

ONWARD

MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGIES
THAT ACTUALLY GET RESULTS

ISSUE 05 / FEB. 2014

Fusion Marketing

Insights From a
Successful Serial
Entrepreneur

PROSPECTING TACTICS:
**HOW TO TARGET YOUR
IDEAL PROSPECTS**

SALES ADVICE:
**CREATING PROPOSALS
THAT ROCK**



04 COVER STORY

FUSION MARKETING:

Insights From a Successful Serial Entrepreneur

FEATURES

10 IT'S ALL IN THE DATA:

Why Field Sales Reps Love GoSpotCheck

20 FREAK FACTOR:

Building Trust by Flaunting Weaknesses

23 PROSPECT PROFILES:

Identifying & Targeting Your Ideal Prospects

COLUMNS

26 IRREVERENT SALES GIRL

Create Proposals That Rock

30 STRATEGIC ADVERTISING

Assessing the Landscape

34 CUSTOMER FOCUS

Small Touches, Big Impact

36 TOOLBOX

Facebook's Power Editor



How to make your workflow twice as efficient

12

Walmart

vs.

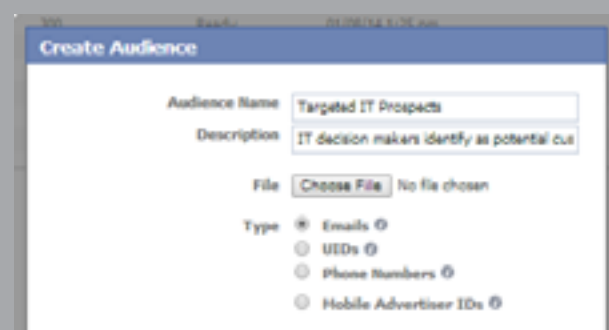
macy's

vs.

NORDSTROM

What are your customers more interested in?

24



Creating a Targeted Audience with Power Editor

36

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Josh Turner

There are times when the quality of content simply speaks for itself. For Onward, this is one of those months.

Our Associate Editor Matt Kersey has been hard at work developing the new format for Onward. This issue represents that new direction for us, which includes a greater focus on interviews and case studies with business leaders who have something unique to say about marketing and sales.

Our cover story feature Chris Torbit, a serial entrepreneur who has built a true marketing machine consisting of about 14 different channels for his company Clarus Communications. Learning how a company like his, in a somewhat traditional space, is implementing such a wide variety of marketing tools is something you can't miss.

We're also fortunate to have sat down with Matt Talbot of GoSpotCheck. Matt and his team are doing big stuff, and he was kind enough to share a lot of valuable behind-the-scenes info on their sales process, how they're reaching prospects, and a whole lot more.

Thinking strategically, Dave Rendall knows a thing or two about converting your weaknesses into strengths. And that's the focus of his feature "Freak Factor Marketing." Stop trying to follow the heard, embrace Dave's practices, and watch your sales take off.

These are just a few of the resources that you now have access to. Also in this issue, you'll find content on mining for competitive intelligence, developing bad ass proposals that convert, finding and targeting your ideal prospects, and a Training Session that features a lesson on selling high price services with webinars.

We are proud to present this issue of Onward to you, as we know it's jam packed with resources that are going to make a real difference for you and your business.

And there's a lot more to come in future issues of Onward, so be sure to subscribe and spread the word!

JOSH TURNER
PUBLISHER
LINKEDSELLING.COM

FUSION MARKETING:

Insights From a Successful Serial Entrepreneur

BY MATT KERSEY

Recently Onward had the ability to talk with Chris Torbit, the owner of three companies in the St. Louis metro area, including Clarus Communications. Founded in 2001, Clarus is a telecommunications company that utilizes various cutting-edge technologies to help businesses streamline their telecom efforts in order to efficiently manage and reduce expenses.

Why did you start Clarus Communications?

We started Clarus Communications back in 2001 as a technology broker. Tech brokers help companies control their technology expenses. It's very common for businesses to struggle with telecommunications, finding expertise and putting it all together. Many of them work with us even if they have an IT department. We are experienced at getting results and achieving our goals.

We function like an independent insurance agent... but we do it with technology. We allow our clients to see many different choices based on their needs,



Chris Torbit

Founder, Clarus Communications

which will help them save time and money.

Who buys your services?

We focus on a number of different industries. But usually, larger companies with multiple locations since they typically struggle with tying all their technology together and making sure that purchases work as a seamless unit.

Can you describe your typical customer?

Our typical customer is probably somebody that has 10 or more employees. They really have a focus and an appreciation for technology. We have customers in every industry from traditional business services all the way to airlines.

What is your strategy for getting new business?

We do that through a multitude of different channels. We do a lot of social marketing and blog marketing, as I like to call it. We also do a lot of referral marketing. We make sure that we're continuously talking to our existing clients and asking for new referrals. We also do outbound calling, or appointment setting.

In total, we market in about 14 different areas including: social, referral, educational webinars, company website, pay-per click, SEO, trademark, print, radio and direct mail.



“

...we're really in the education business. I mean, that's really the biggest challenge, educating people to know how this will help their business.

... Chris Torbit

”

That's quite a bit. So, why did you choose this mix?

We know that technology is not always on the forefront of everyone's mind. We want to make sure our potential customers are being reached through the channels that they use so that we come to mind when they are ready to address some of these concerns.

In today's business you hear a lot about Voice over IP (VOIP), cloud, etc. Even though we're an organization that helps those people in those areas, we're really in the education business. I mean, that's really our biggest challenge, educating people to know how this will help their business.

What do you think is your most successful marketing initiative or medium?

For me personally, it has been around our LinkedIn or social marketing campaigns. We work extremely hard on identifying people that could use our services and then using LinkedIn, for example, to connect us to those people either through direct connections or through groups.

I have heard that you guys really know how to maximize your revenue using LinkedIn.

One of the most successful things we learned about LinkedIn, or just referral marketing in general, is that a lot of times people want to refer you but they don't

know exactly what to say. So, we developed a template to ask our clients for referrals. Our team will cut and paste ideas about what they want the client to send. Then our clients can change the wording to their liking. The point is that having a template makes it very easy for our clients to put in a good word in for us. That's been very effective.

Making things easier for people is always a great way to increase their actions.

Right...I believe people want to help other people. I don't think that's going to change. But, life moves on and people usually say, "Well, I want to help, and I know that they do this but, I don't know exactly what they want."

Some people don't feel comfortable doing it any other way than saying, "Hey Chris, you should meet Bob," and it doesn't make for a good conversation whereas, when you have a template to cut from, it makes it very simple. Simple sells...especially in the technology space.



I look at marketing as a cable TV. That's the easiest analogy I use. You don't just watch ABC, CBS or NBC... you watch 400 channels right? So, the trick in marketing is understanding which channel your customer wants to be in. And then you can air your message on that channel.

... Chris Torbit



It's really hard for everybody to understand technology and how it can help their business. So, the simpler you can make things for people, no matter if it's referrals, technology or just in general, simplicity will

increase your sales.

I read in your background that you are recognized for your mobile marketing. How do you use that for your current business?

Well, fortunately for me I own three separate businesses. One of them is a marketing company and we do mobile marketing for clients as well. So, I have a marketing company and two technology companies.

Mobile is a challenge that we overcome by getting someone to opt-in and send them information that they want. On the mobile phone, more than any other channel, it's very important to make sure that subscribers get the content they are asking for. Their phone is one of their most personal devices. It's irritating when I get stuff that I don't want coming to my phone. I can deal with it a little bit better if I get something in my email inbox that doesn't pertain to me. But, when you're sending a text message about a product, service or an update, it really needs to be very honed in to their individual needs and wants.

It's definitely a different medium and you can't use it the same as email or anything else.

I look at marketing as a cable TV. That's the easiest analogy I use. You don't just watch ABC, CBS or NBC... you watch 400 channels right? So, the trick in marketing is understanding which channel your customer wants to watch. And then you can air your message on that channel.

We broadcast on many different mediums and have found some of our customers are best reached through mobile devices. So, that's how we target them.

Have you ever used any consumer promotions or loyalty programs for your business?

No. However, we are rolling out a new program this year for our clients called Affinity Marketing. Essentially, it's a cause marketing initiative where a percentage of our clients spend will be donated to charity. And we believe that this will drive not only one of our goals, which is to be a good corporate citizen, but also help with what our clients are doing.

I want to ask you a question about Voice over IP. I know it's steadily becoming more and more the norm and I know you started your company in 2001. Was that around the time VoIP became available? Or did you have to adapt your services to meet that need when VOIP became prevalent?

Great question. Yeah, Voice over IP started to get talked about around 2001 and by 2005 it had become pretty ubiquitous in the market. It is still an evolving technology. Customers consider it because of the lowered costs and for marketing purposes.

For example, let's say you have an office in St. Louis but you want to have a local Los Angeles number. You can do that with VOIP, where you couldn't do that traditionally. You'll be able to have an 818 area code (LA) and market like a local company in that area, but actually be taking the calls in St. Louis. This drives local calls for local services. Also, your business could have employees all over the country but still be on one phone system.

Those are just a couple of the advantages. It is also a lot easier to manage and maintain these phone systems.

What is your customer acquisitions cost, if you know it? How are you working towards improving it?

Well, it's different for every channel. Our referral cost is less than \$2 per acquisition, which is very low. Whereas, our pay-per-click can be as high as \$20-\$30 per click. Especially in certain keywords that are highly competitive. Verses our blog marketing cost might be around \$7.50. So, we have a different cost based on how we acquire.

Do you have any systems that you use to automate your business? Specifically to help lower your costs or streamline processes?

Yeah. We do a combination of things. The first is that we use a CRM tool called ConnectWise. It's similar to Salesforce.com or SugarCRM.

Secondly, we have developed some of our own software and processes that our partners use to place orders with us. We also use Quickbooks and other software programs that help us stay on top of things and lower costs in many areas. Anywhere that we can automate, we have automated.

How do you keep your employees motivated at work?

We survey them twice a year to get their feedback. Also, once a quarter we do something completely out of the norm...like going to a shooting range for example. Just different activities that I know they will find fun.

We also have a flexible work schedule that allows time for a certain activity during the day. So, if you have to leave for a while or come in late it's no big deal. We're very flexible. That's a huge perk for our employees: having a flexible work schedule which we have enacted from day one.

And then we also have systems in place where employees can be rewarded for doing actions that we deem profitable for our company.

You mentioned earlier that you own three different companies which definitely qualifies you as a serial entrepreneur. So, if you had to give some advice to a recent graduate looking to start their first business what would it be?

Double the time, triple the cost.

Understand your business plan & model and be willing to deviate from that a little bit based on the market responses.

Find a need and solve it in a way that creates value. Those are the things that you have to know to have a successful business. Meaning, if you don't find something that somebody needs and are not able to tell somebody else how you brought them value, you'll going to struggle as a business.

Know your numbers. Make sure you know how much money you're going to make at all times. Pay yourself and your taxes first. Don't go out and hire people until you've paid yourself because it ends up being pretty demotivating.

Even though it may seem cool to create the latest widget, assuming that's the sexiest thing to you right now, if it's not your passion, it's not a good idea. Life is short and it's important to enjoy what you're doing. It also helps to make work not so difficult.

The more you give, the more you get. When you impart knowledge onto others you'll get it back ten-fold.

**MATT
KERSEY**

~Your Associate Editor:
Onward Magazine

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It's All in the Data

.....
An Interview with Matt Talbot, Co-founder of GoSpotCheck



What is GoSpotCheck? Can you give me the 60 second elevator pitch?

Sure, I'll try to do it even better and do it in 20 seconds.

We're a mobile data collection tool and we work with employees that are based in the field. We help field sales reps, merchandisers or anybody that has a job where they are required to visit multiple locations streamline all of their data collection. Typically, a key part of their job is to capture data about the accounts they're visiting; whether that's promotional execution or operational excellence or even a safety audit.

We have a mobile platform that enables this process to be done significantly more efficiently than it has been done in the past. We have an iOS app, Android app, and a web app that all work together to essentially enable this data collection process.

What are some of the metrics that GoSpotCheck captures for your clients?

Our customers use GoSpotCheck for a number of different things. Essentially, the way the product works is management, or a company admin, sets up forms or surveys that go out to the field team members. The field team members use our smartphone app to capture all that information in real time. And that data is aggregated back to our web dashboard for analysis.

Because of the flexibility of the platform, we're seeing customers use it for a lot of different things. One of the most common uses is for retail sales reps to utilize the platform to capture in-store execution data.

For instance, imagine you are selling a product through a grocery store or retailer. The most critical things to check are where your products are on the shelf, price, promotional displays, and what

your competitors are doing. GoSpotCheck allows the sales reps to capture that data for each account and we have had a lot of growth in that market.

What are some of the reporting capabilities your software aggregates?

One of the things that we try and do with GoSpotCheck is help management get to answers much more quickly than they could have in the past.



We do that by making it extremely easy to filter and view the data by different key attributes in real time. Our dashboard allows you to quickly pull up a report and see across any number of different retailers, regions, teams, etc. And then you can create a PDF or Excel spreadsheet and share it with your co-workers. We've done a lot on the analysis and reporting side to ensure that management is spending less time trying to aggregate and sort through data and more time using that data to get to the answers they need to improve their business.

Why did you build GoSpotCheck? Did you see a need in the market? Walk me through that whole process.

When we originally launched GoSpotCheck, we were actually running a mystery shopping business. It was initially used for consumers to capture in-store data.

However, we found that there was a big lag in

technology adoption for the retail market-place. A lot of field-based sales reps were still using clunky laptops, digital cameras, and even clipboards to capture data. We saw this as an opportunity to go to some of our early brand partners and say, "Hey, would you guys like to try this app for your own teams as opposed to having your consumers collect the data?"

We learned by asking our customers about their problems and listening to what they had to say. The overwhelming response was that they were looking for tools to enable their own workforce to do their jobs more efficiently. We saw that as a tremendous opportunity to build a design-focused, easy-to-use app that could become part of the everyday workflow for our customers.

You created GoSpotCheck to simplify the data that retail sales reps obtain in the field. But the tracking and reporting metrics, I think benefit the entire executive team, sales team, marketing team, and etc. When it comes to converting your prospects into paying customers, who you do usually have to convince?

That's a great question. With any enterprise software sale, usually you're going to have a constituency of people that you have to get onboard. I think the thing that we have going for us is the data that we're capturing is essential to these businesses. And I say that because this holiday season e-commerce has done extremely well while retail has lagged. But we know that most of the volume is still going through doors.

So when you are selling a product through a retailer, the most important thing is to know how your

products are being promoted and displayed in the store. We created a platform where business management, everyone from the CEO, to the VP of Sales, to VP of Marketing can understand what that store level execution looks like. They can get actual photos of their products on the shelf and understand, in real time, how compliant they are with display promotions. That's a game changer.

So, in terms of how we sell the product, we typically focus on working directly with the sales team. We can easily go to the VP of Sales or whoever is managing the team and show them how we can give them a tremendous ROI on improving their business processes. If their team is using a laptop and Excel spreadsheet, I show them how using GoSpotCheck is able to make their workflow twice as efficient.



Now, that's not to say that we haven't got the sale through IT, the CEO, or Marketing Director. We've sold through all these channels. But at the end of the day, the person managing the sales team is the one who is equipped with our technology and that is almost always the VP of Sales.

How do you usually reach these people?

We use a number of different methods. I think that the best weapon we have, of course, is the companies that are extremely pleased with our product. We've had a significant handful of inbound calls from potential customers that have heard about us from our current customers.

The best way to ultimately drive customer growth is to make your current customers incredibly happy and satisfied so they tell their peers how they're using this great new tool that makes them operate a lot more efficiently. In order to do that, we have to have a great product, provide amazing customer support, and consistently deliver a great experience.

The other thing to note is that we've had a lot of success with LinkedIn for outbound prospects. With LinkedIn, you can say, "Here's the VP of Sales at XYZ company, I'm one connection away from them, let me see if I can get an introduction."

Additionally, we find that it is really important to create great content and using that to bring new people to us. That means creating great white papers, case studies and blogs that have a lot of useful content for our potential customers. This drives a lot of organic inbound traffic. That's the best traffic to get because people are self-signaling that they're interested in what we are doing.

It sounds like you guys are doing a lot of great stuff. Out of all the things your company does for marketing, what do you think has been your most successful and why would you consider it to be the most successful?

The most successful thing for us from a market-

ing perspective is telling our customer's story. We can take a customer's story and spin it into a case study and say, "Hey, look here's how one of our brands was able to double their orders from their biggest retailer by bringing GoSpotCheck data into their vendor meter."

That's the type of story that people are going to notice when we are reaching out on LinkedIn. That's something we want to enable our current customers to share with their peers and something that we can also share with our own network in an easily digestible format.

Outside of that, I really think we've been successful with just a lot of hustling through our network and through LinkedIn. That's just a matter of putting in the hard work that it takes to get those meetings. Once you put in that effort, you're usually going to see strong results.

It's fascinating to hear how brands use LinkedIn to promote and market their business. Can you expand on your LinkedIn strategy?

Without any getting into too many of the nitty-gritty details, we use it as an outbound strategy. We are essentially able to segment our market into the 4-5 most important verticals. For us it's: beverage & alcohol, consumer electronics, outdoor gear/apparel, tennis shoes, fast food, and consumer goods. And then we run searches and try to get outbound messages to the people that we know are the decision makers in those verticals and who would get a tremendous amount of value by using our product. We have a specific copy that we use in those outbound messages. We measure which copy is converting the best and what's producing

the most results. Then we use that as the basis for a targeted, personal message to that decision-maker asking for 15-30 minutes to talk.

Once we get those conversations going with the right people, we then show them how they can benefit from using our products. It's a lot of blocking and tackling. But the magic comes when you combine volume with focus.

Do you guys work with any creative agencies or do you do everything in-house?

Everything is done in-house by our Design Director. Occasionally we will partner with copywriters and specialized agencies for specific campaigns. But we're a really design-focused startup. We believe in keeping that pretty close to the chest. Often times that's what makes the difference: great design wrapped around a really good message.

How do you price your software?

There are a lot of variables that go into the pricing as there are with any software product. It's never just as simple as it's X dollars per month. A lot of it depends on the level of scope that a customer wants.

If they had made a very specific request that needs to be built, that would obviously impact the price. From the most simplistic standpoint we focus on saying, "Here's the user fee per month." What that allows us to do is give our customer's unlimited data and data collection.

We don't limit them in terms of the number of locations they can have in our database, the number

of missions they can create (a mission in our case is just a structured survey), the number of tasks they can have, or on the number of photos they can upload.

We look at their unique business needs and understand how they are going to use the product and then price it at a per-user monthly fee. And then it's theirs to use on an unlimited basis. We don't throttle them with data overages or make them pay extra for storage. We get rid of all that nonsense.

How is your sales team structured?

We use a pretty common structure which is essential to everything. Think of it as a team with three distinct components. One component is marketing and what marketing is responsible for is filling the top of the funnel.

Marketing needs to bring in as many people to GoSpotCheck as possible. Whether that's through our inbound efforts, a paid LinkedIn campaign, search engine marketing, or PR.

There are a whole host of tools that marketing can use to drive leads into the top of the funnel. And then there's also a degree of qualification that happens. We try to automate qualification as much as possible by having a tight focus on a specific vertical and type of decision maker. That allows us to filter out the good leads from the bad.

In order to do this effectively, we use Hubspot. We're a really, really a big fan of that product. It helps us qualify leads easily. We then put them down on different marketing workflows and then they get passed along to sales.

Our sales team is responsible for really understanding the in-depth needs that come in with the proposal and then closing the contract. Then they get passed to the third part of our team which is the account management. We consider them our customer success team. They're responsible for making sure that the customers have a great experience and being the point of contact once they're up and running.

Do you have any competitors?

Yeah, there are a lot of competitors. You can kind of throw our competitors into three buckets right now. The highest end of the bucket would be someone like Oracle or SAP. They build a highly customized retail execution to solution that would include data capture for your mobile team. That's something that's going to cost probably millions of dollars and take months to implement. But it'll be fully customized and integrated with their ERP.

The next bucket would be a modern SaaS solution. One built for the cloud and mobile, just like we are. And there are large ample competitors in our space. I won't go through all of them individually but there are a lot that are in that broader market of, "How do we make data collection easier for people that are on the go?"

And then you have the low-end bucket. This is where a lot of customers are today; using Excel, email, Google Forms, etc. They are using solutions by duct-taping a lot of different things together. This is obviously not as secure of a solution. You're not going to have something that's scalable. You're not going to end up with something like a single dashboard view that helps you comprehend all this data in one minute and will let you dig further

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into details if you wish.

That's how we view the competitive landscape. If I had to bet, I think SaaS will be the number one winner in this category. But I think that we are in a really great spot in terms of where we are positioned right now.

Your company had the opportunity to go to the TechStars program. Can you tell me what that is and detail for everybody who doesn't know what that process was like?

The TechStars is the world's number one business accelerant. They take a business, bring them on-site for three months and provide world-class training on how to build software products.

The program was incredible. To put it in context, over 1,200 companies apply every year to each program and 10 are accepted. We were one of those lucky 10. We participated in Boulder which is the founding location of TechStars. The program was very intense; 3 months of really, really long days, questioning all of your assumptions you made about your business and then coming out 10 times as strong as you were when you came into the program.

The advantage is that you get instantly plugged into a network of incredibly intelligent people that can help you grow your business. With that, you get a certain level of pedigree you can then take to investors. A kind of a stamp of approval that says this company is vetted to be good people, building a good product.

Finally, you're learning how to pitch and position your product, which is incredibly important. From our standpoint, it was really an incredible experi-

ence and I don't think we'd trade it for anything. It allowed us to go from 0 to 120 miles per hour in 3 months. I can't underestimate how important those founding months are and TechStars is absolutely the best way to get going.

What are some of the sacrifices that you have had to make to be successful as an entrepreneur?

First off, I don't consider myself successful yet. We're in the very early stages. This is a marathon run and we're on mile 3. But we were lucky enough to have raised over a couple million dollars. We work with some really, really incredible customers. We've seen 30% month-over-month revenue growth so things are going very well. But we still have a tremendously a long way to go.

In terms of sacrifices, you have to make them every day. The hours, of course, are straining. I'm married and have a two year old. My wife does a great job making sure I'm home for dinner every night and being there for my family. But it's the mental work that you can't stop. Even when you're at dinner, you're thinking about what you have to do tomorrow or that new sales strategy or that investment you need to update.

So they're different than just in-your-face sacrifices and they're just things you have to learn to live with. Really you have to learn how to manage your own psychology. The ups and downs of starting your own company are just wild. One day, you're like, "We're taking over the world" and the next day you're like, "Nobody even knows we exist." So you have to learn how to manage those highs and lows and stay within a tight range in order to make progress and move forward. You're going to

have some really good days and you're going to have some really bad days.

And then, of course, there's the monetary sacrifice. We didn't take salary for about a year. And there's really a lot of monetary sacrifices we're still taking. From a founder's perspective, we're probably below market in terms of what we should be paid in the position we're at.

There are a lot of sacrifices that you're making, but at the end of the day, I think that if you're going to do something like starting your own company, you have to be ready jump into it 150 percent. It's not something you can just dip your toe into. You really just have to go for it. Then you have to do your best at navigating in a positive and successful way and you'll be fine.

Post-TechStars, what is one of the most important things or the most important thing you've had to do to grow your business?

The most important thing we've done to grow our business by far is really getting to know our customers and that's a lot of hard work. It's a lot of volume. You have to spend a lot of time talking to them, trying different things, pitching different things, building a lot of relationships over a long period of time. Then you get the benefit of getting inside their heads; understanding what they need, what makes them tick, where their problems lie, and how you can make their lives better.

That doesn't necessarily mean we try to please everyone all the time, I'm not going to run to the design department if a customer says, "I think this background should be purple." or "I think that button should be a circle instead of a square."

That's not what I mean when I say we listen to our customers. You have to understand what parts of their workflow are slowing them down, what types of data they wish they had. Then you have to go back and figure out how to build a product and business around that. That's what we've done well.

How do you keep your line of communication open with your customers?

I think it's like any other relationship in life in that you have to be providing value. It's usually not that hard to get a first call with a potential customer. If you're a relatively respectable person, market yourself well enough, and have the connections; you should be able to get in front of 20 customers. It's not rocket science.

The thing you have to be able to do is build a long term relationship by being able to keep coming back to them with the different values that you're providing. For our company, my co-founder, Samantha, has a great ability to take the technical issues from the software and break them down into very clear layman's terms for our customers, who are primarily sales people. That's an incredible value. So by building that long-term relationship, Samantha's able to break down some barriers and understand more about what they're doing.

We want to come in, educate, and provide value. Our goal is to show our prospects how we can help overcome their problems and ideally they will be a great candidate for working with GoSpotCheck. But the important thing is building that relationship; that's your ticket to success.

What are you doing to achieve long-term success? How are you keeping ahead of the technology curve? What's hot today probably won't be relevant tomorrow. This especially goes for your industry. What are you doing to keep ahead of that?

I think that's the toughest thing. For any software company at a given point in time, you know, two kids in a garage in San Francisco can all of a sudden completely eliminate the need for your entire business.

At the same time, somebody like Steve Jobs can come in and create a product like the iPhone and create a whole category where multiple billion dollar businesses are getting built. We're a mobile product; we certainly appreciate and respect that.

Enterprise mobile is still in its infancy. I think a lot of companies are still trying to understand how they secure these devices and how they can get different workflows from mobile then they can on a desktop.

I think there are still questions on whether they should enable BYOD or is everything you need going to be provided on a company-issued device. These are massive challenges for the CIOs and CTOs of these organizations. For instance, imagine you're the CIO of a Fortune 500 company and you have thousands and thousands of employees that now all use Night Hat at the office.

The enterprise of mobile is still very, very new. So I think we're fortunate enough that there's still going to be a lot of development in this space. There's going to be a tremendous amount of software that's going to come into this space before there's too much change from a hardware perspec-

tive. That's the bet that we're making.

On the other side of the coin; what kind of unknowns are going to transpire over the next couple of years that will change the game? We're involved the early stage of technology. We're just trying to keep afloat of everything. I think you could probably ask anybody at our company and they're going to be really up to date with the latest technology for retail, certainly, but also within mobile. That enables us to stay pretty nimble and forward-thinking instead of just looking at today. We can really see the landscape, what we think will look good 18 months from now, and that's what we're building. We think that enterprise mobile will be tremendously large in 18 months and we think we're in a really good spot to catch that wave.

**MATT
KERSEY**

~Your Associate Editor:
Onward Magazine



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Freak Factor:

Building Trust by Flaunting Weaknesses

Are you looking for an unconventional, and surprisingly effective, way to market your products and services? It isn't difficult. Just start flaunting your weaknesses.

Of course this is exactly the opposite of what most companies (and politicians) do. The traditional approach to marketing and public relations involves highlighting positive features and ignoring or obscuring any negative ones.

For example, a bag of Domino sugar explains that "sugar is a **100% natural** simple carbohydrate. Carbohydrates are an important part of any **balanced diet**. Sugar contains **no fat or cholesterol** and has **15 calories** per teaspoon." They make it sound like the perfect food.

Domino's strategy seems to make sense. Why would you want to tell potential customers about what's wrong with your stuff? It seems ridiculous. And that is why very few companies do it.

However, there's a major problem with this approach. We all know that sugar isn't the perfect food and that undermines our ability to trust Domino. They aren't being honest.

We know that nothing is perfect. Pretending that your stuff is flawless makes it difficult to trust you.

In contrast, acknowledging that your stuff isn't perfect makes it easier to trust you.

According to the Heath Brothers, authors of *Made to Stick*, openly admitting limitations helps us build trust. This is true when discussing our own limitations or those of our ideas, products or services.

"We've all come across salespeople who are reluctant to admit any weakness in their product or service, no matter how insignificant. **Building trust involves being candid, and being candid involves admitting that your products aren't flawless.** Admitting weakness can, oddly enough, make your core ideas more powerful."

Similarly, brand consultant, Vicki Stirling, believes that "admitting mistakes and flaws are actually really good tools to encourage loyalty."

And to be clear, this isn't about admitting, and then apologizing for, your product's weaknesses. As Stan Phelps at 9 Inch Marketing explains, it's about the opposite. For example, Jony Ive, Apple's design guru, recently declared that the new iPhone 5C is "beautifully, unapologetically plastic."

The word, flaunt, means "to parade without shame." Weaknesses aren't something to be ashamed of. They are something to celebrate.

So what would that look like in real life?

Alex Bogusky and his ad agency, Crispin Porter + Bogusky, are the creators of many well-known and successful advertising campaigns. His successes include the resurrection of Burger King and the introduction of the Mini car to America. Both of these transformations were based on amplifying weaknesses, not minimizing them.

"Instead of hiding qualities that may seem negative - such as Mini's tiny proportions or Burger King's fat content - **Crispin exploits them.** "It's part of your job as a marketer to find the truths in a company, and you let them shine through in whatever weird way it might be." Naturally, that risks pissing someone off."

If you can't fix it, feature it.

- Gerald Weinberg, Secrets of Consulting

Another example is from Buckley's. Their cough syrup is nasty and they are proud of it. They aren't trying to hide it. Instead, they made the bad taste the focus of their advertising campaign by comparing it to **trash bag leakage** and **sweaty gym socks**. The tagline is "It tastes awful. And it works." However, the implicit message is that it works because it tastes awful.

Obviously, this approach won't work with everyone. Kironmoy Datta, senior brand manager for Novartis Consumer Health, says that "Buckley's isn't for everyone. . . We made a conscious choice to not be everything to everyone."

It takes courage to call attention to existing weaknesses, but takes even more courage to make those

weaknesses worse, to exaggerate them. That is what Hardee's did and it saved their company.

I recently found this letter from Andy Puzder, President of Hardee's, on the back of the bag for my Philly Cheesesteak Thickburger.

"A few years ago when I became president of Hardee's Restaurants, we were selling so many things that we had truly become a 'jack of all trades and master of none.' Unfortunately, in today's competitive fast food world, that wasn't cutting it.

The chain needed to become known for doing something really well again . . . So I challenged my menu development folks to come up with a new line of burgers that would make people say 'Wow! I can't believe I can get burgers that good at a fast-food place.' And they did. They came up with 'Thickburgers.'"

It is important to note that Hardee's was going out of business and closing many of their stores before developing this new line of burgers. Even more importantly, most other fast food companies were furiously adding healthy options to their menu. In response to criticism about the negative health effects of their offerings, fast food outlets were offering water, fruit and salads. Hardee's moved in the opposite direction.

In essence, they were saying, "our food is fat and nasty and will make you fat and nasty." And it worked.



They succeeded by amplifying the weaknesses of fast food while everyone else was busy trying to moderate those same weaknesses. They took fast food, which was already tremendously unhealthy and made it **unhealthier**. They took fatty foods and made them **fattier**. They took nasty food and made it nastier. And it worked.

You can even use this approach with your personal branding. Jimmy Vee at Gravitational Marketing calls himself "The Five-Foot High Marketing Guy." He doesn't try to hide or minimize his short stature. He celebrates it and it makes him likable, memorable and interesting.

So are you ready to follow the example of Mini, Buckley's and Hardee's?

Are you ready to amplify the weaknesses of your product or service?

It's time to be unapologetic and flaunt your flaws.

It's time to freak out.

DAVE RENDALL

is the author of *The Freak Factor* and he speaks around the world. His clients include Fortune 50 and Fortune Global 500 companies.

@daverendall

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Prospect Profiles:

Identifying & Targeting Your Ideal Prospects

"What's cooler than a billion likes on facebook? 10, or even 1, of your ideal client." – author unknown

I heard that quote on an episode of Entrepreneur on Fire.

It's what most of us are trying to do, cut through the masses to get an at-bat with our perfect client.

But, ask yourself, how effectively are you achieving it?

Let's break it down.

The identification phase typically involves two things, demographics and psychographics.

Each are very important.

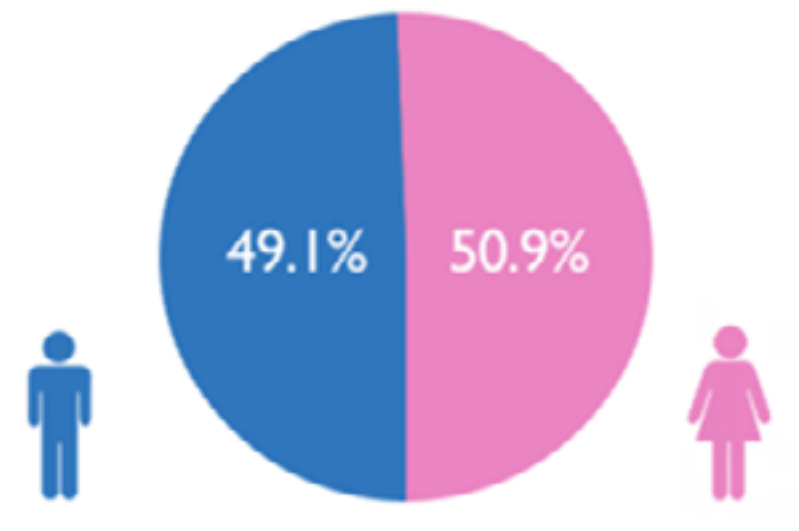
Demographics

This is the type of data most people have on their target market.

Ask John, your IT consultant, what types of businesses he's after and you'll probably get a response along the lines of:

"Any business here in the Chicago area that has between 10-200 employees. Oh, and I usually am dealing with the CEO or CFO initially."

That's demographics. It's this stuff:



- Geographic location.
- Company Size Range
 - Revenue
 - Employee count
- Ideal Position (who buys from you?)
- Age Range of this Buyer.
- Average Salary of this Buyer.
- Target Industries
- etc...

But if you just stop there, you're missing out on a key piece of the puzzle.

Psychographics

The psychographic profile of your ideal customer includes their "values, behaviors and characteristics."

(Note: Everything I learned about psychographics, I

learned from Dale Furtwengler's [Pricing for Profit](#).)

The questions you need to ask yourself are; is your customer more interested in:

Walmart 

vs.



vs.

NORDSTROM

- Image?
- Innovation or Convenience?
- Savings or Relationships?
- Value or Price?

How do they typically dress? What kind of car do they drive? What are the concerns that keep them up at night?

Answering these questions might sound like an exercise designed to manipulate. But it's not.

Think of it this way. If your business model is in-line with delivering based on strong relationships and value, do you think that a prospect with a Walmart mentality is going to be a good fit? Absolutely not.

On the flipside, if you're talking to a Mercedes Benz owner, you better not be pushing low price.

Those are the basics of "identifying" your ideal prospect, now let's talk about "targeting."

Here's an exercise that's very much worth your time.

Identify your 3 key target prospect profiles, and the top 3 methods for targeting them.

Create a cheat sheet, one for each prospect profile. It might look something like this:

Target Prospect Profile #1 – Lawn Care Company Owners

Description of Prospect:

- Owners or C-level executives at lawn care companies.
- 10 employees or greater.
- Kansas City metro area.

Top 3 Ways They Can Be Reached:

- Direct Outreach (Pick up the phone)
- Email Marketing
- Webinar

Look, you can add as many tactics to the list as you want. But the point is that you want to be focused.

Sure, you can find a lot of these people on LinkedIn, but...

1. You can also find all of them on the phone, given the nature of their business.
2. Second, you know that you can find their email addresses easily, so that's a no-brainer.
3. And finally, getting them to attend a webinar will make sense if your product or service is amenable to it.

You've essentially roughed out a mini-campaign. And skipped the stuff that isn't right. Facebook? Not for this market. Twitter? Probably not.

Trade show? Now that might be something to put on

the list, but when can you get all of these targets in one building at the same time? Probably not often, if you have a tightly focused market.

Let's take a look at another example.

Target Prospect Profile #2 – Financial Advisors Who Own Their Agency

Description of Prospect:

- Owner operators of boutique financial management firms.
- Typically have less than 20 employees and/or advisors working within their firm.
- Nationwide (U.S.)

Top 4 Ways They Can Be Reached:

- LinkedIn
- Email Marketing
- Webinar
- Direct Outreach (Pick up the phone)

This is a perfect audience to target via content marketing. For one, there are a lot of prospects that fit this profile. That makes it worth the investment to develop content (such as a webinar) that will generate results on an ongoing basis.

Assuming you agree, and you're ready to develop a webinar...don't make the classic mistake of presenting about your services. Instead, focus the webinar on a topic that has the greatest chance of piquing the interest of financial advisors who own their firm. Think about them first, and you'll attract far more prospects to your content. Then, once you have them hooked, your ability to build the relationship and move them toward the sale is completely in your hands.

But that still leaves the question...How do you get

these prospects to know your content exists? Think about where these people can be reached, and go get 'em. In this case, a combination of LinkedIn and email marketing is a perfect fit.

Now, I'm sure you're thinking, "But how am I going to actually close deals?" This happens through the direct outreach you're going to do after the webinar. Picking up the phone and calling prospects at this point will be extremely effective. They know you and trust you at this point, making it a very warm call.

No matter who you're targeting...

The key is balance. Balancing your budget, with the tactics at your disposal, with the predisposition of your prospects.

Build a little cheat sheet like the examples above for each of your target prospect profiles, and you'll have the foundation for a far more effective campaign.

And don't overthink it.

Reaching your ideal prospects is easier today than ever before. The channels available are so numerous, you'll almost never run out of tactics.

Armed with a message that stands out from the crowd, and a clear plan for executing your marketing mix, you almost can't lose.

**JOSH
TURNER**

is the Founder of **LinkedSelling** and
LinkedUniversity



Create proposals that ROCK!

Congratulations! Your customer wants a formal proposal. You must have done something right!

You are on your way, but here is where you will get put to the test.

Even the hottest salespeople get dogged up when it comes to writing a proposal. Mostly, because it feels like your information is about to dive into a black hole and you feel like you will lose control of the sale!

FEAR NOT!

There ARE the few that KNOW when a customer asks for a written proposal that they have it IN THE BAG. The deal is theirs! They rarely lose when they get to this stage in the game.

What makes them so certain? What sets them apart?

Here we will explore the NINE things that Proposal Pros know!

Number One: The advantage is now in YOUR COURT!

You NOW have the advantage! WHAT? HOW?

Yep! YOU now get to frame up the conversation! You get to set the context. You get to ask the questions and then you get to answer them! And it's all in writing, which EVERYONE knows is more believable than any verbal presentation!

Here's how you start to frame the conversation.

FIRST, you write down the customer's top 3 – 5 priorities that you have been discussing so far.

For example:

ABC Endeavors Manufacturing is seeking to:

- reduce inventory costs by 20% this year, significantly freeing up capital to purchase their top competitor
- cut order fulfillment times by 10% in the next eighteen months, creating increased customer satisfaction and employee pride
- increase manufacturing capacity without adding square footage or acquiring new facilities

(You get the picture!)

Can you see the ADVANTAGE you now have? You have effectively done the following with this simple exercise!

1. You made it about THEM. (Nobody cares about you. They care about them.)
2. You demonstrated that you are listening and that you “get” them
3. They are already agreeing with you from the very beginning! Aren't you smart?
4. YOU defined what is important. You are guiding the conversation!
5. You have created an outline for your proposal. Smooth sailing from here!

Number Two: The Executive Summary

Executives do NOT want to read your entire proposal. I promise! So give the people what they want!

Your Executive Summary will be short, make your case in bold terms, and be easy to read.

It will be one or one-and-a-half pages long.

It will start with your summary of their considerations.

It will devote a paragraph (with headings) to each of the key considerations and an idea of how you will provide a solution at each turn.

It will serve as the “table of contents” for the rest of the proposal. When an executive gets to a part of the summary that makes her think “REALLY?”, it will be easy to find the section dedicated to this topic.

Number Three: Lose the Jargon

Stay away from acronyms whenever possible. Do not assume that someone knows the language shortcuts you are taking. No executive likes to say that he does not know what you are talking about! He likes to feel SMART!

Stay away from the big and impressive words. If a gi-normous word is absolutely necessary, go ahead. But PLEASE never do anything like this: “Our clients have extrapolated six sigma implications by utilizing the synergies of affinity that we facilitate through our innovative designs.”

HELP!

Keep it simple and straightforward: “Our clients regularly reduce inventory costs by 20% after one year of using our services.”

Aaaahhhhh! So much better.

Number Four: Make it READ-able

The key to having your proposal read is to make it READ-able!

Use TITLES, HEADERS, and Subtitles to guide your reader to the right section.

Keep your paragraphs to digestible lengths. No more than six sentences, as a rule.

Remember: No one is going to read the whole thing! They really aren't.

Make sure each sentence is tight, is properly categorized for easy detection, and makes the case on its own.

Number Five: Give it some Pizazz!

Think about what YOU like to read. Are you sucked in by articles with compelling pictures and supporting graphics that keep you moving through the topic at hand?

Of COURSE you are. What makes your Executive Reader any different?

Give her something interesting to look at. Graphs, pie charts, and tables (as long as they are CLEAR), are powerful reader assistants.

Create boxes to house client testimonials or to highlight an award your company has won.

Your graphics will display a professionalism that is a match for your brand and for your customer's industry.

FUN CHALLENGE: How about including an Infographic as part of your proposal? If you have the talent on your team, this is an idea that can really set you apart!

Have your graphics DRIVE your points and make it easier to find the supporting information. Do not include them just for the sake of window dressing. Make each part of your proposal count!

Number Six: The Power You Gain when Quoting Price!

Price can be tricky, but done well, can win you HUGE POWER!

Price is tricky because your customers are sensitive to it and your competition is quoting it in all sorts of different ways! How do you keep from losing your customer at the very first sniff of price?

Here's the good news! Price is one area that allows you to really shine! If you do it right, YOU get to frame the conversation and design the right solution WITH them:

Here are the THREE most important components to quoting price:

1. Have the conversation with your customer about price and budget BEFORE you get to the proposal stage. If the first time you mention price is in the formal proposal, you are in hot water and setting the stage for your competition to win. A big no-no.

2. MAKE IT SIMPLE TO UNDERSTAND!

Each item on the price sheet should clearly demonstrate exactly how much that item will cost. Each product or service you quote should drive the customer to achieve the goals you identified in the Executive Summary.

3. Tell the Story with your Price Quote

In each description, make sure you clearly

demonstrate WHICH of the top objectives will be addressed in the particular selection.

For example, perhaps one of my company's offerings is a hand scanner issued to each employee responsible for either, inventory production, inventory storage, or inventory shipment. In the description, I might say something like: "Hand scanners for each employee associated with inventory control – providing seamless communications and real-time tracking." Clearly, this line item is a critical component of reducing inventory costs by 20%.

Now, you are guiding the conversation. Unless your competition's core offering is also hand-scanners to help with inventory control, then you will not be going head-to-head on price. You will be evaluated on the end result and the company can pick and choose the components that they believe will get them there.

Put an expiration date at the end of every price proposal. Don't lock yourself in forever. You get to say when it is time to re-negotiate!

Number Seven: TEAMWORK is critical

This is no time to go rogue!

You MUST use others in your company when you create a proposal for THREE very important reasons:

1. This is a formal document that (while not a contract) your company will be held to deliver. Do you REALLY have the authority to promise all this stuff?
2. Marketing and management may have very specific messages they want used to make company communications consistent. Make

sure your proposal is a match with their vision.

3. You are not foolproof! You missed something, made a typo, or just plain did not say it right! Get another set of eyes – or look like a fool!

Number Eight: OK, NOW it is about YOU!

This is the time when your reader is thinking, “HUH! This proposal looks pretty great. Especially if they can do everything they said! Who are these guys, anyway?”

End your proposal with your “Press Release” summary. Spend a paragraph or two summarizing your company. Include your key mission, your standing in the industry, relevant awards you may have won. Things like that.

Highlight a key client example or link to a case study.

Share a couple of testimonials.

Offer to provide references.

Number Nine: Make sure your business contact is a ROCKSTAR!

Before your proposal goes out, talk with your business contact.

Ask them THREE THINGS:

1. Did I nail the top objectives? Is that what your decision-makers are going to care about?
2. Does the price proposal section make sense and look right?
3. Is this what you expected when you asked for a proposal from me?

BONUS QUESTION: Will this make you look like a ROCKSTAR at work?

If all systems are go, ask when they will be delivering the proposal and to whom. Mark a time in your calendar to get in touch and ask for feedback. Get ready to sign a deal!

Love your proposals UP!



**DIANNA
SMITH**

The Irreverent Sales Girl, a.k.a.

Dianna Smith, brings dignity, adventure, and poise to the Art of Selling, helping clients achieve new horizons



Assessing The Landscape

Why is writing a marketing plan such an ordeal every year?

Everybody recognizes the importance of creating an effective marketing plan and then working that plan in a disciplined way to achieve commercial success. But, often when creating a marketing plan the brand team spends an inordinate amount of time assessing the landscape. The team sifts through reams of data in search of competitive insights to inform strategic choices. It becomes overwhelming, and the team slips into analysis paralysis. Like deer caught in a car's headlights, they are unable to move forward with a recommendation on how market challenges should be addressed.

But, the process of assessing the landscape doesn't really need to be such a challenge. Not if you follow the 4-I analytical model (Integrate, Immerse, Imagine, Implement).

DIRECTED ANALYSIS

For most, assessing the landscape exercise start with a massive data dump. Identifying actionable insights becomes very much like finding needles in a haystack. The exercise quickly becomes overwhelming and frustrating. More often than not it is abandoned early and the only

output is a set of basic charts (e.g. share, sales trends) supported by a limited understanding of the real business trend drivers. Or, even worse, it becomes an exercise where the team focuses on finding data to support prior assumptions regarding how to effectively compete.

The output of these paper-shuffling exercises is easy to recognize. The new marketing plan looks remarkably like the old marketing plan. The proposed budget is the same as the prior year budget adjusted for inflation. Instead of starting the assessing the landscape phase with a data dump, you need to begin with a directed analysis.

A directed analysis starts with asking the right questions, and then seeking data to answer those questions. The output of a directed analysis is easier to work with and takes less time than a classic data dump, because you don't need to sift through as large a volume of data.

The downside of a directed analysis is that you need a solid understanding of your business to generate the right questions. You need to understand competitive opportunities and challenges. You need to look at your brand and the market through three distinct lenses:

- What has worked in the past?

- What is happening now?
- What might happen in the future?

The 4-I Model

Each of the 3 lenses (past, present, future) provides a unique perspective on your brand situation. You use these lenses to assess 5 different areas:

1. Consumers

- What are the key consumer and market segment needs?
- How and why are they changing?
- Have we been effective in anticipating and addressing competitive entries?

2. Customers

- What are the key priorities of my customers?
- How does my brand fit into their product/service mix?
- What does a win look like for them?

3. Competition

- Who are the main competitors?
- What are their perceived benefits?
- What share levels have they earned and how has it changed?
- How might their past behavior predict their future actions?

4. Category

- Is the overall category growing, stable or declining?
- What are the drivers of the trend?

3. Brand

- How is my business doing?
- What is driving the performance?

INTEGRATE

The goal should be to obtain as diverse a perspective as possible to answer the questions. Involve cross-functional partners, Management, customers and consumers to get a robust picture of the landscape your brand competes in.

Put the answers in a 3x5 matrix to make it easier to see connections. The answers will allow you to “integrate” the information in such a way that the business drivers and challenges tend to stand out more prominently.

From the matrix, identify the 2 – 3 most important issues/opportunities that appear to have represented a meaningful challenge for the brand in the past, present and anticipated future. These are the business areas you are going to want to spend the bulk of your time addressing.

IMMERSE

Armed with an integrated perspective, the next step is to “immerse” your team with as much practical information about the 2 – 3 issues/opportunities you selected. The objective of this step is to identify actions you could take to address each.

During this stage you may feel you’ve wasted a ton of time and money peeling back the onion, but you need to invest a little more to better understand the business implications presented by the issues/opportunities. This is the step where understanding relevant case studies, market research and management experience is extremely

helpful.

It is also the step where interacting directly with customers/consumers can enrich your understanding. Seek to shake up your perspective by looking at the issues/opportunities through the eyes of the people your brand is trying to serve. The more you engage with customers the clearer your perspective becomes and the easier it is to determine what you should be doing.

Ultimately, you need to be in a position to adequately define the business risks/reward for each issue/opportunity so they can be addressed.

IMAGINE

Albert Einstein has been quoted as saying - "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome." Yet how many marketing plans end up looking like a reread of last year's plan? If you invest 80% of your marketing budget in the same way as the year before, should you expect discontinuous results? Einstein would argue that if you do expect different results you are insane. And who is going to argue with Albert Einstein?

Your teams must take the information collected in the "immersion" step and exercise their **"imagination"** in developing effective action plans. Answering the following questions can help stimulate innovative thinking:

1. What do the insights/opportunities suggest as alternative ways to build my brand?
2. What trends or emerging issues could hinder my brand's progress and how could I address them?
3. What are some of the choices my brand might

have to face?

4. What contingency plans might be needed to quickly course correct as these realities play out?

One resource often ignored in this step is the brand's customers and consumers. And yet, they often have the best perspective on what the real drivers and/or impediments to addressing the insights/opportunities you've identified. Not only is their perspective helpful in informing your understanding, but it is also compelling support for the choices you will be recommending when you bring your marketing plan forward to your management for review/approval.

IMPLEMENT

Marketers often overlook the importance of excellence in execution. And, yet, it is probably the biggest factor in determining the success or failure of a marketing plan.

Forbes Magazine published a great article authored by contributor Karl Moore that was titled *"Strategy Without Execution is Hallucination!"* Karl's article introduced the book - "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" and made a case for why excellence in execution can create competitive advantage. The 4 disciplines are: 1) Focus on the Wildly Important, 2) Act on the Lead Measure, 3) Keep a Compelling Scoreboard, and 4) Create a Cadence of Accountability.

The 4 disciplines are a good backdrop to think about the implement phase. Insights gleaned during the imagining step need to be translated by your team into action steps that can be "implemented" (adequately resourced and given appropriate priority). Think in terms of actions

that will strengthen your brand's targeting, value proposition, communication mix, and product development choices so you will be prepared to compete successfully today and address any possible future disruptions.

Failure to have a robust action plan to implement is a failure in the marketing plan. In the end, the only strategy the customer/consumer sees is the implementation. To avoid failure, be sure to include your sales leadership in both the imagine and implement steps of assessing the landscape.

Putting it All Together

The work you do in assessing the landscape should inform the choices you make in writing

your marketing plan. You should end up with a base plan that will continue to drive your current brand growth, an integrated component that is intended to accelerate growth (or reverse decline). You should be able to clearly describe both, and define a "compelling scoreboard" to measure tactical success. In addition, you need to be continually assessing the landscape to determine if the new tactics are working better than anticipated. If they are, consider either redirecting funds from less effective tactics or allocating incremental funds to support achieving their full upside business potential.

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Small Touches, Big Impact

While interviewing financial services clients about their experiences at one firm's office, market researcher Reva Dolobowsky found a surprisingly large impression left by a simple gesture. Being offered coffee in the waiting room set a tone of hospitality and helped transform what could have been a stressful meeting into a positive one.

Clients also liked the fact that their advisor highlighted important points in a packet of information he was giving them to take home and inserted all the materials tidily into a folder. "This was psychologically calming for the clients, signifying that chaos had been turned into order," says Dolobowsky, head of Dolobowsky Qualitative Services in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In a focus group for a pet food firm, customers expressed appreciation for handles on big bags of pet food. "This often overlooked detail expresses a thoughtful concern for making customers' lives easier," Dolobowsky notes.

"Another thing that comes up again and again from customers is tone of voice. When someone is being patient with them, they can tell right away, and it matters," she adds.

What struck me most in Dolobowsky's examples

is how unlikely it is for such small details to be on a company's list of factors to implement and monitor. Yet they have an undeniable influence on how customers feel about a company and whether or not they're likely to recommend a vendor or service provider.

Subtle touch points can build trust, heighten perceived competence, communicate a sense of caring, engender a feeling of relationship, offer pleasant surprises and even bring on sheer happiness for customers. Of course, which touch points are significant varies by what business you're in, but consider these examples.

- **Punctuality.** Do you respect clients' time by calling when you say you will and ending meetings at the pre-arranged hour while not having an efficiency-expert approach to watching the clock? Recently I heard someone complaining bitterly about a coach who charged stratospheric fees and made a big fuss if a client session went even one minute over the allotted half hour.
- **Consideration.** When I asked a repair person who came into my house to take off his work boots to protect our hardwood floors, he said company policy didn't allow that. At

this point my mental evaluation of him and his company began to decline and he hadn't even touched the problem he'd come to solve yet.

Do you take positive steps to cushion any inconveniences your services create for customers? A copy center in the financial district in Boston encourages customers making a pickup to call from their car so the manager can bring their order out to them. That way, they don't have to hunt for a parking spot or risk a ticket from double parking.

- **Listening.** According to the medical journal Family Medicine, doctors on average listen to patients only 12 seconds before interrupting. Yet internist Dr. Lisa Sanders says it takes the average patient about two minutes to tell the doctor why they made their appointment. Whether you sell telecom linkups, window treatments or change management, it's vital to really hear the concerns, needs and questions of the client rather than assume you know what's going on from the first few words. And when you're in person, customers expect eye contact, a pleasant facial expression and a minimum of multitasking.

Always keep in mind that your opinion of a customer's concern isn't as relevant as their perception. If you believe their issue is irrational, unfounded or unfair, button your lips. When I told my dentist that the lack of auditory privacy in his treatment cubicles bothered me, he tried to convince me that I was being ridiculous. "You can hear them and they can hear you, but so what? They don't know you and you don't know

them," he argued.

Along the same lines, understand that a gesture may have a positive meaning for you yet the opposite meaning for a customer. For instance, in your mind, going through a checklist together conveys thoroughness. But the client may feel going through a checklist where many items don't apply to her signals "failing to regard her as an individual."

All this underlines the importance of finding out the touch points that actually make a difference to your customers – both the annoyances and what's appreciated. Conduct a survey or engage a neutral third party to ask questions about how those doing business with you feel about the process. Use the negative points to improve and highlight the positives in testimonials, case studies or your marketing copy.

Stay on the lookout for ways to go above and beyond emotionally – which often translates into financially – small things can indeed have a disproportionate impact.

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Facebook's Power Editor By Ryan Farrell

If you are currently running Facebook ads without **Power Editor** you might want to go pause them until you are done reading this month's Toolbox. Not utilizing the powerful features of Power Editor is like driving a car with only half the cylinders firing or like baking something with the oven door open. Simply put, it's a down right waste. Power Editor is a tool that works from within Facebook's ad manager that allows you to greatly improve your ad targeting and customization.

While Power Editor is useful in a ton of ways, for the sake of brevity, I am going to focus on the two tools that are most useful to small business owners and marketers.

Potential Audience ⓘ
480,000 people

- Who are in the custom audience Attended Jan 7 Webinar_Lookalike_US_
- Who are not in any of the custom audiences Attended Oct 28th Webinar, Webinar and Attended Jan 7 Webinar
- Who live in:
 - Canada
 - United States
- exactly between the ages of 26 and 60 inclusive

Custom Audiences

This tool allows you to take your ad targeting to the next level by giving you the option to target your ads based on an email list. You can upload

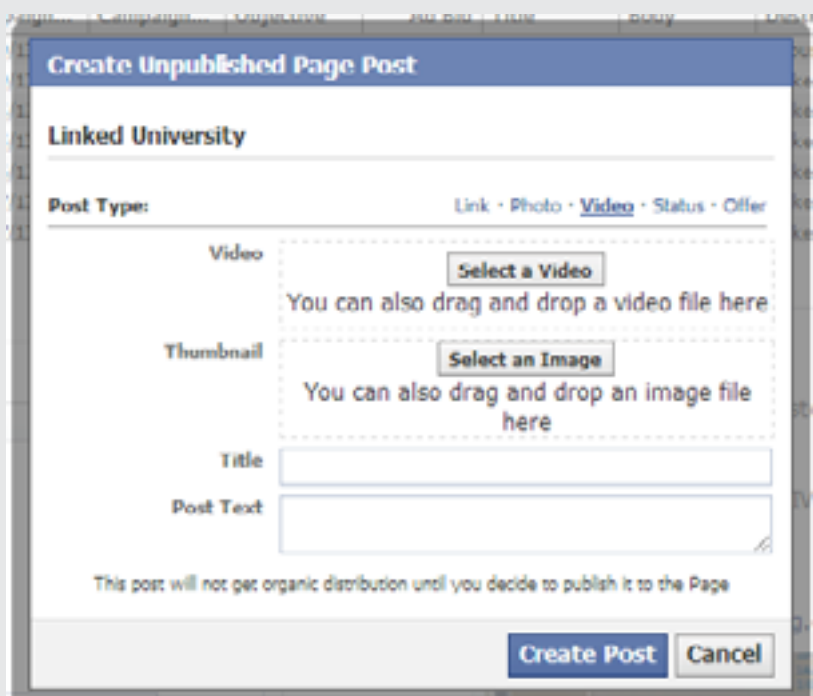
a .csv file to the Power Editor and they will create a custom audience that will only target said email addresses. This is great for having ads that you want to only reach your current customer base and /or others that have opted into an offer previously (thus surrendering their email address). This kind of pin-point targeting can greatly improve the effectiveness of your ads and thus makes them less expensive. After you have created an audience with an email list you will have the option to "create a similar audience", where Facebook will compile a group of Facebook users that have similar tendencies and interests as those who are currently in your database. You can then further segment this new "similar audience" based on specific interests that relate to your business and who you sell to.

Ad Customization

Other than its advanced targeting features, the Power Editor offers a wider array of ad types. Most notably video ads and unpublished page posts. Videos are a great way to grab your audience's attention and often have much higher engagement rates than other ads. Short explainer videos can be very useful in grabbing your audience's attention and getting your message across.

For example, say you have a new product that you want to promote. With a Facebook Video ad you could promote a product demo video that will be placed directly on your targeted audiences news feed. The great part is that you can also decide to promote a page post that is unpublished and unavailable to your current Facebook network. This is great for offering a promotion or offer to only new customers without ruffling the feathers of your current Facebook followers. This makes it easier to test different page post ads without filling up your pages feed with the same message over and over again.

For more information on how to use Facebook ads for B2B marketing [click here](#).



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-Josh Turner

Founder, [LinkedSelling](#) ✦ [Linked University](#)
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- ✦ How to structure your webinar effectively
- ✦ How to handle the post-webinar leads effectively
- ✦ And a TON more

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