity to hedge against future price increases, you're also gently convincing your customer to buy more product from you and you're building a last relationship with him or her.

This up-sell also works great with subscription (or membership)-based businesses where customers might let their membership lapse. Instead of just letting them become inactive customers, you can up-sell them on a small “price lock” fee that protects them from future price increases if they ever re-subscribe to your service at a later time.

The key to up-selling is to spend time evaluating your customers and their needs. What are they doing? Where are they going? What do they fear? What do they enjoy? Answering those questions will put you a lot closer to determining exactly what up-sell offers to make. And once you have your up-sells in place, you're almost guaranteed to increase the average size of your orders!

Strategy #3

Referrals

Are you a movie buff? I am. I love movies. Can't watch them enough! That's why I use a service called Netflix. They send me movies via snail mail in these little red envelopes. Once I've watched the flick, I mail the DVD back to them and they send me another one. It's a brilliant concept. And oh yeah, before Netflix ever spent a dime producing TV commercials or putting banner ads all over the internet, they came up with the *perfect* marketing strategy.

See, what Netflix's founders realized at the time was that their entire concept was so new that a few banner ads sprinkled around the internet wouldn't work because they just couldn't convey what Netflix *is* with a little web ad. So instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars on getting the word out with a traditional advertising campaign, Netflix decided to turn its own customers into its sales force! OK, maybe not exactly a sales force, but what Netflix did (and still does!) is offer great deals to existing customers when they refer new customers to the company's service.

At the most basic level, that's all that referral marketing really is. Yes, there are all kinds of “gurus” on the internet selling expensive referral marketing systems that you can buy, but in reality most of the supposedly “new” information aimed at referral marketing on the internet is really just basic conventional business wisdom that was being used long before anyone had an e-mail address or fancy website. There are even different types of referral marketing programs, but for our purposes today, we're just going to talk about referrals from your existing customers.

The important thing to remember is that the biggest advantage referrals give you is that they essentially cost you nothing to market your business! And one of the best things about these new customers is that they arrive at your door already having a high level of trust in you and your business.

So when is the best time to make your referral offer? That depends on your individual business. Remember, your goal is to plant the idea in your customer's head that they will want to tell their friends and family about your product. You have to be proactive because for most customers, even the ones who absolutely *love* what you sell, telling other people about your product won't naturally be a high priority. It's *your* job to create incentives that give them the gentle nudge they need.

Here's our checklist to help you plan your own referral marketing program:

❑ Determine when and how to actually make the offer.

This depends greatly on the nature of your business. If your customer is likely to see the benefits right away, you may want to include a flyer with the product when you ship it. That way your customer will open the box and immediately get excited about your offer. If the product takes time to reveal its benefits, you may be better off using an e-mail sequence. You can write a series of two or three e-mails and then set up your auto-responder to send those e-mails to customers a few weeks (or even months) after they receive the product. If you own a retail store, you can make small, eye-catching postcards and include them with each customer's receipt.

❑ Determine what your referral offer will be.

What's in it for me? That's the first question your customer will have, so now you need to sweeten the pot for him or her! The simplest type of incentive is just to pay cash for each referred customer who purchases a certain amount of product from you. Remember, that new customer costs you nothing to get, so you can afford to give the first customer a discount. The math really starts making sense when that first customer refers you to three or four new customers! You can also offer your original customer a rebate off the purchase of their products. An even better plan is to offer that first customer a rebate off their *next* purchase. That way you don't have to write off the revenue from the first sale and that customer becomes even more immersed in your product line.

❑ Keep track of your referral program.

If you're selling products or services over the internet (and even if you're a brick and mortar business), then tracking referrals is easy. There are many different software solutions nowadays and most of them will cost you very little to maintain. But make absolutely sure that you keep track of who is entitled to receive referral bonuses. Poor record keeping and organization could jeopardize the relationships you've worked so hard to build.

Remember, when it comes to referrals, word of mouth is the currency that we trade in. You should be encouraging every single customer to tell all their friends and family about you! Don't take for granted that they like your products or your store. That's simply not enough! It's your job to remind them that they can get free stuff or special discounts for referring friends.

Strategy #4

The Affiliate Program

I like to think of affiliate programs as the dressed-up, formal cousin of the referral program. They both essentially involve the same thing – using your customers to market your business. But there are some key differences that we'll go over here.

So what is an affiliate program? It's a marketing program where you pay affiliates a commission for each customer the affiliate gives you. You can either set up your own affiliate network or you can outsource that to an existing affiliate program. Most smaller businesses use existing affiliate networks to handle the technical challenges for them, but you can do it yourself if you have some IT savvy. Affiliate programs are geared toward selling products and services on the internet, so if your company still doesn't have an e-commerce presence, this is yet another great reason to start selling on the web!

So let's start off by talking about setting up your own basic affiliate program. First of all, why do it? The answer is simple, even if you set up the greatest e-commerce site in the world and launched it overnight, you'd still never be able to get the kind of web traffic that a good network of affiliates can bring to you. Think about it, if you opened a new store in town, would you have better results by putting up a single sign and hoping for the best or by paying a couple of neighborhood kids a dollar for every sign they put up around town? The latter is essentially all an affiliate network really is – you're paying *other* people to generate leads for you. They give you a level of access to new customers that you'd never get by yourself.

If you decide not to set up your own affiliate network you should ask yourself which outside affiliate network you should use. There are dozens of different affiliate programs aimed at helping small businesses keep track of their affiliates, payouts and new leads. Before diving in headfirst, though, you should do some research and check out whether the program is right for your business. Google itself even has an affiliate network for advertisers, so if you're worried about finding a program with a good reputation, that's a good place to start. (You can read more about it at www.google.com/ads/affiliatenetwork.) And like most other Google programs, you can invest as much or as little as you want.

Need help managing your affiliate network? Remember the three rules.

1. Start off small.

You don't want to invest a lot of money until you've done enough testing and are comfortable using the entire system. Don't go “all in” on your first hand!

2. Run split tests!

Split testing is where you run short, inexpensive tests of different marketing variables and track the results. Split testing allows you to fine tune your marketing campaign and is the only way to really get your affiliate network to achieve maximum results.

3. Do the math yourself.

Outsourcing is great, but make sure you have a full understanding of where the money is going. You're not an absentee landlord or silent partner, you're an entrepreneur! So don't be passive when it comes to tracking the results of your affiliate program.

Many affiliate networks will match you up with outside affiliates who are willing to direct their own customers your way, but probably the best way for small businesses to launch an affiliate program is to use your own customers as affiliates. And here's where the affiliate program differs from the referral program. Unlike with referrals, where your customers are basically just telling their friends and family about a product they like, you need to frame your offer much differently. With your affiliate program, you should pitch your offer to your customers as a genuine business opportunity, not just as a little “thank you” for telling friends about you.

Strategy #5

Reprint and Production Rights

The life cycle of the typical product is pretty simple: You come up with a great idea for a new product. You make the product and then you sell the final product to your customers. Then over time, most businesses stop making those first widgets and focus their time and money on making some other newer product that its customers are now clamoring for instead.

So what happens to all those products you're no longer selling? Should you just put them on a shelf and forget about them? Heck no! There's a huge market for reprint and reproduction rights and all those products might really be worth a lot to someone else who can market them to their customers or have an affiliate network that's craving your product.

In fact, there are even huge networks of reprint buyers. These clubs basically buy reprint rights from business owners like you and then offer them to their members in bulk. Obviously this isn't going to work real well if you manufacture backyard grills, but if your primary business is selling information products such as e-books, you should do look into selling reprint rights. You can even offer reprint rights to your customers in exchange for orders so that you make money on the back end when they sell copies of your product.

Strategy #6

The Cross Promotion

Cross promotions are another great sales strategy that can be used by *any* business in *any* industry. The great thing about cross promotions is that they cost you almost nothing to launch but they have the ability to drastically raise your business's profile. A cross promotion is when you and another business agree to promote each other's products to each other's customers. It's similar to a referral or affiliate program, except that instead of teaming up with affiliates or your customers, you're partnering with another business.

The successful cross promotion can not only increase your company's exposure, but it can be tremendously profitable if both partners are a good fit for each other. So how does one determine who to partner with on a cross promotion?

Here are some factors to consider when choosing a cross promotion partner:

- ✘ If you have a **brick and mortar store**, are you in a neighborhood with other businesses that might appeal to your customers? Obviously you wouldn't partner with a direct competitor, but perhaps your business appeals to an upscale clientèle in a certain neighborhood. If so, you should find another business whose products would appeal to those same customers.
- ✘ If you sell some type of **information product**, you should think about what related topics your customers would be interested in. Give some serious thought to where their gaps in knowledge are and what types of products would appeal to them. Perhaps a cross promotion with another information marketer would help everyone's customers.

Cross promotions are all about putting your product in front of new customers, so make sure that you only enter into such a relationship if you think your own customers would really benefit from the other products. If not, then it's not the right opportunity for your business.

As for finding cross promotion partners, you'd be surprised how easy it is to find businesses looking to enter into these relationships. If you're just getting started with your own business, now is the time to start networking! Consider joining your local chamber of commerce or town business association. You can also go online and find numerous online message boards aimed at entrepreneurs. Get on Facebook and LinkedIn and before you know it you'll have other business owners beating a path to your door!

Strategy #7

The Coupon

Coupons seem like such an *obvious* sales rainmaker, but you'd be surprised how many entrepreneurs overlook them! Well it's time to get serious about increasing your sales, and one of the *best* ways to do that is with coupons. Setting up a coupon program will cost you a little bit of money, but the benefits far outweigh the costs when you consider just how much business coupons can drum up.

So why do so many small businesses fail to launch their own coupon programs? Well many entrepreneurs, especially early on, fear they'll hurt their product's cache by giving away discounts. They spent months or even years worth of blood, sweat and tears developing their new products and they sure as hell aren't going to start discounting them now!

That's a fatal mistake and I'm going to explain why.

You absolutely **SHOULD NOT** get hung up on the discount itself. Yes, in some cases you could be turning down profit from a customer who would have paid full price anyway, but the upside is **WAY WAY WAY** bigger than that! True sales geniuses instinctively see this. So why is there so much upside? Because coupons are one of the best possible ways to get your existing customers to return to you to buy more stuff.

Want to create your own coupon marketing system? Here's how.

Step 1. Run the numbers.

The first thing you need to do is plan out what your coupons will offer, and you can't do that until you've gone over the numbers and know exactly what your profit margins are on your various products.

Step 2. Determine what your discount will be.

Now you can figure out how much of a discount to offer. You can make the coupon a discount on each purchased product or as a percentage of the total order. The larger the order, the larger the discount you can offer.

Step 3. Determine how you'll deliver your coupons.

If you're shipping physical products to your customers, you can include a printed coupon with your product. If you're selling some type of downloadable information product, then you can e-mail your coupons to your customers.

Step 4. Set up your ordering system to accept your coupon codes.

Don't forget to set everything up and test it at least once to make sure everything is working in sync. You're going to have angry customers if they don't get the discount they were promised!

Step 5. Deliver your coupons.

You need to take the most advantage of the opportunity you have. And that means delivering a coupon that gets the eye of your customer and reminds him to buy from you again. If you're doing printed coupons, try printing your coupons on fluorescent pink paper so that your customers don't just think they're junk and throw them away with the shipping boxes.

Quick Tip: If you're using e-mail to deliver your coupons (which you should consider doing no matter what business you're in), pay attention to the subject line. Make sure it's eye-catching. And beware of spam filters. For instance, if you have the word "FREE" anywhere in your e-mail, the customer's spam filter is more likely to send your message to the trash folder. One little trick many marketers do to get around this is to insert a character into the word, so that it's typed in as "FR'EE" or "F.REE."

The bottom line is that coupons are one of the best ways to make sales from existing customers. Remember, they've just bought your product. They're not necessarily thinking "Where do I go from here?" It's *your* job to point them in a direction. If you just fill each order and move on to trying to catch more new customers, you could be ignoring a huge sales opportunity.

Strategy #8

The Catalog

When you hear the word “catalog” what do you think of? Personally I think of the L.L. Bean or Victoria's Secret catalogs, the ones that seem to come to my house about every three days and are filled to the brim with hundreds of different products in different colors and sizes.

They're a big-time business and those companies pour HUGE amounts of resources into putting them together. Trust me, I've seen the catalog business from the inside and can tell you it takes an army of photographers, graphic designers, writers and proofreaders to put those things out all the time. It's a *ton* of work.

So you're probably thinking to yourself, “I run a tiny little company. My spouse and I are the only employees. We don't have the money to hire an entire office floor full of publishing professionals!” Well you don't need to worry. You most likely *don't need* to produce a huge, glossy catalog because your customers are a much smaller niche than what those big companies are trying to appeal to. For our purposes, a catalog is really just a brochure cataloging the various add-on products that we sell.

On the next page is my 5 Step Guide to Publishing Your Own Catalog. It will take you through each of the steps in producing your own catalog. Trust me, you absolute *do not* have to be some kind of publishing whiz. If you're bright enough to start your own business, you can handle this!

My 5 Step Guide to Publishing Your Own Catalog:

Step 1. Develop your product menu.

The whole purpose of your catalog is to sell more product to customers who are already familiar with your offerings. You don't need to explain everything about your business to these people, so you're going to focus on offering add-on products, upgrades, special services, software plug-ins, attachments, extra features, etc. If they enjoy your product they *will* buy the extra add-ons. If you don't already have extra add-ons like that, then you should spend some time developing them. Think about your customer's needs and desires.

Step 2. Write copy that sells.

Write little copy “blurbs” selling each of the products that will be in your catalog. Use lots of action verbs and avoid the passive tense. Use “exciting” words and avoid long paragraphs. Also take time consider who your customer is. If you sell laboratory equipment to chemists, your sales copy is obviously going to be much more technical than if you're selling diet pills. I've always recommended that sales copy not be “technical,” but also don't be afraid to throw in some colorful “jargon” that the customer will be able to understand. And you don't have to be a professional to write this sales copy. Just write it the way you would explain it to a customer in person. Write the way you speak!

Quick tip: Lots of people have trouble just sitting in front of a computer screen and writing creative sales copy. If that sounds like you, try using a small voice recorder and dictate your spiel. One advantage of this is that it allows you to get up and walk around. You can even have a family member or friend pose as a customer while you extol the benefits of your program into the voice recorder.

Step 3. Get pictures that sell.

This is huge. You absolutely NEED to actually show the products to your customers. This will drive sales much higher than if you just use text. If you're selling a product that's easily photographed, you may be able to take the photos yourself. Or you could pay a local photographer to do that for you. If you do the photos yourself, make sure the images are bright enough and not cluttered by the background.

Step 4. Design your catalog.

We're living in the golden age of desktop publishing these days. Design jobs that would have cost \$5,000 a few years ago can now be done for free on your laptop while you're sitting at your computer. When it comes to designing catalogs you really have two options:

A. Hire a graphic designer. You can advertise in the help wanted section on Craigslist for free and hire someone local. Or you can check out a site like oDesk.com or Elance.com, where freelance designers actually bid on your project so that you can get the best possible price. Both ways are good options.

B. Do it yourself. Personally, I think this is the way to go if you plan to design a lot of catalogs down the road. There are lots of different software options but the absolute best one I've ever found is called Mac Pages. Yeah, Pages only works on Apple computers, but the software is so good that I'd almost recommend getting an Apple just for that. Here's the thing: Pages is easily the most intuitive page design software that's available right now. You'll be amazed how quickly you master it and how good your documents will look when using it. I'm a huge fan.

Step 5. Deliver your catalog.

I recommend that you deliver the catalog as a printed product. Yeah, making a PDF and e-mailing it to people is definitely cheaper, but a print product will go a long way toward getting your customer's attention, which is the whole point of what we're doing. And when it comes to printing and shipping costs, you absolutely MUST shop around... because that industry is highly competitive. You can call your local Kinko's and get a price quote, but I also would look in your local phone book for printers and even check online for fulfillment companies. These are firms that will print your product and ship it for you on a contractual basis. You might pay slightly more than if you did all that work yourself, but it's probably going to save you a lot of time that could be better spent on generating new leads or expanding your product line.

Strategy #9

The Gift Certificate

Every single business should be selling gift certificates. OK, maybe not if you sell plumbing supplies. (“Merry Christmas, now you can get that toilet drain you've always wanted!”) The simple truth is gift certificates *will* bring you extra sales that you wouldn't have otherwise got.

Here are some of the advantages:

- ✘ The purchase of the gift certificate itself is a sale. Hey, some people will buy a \$100 gift certificate even if they never would have spent that much on any one of your individual products.
- ✘ A small percentage of gift certificates will never be redeemed. Look, don't ever try to make money by making it hard for people to redeem your gift certificates. If you do that, don't be surprised when your state attorney general starts investigating you! Preventing people from getting their products is against the law. But what about when the customer just doesn't get around to it? Yeah, you hate to “lose” a customer who might have ended up buying more stuff from you down the road, but if he can't even get motivated enough to redeem his gift certificate, he probably didn't have much revenue potential anyway.
- ✘ Every gift certificate sale is like a zero percent interest loan to your business. If your customer buys a gift certificate in November and then a family member doesn't redeem until May, they've just given your business a six-month, interest-free loan. And they don't mind a bit!
- ✘ When the gift certificate recipient cashes it, they're extremely likely to buy other items from your store or website. I love this about gift certificates. It really seems to make people want to buy more. And why not? After all, if someone comes to your website with a \$100 gift certificate, and then spends \$150 total, it only *feels* like he spent \$50!

Strategy #10

The Free Teaser Product

I love using little “teaser” products to get my customers excited about my business. Here's the whole strategy in a nutshell: You send your customers free products with their product package. The freebies should have your ad printed on them. It could be bumper stickers, ball caps, t-shirts etc. This will allow other people to see your ad and order.

This is a different strategy from the “Loss Leader.” The loss leader is a heavily discounted product that's sold at a low price in order to attract customers to your store. Free teasers aren't even sold. We're giving them away! Nonetheless, your customers will go *nuts* for them.

Much of this really depends on your business's individual circumstances, but the general rule of thumb is that the more expensive the products, the better the teasers. And you should gear your teasers toward your customer base. So if your product is geared toward having fun, then maybe t-shirts and hats are a good idea. If you're selling business software, come up with something useful for the office like those little desktop squeeze balls. I love those things.

Whatever you do, shop around for your supplier because prices for this type of promotional swag are very competitive. I would look in your local phone book for a few local promotional companies and get their prices first, then compare them to what you find on the internet. Teaser products are great because they let your customers know you appreciate them, they get your customers thinking about your business more and they're a great way to spur the word of mouth that makes all the difference in the world of small business sales.

Conclusion

So I've given you 10 different strategies for increasing your sales. Now what are you going to do with them? I'm asking this because by far the greatest factor separating the “doers” from the “looky-loos” is the ability to set aside time and energy for actually executing these strategies. It's not enough to just read up on techniques. If you don't actually take the time to apply these principles to your own business, you're never going to benefit from them.

So do you just want to stay a “looky-loo” or do you really want to get out there and make things happen? I know you want to grow your business. I know you want financial independence. I know you want to apply fresh new ideas to your company. Well now is your chance.

I want you to systematically evaluate each of the different strategies and take real time planning out how you will execute them. When you're done reading this book, you should start with Strategy #1. Turn off the TV and find somewhere you can work without being distracted. Then start writing out your own personalized Action Plan for your business. You should do this for every single strategy that you think your business can benefit from.

This action plan doesn't have to be some fancy PowerPoint presentation. All it has to be is an outline of the various steps you're going to take. If you're a “visual learner” who prefers to use to visual aids, then I recommend you include lots of flow charts and checklists in your action plan. It may seem kind of wonkish and time-consuming, but when you draw out your business plan in a graphical way, you will have a much easier time visualizing the next steps you're going to take!

So that's all for now. Remember, you launched your own business because you wanted to take control of your life and you wanted to do what you love. So even when you're most frustrated, keep your eye on the big goals, whether that's increasing your sales by 15% or buying that sailboat you've always wanted. Now is the time to be aggressive about growing your enterprise. I know you can do it!

To Success!

John Schlott