

The LEAP Marketing Newsletter

Listen - Explain - Ask - Profit

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Why people are waiting for you right now, how to find them and win them over, and why business and marketing can be (should be) lots of fun

“The road to business success is paved with the experiences you choose. I say: Let’s play and make some profit while we’re at it.”

Welcome to this very first issue of LEAP, the fully people-centered marketing approach only an ex-monk could create. I’m intensely grateful to have you with me.

Let’s dive right in, because I want to talk to you about something: I want to talk about you. After that, we’ll talk about ‘them’ - **your people and how you can reach and convert them**. But first you need to know about an incredibly fun and effective way to treat the whole matter of trying to sell the things you make.

LEAP Rule #1: Don’t Panic. Rule #2: Have Fun. PLAY, dammit

I’m not going to tell you business is a walk in the park, but I’ll bet it can be a lot easier than it is for you at this moment. The trick is in how you deal with things, specifically in terms of *how you choose to perceive things* that you need to deal with. This bit isn’t strictly about business and it might be too out there for some readers, but I believe this stuff is common sense truth, and it’s important. You may have to struggle and battle, but you can get through rough patches with far more ease if you take the right attitude.

You choose how you perceive things, which determines your reactions, your thoughts and your feelings. Together, those influence the choices you make as well as the things you do and don’t perceive thereafter. In other words: if you decide and choose to take a positive constructive approach to things, you’ll gradually see your reality change. Take it from an old monk. You are able to start a self-perpetuating virtuous circle of more ease, more peace, more happiness, more effectivity, and ultimately: More sales. You can start right now:

I once read that in Japanese culture, the concept of play - asobimasu - has an extremely important role. It shows in the language too: a phrase like “I see you’re playing at having a new job”, or “I heard you were going to play at being in Tokyo” is entirely common. In line with the extremely polite society, and the formal ways of communicating, the phrasing is used to indicate respect: The person spoken to is being esteemed to have so much control over life, that to him everything is essentially play.

I read this years ago, in the monastery, and I’ve always found it massively inspiring. Especially when I read that it’s even used in phrases like “I hear his father is playing at being deceased”. That guy, he’s so much in control, even life and death are mere play for him. I’m

not saying this to get spiritual on you, but you'll agree that if you can take something lightheartedly, it gets a whole lot easier. A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down. No, I did not just quote Mary Poppins.

So that's what I want to start you out with: the notion that you are in control - or can be, if you want to. You can't control what happens to you, but you do control how you perceive those things. Start by taking it as play. If you lose a client, or your laptop breaks, just take it as a setback, and don't let the 'disaster feeling' get you down. Things can get better or worse at any moment in time. Which one it's going to be depends on how you choose to react to things. So let's play.

Listen

Most people in business start out with the right intentions, but they get the order wrong: the first question they ask is 'how do I sell this', whereas the actual starting point is 'who will benefit most from buying this?'. Ironic really, because the people who most often make that mistake, are the ones who are most reticent about selling and marketing. People have a dream of helping others, they are driven to provide true value and they genuinely care, but instead of listening, they start right away by blaring messages into cyberspace. These are the Twitter accounts that instantly return your follow with 'Hey download my ebook', the Facebook folk that keep pressing promotions out, and the people who never send an email unless they have a special offer (which is, incidentally, the worst thing you could do if you want to keep your subscribers).

I think that most of that kind of mis-marketing is simply because people get suckered: the guys who have figured out how to use those strategies invariably work with large numbers: Lots of ads, high volume traffic, bit of spam, good conversion rates, and so on. That works, but I much prefer working with people than with lists. Meaning: The individuals, those people who have expressed an interest. Because I would much rather have 2 friends instead of 20 acquaintances, just like I prefer to have 10 really good clients who get what I do, than 100 buyers who hardly take my work seriously but who buy just because my marketing is so good.

The amazing power hidden in small numbers

Let me ask you this: If I gave you one day to sell \$1000 worth of product, would you prefer to sell to 10 people at \$100 each, or would you hunt for one person willing to spend \$1000? It might be tempting to think that it'll be easier to have people part with \$100 than \$1000, but that's not how it works. For one thing: to catch 10 people, you'll need to find and identify ten people, one by one. Then you need to do your dog & pony show and deliver your pitch - 10 times. But if you go for the one big fish instead, you only have to do that stuff once - you just need to make sure you do it better. Better as in: create a stronger personal

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relationship with that one big fish than you would need to have with someone who's considering spending \$100. And guess what? If you have the whole day to talk to one person instead of dividing your time between 10, you'll do much better. That's the power of small numbers for you.

This narrow focus on people has further benefits: How can you expect people to pay attention, and give you money - \$100 or \$1000 - if you don't closely and intimately know those people and their problems first? If you want people to pay attention to you - and give you money - you need to pay attention to them first. You need to know what they think, how they feel, what their worries are. You need to be able to describe them accurately, in detail, so that **if they would hear you, they'd go "Huh, it's like he's talking about me."** This is why large companies put so much money into market research - they want to know the fine details about people. I used to do that work, back when I was 18. I'd call people and ask them questions about their usage and opinion of products: coffee, or milk, cars, telephones, TVs - my employer's clients paid huge money to create exact profiles of the people.

Why? So that they could target their marketing message to the right people for that brand. Because on that scale, paying for airtime at a moment when your ideal client isn't watching costs you thousands upon thousands of dollars. I don't know what size company you run, but I'm guessing you don't operate on that scale. But even so, the very same thing applies: Trying to appeal to everyone is hard work, costs a lot of money, and risks getting you the wrong clients.

You need to be hyper-specific about the people you want to work with

You won't lose thousands of dollars if you target the wrong people, but you'll sure as hell churn like mad if you keep having to deal with bargain hunters, scope creeps or idiots - and that hurts a small enterprise much more than a few thousand misspent dollars would damage a larger outfit. Not only that: You'll also find - as you'll see in this newsletter - that you get far easier sales, and far more profit, if you are selective about who you target. Which begs the question:

Who exactly should we go for? How do we determine the right people to target? If we should listen - who do we listen to?

Start here: have some fun. Figure out who is, and then go for, the type of person you'd most like to work with. Do that, and everything will fall into place far more easily than if you try to please everyone and try to sell to all and sundry. If you're not really sure, then before you start researching your market, and listening to the conversations, it's worth your time to sit down and create as specific a profile as possible of your ideal client. That much we can learn from the big guys. For that, don't be difficult: Simply dream up the perfect combination: man or woman, interests, hobbies, type of job and career status, what car would they have, where would they live, how do they spend their Sundays? Create a personage, as if you'd be writing a novel, and make that picture as complete as possible. Colour it in completely. Then when you have that person in your mind, you keep that as your ideal client, for later. Over time, you'll see your average customer profile match that ideal person more and more, to an uncanny level.

First, we listen. And for that we're going to take Old Bo's advice: If you want to catch a fish, you gotta go to where the fish are. The fish being your clients, and the sea being the world at large. Which is, frankly, no help at all: how the hell do you figure out where to go?

Online or offline? Facebook or LinkedIn? Forums or Twitter? Blogs and comment sections, Instagram or StumbleUpon or Tumbler? MySpace? Where, indeed.

Go where you have most fun

After all, it's my belief that promotion and marketing should always be fun first - for your audience as well as for yourself. Informative second, and sales-oriented third. I mean, the Richard Branson quote is quite telling: "The first thing to do if you want to become an entrepreneur is basically to have an idea that is going to make a positive difference to other people's lives. A business is simply that." See what I mean? It's always about other people first, about the problem they have, which you solve. And Mr. Branson is no dummy when it comes to business, or so I've been told. So your first mission once you finally start talking - explaining - to people, is to make it fun for them, or entertaining, or pleasant. Being in business and communicating with people will change you, and that process greatly enhanced if you're enjoying the ride. So instead of looking for dreary corporate clients - look for the individuals you get along with, and pay attention to them. Get in touch, tweet at them, friend them - that way you build a relationship with those people, and it's from relationships that sales will manifest.

The point is that marketing and business and promoting are all long-term efforts

Once you start a business, you're in it for the long haul. So if your promotion and marketing aren't fun for you - it's going to be really hard to stay motivated. However, if it's a fun ride you're much more likely to keep up and push on. For you that can be Facebook (yes it has merits), or Pinterest or Instagram - it doesn't matter at this point because you're not on social media in order to sell things. That's one of the big mistakes people make: they get on Twitter, hoping to find buyers. But people don't go to Twitter or other platforms to buy - they go there to have fun and hang out with people. Share cool stuff, learn things, make new connections. Once more: have fun, build relationships. Sales are made of relationships.

Want people to pay attention to you? Pay attention to them first

So you've got item one on your list: Places where you enjoy hanging out and connecting with people. Next up, you're going to use that space not to sell anything, or promote anything - no your mission there is to stealthily learn what people are about, what fears they have, how they talk. You listen, you observe who talks to who, about what, which things get shared and so on. Pay special attention to emotive words: the expressions people use that reflect their inner emotional state, because using those words back at them is exactly what makes explaining and asking effective. As you'll see in a minute, it's the technique the most effective negotiators and salespeople use.

And you got to listen, you can't skip it. I mean, how can you ever expect to tell people the things they want to hear if you don't first listen to what's happening in their world?

Social media: Join the conversation

There's already a conversation going on about what you offer. There are people out there who have a problem and until they find the solution they'll keep looking for it and talking about it. So as you investigate and learn what people are about, you join in. Specifically: ask questions. While you're offering quality content that you create, and share resources, you

show people you're interested by asking questions, so that they'll give you more information about what keeps them up at night.

There's something almost magical about listening, about really opening up to another person and really perceiving what they're about. That is to say: people who really listen learn quite a lot. People sometimes they tell me that I'm so smart, but that's not true: I've just learned how to shut up and listen. That's it. I'll quite happily sit and listen to people for hours. Taking mental notes, registering body language, observing reactions to questions I ask, seeing patterns in their language and thinking and so on. The magic is that if you give people that space, if you genuinely listen, they will give you all the information you need. They'll tell you what they like and don't like, how they want to be treated, what they expect, what they're willing to pay, how badly they need it, how they want to be marketed to - basically, listening to an individual gives you a pretty complete cross-section of one particular type of demographic as exemplified by that one person. And if you do it right, that will be your ideal prospect.

You can never stop listening

This is one more reason for daily emails: The more frequently you send, the more feedback you get, which means you're getting into conversations, and thereby doing research. When you start getting feedback from people, they will tell you whether you're on the right track or not. If you see that your ideal people start getting in touch with you, that's when you know you can tailor your message even more to those people. If however you start getting comments from friendly folk who aren't right for you, it tells you that you need to adapt your communication to those other people who are more aligned with you. If you listen long enough? People will tell you EVERYTHING you need to know.

Explain

As I'm fond of saying: there are people out there waiting to find you. Not just anyone, not your competitor - you. But, they are the sardines in between a huge, vast, pool of sharks. It's our task as entrepreneurs to find those people, and that's a truly herculean task. Between SEO, site copy, social media, you also need to find the time to do your work, the stuff that you're promoting and that pays your bills. I think this unbalance between promotion and actual work is one of the reasons so many people spend so much time churning away their days on nothing substantial. It's happened to me as well, and it's something I still need to be weary of. However, once I got serious and started writing daily emails last year, I discovered that my being in business instantly became much easier. Once it became a mission to communicate daily with my readers, everything changed.

The enormously therapeutic effect of writing

Yes you need to learn, but you need to change as well. You need to grow into knowing those people, that's why **basically you can't not write, because the process itself is transformative**. Maybe email marketing isn't your thing, and you're good at creating infographics or videos - it doesn't matter so much what you create, as long as you're putting together content - media - that explains to people what you do. The therapy in it all is that by making this a constant part of your work, you adjust - attune - to the minds of those ideal people. It changes you, and that's one of the reasons I keep hammering on the need to write.

People have a real, tangible, bothersome or even painful problem. And it's your mission to solve it. That is, the people you most want to work with. It doesn't always have to

be the need for a plugin or an ebook, or the need for a new website design - if you're a novelist trying to pitch your work, think about the people who will be your best clients. 'Best' meaning the person who will be most happy and enthusiastic about your book, so much so that they leave raving reviews, send thank you's, buy copies for their friends and mention your book to others on Twitter. The kind of reader whose life changes as a consequence of reading the book. Think of that person and then go back in time, to the state she was in before she found you, ordered your book, and read it. That person was - in whatever degree of intensity - suffering from a real need: to find another book that she'll actually really like- it's hard to find book that really rock your socks off. In that state, wanting to find that one next really special novel, their problem is every bit an issue for them as someone who, say, needs to find a lawyer or a natural skin cream to treat baby rash. It's all a matter of perspective, meaning the perspective of that other person.

For them, their problem is real and urgent, whatever it is that you sell

Now let's go further with the example of a novelist: a voracious book-reader will always be looking for new books. He'll always want to have new authors introduced to him, and the best friend a bookworm can have? Another bookworm, so they can get together and talk bookworm things, 24/7 if they can. When you are in business, it's your task to become that bookworm's best friend. You need to essentially become your own ideal customer - or at least, as close a copy of it as possible. By the time you show up in front of someone, you need to know them better than they know themselves.

Because once you reach the point where you are being treated, regarded and appreciated as that friend, you have people's undivided attention. Become the best friend, the most knowledgeable about their problem, *and show up relentlessly to tell them things interesting to them, and you have in your hands the most captive audience you can imagine.*

Relentlessly and incessantly display how committed you are

That's why I write daily emails, and it's why I keep getting pretty good results from the tiny list I have. People see that I'm serious, that I'm committed to telling them things that maybe help solve their problem, and every day they go: "Yeah, that makes sense, I appreciate that". The compound effect of them receiving that message every day, that I'm there for them as often as I can - for them - is what builds that trust you need before you can make a sale, and over time the effect is huge. It seems like such a simple thing: a quick email, an update, a hello and 'have you considered this solution? It might work for you'. But do that to someone every day for a few months straight and you'll have become a fixture in their lives. Anyway, I'm not here to make a case for daily emails, but you will realise that and agree that it's a solid strategy.

The secret to making your communications fun for all, and incredibly easy for you

Let me tell you a story.

Now stop. Look at what happened - how you felt - the moment you read 'let me tell you a story'. If you're like most people, a part of your brain instantly, instinctively, perked up and said 'oh interesting, let's see what comes next'. That's not something I made up - they actually did research on what marketers have known for decades: the attention for stories is hardwired into our systems. It's interesting research - you can find it here: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2922522. The short of it is that stories *connect people's brains*. No joke:

researchers used MRI scans to observe the brain activity of speaker and listener, and they found that the states of both person's brains reflect each other: the listener's brain pattern mirrors that of the speaker's. Realise what this means: when you tell people a story, they don't just absorb the information - their brain patterns match your own. This explains why storytelling is so important in marketing (why, in fact, most effective marketing uses storytelling principles), but it also means that we get to truly *work* with people's minds.

When I say: 'Let me tell you a story'; your brain aligns with my intention - which is to have you pay attention, while I get to share some sort of information. But the mechanism works, even if you don't do it this explicitly. You don't have to say it's a story - you can also simply tell the story, like Jimmy does in the email I'll analyse later on. I often write my emails literally as storytelling. I'll just start with "Currently I'm hanging off a cliff, clinging on for dear life" or whatever makes a nice abrupt introduction, and I take it from there. That's just my style, since I happen to like that, but you too can tell stories, in your own way. Now, you use specific words and idiomatic expressions to do that. Things like 'the other day', 'someone said to me', 'I wasn't happy when my hard drive crashed' are all great ways to put the readers mind in storytelling mode without having to be too explicit about it. But, once again you get the chance to work with a captive audience because you're triggering ancient mechanisms that are part of our biology.

Use stories and hook into their minds

Personally I think it's nothing special or new, the fact that stories work so well to capture people's attention. I mean, the human race spent millions of years using the oral traditions to convey the knowledge of their societies. Laws, history, lineage, sacred texts, poetry and theatre pieces - for most of our history all that information was passed by means of the spoken word. Sure we've had phases before where script was used, and lots of them: Egyptians, Incas, you name it. But before those, all the way back to when we were still roasting prey in front of our caves, we've used speech - oral traditions - to transmit and keep alive information. Humanity was exposed for countless generations to story after story after story - you'd do well to make use of it.

And the stories were important: not following laws could be lethal, not adhering to religious prescriptions was often risky business. If you didn't know which plants were poisonous or how to exactly to get to the achilles' heel of a mammoth, you'd be screwed. Or flattened. And you know how that goes, when someone tells you: "Those are dangerous and you gotta do it right. Your auntie Helen has no husband because one day he missed the achilles' tendon and wouldn't you know it, the mammoth tripped and fell on him". You'll never forget a story like that, and when the time is right you'll repeat it to your children. And thus, our subconsciousness was trained incessantly to go 'Hey what?' whenever a story starts.

So: treat every missive, each email, each status update or blog post as part of the ongoing story that's your business, your life and your relationship with your clients.

Or as Hugh MacLeod said: "Treat it like an adventure, and adventure worth sharing."

Your readers and followers won't just thank you for it - they'll be the incredibly engaged and caring tribe that hangs on your every word, for guidance in the treacherous word of not being ripped off when buying something they need.

Now while you're doing that, make sure that you bring back the elements that you picked up in the listening phase. Specifically, as I mentioned, the words that people use - the terms and phrasing, the emotional states, the fears and worries. This is useful in two ways:

First, when you write in terms and forms your ideal client uses, you'll increase that feeling of **'they really get me!'** that people need to have about you. Just utilise, when you talk and whenever you can, the ways and forms in which they talk. Mirror their thinking patterns, and you can do that quite literally. You can also do that in a more direct sales-setting: When you speak to someone on the phone, in person or in emails, take mental notes of the words they use. The things they say: observe sharply how they present their ideas, worries, needs and fears and in which order - and then give it back to them in exactly the same wording, the same order, with your comments or recommendations or messages mixed in. As in: "You say your site design needs work and might possibly have to be scrapped. Looking at it, I'd say a new design is a good idea, but it's not necessary, we can do tweaks to optimise it for the time being. Where you worry about the stability of the site, please be assured that there's nothing I can do wrong that I can't fix."

Ask

When you talk to people, it's very important to ask them to take action, some way or other. In a general sense you could say 'always ask for the sale', but on more subtle levels and at different places in your funnel, it can also mean asking them to download something, or to get back to you, or even simply imploring them to think about something.

Look at Jimmy's email, and you see his call to action is just a simple and quippy little remark. I'm a firm believer in Calls to Action of some sort, even if it's just for them to think about something. Think about it: You've just been in front of them, they've given you the time to convey your message... now what do you want them to do with it? You could just say something motivational or inspirational, but you can also end it with: "It's worth your time to meditate. If that anxiety is bothering you, why not give it a try?" Very often, people need just a little push to do something. It's also something I consider a duty: if I've told a reader that I'm going to say something useful, they've read through it till the end - I can make their life just a little better by offering the right suggestion - also if that's not asking for sale and doesn't make my life any better. I'm supposed to give them the nudge.

And when you do that consistently, you cause people to get used to switching into action mode after reading you. It really is, quite literally, a form of training: You train their mind to expect the request or invitation to take some sort of action.

Get hem used to it, because that way when you do ask for a sale, it will be perceived as normal and logical and matter-of-fact

I do it all the time in my own emails; I constantly ask people to click on to my sales page. Not because I expect readers to do that and click that link each time, but because I want them to know that I'm here to be in business, because I believe my business helps theirs. The odd effect of asking always and at every turn is that, counter to what you would expect, they are less offended by it than if you only ask infrequently. You know that reaction? "They only contact me when they have something to sell?" We don't want that kind of reaction, and you avoid it by being consistent in always having something for 'sale'.

Now, when you ask for the sale, there are things you need to be aware of. How you ask is not only decisive for the click that you may or may not get, but as we've seen, you also work with the mind and thereby you set up the way and degree to which they are receptive for your next mesa and the next CTA. If you can manage to ask people in ways that are logical as well as fun, I consider that the best way because when you connect the rational and

the emotional states of the reader it makes sense, they receive a complete and coherent experience.

Choose what to ask

When you ask for an actual sale, you also need to be mindful of what you ask for. Asking for a click or a sale is one thing, but if you're going to make a profit you need to ask in such a way that there's actually a profit left for you at the end of the day. To this end, it's extremely important that you set clear terms for what to expect. And don't be shy about that either: you know that for the psyche, it's incredibly important to know where boundaries are. If you're raising a child, you have to set limits as to what is and isn't allowed. If you don't do that, any child will eventually run amok - they won't know what is acceptable or expected and by not knowing where the limits are, they'll constantly go over them. Same with a dog - not that I'm comparing customers to animals - if the creature isn't taught what the limits are, it'll sooner or later end up eating a sofa or a car. Or a baby, who knows - anything can go wrong when there are no limits. Take that literally: Not having predefined boundaries when working with clients is 100% guaranteed to cause problems. And, setting those boundaries will make your sales easier because it'll position you as a more serious professional.

Children as well as animals - and yes, clients too - are happier when they understand limits: when you know what you're up against you get to choose whether or not you break the rules, and if you get told off when you do, you'll end up leaving that behaviour. Knowing limits gives the individual responsibility, and that actually empowers the prospect to decide the answer to...

The core question that makes for healthy sales is this:

Is this right for you?

However you phrase it and whatever you want to sell, it always comes down to how they will or won't benefit from buying. That's why listening and explaining are so important: First you figure out what they'll be most likely to need, and then you explain it, so that by the time that you get to asking, you can simply put your cards on the table. Like I always say: "This is what it is, what it does, what you'll get from it, and what it costs. Is this right for you?"

That's the negotiating strategy that works so much better than trying to get a win-win: your cards on the table, the question next to it, and right in front of them: Their right to veto. And when you really paid attention to them, and you use their own words in the same order, you'll very often find that they're already sold, and all you needed to do was just ask.

Super-negotiator Jim Camp says going for win-win is not a good strategy - and I completely agree. If you try to get a win, and the other wants to get his own win, you're both opposed - you each want to get one over on the other person. I much prefer to meet people on equal ground: if they say no, you either let them walk, or you redesign your offer, and again ask 'is this more like it, is this right for you?'

The thing is that sales are about communication, not about pushing your message or your pitch out. Even if I say that you should always be asking for the sale, that doesn't mean you should be telling everyone 'buy this buy this buy this' all the time. What I'm trying to get across is that in any business, you can not afford to leave your shopping window shuttered: any keeper of a physical shop knows that you need to show up, keep the windows clean, the door open, your items on display, inviting and demonstrating, and it's the same online. All of that is part of asking for a sale, it's what you do to let people know you're in business. Your

job is to figure out the best way to ask for that sale. Jimmy does it with humour, and only very mild pitches. I like to be more sales-driven, but also with humour - it seems to work for me and my audience.

Always remember: if you don't ask for a sale it's not very likely you'll get one. The trick is to ask the right question at the right time

There's another aspect of asking that you need to be very aware of: timing. For that, you need to listen closely, and observe. Like I said before: as long as you pay close attention to what people say for long enough, they'll eventually tell you what you need to know. And, in the end they'll tell you when they are ready to do business with you. You'll notice that in individual messages you get from people, or the updates they put on social media. When someone writes 'I'll be soon buying', it's clear the moment isn't right. But if all you do is sit and wait until someone writes in asking where to send money, you're missing out on a lot of sales. That message might be an invitation for you to simply reply and say 'no worries, let me know if you have questions'. Sometimes, someone will say "How does it work?" Or maybe: "Would this be fit for my own type of business?" That's not necessarily a message that indicates they want to buy, but it does show you that in their mindset, they are at that moment asking themselves whether they should buy or not. You need to pick up on that and respond. As if, indeed, it were a game: a message, a reply, an inquiry - are you ready, do you want more info, can I help? You'll see it's not that hard if you don't take it all so seriously.

You always need to be extremely sharp, and constantly keep an ear to the ground. Once again: it's about people. Learn people, learn to read between the lines, try to intuit where they are in their life and business, and really try to reach out emotionally to that other person. Feel into them, try to gauge where they're at. It won't allow you to read their mind, but your own subconsciousness will respond and probably show you a few useful things about what to say to them next.

How to dissuade tire kickers, fence sitters and bargain hunters

There's asking, and then there's asking. If you do it right, you can avoid a lot of trouble by making it very clear who this offer is not for. Like I said, scope creep and the like are terrible for your bottom line.

There are two kinds of buyers: The first says: "Take my money, give me that stuff, I want to use/learn/implement that product right now please". The other kind says: "Well this looks good, I think it might work. Let's give it a try - if it doesn't work I don't run any risk because I can get my money back." How motivated will that person be? It's very likely that they won't pay special attention, or even read the materials, and then they might even ask for a refund. Which means they'll have wasted their time and mine, and the net result is that they learned nothing and advanced little if at all. Total waste of time for everyone involved, AND it risks me getting bad reviews or comments.

So I'll lose those sales, easily and gladly. Because I'm here to help people get ahead, and that means I'm only interested in people who have the highest chance of advancing. That kind of people need to have the motivation and the drive and the willingness. Anyone who doesn't, I drive them away. All smart marketers do this btw, especially if they have some ethics. I mean, if it's not right for you, why should anyone tell you that you should buy it? That would just be profit-hunting, there's no honour in there and it's not a sustainable business model anyway.

So when I write a sales page, I always make sure that's it's extremely clear who it's not for. When I say "If you're not going to study, go away", it might seem like I'm being unfriendly, but I genuinely care about people's results and I can't stand seeing people buying something that won't work for them. They'll never profit from it, and that's what matters for my clients: that you move forward, grow, get more free time, earn more, get happier from the type of clients you get.

The one thing Facebook is good for

Sure you can ask people on Facebook to buy from you. But you would be missing the mark because people don't go to Facebook to buy things - they are there to share stuff, to communicate with people, to have fun and to pick up news and interesting information. FB and other platforms are called social media, and that's exactly what they are; people go there to socialise. So I say ask them for things that are in line with their interests, while spending time on that platform. Ask them to share, ask them for their opinion, ask them who are cool people to talk to. If people go to SM for interesting info and social interaction, then give that to them. Join in the conversation.

Now here's where Facebook does actually have massive value for your marketing: it's a fantastic place to listen, to learn people. Especially when you combine it with asking: people there have an interest in solving their problem - except not everyone talks about the problems all the time. So what you do, is you identify those people who have the problem you solve, and who talk about it. Facebook groups, twitter chats, LinkedIn groups, Skype groups, Google Hangouts - you'd better believe that if people have a problem, there's a place where they get together and share their experiences, and that's where you want to be - listening. Same thing with forums - you can't believe the wealth of information about the psychology and the mindset and the fears that people talk about. And you're there, fly on the wall - or joining in the talk if you do it right - learning learning learning, exactly what they want and need.

Now for the meat of the thing: Your Profit

So you have a message, you show up and try to help people. You're there to make a positive difference for them, and you do what you can to be truly helpful. One of the best things you can do at that point, is basically to constantly explain *how it works*. To show you one example of how you can do that, I'll show you Jimmy's email first and then explain some about what he did there. Take it away Jimmy...

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Framing People

It was Degas who said that "The artist's reward is the frame". He wasn't far off the mark with that statement.

It's amazing what a frame can do for a work of art. It's a form of validation for the effort and brings it one step closer to actually finding a home on someone's wall.

There is one problem however, frames can be prohibitively expensive, even the cheap ones. For someone like me, who is quite prolific when it comes to producing art, hard decisions in this area have to be made.

I line up newly produced paintings and I tell them straight - "You are all beautiful and deserving in your own right, but not everyone can go on to the next round"

It's like a scene from America's Next Top Model. There will be tears and tantrums, mainly mine. The paintings themselves are decidedly non-plussed by the whole affair. Almost telling me to just get on with it.

Finances are examined and then duly ignored as I procure the materials for framing. Then the final decisions are made as to what will hang on the wall, for a short time at least, until a worthier new-comer arrives, fresh on the scene.

The painting that I swore would never be frameless again is ripped out without a second thought and the new one finds its true home on the wall. It will be there only for a short time, but a good time. It won't be ignored, rather the opposite. It and the frame will be scrutinised every time I walk by.

You see, I make my own frames. Have the guillotine for cutting the angles and the under-pincer for joining them together. Everything a professional framer requires. I love that buzz of cutting and pining a new fresh frame together and then neatly slotting in the painting.

Hanging it on the wall is icing on the cake and the five, ten, sometimes fifteen minutes of staring that follows that moment.

It's important to share our joys. A painting is for life and keeps on giving in new and unexpected ways. If you're lucky enough to buy a painting of mine and it's also in its original Jimmy-Kelly-made frame, your joy is possibly doubled.

This can be arranged by clicking [here](#) and allowing your imagination to see it hanging on your wall.

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First thing that happens in that email, is that he selects people right in the first sentence: Jimmy is a guy who cares tons about the frame on a painting, and not just for aesthetic reasons. By coming out with that statement right up front, anyone who doesn't care about frames or what they mean to an artist will lose interest, probably so much that they stop reading the email. Which is great news, because you want to be talking to people who are right for you, and in the case of Jimmy, that means people who take an interest in frames.

Then he does something pretty clever: he begins line 2 with a strongly emotive statement, followed by a rational touch (validation), and subsequently telling them that his art is meant to go on walls. That's a given, but if you're in business and you have the chance to mention it to people, then you grab that chance of course. In two sentences, he basically wrote a mini-sales letter, minus the call to action. But he said 'this is for people who take art seriously, who think about meaning and the artist, and this stuff is meant to go on walls. Anyone who's still reading at that point has been qualified as someone who thinks like him, and that's the first criterion for a 'good client'.

Next, he gets into storytelling mode

(I'll give you some hot tips about that in a minute) and paints a picture of him talking to his paintings. It's an interlude of mild madness that people take to. Also clever is how - without boasting or saying so explicitly - he installs a message saying his art is beautiful. A real smooth move: he puts the notion in the reader's mind and you'd never even notice - not consciously, at least. "Tears and tantrums, mainly mine" - another slightly odd remark that endears like-minded people, and that also shows something about his personality.

Then it gets a bit close - you wouldn't expect the artist to complain about cost but he mentions it. Next, he gets down and dirty about what making and living with art is like: You can practically see him standing there, brutally ripping the painting out, driven with zest to

free up the frame and put the next one in. Sawdust, lengths of wood, frames all over the place... this guy means business. For him, art is a job - a fun job, but a job and one that he takes seriously. Makes his own frames and all. This incidentally is again that trust building mechanism, showing that you're a pro by demonstrating how you run your processes.

The important point is though that by now we're there with him.

He tells the story in such a way that it draws people in. A short roundup talking about the hanging of the frame and the icing on the cake: neatly suggesting to the reader exactly the feeling he has at that moment - and which they too will have if they buy a painting from him. Then - this really is a pretty masterful email - he tells you exactly what just did: shared his joy with us. Then he moves straight into massive benefits of (his) art: a joy for life, that keeps giving in new ways. Add a good bit of cheek about the buyer being lucky enough to own a artist-framed piece made by him, and he both pokes fun of himself and tells people of more benefits.

The only thing I'm not 100% thrilled by is the call to action. It's not bad, I often use that kind of casual (actually kind of bland and perfunctory) CTA myself. And I guess that after having been almost arrogant just before, it makes sense to keep the CTA kind of unobtrusive.

The result of that email is then that he's explicitly sought to engage exactly the kind of people he wants to deal with. The fact that a painting keeps giving in new and surprising ways over the years is one of the great values they have for him. He tells people that so even if they don't click, they'll have gotten the point. Tomorrow, he'll say something of a similar nature, and over time, the people who think like him increasingly will have the feeling that - "Man! That jimmy is exactly like me".

Making a profit: put your own oxygen mask on first

They say that before you can help another person, you need to help yourself first. Makes a lot of sense, if your airplane loses cabin pressure. Works the same in business too, let me show you: If you don't protect yourself - meaning run your business in such a way that you actually make a profit - your lizard brain will sabotage everything you do. The difficulty is how to figure out the balance between being truly helpful and of service to people, and keeping your own happiness, sanity, workweek and most of all your finances in check. It seems like a paradox: You're genuinely, truly there to help people, but taking a profit because of that - how do you reconcile that with all those ethics? Where does it leave your 'other person' if you want to make a profit?

Without profit there is no business - and then how could you continue to be of service?

Whatever your business, you need to attain such level of return on investment that you can keep serving people to the best of your abilities. Now guess what? You can only ever do that if you earn enough to get you enough free time to enjoy life. Because whatever you make - UX reports, art, copywriting, web design - if you're not rested, happy, unhurried, you can't perform. Not if you're a maker of things, a creator, someone who does more than simply connecting dots. Sure a deadline might help at times - working under pressure helps me too, but if you have that (good) stress while you're also having to take care of your own toddler because you can't afford a babysit, how well are you going to perform? You won't even be able to properly take the time.

Same with equipment: Sure that 4-year old laptop still does its job and buying a \$1200 new one would basically be a luxury. But I say that's the moment you should buy it. Because you know that it's not the machine needing replacing that gives you the desire - it still does its job. No, it's your sub-conscience telling you it's time for a reward. Because you deserve it. If you give it that, you'll make it stimulate instead of sabotage your work. You suddenly have a new tool that makes you happier and more efficient. You bet your work will be easier, and you'll no longer have your subconsciousness nagging at you.

It's simple: you need time to play if you want a healthy business

Like I wrote the other day, in my email about the dancing skeleton: as creatives, we absolute must, have to, cannot live or get by, without whiling away large amounts of time. The ideas we sell once they coagulate, they need to have the time to do that. I can read about a market or a niche for a week straight, and know everything there is to know about them. I've studied midwifery so in-depth, that I could probably deliver a baby, if need be. (If you're currently about to give birth: do not show up at my doorstep - thanks.)

But if I read all that much and straight away go into drafting copy, nothing good will come of it. The information has been dumped into my brain, but it needs to shift, simmer, connect, find its place, - and only once that has happened do I have the clear ideas that I need to write something good. You are probably the same, and that's why your profit levels should always be high enough to buy you that time.

There's another reason profit is so important: your lizard brain, the amygdala. As Peter Shard (<http://www.petershallard.com/why-your-emotional-intelligence-will-make-or-break-your-business-success/>) often mentions, the amygdala has one major function: to keep you happy and safe, in varying grades and varieties. When the light turns to red, your foot is right on the brake, before you even put down your lipstick, because it's always looking out for you.

But the tricky thing with that lizard brain is that for your safety, your survival, happiness is also a requirement

That's the reason people sabotage themselves so much, and it's the reason for 99% of the worlds' procrastination, in my opinion. When you start a business, you tell your sub-conscience that you're going to work hard for a while, so that you can sit back and reap the benefits later. The way most people do that is by sacrificing whatever they can, including sleep, good food, exercise, fun, family, friends, time with your kids...

At first the subconsciousness won't mind - it's a deal you made with it, to first work and play later. But as time goes by, pressure goes up, stress increases, and your sub-conscience is going to rebel. I didn't make that up either: Shard and lots of others write about this and there's a lot of evidence to supper the theories.

"Hey, when's the fun you promised going to start? ", asks your subconsciousness. "Soon", you answer. "I just need to finish this client project first, then I'll be right with you and we'll go sailing, like I promised". The sub-conscience shuts up because its job is to look out for you, not to decide what's best. You're the one who decides, and so it waits. Until this happens over and over again, and it finally decides: "Screw this, you're going to have fun. You need some time off, and you'll have it whether you want it or not." At the other end of an hour, you find yourself zonked out, staring boredly at your friend feed. (You should read Peter's site, by the way. In fact, let me give you the link to his ebook Seek and Destroy. You need that stuff: <http://www.petershallard.com/downloads/SeekAndDestroy.pdf>

The same thing happens with profits and rewards: your subconsciousness has given up fun for a while, so that you can get that cash together that'll allow you to go on a holiday

But because you keep yourself locked in a no-profit mindset, that money never appears and the reward doesn't come. And that's why you suddenly find yourself ordering a product online that you didn't even need or knew you wanted - but you promised your lizard brain that you would get yourself a material reward - and if you don't buy that TV or go on that cruise, it'll get you something else.

This is why, just like in an airplane, you look out for #1 first, and that's why if you don't plan for, work towards, and actually make the profit, you'll be perpetually sabotaging yourself.

So: we're going to make a profit

As I explained, that means you'll need to charge enough to buy you time. You need to set terms that leave you a profit, and you need to be firm, exactly like a parent needs to be firm. It's all good and well to set maximum of two revisions on a project, but that means two and no more, and if a client wants another one than you're happy to do that for them: At this or that price, as stated upfront. The worst thing you could do for yourself is to set boundaries, but then go over them at the drop of the hat. Not only does it confuse your client, it also means you'll lose confidence in yourself - or at least, your subconsciousness will.

You can sell to anyone, but you'll have experienced that there are clients who are great to work with - happy, don't waste your time or make unreasonable demands, who give good feedback and so on - and clients who just don't work or are an outright horror to work with. Someone who micromanages and tries to tell you how to do your job, someone who keeps complaining, someone who's always trying to add things to the brief - all that eats away at your profits. And don't underestimate that: You might think it's only the extra few hours that will go unpaid when you take another job for that guy who was a scope creep, but you spend much more than just hours. The emotional cost of churn is far more intense than the few hours you could put in.

If you lose unpaid hours, not only will you lose out financially, but you'll be emotionally drained as well: your other work doesn't advance, gets late, takes too much time, and there goes your profit. So, always go for the very best clients, and the way to do that is by explaining what kind of people you want to work with. You can do that in all kinds of ways - from simply doing what Jimmy did in his email, to the other extreme: There are guys who do podcasts that don't really sell anything but they'll spend an hour telling people exactly what they do and don't expect from their clients. It's an advanced strategy and it works though it's not for every audience.

Either way, their principle is sound: If you don't tell people who you want to work with, there's no telling who'll you be working with.

How to create an offer that gets you enough profit

When you want to make that profit, and you ask for the sale, you'll need to have your offer right. It's got to be clear and understandable. Terms must be laid out and defined, as well as cost, expectations and return policy etc.

The worst thing you could do is confuse people, like one of my clients did a few months ago. She runs a video production company and wanted to offer masterclasses in London. But,

during the summer she was to be in her home country in Africa and offered people the option to take the masterclass right there, all expenses paid save airfare. Fantastic offer, awesome freebie, real sales magnet. But, the way she formulated it on her sales page, it wasn't clear how it all worked. Would the flight be paid for? How long would the stay be? How would people get from the airport to the venue? There were so many unanswered questions in her offer, that people would never buy, because a confused mind just doesn't. And if they do because we're being persuasive and we sway them, they'll probably buy the wrong thing. So in her case, it was better to remove the extra, and just have people do it in England. Pity though, because if she'd have created a better explanation (get it?) it could have become one of the most enticing offers she's ever put to her people.

This begs the final question: What is it that you put in your offer that makes it an offer they can't refuse?

What's the 'free stay in Africa' that you have for your people? Don't forget: when someone is almost ready to give you money, very often they only need a little push, a little something extra, to go over the edge and buy. It's why I offer a free consultation to new subscribers. It's also why people get to ask me questions by email when they sign up.

There's another benefit to it, something a friend pointed out to me. He said the free email consulting is a good idea because this whole 'being an online entrepreneur thing' is one of the most challenging and lonely things you could do. You'll always have questions, doubts, a need for an opinion - you can't get that without somebody's help. (Tip: get yourself a mastermind group). Nobody wants to go it alone - I sure don't - which is why I loved my mastermind so much before it's demise last winter.

So whenever you are creating an offer, always ask yourself: "Will they need help with this? What can I add that costs me little, but adds something real and tangible and valuable to their purchase?"

What benefits can you give them, that are so great they'll pay you enough money to make the profit you not only deserve - but need as well?

Take care of yourself,

Martin

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