

The Secret to Sales and Marketing

This information can help you market your services better and generate more leads and referrals.

This content is good for:

Anyone who needs to communicate to others to build relationships for business or otherwise...

...we're all marketing something...ideas, points-of-view, a particular story, actual products, services or the brand of a business...everyone is a marketer whether they embrace it or not.

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The Secret to Sales and Marketing: A Manifesto

At the start of my career I grasped at every possible tactic to market myself and my talents.

Unfortunately, that approach was all over the place, and didn't have a cohesive focus.

After a few years of bouncing around to different jobs I decided I needed an approach or a philosophy to hang my proverbial hat on.

I needed simple fundamentals that would become the foundation from which I could build success.

I thought a lot about what makes me successful, but also what is at the heart of anyone's success in life or business.

Here's what I learned about myself and everyone else:

I learned that we're all humans interacting with each other. We're all trying to stand out with our own voice. We want others to understand us. We want the ability to express thoughts and concepts with one another. In doing so, we want to build shared understanding with others. In fact, that's how just about everything gets accomplished.

All human interactions (in business or otherwise) boil down to communication and relationships.

The success of my career continues to build on that philosophy because it works.

My use of this approach has helped other businesses, too. I've helped them communicate better, build better business relationships and generate more sales.

I believe that everything boils down to communication and relationships. Communication is the tool or vehicle that gets you from point A to point B with another person.

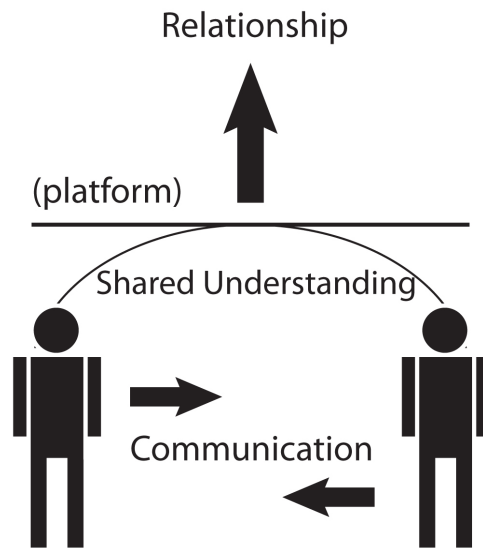
Communication is a way to create shared understanding – getting on the same page, if you will.

When that connection via communication begins to take place you have a platform from which you can grow a relationship.

It is necessary for all relationships to continue honest communication over time to build trust.

Two parties armed with shared understanding and trust can accomplish more together than individually.

Here's a visual representation of communication leading to shared understanding forming a platform for a trusted relationship to develop:



Your personal or company brand is similar. It's a communication vehicle that outlines who you are and what you value. All the verbal and nonverbal ways you communicate help drive relationships. Relationships with your friends, family, customers, vendors, industry colleagues, etc.

My intent with this simple philosophy was to be confident in my approach for my own endeavors.

Also, I wanted it to be easy to teach to others without being intimidating or difficult.

Success doesn't have to be intimidating, but it does require a conscious strategy and continuously improving execution.

Communication that leads to relationships is the basis of any successful strategy.

Look at every single marketing and promotional strategy of any business. The marketing messages are the communication that helps initiate a relationship with prospects. The idea is to build trust. When trust is present equal exchange of value between a buyer and a seller is much easier.

One cannot reach success absent of communication and relationships -- it's impossible.

So here's my basic success formula:

- Define your success
- Decide the kind of relationships essential to achieving your success
- Target your communications to build specific relationships
- Execute your communications, foster relationships...rinse and repeat until your desired level of success is achieved.

I know, that formula makes it seem easy, and the basic concepts are, but the work comes when you put it into action – that's the hard part.

Even harder than taking action is developing a habit of consistent action (daily, weekly, monthly). That's where real progress happens.

But here's what else I've found:

The more comfortable and knowledgeable you are about yourself the easier it is to steer yourself where you want to go.

When you're comfortable with who you are and where your strengths lie you will have confidence in your abilities.

You'll understand what tasks you can do well what you can't. But through communication you can build relationships with those whose strengths are your weaknesses. Thus, overcoming your weaknesses without spending extra time on them only to become mediocre at them.

In the book, [Now, Discovering Your Strengths](#) (Amazon affiliate link) by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., this concept of playing to your strengths is paramount.

That's just an example of how communication used to build trusting relationships can lead to success.

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Deeper Dive into the Success Formula

Earlier we mentioned a basic success formula utilizing the philosophy of communication and relationships.

Here we're going to dive deeper into each of these:

- Define your success
- Decide the kind of relationships essential to achieving your success
- Target your communications to build specific relationships
- Execute your communications, foster relationships...rinse and repeat until your desired level of success is achieved.

Define your success

You've likely heard it before, start with the end in mind.

It's true, you need to know where you want to end up to understand how to focus and measure your efforts.

Your vision of success can be anything you want -- more time with family, more income, ability to pay down debt, save for retirement. You need to determine whatever it is for you.

Now, I recommend writing this vision down. Post it somewhere you'll see it every day. Let it be a constant reminder of where you're going.

Decide the kind of relationships essential to achieving your success

Here, we're defining who your target audience is. Who do you need to connect with to help you achieve your goals.

Who do you need to connect and build relationships with to reach a value exchange. A value exchange is often your service or product -- solution to their need -- in exchange for their money.

What is the need you can help these people fulfill, or what value can you provide that they want?

What do those who want or need what you can provide look like? What age are they? What are their occupations, interests and/or hobbies?

How can you identify your target audience if you don't understand what attributes and characteristics they possess?

Write these attributes and characteristics down so you have a constant reminder of who you can ideally help. And who in turn can help you reach success.

Target your communications to build specific relationships

Now that you understand your success vision.

You understand what type of people you're looking for.

You need to know where to find your target audience and understand the best ways to identify and communicate with them.

Services like, designers, copy writers, life or business coaches or even professional consultants are more than likely running business to business (B2B for short) operations. They are a business that often sells to other businesses.

For B2B companies I recommend social media platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter. The audiences on those platforms tend to be good for B2B companies.

If you're selling your products directly to consumers, you're more likely a business to consumer (B2C for short) operation. For B2C companies, social networks like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest might be the best place to initially find your target audience online.

You'll need to do some research to determine where your target audience hangs out online.

Social media is often a great place to find mass amounts of your target audience online. Because of the nature of social networks they are great places to begin communicating with your target audience to build trusted relationships.

All that is to eventually have your target audience buy from you to move your endeavor closer to your vision of success.

Execute your communications, foster relationships...rinse and repeat until your desired level of success is achieved.

You now understand your goal, who your target audience is and where to find your audience online so you can start connecting and communicating with them.

You'll need to identify and articulate what value you bring to your target audience.

In online communications you need to give value before you get value. This means, that you want to provide something useful and helpful to your target audience.

This kind of help will help build trusted relationships to the point that you can eventually ask them to buy from you.

Whatever you ask them to buy should further help them and solve some sort of challenge they have. It should provide a higher value level than the free information you provide to build a relationship with them.

To begin building a relationship you can post useful tips on social media. You can write a regular blog that offers value to your target audience.

These activities can help you to build connections with your target audience. Be sure to invite them to join your email list where you can build an even deeper connection by having more of their direct attention.

By consistently providing value to those on your email list, over time you can ask those people to help support what you do for them by purchasing your service or product.

You see it ends up being a bit of a journey. You're finding and communicating with your target audience. You give your audience something they want (often how-to information online) in exchange for the opportunity to build an on-going relationship with them. The relationship, even if just online, will

Over time you keep providing valuable information, continuing to build your target audiences' trust.

Eventually you ask your audience to support you (and all the great information you provide them) by purchasing other products and services from you.

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Essential Elements of the Journey

To scale and capitalize on your ability to communicate and build relationships with your target audience you'll need some basic tools to build a system.

That system will allow you to distribute communications (content) and connect with new people within your target audience who you can help with the value you provide.

When you connect with those in your target audience you'll want a way to capture their contact information so you can continue building the relationship on an on-going basis.

Often this is your email list. Your email list is typically your best followers. These are folks who have chosen to give you their email address because they want to get regular communications from you. They look forward to your communications because you consistently provide value to them related to the challenge they have that you have expertise in.

Essentially, you're teaching them about a particular subject and/or helping them view their problem from a different perspective, and that is valuable for someone with a need/want to know that information.

A Working Example

Say our protagonist is a marketing copy writer, and she knows that her audience is other businesses (with between 5 and 15 employees). The target is businesses that don't necessarily have any dedicated marketing writing help to take their marketing messages to the next level -- that's the need the targeted businesses have.

Our marketing copy writer provides great copy writing services that can help businesses articulate their message to engage prospects, further influencing greater sales -- that's the value of what the copy writer provides.

Our copy writer is just getting started so she doesn't even have her own website yet. She does, however, have a free LinkedIn profile that she uses to brand herself, her past credentials and her copy writing capabilities, and she knows that her potential clients are other businesses whose owners and executives are networking on LinkedIn to make business connections that could be useful and profitable for their own business goals.

Our copy writer has decided to use the LinkedIn Publishing platform to write and publish blog posts right from her LinkedIn profile to the LinkedIn social network, which she can use to showcase her copy writing know-how and teach her ideal business prospects some basic tips and tricks that they may not otherwise know.

She consistently writes these blog posts and asks business owners and executives who read them to connect with her on LinkedIn as a call-to-action at the end of each of her posts.

Now connected to her, the business owners see her LinkedIn blog posts right in their LinkedIn feed because she's a LinkedIn connection. Thus, she's distributing her LinkedIn blog posts directly to her target audience and getting them to connect with her on LinkedIn as a call-to-action from her blog posts.

Using the email service within LinkedIn, and having connected on the platform to the owners of her targeted businesses, our copy writer can directly email very specific messages to specific business owners and offer her services in a way that is better received because she has spent time planting the seeds of value first and asking for their business second. She's used communication and LinkedIn as a communications vehicle to connect and build relationships with her target audience over time to eventually ask for the sale.

Some Tools and Tactics to Begin Using Now

You'll notice from the example above our copy writer utilized the following tools to communicate with her target audience on a regular basis, building a relationship over time to eventually be able to land the sale from a captive audience who was interested in her messages.

Tools:

A blog to write and host content that her target audience would find valuable.

A way to distribute that blog content to her target audience. In the case of the example she used LinkedIn. You could use other social networks to help distribute your content like, Twitter or Facebook.

A way to capture contact information and/or connect with her target audience, in this case, small business owners. In the example, she used the capabilities within the LinkedIn platform to connect and stay in touch with them via LinkedIn's internal email service. You could drive traffic with a link back to your blog post hosted on your own website and have an email capture form that encourages visitors to sign up on your email list to get valuable information (maybe a free ebook).

There are email services that are low cost or even free to a certain level (MailChimp offers a free level of service). If you're just starting out you can even simply list an email address and have people reply to opt-in to your email list so you can continue to stay in direct contact with your target audience.

So these are the basic elements of a content marketing system:

A **Blog**

Distribution/Engagement (social media). This is to help drive traffic back to your blog posts on your website or preferred online platform.

Email and a way to capture email addresses from your target audience who reads your blog. It's easiest to use a service that makes it easy to organize consistent email messages to your target audience to build your relationship with them over time.

If you haven't figured it out yet, your email list is likely your largest marketing asset. These are the folks who have already given you permission to market to them with your regular email messages. And it's those valuable, regular messages that build deeper and deeper connections with your target audience over time. The trust that is built from those efforts is what helps your target audience feel comfortable buying from you when you do end up asking for the sale.

The other major part that is often skipped over is the content. You need to be able to produce content that your target audience will find valuable. Information that they want and/or need.

Content can take many forms, written (like a blog), video (YouTube), audio (a podcast), or webinars (slide show with audio narration). Choose whatever you're comfortable with and ideally whatever form your target audience wants to receive the content in.

Finally, the subject-matter of your content can be tough to come with. In fact, this is often where most struggle with their online content marketing efforts.

One quick way to begin getting some ideas that you could address to help your target audience is to simply Google the top challenges within the business industry that your target audience is in. Then offer insights that help your audience overcome those challenges.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this manifesto. I hope you found it helpful.

I encourage you reach out to and initiate communication with three new contacts this week with the intention of fostering a relationship -- for business or otherwise. Use whatever method of communication you would like (phone, email, social media). Just get started.

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