

Transform Your Website
into an
Ideal Client Attracting Magnet
in 7 Easy Steps



Website Spa

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In This Special Report...

Introduction

The Seven Steps

1. Identify Your Ideal Client
2. Determine the Main Purpose of Your Website
3. Target Your Content to Provide Valuable, Problem-Solving Resources & Build Credibility
4. Tweak Your Layout and Structure
5. Capture the Contact Information
6. Drive Targeted Traffic
7. Follow Up and Convert to Customers

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Introduction

This ebook will guide you through the 7 steps to turn your website into an ideal client attracting magnet.

Each step will be explained and followed by an assignment for you to complete to apply what you've learned in the step.

Be sure to take time to complete the assignments so you're applying what you've learned!

Step One:

Identify Your Ideal Client

Who is your ideal client? Does your website make clear exactly who you serve or support?

Many small businesses focus only on trying to find clients or customers and skip the critical step of identifying their "perfect" or "ideal" customer (also known as "niche").

Unless you sell a product like toothpaste, "everyone" is not your market. Even toothpaste can be narrowed down. Is it whitening toothpaste? Toothpaste for sensitive teeth? Kids toothpaste? Flouride free toothpaste? Each of these different types of toothpaste has a different target customer and should be marketed with that in mind.

No matter how great a website is or how much time or money is put into it, if it's aimed at the wrong people (or worse yet, aimed at no one at all, but just at "people") it will not be nearly as successful as it could be with better targeting.

You could market kids toothpaste to my Grandparents all you want, but they probably aren't going to buy it, so it'd be a waste of marketing money and energy. Consider also that you don't want to target the marketing for a kids toothpaste at only kids. Who makes the final buying decision for kids toothpaste? Most likely it's mom. So the right target marketing for a kids toothpaste would be moms. But not just any moms. Moms with children under 10 years old, who live in the geographical area where the toothpaste is available. See how we've narrowed down the target market? Keep going further. If you've got a flouride-free kids toothpaste, then you're looking for an even more specific ideal customer.

Apply this to your products. Keeping in mind what makes your product or services unique, who is your ideal customer?

Describe them as specifically as you can: gender, age, geographical area, income level, interests, causes they care about, etc. The more you get inside the mind of your ideal customer and figure out what makes them tick, the better you'll be able to communicate with them, and provide the products or services they want.

Why does this matter? Knowing who your ideal client is will change the way you present your products or services, how you write your website copy, and even what colors you use or voice you create on your website.

If your website is general and speaking to "everyone" then no one will be able to identify or see themselves in your copy (the text on your website). When you know who you want to help then you can focus on that ideal client while you're writing and designing your site.

You want a site that makes your ideal client say, "Hey, that's me! This site is here to help me."

Here are some questions to consider when identifying your ideal client:

- ✓ What types of people do you get along the best with? Understand the best?
- ✓ Who do your products or services provide the most value or benefit to?
- ✓ Who is likely to value and appreciate your products or services the most?
- ✓ Think about your past customers. Which ones have made you feel the best about providing service to them or giving them your products? Why?

Your Assignment: Write a Personal Ad For Your Business

Whether it's print ads in the newspaper or the matching programs online, personal ads are a popular way to find a person to share your life with.

A personal ad is designed to be a short, attention grabbing description of who you are and what you're looking for. To work well, they've got to be honest and to the point.

Most start with a few key facts about the seeker (relationship status, ethnicity, gender, age, location) and who they're seeking (relationship status, ethnicity, gender, age, location). Throw in some details about interests, hobbies, or general life experiences. State any specifics about who you definitely aren't interested in. Add your contact information. You've got yourself a personal ad.

Just like a personal ad express who you are and who you're looking for, your marketing should help you do the same. Not everyone is your ideal target. You're not the ideal business to serve everyone. Acknowledge that, and you'll be a step ahead on your marketing. It's important to know who you **aren't** looking for, as well as who you **are** looking for.

Now, It's time to write a personal ad for your business!

1) Describe Your Business. “Who” is your business? What does your business offer? In 1 or 2 sentences describe what service you provide or products you sell.

2) Ideal Customer. Who is your ideal customer? Imagine the perfect customer in detail-- gender, age, marital status, children, occupation, interests, etc. If you have trouble with this step, look over your customer/client list and think about the ones who were wonderful to work with or who gained the most from your services.

3) Get Specific, Succinctly. If you had to pick three of the top results customers/clients gain by doing business with you, what would they be? Think results, not features. A good place to look if you get stuck is to the testimonials and thank you notes customers/clients send. What do they mention most often about their experiences with your business?

4) Skip Me If... Some customers/clients can be better served by another business. Who are they? This isn't necessarily something you want to mention in your advertising, but it's

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

something you definitely want to keep in mind so you don't advertise or market in the wrong places.

5) Please Call. How can customers/clients make contact with you? Offer easy options to reach you for business!

One more thought--a common joke about personal ads is the exaggeration that often happens - while it's okay to accentuate the positive, never over-promise or be dishonest when describing what you offer or the results you or your products help deliver. Focus on building long-term customer relationships so that customers not only purchase once (and leave disappointed like the blind date that just wasn't what you expected) but become regulars who also refer friends and family.

When you've finished writing a "personal ad" for your business with these five steps you'll have a short and sweet reminder that will help you focus your marketing efforts in the right places to get results and help more of the right people. Next time you aren't sure if a marketing strategy or opportunity is right, read over your ad and see if you're reaching the right people in the right place.

Your Space:

Step Two:

Determine the Main Purpose of Your Website

Why do you have a website? What's the goal? What do you want it to accomplish for you?

Here are some possible goals for a website:

- ✓ to develop a list of targeted prospects
- ✓ to sell products or services
- ✓ to encourage potential customers to contact us by phone or mail
- ✓ to provide product information and/or price lists to customers
- ✓ to provide product information and/or price lists to distributors
- ✓ to provide customer service (how to use/wash/care for items, etc)
- ✓ to provide information to a particular niche or target market
- ✓ to strengthen brand recognition
- ✓ to establish you as an expert in a particular niche or subject

Your website may have more than one goal, and several goals may work together. For example, if your main goal is to sell products or services, then developing a list of targeted prospects who are interested in and need the products or services you offer should be a goal also.

Once you know your website's goal, you need to figure out what the ideal action you'd like a client to take is. If your website is a blog that you want to use to build your credibility and establish you as an expert on a certain subject, your ideal action may be that you want your visitors to sign up for your newsletter or ezine so that you can continue building a relationship where you can help them and they can see your expertise, then later purchase your products or services.

As you work to improve your website, you want to keep in mind the actions that you want to focus on. If your goal is to sell your products, then everything needs to be centered on that goal and making it as easy as possible for customers to purchase.

If you are focused on building a list, you want to make it easy for customers to subscribe to that list and would take actions such as:

- ✓ Create an easy to use subscribe form
- ✓ Put the subscribe form in the top area of your site where it's seen without scrolling down
- ✓ Put the form on every page of your website
- ✓ Request only the essential information you need (name and email) and not name, address, phone, etc unless you're delivering a physical product through the mail at sign up
- ✓ Offer customers a free gift, download, coupon, etc if they sign up
- ✓ Design an image to represent what the visitor gets when they sign up (free ebook, audio, etc)
- ✓ Add a privacy statement such as: We will not share your information.

If building a list of prospects is your only goal, then you may even consider having a one-page squeeze type site where the only option a visitor has is to subscribe to your list. Keep it simple!

You need to know your website's goal so that you can find ways to make that action easier for customers to take.

It should require as few clicks as possible, be as easy to find/do as possible, etc. Don't make your customers think hard or search around for how to buy or how to contact you. The easier you make it, the more visitors will take that action.

Your Space:

What is the goal of your website?

Are there distractions or barriers that make it difficult for clients/customers to take that action?

What can you change to make it easier for clients/customers to take that action?

Step Three:

Target Your Content to Provide Valuable, Problem-Solving Resources & Build Credibility

What are visitors looking for when they come to your website?

They're looking to see what's in it for them!

Make it easy to find case studies, helpful articles, step by step guides, assessments or other resources that show them how you can help to solve their problems.

Do you value your relationship with your customers (and potential customers)? Do you really want to connect with them and help them? If so, make more available on your website than just your catalog of items for sale or services for hire!

Here's an example: My kids love to shop at Costco—they enjoy the free samples. Several days ago we were in the frozen aisle and I was discussing with my son (who is gluten intolerant) that a particular product wasn't gluten free so it would be better to find something else. As we passed a woman offering samples a few feet away, she offered him a sample of potato wedges and included "they're gluten free!" After his taste test, a bag of potato wedges jumped right in the shopping cart and came home with us. By offering free samples and paying attention to the particular needs of a customer, they made a sale and a very happy five year old who's sure to tell others about his experience (and insist on returning to purchase more potato wedges).



Any business can find a way to give more to their customers so the customers feel valued and listened to. When your customers feel like you understand their needs they are much more likely to purchase, become repeat customers, and share your products/services with their friends and family.

Add something of value to attract more shoppers and to serve them better. Free articles, eBooks or eCourses, "how to" guides, a newsletter, instructional videos... there are lots of great ideas you can use to create a valuable free service or offering for your customers.

The most effective free items or giveaways will be closely targeted to your market. For example, if you offer items for nursing mothers such as nursing bras, you could create (or hire a designer to create) blinkies promoting breastfeeding and give them away to visitors to use on their websites or MySpace pages. If you're an artist, you could setup a script to offer free ecards that feature some of your artwork. You could give away craft project ideas if you sell children's items, or recipes if you sell home related items to women.

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

Just grab a piece of paper and take five minutes to write down everything you can think of that your target market is interested in, and then go back over your list and highlight the ones that also relate to your products or services. Those are good things to consider focusing on to find ideas that will add value to your website and better serve your customers.

"You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want." -Zig Ziglar

After all, isn't your business all about serving your customers and helping them get what they want? 😊

Answering Customer Questions

An effective website should focus on meeting the customer's needs and helping them be sure that the products you offer are exactly what they want. ***To help customers determine if your products or services are right for them, you need to answer their questions.*** Only when their questions are answered will they feel comfortable making a purchase.

Think about your products or services from a different perspective. If you were looking at it for the first time, what questions would you have about it? What would you want to know to determine if it were the right product for you?

Think about your business from a different perspective. When you make your first purchase at a new store or website, what questions do you have?

Consider asking a friend or colleague to look through your website and let you know what questions they'd have as a shopper.

Here are three tips to help you answer your customers questions effectively:

✓ **Describe Your Products (or Services) in Detail**

Include plenty of detail in your descriptions. The more detailed you are in writing up your product descriptions the less likely a customer will leave the page with questions, not sure whether to purchase.

Be careful that your descriptions will be clear and make sense to people who aren't familiar with the jargon of your industry. For example, if it's got an acronym, you probably need to write it out and explain it.

Also focus on the benefits of your products/services more than the features. If you use organic fabric, don't just say the item is made from organic fabrics, explain why. Are they softer for a more comfortable fit? Safer without pesticides or chemicals used in processing? You know the features of your products/services—now turn them around in how that feature benefits your customer.

✓ **Clear Photographs**

Online shoppers don't have the opportunity to pick up a product, to see the quality, or feel the softness, so quality photographs are essential to providing a shopper with the confidence to purchase an item. Here are some quick tips to help you with your photography, followed by

links to websites for further help.

Be familiar with your camera. Take the time to read your user's guide. It really does make a difference, especially if you're using a flash!

Keep the camera steady while shooting. Use a tripod for your photos if you can or rest your elbows on a table or on your sides. If your camera moves, your photograph will be blurry.

Pay attention to your lighting. If you're shooting outside, in general, the sunshine should be behind you and off to the side just a bit to add the most depth to your photo. If you're using a flash, do not aim it directly at your product.

Get close to your product. It should nearly fill the frame. Or, crop your photo so that it does.

Backgrounds matter. Remember that your shopper's eye should be drawn to your product, not to the background of the photo. Do not use bright or overwhelming patterns for a backdrop. I also don't recommend taking photos of products on a floor, especially not on carpet—it's not professional. A lightly colored fabric or piece of white poster board often works well. You can also try a solid color fabric or piece of paper that will be easy to remove with photo editing software.

Include a full product shot as well as some close ups. Close ups will allow shoppers to see the quality of your crafting.

Experiment to find what works best for you. Keep your camera with you and shoot not just when you have to do product photos, but as often as you can. The more you practice the better your product photos will be.

If you are going to edit the photographs, be sure you know what you are doing. When erasing backgrounds, zoom in and pay close attention to the detail—jagged erased edges will look worse and less professional than a simple background would have.

Consider using a lightbox to take your photographs. There are lots of nearly-free ways to create one. Just Google “make your own lightbox” and you’ll find lots of resources.

✓ **Make Your Policies Clear**

Are your policies easy to find and clear? Customers will feel more comfortable purchasing when they know what payments you accept, how you ship and when they can expect their order to arrive, and in what circumstances you allow refunds or exchanges.

Well thought out policies will save you stress and frustration later. Take time now to decide how you will deal with troublesome situations, while you're unemotional and not in the heat of the situation—it's much easier to create fair, reasonable policies when your head is clear. Here are some important areas to cover in your policies and a few scenarios to be sure your policies address.

Order Acceptance Policies for Services

- ✓ Are there any types of clients you refuse to work with?
- ✓ Any reason you might refuse an order that's been placed?

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

- ✓ If you need to screen clients, do you have an easy to find notice about this policy?

Ordering Policies for Physical Products

- ✓ Are there any specific types of orders you may refuse?
- ✓ What will you do if your cart oversells? Refund? Offer another?
- ✓ Do you offer gift certificates? If so, what is your refund policy?
- ✓ What if there is a typo or accidental error in a price or a listing?
- ✓ Will you blacklist a customer for any reason?
- ✓ Do you reserve the right to refuse an order based on feedback?

Shipping Policies for Physical Products

- ✓ What shipping methods will you offer?
- ✓ How quickly will you ship instock items?
- ✓ Will you ship UPS, FedEx, DHL, or internationally by special request?
- ✓ What is your insurance policy? Is insurance required?
- ✓ Do you put delivery confirmation on all packages?
- ✓ What if an item is lost in the mail?
- ✓ How long will you wait before determining an item is lost in the mail?
- ✓ What if that item shows up later?
- ✓ What if an item is damaged in the mail?
- ✓ What if an item shows as delivered but the customer claims it was never received?
- ✓ How will you handle it if a package is returned to you undeliverable? Will you re-ship? Who's responsible for the second shipping charge?
- ✓ If your items are perishable (lotions, candy, etc) do you need to add any special shipping notes to your policies?

Refunds & Returns

- ✓ Do you allow returns? For sizing? For color? For errors?
- ✓ If you offer digital downloadable products, will you offer refunds? In what circumstances?
- ✓ Who pays return shipping on a package sent back to you? Do you require the customer to purchase insurance or have proof of sending the package back?
- ✓ May an item be returned after use? Or only prior to use?
- ✓ Do you charge a restocking fee?
- ✓ Will you issue a refund for a returned item? Or store credit?
- ✓ Do you accept returns only for a limited time (within 30 days)?

Payments for Products/Services

- ✓ What payment methods will you accept?
- ✓ If you accept PayPal, will you ship to an unverified address? Accept payment from an unverified buyer?
- ✓ If you accept PayPal and are paid with an echeck, will you ship before it clears?
- ✓ If you accept checks, will you ship before they clear your bank?
- ✓ What if a payment is later returned (bounced check, non-cleared PayPal e-check)?
- ✓ Do you require prepayment or deposits for services?
- ✓ If you offer subscriptions or monthly payments, what are the terms? Can they be canceled under any circumstances?

Custom Orders of Handmade Items

- ✓ Do you accept custom orders?

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

- ✓ What is the payment policy?
- ✓ How long do you need for creating and shipping the item?
- ✓ Are custom orders returnable/refundable?
- ✓ If someone requests a custom slot on your waiting list, then changes their mind before you start their order, what's your policy?

Lotteries / Auctions for Physical Products

- ✓ How long will you wait to allow the winner to contact you with shipping information?
- ✓ What if you cannot get in touch with the winner?
- ✓ What if a winner changes their mind?

Privacy

- ✓ What is your privacy policy for customers?
- ✓ If you operate a newsletter you need a privacy policy for it as well.

Next, make sure that your website establishes credibility in the minds of your visitors.

Selling requires building a relationship of trust with a potential buyer. This applies online as well as offline. You must build a relationship with the consumer through your website that creates trust before that consumer will feel comfortable making a purchase.

Here are 6 easy ways you can help build that trust through your website.

✓ **Add Familiar Logos**

This will help a customer's comfort level. Place them where they can be seen immediately upon the page loading, so that it doesn't require scrolling to see them.

* If you accept credit cards, add the Visa/Mastercard/Discover/American Express logos to your website. Many customers expect to see these at a company that accepts cards. If they aren't sure you accept them they won't hunt for the information, they'll just leave your site and shop elsewhere. If you accept PayPal, add the PayPal logo.

* Add a "Secure Payments" type logo - either from your CC processor, or create your own with a padlock design to show customers you protect their financial information.

* If you have your own SSL certificate and your SSL issuer offers a "Click to Verify" type graphic, be sure to add it to your website.

✓ **Company Contact Information**

Include full company contact information on every page of the site. The footer is a good place for this info. Include both a postal address and a phone number if possible. You may also want to include various online methods of contact such as email, webform, or social networking sites you have business profiles at. Customers want to feel secure that they can easily contact you if something goes wrong or they don't receive their purchase.

✓ **Photographs to Connect With**

Consider adding a photograph of your, your family, your store, or something else concrete that people can connect to. Shoppers buy from people they know, like, and trust. Including a photograph can help build that feeling that they "know" you.

✓ **Testimonials from Customers**

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

Testimonials are both a powerful selling method and a confidence booster. Sprinkle them throughout your website (but only honest ones). Always include a name with a testimonial - full name if possible, or first name and state at least. Testimonials are more believable if there is a name and place associated with them. Written testimonials are good. Written testimonials with pictures are better. Add audio and it's even better. And video testimonials are great!

✓ **Clear Privacy Policies**

A well-written privacy policy is crucial to customer confidence. Please create a separate page for this, and link to it from every page of your site. (See the above section on policies for ideas of what to include.)

✓ **BBB, Chamber of Commerce, and Other Organizations**

Consider joining an organization like the BBB, Chamber of Commerce, or similar groups so that you can add that logo/link as well, and any other applicable online organizations or associations related to your products. Look for guilds, associations, or other similar groups.

In addition to these 6 tips, next time you shop online notice what it is about the websites you choose to shop at that makes you feel safe and secure purchasing from them, then apply those lessons to your own website. Look at your website through a potential customers eyes. Then do whatever you can to help them feel confident and to answer all their questions about shopping with your business.

Your Space:

Does your website provide easy access to articles, case studies, and other resources that show how you can solve your ideal client's problems?

What can you do to better target your content and build credibility?

Step Four:

Tweak the Layout and Structure

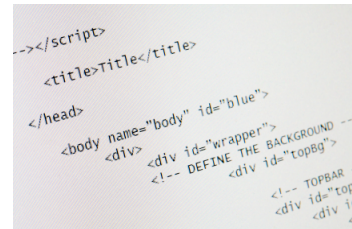
In this section we'll look at two different aspects of your website and what you need to review to make sure it's working effectively for you: website design and navigation.

Website Design

Don't scare off customers with your website! Here are some basics to review to be sure your website isn't driving away possible sales.

✓ **Compatibility**

Is your website compatible with all the major search engines? Test it on as many browsers as you can, and do a quick check at <http://www.browsershots.org> to see what it looks like in other browsers and on other operating systems.



The most common browsers are Internet Explorer (6, 7 and 8) and Firefox (2 and 3). Safari, Opera, and some other browsers are also important to check your site in.

If your check at Browser Shots shows problems, a good first troubleshooting step is to run your code through a code validator (links below). Or contact your website designer to see what they can do to help.

Clean (correctly written) HTML code is important for compatibility, accessibility, and search engine rankings, too. Check your code at <http://validator.w3.org>

✓ **Quick Download Time**



Visitors will not wait long for your page to load. If it doesn't come up quick, they'll click away without taking time to browse. Avoid this by being sure that your images are optimized to load quickly and that your code is clean and error-free. Be especially carefully with flash or animated elements.

With too many fancy features or large photographs, the time it takes for visitors to load your page may sloooooow to a crawl. And if it takes longer than a few seconds, you'll lose shoppers who don't have the patience to wait. This is especially important on your home page. Be sure that your images are optimized (try the free tool at <http://www.resizeyourimage.com>).

✓ **Complete & Functional**

Is your website complete? Be sure there aren't missing pieces or incomplete pages. Make sure there aren't any broken links or other problems.

Run a free check here to help you find broken links <http://validator.w3.org/checklink>

If you have pages or areas that aren't completed, consider whether it's better to temporarily remove them until you're ready to finish them up.

Frequently check your site's newsletter sign up box and shopping process. Once a month or so, be sure to go through your site and place an order as a shopper.

If you offer virtual products (e-books, pattern downloads, software, etc) make sure you test your order/delivery process to ensure it's working properly and delivering the items it's supposed to.

✓ **Clean Design with White Space**

Your design and layout should be clean.

Very busy patterns, loud colors, or crowded pages drive away visitors. Include white space areas (areas with nothing but space – this can be the background, space in between paragraphs, around images, etc – it doesn't need to be white necessarily but a light color that's easy on the eyes). When we're reading on a computer screen eye fatigue can set in quickly if there's too much on page.

Don't use multiple fonts and colors within one page. Stick to one main font and color, using a complimentary font and color only for highlights.

✓ **Focus Drawn Immediately to Product/Services**

What do you want your shoppers to see? Should they focus on a crazy, busy background? Only if your background is for sale. Otherwise, you want the shoppers eye to be immediately drawn to the products or services you offer. Make sure your header area and graphics are a reasonable size and load quickly so they don't take over the focus of the page.

If your images don't load quickly, try optimizing them for the web with a gif cruncher or similar program. You can use www.resizemypic.com or www.resizr.com online free.



✓ **Easy to Spot the Order Button**

Make sure your "Add to Cart" or "Buy" buttons are large and easy to spot. Remember your overall action goals, and make sure those actions are easy for customers to take. That button needs to be BIG and OBVIOUS.

✓ **Confident**

Never talk down about your projects or your business. Owning a small business is nothing to be ashamed of! You can offer fantastic products and fabulous service to your customers. So do your absolute best and be confident in that.

✓ **Consistent Brand and Voice**

Keep in mind your target market as you write your website and use a consistent voice throughout your website. Also be sure that your branding is consistent throughout the pages of your website, your products, your emails, your sales invoice/packing slips, etc. Match your logo, your fonts, and your style so it's easy for clients and potential clients to identify any piece of your business, marketing, or sales materials.

Website Navigation

If your site isn't easy to navigate, your customers will get confused and confusion does not lead to happy shoppers or to sales! So let's avoid confusing our website visitors.

✓ **Navigation Links & Menus**



Make your site easy to navigate and intuitively clear where to find things.

Is your site easy to navigate? It might seem easy to you because you are familiar with where to find everything. But you need to get the perspective of someone who doesn't know your website or your products (just like the new shopper who comes to your website for the first time).

Use what I like to call the "Grandma Test." Ask your Grandma, or someone else who is not technically savvy to look at your home page, and to try to make a purchase. Watch where they run into confusion or hesitate. This will help you identify where there are problems or potential problems.

Ask friends or family members to look over your site for you and let you know how quickly they are able to find specific information like how to contact you, how to place an order, or your shipping policies.

✓ **Order Process**

Shopping Cart: If you are selling products, you need a shopping cart. Do not expect customers to email you to place an order. First, email is so unreliable these days you may not receive their email. Second, customers expect a professional business to have an easy to use, secure shopping cart on their websites.



Easy to Spot Buy Buttons: Make your "Add to Cart" or "Buy" buttons large and easy to find.

Easy to Spot Checkout or View Cart Buttons: Also be sure you have a clear "View Cart" or "Checkout" button available. It's frustrating for customers to add an item to their baskets, continue shopping, and then not be sure how to get back to their carts to checkout.

Test Your Purchase Process: Be sure you do a “test” purchase from your website at least monthly. That way you can catch any problems in your order process and make sure it’s working smoothly.

Contact Form: What if a customer has questions during the order process? Have you made it easy for them to get in touch with you and ask? Setup a contact form and link to it from every page of your site. Don’t hide that link in the footer.

Your Space:

Website Design

- Check Compatibility
- Quick Download Time
- Complete & Functional
- Clean Design with White Space
- Focus Drawn Immediately to Products/Services
- Easy to Spot the Order Button
- Confident
- Consistent Brand and Voice

Website Navigation

- Easy Navigation
- Shopping Cart
- Easy to Spot Buy Buttons
- Easy to Spot Checkout/View Cart Button
- Test Purchase Process
- Contact Form

Answering Customer Questions

- Clear Policies
- Detailed Descriptions
- Clear Photographs

Notes:

Step Five:

Capture the Contact Information

Most studies show it takes anywhere from 5 to 12 exposures to a product or service before customers are ready to purchase. You need a way to capture the contact information of your website visitors so that you can stay in contact, keep your services/products in their minds, and draw them back to purchase.



A newsletter is a fantastic low-cost marketing tool. You can use it to promote special sales, new products, or other events of interest at your store.

In addition to reminding potential customers of your products or services, it also provides a way for you to build a relationship with them. As you continue to send out newsletters your subscribers begin to get to “know” you and will feel more comfortable doing business with you.

Once your subscribers have your newsletter it’s easy for them to save it, print it, or even forward it to share!

A “list” is a group of people who have given you their email addresses and their permission to contact them. An “online newsletter” is an email with news or information from the sender that is sent to people who have requested it. It’s also commonly known as a mailing list or e-zine.

You decide whether you want to create a “notices and sales” type newsletter where you contact customers with an email when you stock new product, offer sales, or have other business related news, or you can create more of an “e-zine” style newsletter where you offer articles and information based around a theme.

Depending on your needs you might consider a free newsletter from [Your Mailing List Provider](#) or for more features check out [AWeber](#) (note: these are both affiliate links)

Three easy steps to getting your own sales newsletter up and running:

1) The system running your newsletter is important. Choose wisely.

You must have a system that allows users to subscribe and confirm their subscription (this is called double opt-in). They must also be able to easily unsubscribe. You need to include your postal contact information in every issue you send out. This ensures that you will be in compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act. You do not want to accidentally violate this law. All reputable newsletter services can help you stay compliant. By reputable newsletter services, I do not mean sending a mass email through Outlook Express — that’s a good way to get yourself in trouble with blacklists. You must use a legitimate mailing service if you want to run a professional newsletter. There are budget friendly options for small businesses.

2) You need to add a subscribe box to your website that includes three things.

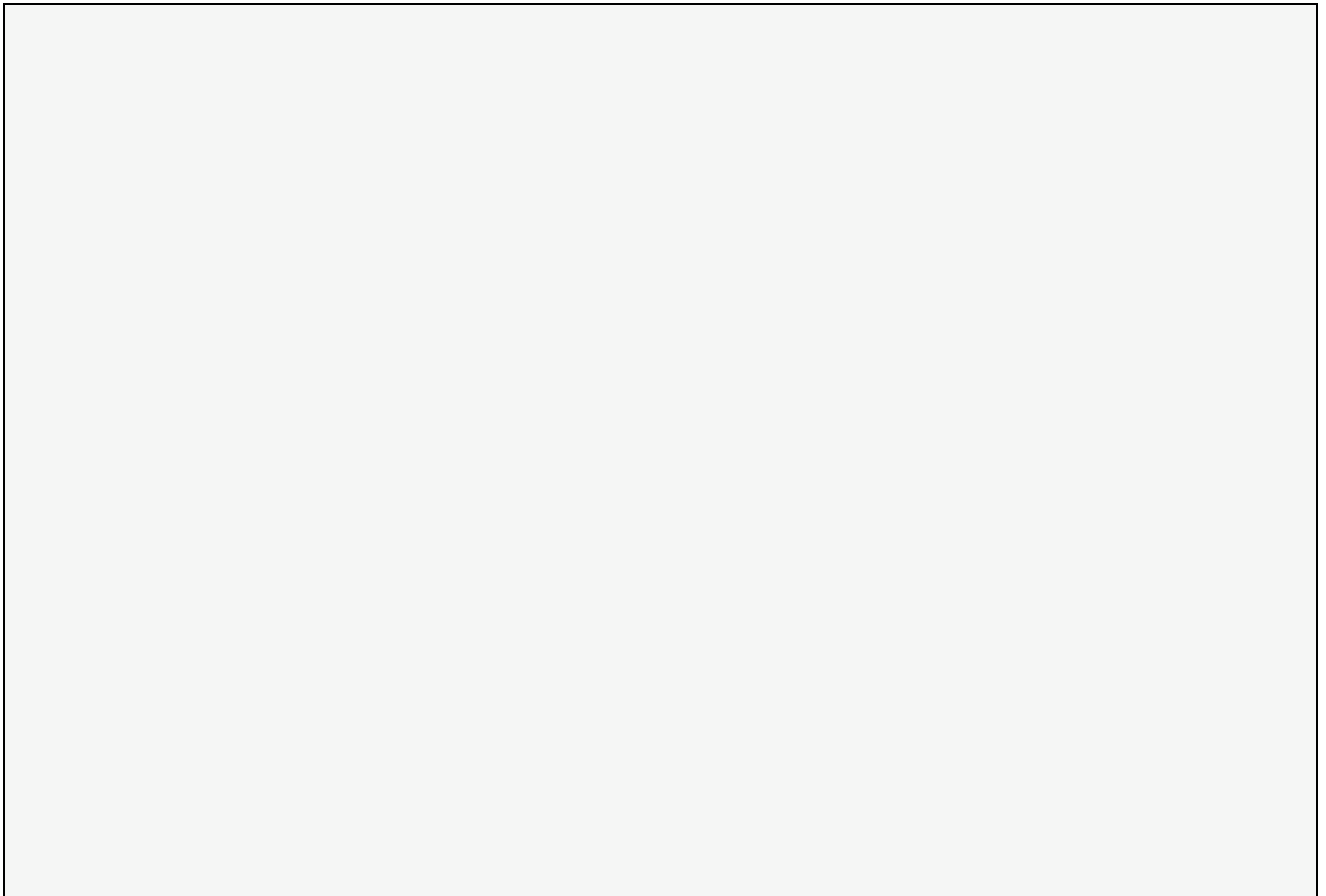
- The form for collecting the information — this code will be provided by your mailing service.
- A privacy statement so visitors feel safe sharing their information with you — for example “We will not share or sell your information.”
- An incentive to sign up — no one wants more useless junk mail, so offer your customers a coupon or special deal, a free report, or other helpful resource in exchange for allowing you to contact them.

If you aren't familiar with editing your website, I strongly recommend having your designer add this code for you. It only has to be done once and should only take a few minutes of their time so the bill won't be too painful. The code will only collect the information if it's added properly though.

3) You will need to contact your subscribers regularly.

Your newsletter won't be helpful if you don't use it. So set a regular schedule and send out that newsletter on time. It can be monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly and that's a decision you need to make depending on your own business/market.

Your Space:



Step Six:

Drive Traffic

Once you've completed steps 1-4, you're ready to start driving traffic to your website!

There are many different ways to drive traffic to your website. I recommend choosing just 2 or 3 to focus on in the beginning, then add more as you get an idea of what's working for you.

Here are some of the ways you can consider generating traffic:

- ✓ Article Marketing
- ✓ Social Networking & Bookmarking
- ✓ Blogging, Blog Commenting, Blog Tours
- ✓ Forums
- ✓ Link Building & Directories
- ✓ Online Video
- ✓ Word of Mouth
- ✓ Contests & Promotions
- ✓ Press Releases & Media
- ✓ Charities, Causes & Community Involvement

Your Space:

What methods will you use to drive traffic to your site?

Step Seven:

Follow Up and Convert to Customers

The final step in the process is to convert those who've signed up for your free newsletter into clients. To do this, you need to use your newsletter to continue building your credibility and showing how you can help them. Send it out on a regular schedule.

If you're not sure what to write about here are 12 ideas:

Note: If one of your challenges is that you're concerned about online privacy, you can still use these ideas. Just keep things general and not too personal or specific. You never have to include photos or names/ages of your children if you aren't comfortable with it. Keep things from more of a business point of view and you can still build a professional relationship with your subscribers.

Photographs

Of course you'll include photographs of your products or virtual images of your products, but how about some photos of your hometown, the wildlife or scenery near you, or your sewing studio or office workspace?

Product Reviews

Have you received a positive review from a credible website or publication? Share it in your newsletter along with comments of your own about which of your products or services they reviewed and add what you feel the strong points of that product or service are.

Be Interviewed

Find a mentor, friend, or fellow small business owner and invite them to interview you via email. They write up and send questions, then you answer them and include the Q & A in your next newsletter. You can return the favor by interviewing them.

Profile a Customer or Subscriber

Got a customer who just loves your products? You know, the one who always sends you an email to let you know how much they appreciate you, sends photos of their kids using your products, or raves about your latest ebook on their blog? Ask them if they're willing to be interviewed for your newsletter.

You can include questions such as:

- * How did you first hear about my products or services?
- * What motivated you to make your first purchase?
- * What is your favorite feature of my products or services?

They may also be willing to allow you to publish a photograph of your product in use.

Do a "Behind the Scenes"

Create a photo tour of your studio or workspace including details about the tools you use and your favorite work tips.

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

Dear Abby...

Do an advice column. You can make up your own questions for this or invite subscribers to send you their questions.

Resource List (Top Ten)

Brainstorm a topic your subscribers would be interested in and then offer a resource list. For example, if you sell cloth diapering products your subscribers most likely have young children, toddlers, or babies. How about a list of links to your favorite websites for fun activities to do with children? If you sell makeup or personal products you could do links to sites with makeup tips or spa day ideas. If you sell plastic food storage products you could do food saving tips lists or great recipe blogs. Brainstorm a bit and you'll come up with something fun and useful for your subscribers. If you get a large enough list of links, divide it into a part one and part two.

Networking & Social Marketing Fun

Got a blog? LiveJournal? MySpace page? Copy your most recent post into your newsletter then invite your subscribers to visit and leave their comments. It's important to remember if you use this idea that your blog or page will reflect on your business and if it's highly controversial, political or might be offensive to some readers you may lose customers. If you have a tightly defined niche market though, this may work in your favor.

Take a Survey

Find out more about your subscribers – set up a survey somewhere like Survey Monkey and then include the results in your next newsletter. You can make it a market research type survey (what products do they use, colors they prefer, sizes, etc), or you could make it more of a fun, personal survey.

Testimonials

Share some of the testimonials and photos you've received from happy customers. Be sure to get their permission first.

A Giveaway or Contest

Invite your subscribers to participate in a giveaway or contest. You could do a simple one such as one random subscriber wins a freebie. Or you could do something more creative like hide a little icon on your website somewhere and invite your subscribers to look for it then offer a prize to the first person to find it and a coupon code to everyone else who finds it. This can also be a viral marketing strategy if you give your subscribers permission to invite others to join in on the fun.

A Photo Journal

Make a photo journal of your product process. For example, if you're a knitter, start with a photo of your yarn. Share where you got it, why you choose the colorway, and what you find inspirational about it. Then share a photo of your pattern and why you're choosing to create that item from it. Take periodic photos as you work on the project and share some details. Then take a photo of the finished item and share your thoughts. This allows your subscribers to really connect with your processes and appreciate the effort and passion that goes into each of your creations. If you provide a service, offer photos of you in your work space and add captions sharing how you work.

Transform Your Website into an Ideal Client Attracting Magnet in 7 Easy Steps

If you're still stuck for ideas, here's how I recently got a year worth of ideas for my weekly newsletter with just a few minutes of time.

I created a quick, three question survey at Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a reliable website that offers both free and paid service levels you can choose from based on your survey needs.

My first question was multiple choice with some website related questions to help me understand what point my subscribers are at - whether they have a website, a blog, or sell products or services yet. This helps me know what perspective to start from when writing my newsletter.

My second question included a list of 14 topics I was considering writing about and asked responders to rank their interest level in each topic as very interested, somewhat interested, take it or leave it, or not interested.

The third question I asked was "What is your biggest question or challenge about building your home based business?" This question was the key to getting great feedback on the best topics for me to use in my newsletter. By specifically asking my readers what they wanted help with, I now have dozens of great topics to write about that I know they want to read about.

To entice readers to answer the quick survey I took two steps. I made the survey anonymous and required no personal information. Then I created a free gift called "101+ Free and Cheap Ways to Market Your Small Business" and set it up so that it was available immediately after the survey was complete.

Then I put a note in my newsletter about the survey and posted the link on my blog. Within a few minutes responses started arriving and they kept arriving for several days.

If you have a smaller list, you can also get responses to your survey by posting the link on any forums you visit, social networks like Twitter or Facebook, or ask a colleague to include a link to your survey in their newsletter in exchange for sharing the feedback.

Do more than just sell your products, build a relationship with your subscribers, and they'll be more likely to return to purchase at your website.

In your newsletter, don't forget to offer your subscribers a chance to purchase your products or services. Drop hints about upcoming events or special offers. Feature a product and how it's helped a client. Continue to show how you can be of service and solve their problems.

Your Space: