

# Simple Sales Methods that Work

*Expert knowledge means success*

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Note: This publication has not been updated since it was last published. Some of the hyperlinks may have changed and may need updating. In addition, some of the information in this publication may be out of date.

## How to Use Simple Postcards to Generate Low-Cost Prospect Leads

The postcard is a highly effective business tool you can use to generate prospect leads at very low cost. Even the smallest business on a tight advertising budget can afford to implement a successful postcard mailing campaign.

Postcards are simple and easy to prepare. You can have postcards in the mail within a few days of making your decision to send them. And, delivery is fast because they're First Class Mail. You'll get replies from your postcards within two or three days of mailing them.

### Generate Prospect Leads Instead of Trying to Close Sales

Don't try to close sales directly from a postcard. There's not enough space to provide the information a prospect needs to make a buying decision. The purpose of the postcard is to generate inquiries from qualified, interested prospects. Respond to each inquiry with your sales literature, phone call, personal presentation or whatever you normally do when a prospect requests information about your product, service or opportunity.

### Everybody Reads This Postcard!

The most effective message on a postcard is brief. It presents just one major benefit the reader can gain and tells him or her exactly what to do to get more information.

I've found that providing a phone number with a pre-recorded phone message usually generates the largest number of responses. A toll-free 800 or 888 number will significantly increase your number of responses if your market is not local.

Nearly 100% of the people who get your postcard will read it... when your message is brief. There's no envelope to slice open and no letter or brochure to unfold. With just a

flip of the wrist your message is in front of your prospect's eyes. That's one of the reasons why postcards are so effective. The postcard format guarantees you'll never lose prospects who would have been interested in your offer... but didn't open the envelope to read about it. These same prospects will read your offer when you deliver it "already opened" on a postcard.

### Special Low Postage Rate:

In the US, there's even a special postage rate for postcards.

To qualify for this special postage rate, your postcard must be at least 3 1/2 inches high by 5 inches long but not over 4 1/4 inches high by 6 inches long. You also need to use paper with a thickness similar to index card stock. A standard 4" x 6" index card can be mailed at this special postcard postage rate. Also, a standard 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of index stock paper cut into 4 equal pieces will produce four 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" postcards that qualify for the special postcard postage rate. The printing cost for both of these formats is also low - about 2 cents per postcard.

Postcards don't enjoy a special postage rate outside of the US. However, many non-US business owners who use postcards tell me they are exceptionally effective. That's probably because postcards are seldom used for business purposes outside of the US. Therefore, they attract more attention than in the US. Getting more attention to your offer always results in more responses to your offer.

Postcards are inexpensive and easy to prepare. They're First Class Mail with a special low postage rate. You don't have to spend much time or invest much money to get profitable results with postcards. When you want to generate prospect leads fast while keeping your costs low - send postcards.

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Bob Leduc retired from a 30 year career of recruiting sales personnel and developing sales leads. He is now a Sales Consultant. Bob recently wrote a manual for small business owners titled "How to Build Your Small Business Fast With Simple Postcards" and several other publications to help small businesses grow and prosper.

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## Increase Your Sales by Reversing the Risk

You may be losing a lot of business without knowing it. It happens every time a potential customer decides not to buy from you because they may not get all they expect from your product or service. You can save much of this lost business by reversing that risk. One way to reverse the risk is to guarantee every claim you make. For example, tell your prospects:

*"If for any reason (product or service) doesn't deliver every claim or promise we made, we'll refund 100% of what you paid."*

You'll be amazed at how much more business you'll get with this simple guarantee. Reversing the risk breaks down your customer's resistance and instills confidence that your claims must be true. It enhances your credibility because you certainly wouldn't guarantee a full refund if your product or service didn't deliver as promised.

Maybe you're reluctant to provide a money back guarantee because you're afraid some people may take unfair advantage of it. I've learned by experience that you don't have to worry about refunds if you offer a quality product or service at a fair price. The buyers who take advantage of a money back guarantee represent only a tiny percentage of the total increased business generated by the guarantee.

### Make Your Offer Better Than Risk Free

Did you ever decide to buy something then change your mind at the last minute? Maybe you even had your chequebook or credit card out but stopped at the very last second. Some of your potential customers do this. You can convert many of these "almost sales" into customers by offering a guarantee enhanced with a bonus. TV commercials use this technique all the time. You can copy it to increase sales in your business.

To use this technique, add something extra to your offer as a bonus and tie it into your guarantee. If your customer is dissatisfied and uses your guarantee, he or she can return the product or cancel the service and get a full refund. But, they don't have to return the

bonus item. Now your offer is better than risk free. This "free bonus you can keep" motivates many "almost buyers" to take action and become customers.

Sometimes you can offer a guarantee your customer automatically gets from somebody else. It may be a guarantee from the manufacturer or even a legally required guarantee. For example, most states require life insurance companies to refund 100% of the premiums paid when a policy is returned within 10 days after delivery. Many insurance agents persuade prospective buyers to submit an application with the premium payment based on this guarantee. This is a good example of a guarantee provided by somebody else (government regulators). It's also an excellent example of reversing the risk from the buyer to the seller.

### Reversing the Risk for a Service Business

Removing the risk by providing a money back guarantee works well when a product is involved. But, how do you provide a guarantee when the transaction involves a service? Your customer can't return yesterday's plumbing job. The work was already performed. Instead of offering a money back guarantee, a service business can provide a guarantee to solve the customer's problem. For example, our plumber in the example above can guarantee to come back without charge as often as necessary to stop the leak. A landscaper can replace without charge any plants that don't survive for at least 6 months. A sales consultant can continue working without charge until the promised sales results are achieved.

### Reversing the Risk for a Business Opportunity

Nobody can guarantee someone else's success in operating a business. But there are some things you can do to lower the buyer's risk.

Start thinking about some of the things you can do in your business to reverse the risk for your potential customers and clients. Then implement them and watch how fast your sales and profits increase.

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### MLM Businesses

If you offer a MLM Network Marketing business opportunity, your company is responsible for any guarantees involving their products or services. However, you can lower the business risk for your new distributors by offering support in sales and recruiting.

For example, you can:

- Provide free prospect leads.
- Recruit their first few distributors.
- Conduct 3-way conference calls to help persuade their prospects to sign up.
- Provide free recruiting postcards.

Any sales or recruiting support you offer reduces the business risk and convinces more people to sign up under you.

## Four Ways to Get Your Prospect's Attention Fast

Can you remember the last dozen advertising messages beamed at you today? Can you remember even one of them? Most people can't.

This illustrates the biggest obstacle you need to overcome to successfully promote YOUR product or service. You must capture your prospect's attention in the first few seconds or your sales message will be ignored. This is especially important on the Internet where a visitor can simply click away from your website – for ever.

Here are four proven techniques you can use to quickly capture a prospect's attention. They apply to all media including the Internet.

### 1. Make a Dramatic Statement

Did you ever write a headline for an ad, web page or other sales message? You probably used a dramatic statement. It's the most obvious way to get someone's attention. For example:

*"Lose 8 Pounds In The Next 2 Weeks Without Dieting"*

*"My Doctor Uses These Nutritional Products"*

*"Double Your Sales And Reduce Your Advertising Expenses"*

*TIP:* Your dramatic statement will be most effective when it describes a major benefit for your prospect.

### 2. Surprise Them with Something Unexpected

Unexpected surprises always attract attention. It's often negative attention caused by something going wrong. But you can also use an unexpected surprise to attract positive attention. It happened to me recently. The office supply company I use sent me a letter announcing an automatic \$50 deduction off my total bill for this month. I immediately placed an order for items I wasn't planning to buy for another month or two. I even stocked up on several items I normally buy elsewhere. Their unexpected surprise got my attention and generated a large order during a month I hadn't planned to order anything.

### 3. Ask a Provocative Question

I once saw a direct mail letter that began with the question, "If you're such a smart executive why aren't you making a six figure income?" Not many executives could resist reading that letter, especially if they weren't making a six-figure income. Provocative questions startle your prospects and compel them to find out more. Here are two more examples of provocative questions:

"Why are you paying so much for your health insurance?"

"Do you really expect to get rich working for somebody else?"

### 4. Get Personal

Personalization also attracts immediate attention. Your personalization can be individualized or group oriented. Use **Individualized Personalization** when you're communicating directly with one person by e-mail, postal mail, telephone, etc. Use your prospect's name. It's the number one attention grabber. Merge it into the subject line and the opening line of your e-mail message. Do the same in your postal mail. Include other personal information you know about them. But be careful not to overdo it. You can personalize with a name when you're communicating directly with one prospect. But how can you get personal with a prospect visiting your web site, reading your ad or listening to your radio commercial?

Use **Group Oriented Personalization** when you're not communicating directly with one person. You can get personal by referring to known characteristics of prospects in your targeted market. For example, use phrases like:

*"When you started your business..."*  
(for business owners)

*"Your favourite NFL team..."* (for sports fans)

*"Every mother knows..."* (for women with children)

Group Oriented Personalization isn't as effective as using a person's name. But it still attracts attention because your prospect can react with, "that's me". Take some time today to plan how you can use these four proven techniques to attract more attention to your sales messages. The results will probably surprise you. So will the increase in your sales and profits.

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## Beat Your Competition Without Cutting Your Price

One way to beat your competition is to charge less for a similar product or service. But you can also beat your competition when your price is higher. One of the best ways to avoid price competition is to become a specialist in a narrowly defined targeted market.

### Relating is More Important Than Pricing

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I recently spoke with the creator of a marketing program for new business owners. He could have confronted the established competition and competed with a lower price. Instead, he decided to target prospects in 2 types of businesses he had worked with before - insurance sales and MLM marketing. He knew a lot about the operation of each business and the people who worked in them.

He created a separate web site for each type of business and customized the content to appeal specifically to prospects in that business. The site for insurance sales people looked the same as the site for MLM marketers. But the content was totally different.

His plan worked. Sales are running almost 50 percent ahead of projection ...even with a price that's 15 percent higher than similar programs. He built a successful business in a highly competitive market by becoming a specialist.

### Customers Like to Buy From a Specialist

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People like to do business with a specialist who has a unique insight into their situation. They feel confident about getting what they expect from a product or service when it is proposed by somebody who understands them and their unique needs.

Most customers or clients will even pay a little more to buy from somebody who thinks like them. It's worth it to avoid the risk of being disappointed because they bought from somebody who didn't know anything about their special situation.

### You'll Sell More as a Specialist

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Targeting a niche market enables you to design your sales messages with great precision. You can cater to specifically defined interests of prospects and communicate with them in their own style. More people will buy when they feel you are talking directly to them about their individual needs.

#### *Special Benefit:*

Delivering results as a specialist establishes you as an expert in your field. Customers and prospects will automatically refer their associates and other prospects to you. They value what you did for them. And they're confident you can do the same thing for others in a similar situation.

### Three Simple Steps to Becoming a Specialist

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Becoming a specialist is easier than you may think. You can accomplish it in three simple steps:

1. Divide your primary market into several narrowly defined markets.
2. Take each market, one at a time, and learn everything you can about the prospects in it.
3. Revise your marketing approach and selling materials to appeal to the specific needs of prospects in each new market. Use their unique language and style of communication.

*TIP:* Existing customers who match the profile of prospects in a market you've targeted can help you develop your sales approach for that market. Contact some of them and ask why they bought your product or service. What do they like best about it? Why did they choose you instead of a competitor? They'll give you a lot of information you can use to develop your appeal to other prospects who are like them.

You'll always have competitors. But you don't have to lower your price to compete with them. Instead, become a specialist and cater to prospects in a narrowly defined targeted market. Your understanding and insight into their unique situation will establish you as the expert in your field. They'll want to do business with YOU even if you don't offer the lowest price.

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## Increase Profits with Effective Follow Up

Everybody knows that sales are vital to building a profitable business. But, few people understand the importance of maintaining a permanent reservoir of potential customers (I call them "hot prospects") from which sales can be made now or very soon. The majority of businesses put most of their time and effort into continually attracting new prospects. They spend very little or no time and effort on following up with previous prospects. Attracting new prospects is important. It's also expensive. Following up with previous prospects is important, too. In comparison with finding new prospects, it's very inexpensive.

If you're in business, don't overlook the "acres of diamonds" in your own backyard. You've already devoted the time and spent the money to attract these previous prospects. Most of them who haven't yet bought from you still have an interest in your product or service. It just wasn't convenient for them to take action at the time you communicated with them.

You can still get business from these prospects if you stay in contact with them. The cost of getting business by following up with previous prospects will be very low in comparison to getting business by finding fresh, new prospects.

How do you handle these previous prospects to keep your name in front of them without becoming a pest? I'll give you two "real life" examples from my own experience. One is a traditional, postal mail technique. The other is an online, e-mail technique. Adapt either or both examples to your operation. You'll see an immediate increase in business with little or no expense.

### Follow Up by Postal Mail

Before retiring, I was in the financial services sales business. Most of our business came from sales of life insurance and mutual funds. Because the client sees no immediate reward for buying life insurance or setting up an investment account, most people tend to delay taking action. There is never a right time to start. I became very proficient at staying in contact with potential clients. As a result, most of my new business came from prospects I met months or even years earlier.

Every three months, I sent a postcard to each previous prospect offering them something of value. This was usually a free report or booklet of useful information related in some way to financial planning. The postcard kept my name in front of them. Plus, every time they responded to request the new information, I had another opportunity to talk with them about their financial planning. Best of all, the discussion was always conducted under favourable circumstances because they requested the communication. Not me.

### Follow Up by E-Mail

The other example of successful follow up involves e-mail. Since retiring, I've written a manual and several reports that I sell on the Internet. E-mail inquiries go to one of my autoresponders or come directly to me. All of them receive an offer with a special price deadline about 15 days in the future. About half of the orders I get come from this first contact. However, the other half results from my follow ups. I use two methods of follow up:

1. Five days before the Special Price deadline, I send a brief e-mail message reminding the prospect that the Special Price Offer is about to expire. The reminder includes an offer to send another copy of the original message if the prospect doesn't have it. Only about 10%-15% request the information again. Almost all of them place an order.
2. Every 2 months I follow up again with a brief e-mail reminder of the original request and offer to send my current Special Price Offer if the prospect requests it. Usually 20%-30% will request it.

About 50% of my total sales results from inquiries generated by these two types of follow up messages. I would have only half as much business if I didn't send those follow up messages.

What does it cost me to generate this additional business? Nothing. The money was already spent to get the first reply. Implementing a follow up procedure can substantially increase your volume of business. Because following up is so inexpensive, the business it produces is very profitable.

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If you implement this type of follow up, here are 2 suggestions:

1. Use postcards with just a brief message. They will get read by almost 100% of the recipients. Postcards are easy to print and they're very inexpensive. Plus, the postage for sending a postcard in the US is only 20 cents... and you get First Class Mail service.
2. Send approximately the same number of postcards every week instead of sending a large number at one time every few months. You don't want to generate 250 inquiries this week and none for the next 3 months. You won't be able to follow up on all of them while they are still "fresh". What you want is 20 inquiries per week every week so you can follow up with each one as soon as you get it... while they still have a high level of interest.

## How to Get Free Testimonials and Use Them to Increase Your Sales

One of the most valuable marketing tools for a business is the testimonials it receives from satisfied customers. Yet, many businesses never use these testimonials in their sales efforts.

Testimonials are valuable proof to prospective customers that your product or service actually delivers the benefit you claim it will. In some ways, testimonials are like referrals. A customer coming to you by referral from one of their friends or acquaintances is already pre-committed to do business with you. You don't have to convince them that your product or service will provide the benefit they seek. Your ability to deliver is already "guaranteed" by the person giving the referral.

Testimonials from satisfied customers provide that same assurance to a potential customer coming to you without a referral. In every test I performed using the same messages with and without testimonials, those with testimonials increased sales, often by as much as 65% or more.

### How to Get Good Testimonials

Satisfied customers will occasionally call or write to you expressing their appreciation without any prompting from you. If you've been in business for some time you probably already have a file of these. However, if you're new in business you may have few or none of these "spontaneous testimonials". How can you get some... and get them fast?

Here's a simple procedure any business can use effectively. A short time after completing a transaction, send your customer or client a personal postcard asking what they liked best about your product or service. You'll be amazed at some of the glowing comments you'll get. When you receive comments you want to use in your advertising, simply ask the customer to sign a release giving you permission to quote those comments in your promotional material.

The release form I use includes the full text of the customer's comments. I request permission to use the comments "in complete or edited form" so I can shorten the text when it's too long. I also request permission to use the customer's name, city and state so it appears as "Ann Smith, Austin, TX" instead of "A.S., TX". The customer's privacy is protected by omitting the street address.

### How to Use Testimonials Effectively

My online and print sales letters usually include three testimonials. Each one is only two or three lines plus the customer's name, city and state.

Be sure to select testimonials stating a specific benefit gained by using your product or service. A testimonial saying: "I bought your widget and am very happy with it" won't motivate anybody else to buy your widget. Instead, use testimonials like this actual testimonial I received from one of my customers: "Hi Bob. I purchased your manual and used one of the ideas to do a mailing which received about a 10% response rate." That's a powerful testimonial and I use it regularly in my promotional material. It states specifically what the customer gained by ordering my manual.

What do testimonials cost? Nothing! They're FREE! I've learned by experience that some customers get offended if I offer to pay for the right to quote their comments. Therefore, I don't offer any compensation. I simply send the release form with a pre-stamped return envelope and ask them to sign and return the form. I don't remember the last time somebody refused my request.

If you're not using testimonials in your promotional material, start using them today. Begin by looking in your customer files for comments you can use. Send postcards to some recent customers asking what they liked most about your product or service.

Get permission to quote their comments and include them in your sales material. You'll soon discover FREE testimonials have the amazing power to increase your sales and profits without increasing your costs.

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## Three Buying Motivators to Increase Your Sales

Here are three powerful buying motivators you can use to increase your sales without increasing your expenses. They work for any business and apply to every marketing method including the Internet.

### 1. Promote "Simple, Fast and Easy"

Your customers want your product or service to provide a simple solution to their problem. They also want to see fast results and they want those results to be easy to get.

Give them what they want. Promote the characteristics of your product or service that are simple and easy – and those that provide fast results. These are often more important to customers than price.

Also make your buying process simple, fast and easy for EACH customer so you don't lose potential sales. For example... many Internet marketers offer only one way for customers to order -- online at a secure server. That may be the easiest way for YOU to buy something but it's not the easiest way for all of your customers. That's why many online orders get abandoned before they're completed.

One online marketer told me her sales increased almost 20 percent when she added the options of ordering by phone, fax or postal mail.

### 2. Stop Selling and Let Them Buy

People love to buy things but they hate the feeling of being sold something.

I recently read about a survey conducted among new car buyers. Every participant rated the helpful attitude of the salesperson as one of the major reasons they bought their car. None felt like a persuasive salesperson SOLD them a car. Instead, they felt like they BOUGHT the car.

Most of those survey participants were probably ready to buy a car when they walked into the dealership. The salesperson didn't have to persuade them to buy. He just needed to find a car with the features they wanted and a price they could afford.

How can you create the same atmosphere in your business? Target your advertising to prospects most likely to be interested in what you're selling. They won't require much persuasion to buy.

*IMPORTANT:* Prospects in a narrowly defined target market will immediately recognize how your product or service can benefit them. You don't have to persuade them of its value. But you do have to persuade them to take immediate action and buy NOW.

### 3. Eliminate the Risk

Prospects often avoid buying from you because they don't want to risk the chance of getting unsatisfactory results from your product or service.

One way you can eliminate that risk is to guarantee their satisfaction. A money back guarantee with few or no conditions is a powerful risk eliminator if you sell a product.

But a money back guarantee may not be practical if you sell a service. You can't recover any of the time and labour you already invested. Instead of a money back guarantee, you can guarantee to perform additional services at no cost until your customer is satisfied with the results.

Another way to reduce your customer's risk is to provide testimonials from satisfied customers. They prove you can deliver what you promise. (You do ask your customers for testimonials, don't you?)

The most effective testimonial describes a specific benefit your customer gained by using your product or service. For example, "I already lost 9 pounds in just 3 weeks."

*TIP:* Get permission to include your customer's name and address with each testimonial. Personal testimonials from real people are more believable than anonymous testimonials.

Spend some time today applying these three buying motivators to promote your business. You'll be amazed by how quickly they increase your sales without increasing your expenses.

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## Three Ways to Get More Sales When You Advertise

Here are three powerful marketing tactics you can use to get more sales the next time you advertise. All three work for any business. And you can use them effectively on the Internet or in traditional media.

### 1. Promote One Thing at a Time

Most people dislike making a decision to buy something when it forces them to reject or delay buying something else they also want. They're afraid to make a decision they may regret later. Many prospects faced with this choice spend a lot of time evaluating their options. They can't make a clear choice so they make NO decision at all ...and you lose a sale.

That's why it's more effective to promote only 1 product or service each time you advertise. Develop separate ads, web pages, sales letters, etc. to promote each product or service you offer. Limit your prospect's decision to only "Yes" or "No" instead of "Yes", "No" or "Which One". You'll get more "Yes" decisions this way.

TIP: Sometimes you can successfully combine two or more related products or services into a special offer. But limit your customer's decision to "Yes" or "No". Don't include an option to buy any of the items separately.

### 2. Dramatize the Good Feeling

Customers buy from you because they want to enjoy the benefit produced by using your product or service. They want to get that benefit fast. And they want your product to be easy to use - or your service to produce results without disturbing their daily routine.

Keep this in mind as you develop your ads, web pages, sales letters and other sales tools. Use vivid word pictures to dramatize the pleasant feeling your customer will experience when he or she enjoys the benefit produced by your product or service.

Here are 3 examples of descriptive word pictures used by different businesses...

- *"No Boss. No Schedule. No Debt. Money To Buy What You Want And Time To Spend Having Fun."* (Business Opportunity Offer)
- *"More Prospective Clients Than You Can Handle Will Call You Every Day."* (Sales Lead Service)
- *"You'll Feel Good, Look Younger And Enjoy Playing Active Sports Without Getting Tired."* (Weight Loss Product)

### 3. Follow Up Periodically

Most prospects will not buy from you the first time they hear about your product or service ...or the first time they visit your web site. They may be very interested in what you offer. But other priorities prevent them from buying NOW.

You can recover many of these "almost sales" with a follow up system. Follow up systems produce very profitable sales because they don't involve any advertising expense.

Your follow up system can be as simple as periodically contacting previous prospects with a new offer for your product or service.

Another effective follow up method is to distribute an informative newsletter with topics related to your product or service. A newsletter automatically reminds prospects about you every time they get it. This is especially effective for marketing on the Internet where your newsletter can be distributed free by e-mail.

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*TIP:* Develop a method to capture and save the names and contact information of prospects who didn't buy from you. You need it to follow up.

#### They work!

Use these marketing tactics to make your advertising more effective and more profitable.

They will increase the number of sales you get without increasing your advertising costs.

## Increase Your Sales by Increasing Your Believability

People won't buy from you until they're confident you will deliver exactly what they expect to get. You can help them develop that confidence by making certain every claim you make about your product or service is fully believable.

Here are three ways you can increase your believability with prospects—and generate more sales. All three work for any business. And you can use them with any marketing method including the Internet.

### 1. Use Testimonials

Testimonials from satisfied customers are powerful selling tools. They establish your believability because they prove you already delivered what you promised to other customers.

The most effective testimonials describe a specific result your customer enjoyed by using your product or service. For example, "In just 2 weeks I lost 9 pounds, felt years younger and still enjoyed all my favourite foods".

*TIP:* Get permission to use your customers' names and addresses with their testimonials. Personal testimonials from real people are more believable than anonymous testimonials.

### 2. Provide Specifics

You can also increase your believability by converting general statements into specific descriptions. "It's fast, easy and inexpensive" may accurately describe your product or service. But a specific description of how fast, how easy and how inexpensive is more believable.

Also, try to avoid using round numbers (10, 25, 40, etc.) in your claims. Instead, reduce them to specific odd numbers with fractions or decimals. Here's why...

Which of the following two statements sounds more authentic to you?

1. "Our clients average 30 percent more sales."
2. "Our clients average 27.7 percent more sales."

Most people choose the second statement. 30 percent may be the accurate number. But 27.7 percent is more believable.

*BONUS:* Specific descriptions also create impact and excitement. They motivate more of your prospects to buy.

### 3. Tone Down Your Claims

If the actual results you can produce for your customers or clients sound too good to be true, your prospective customers will assume it's not true. It happened to me...

I once developed a direct mail postcard that generated over 20 percent replies when I sent it to names on a special mailing list. Most of the businesses I approached with a lead service using this postcard didn't believe I could really get that high a response rate for them.

The service was difficult to sell unless I substantially understated the projected rate of response. I eventually discovered that projecting a 7½ to 9½ percent response rate produced the largest number of sales. That rate was still a substantial increase for any company—and it was more believable than the actual rate of more than 20 percent.

#### *Special Advantage:*

Understating the results your customer can expect also enhances your credibility. Imagine your customer's reaction when your product or service produces substantially better results than you promised.

How believable are the claims and promises you make to prospective customers or clients? Do you use testimonials and provide specifics? Are there any claims you need to tone down because they sound too good to be true? Prospective customers won't buy from you unless they fully believe every claim and promise you make.

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## How to Convert More of Your Prospects Into Customers

An obvious way to increase sales is to attract more prospects to your business. But it's easier and less expensive to increase sales by converting more of the prospects you're already getting into customers.

Here are two proven tactics you can use to convert a higher percentage of your prospects into customers. Both are simple procedures any business can implement quickly for little or no cost.

### 1. Dramatically Improve Your Offer

Most prospects who take the time to consider your product or service would like to buy from you. But they decided other things they want are either more important or more urgent. One way to capture many of these sales is to dramatically improve your offer. Create a "good deal" that's so enticing it becomes their first choice.

You don't have to reduce your price to improve your offer. Instead, simply load your offer with bonuses. Whatever you offer as a bonus must have a high perceived value to your customers -- even if it costs you little or nothing. Loading your offer with bonuses is an effective motivator even when you increase the price of your offer to cover the additional cost.

#### *Important:*

Always include an expiration date for your special offer. Give prospects the choice to either accept your offer within a short time or forfeit it. This will motivate many prospects to delay some other purchase so they can buy your product or service now.

*TIP:* To create an absolutely irresistible offer - include a special discount price AND a set of valuable bonuses in your offer.

### 2. Develop a Follow Up System

Most prospects won't buy the first time they hear about your product or service. You can increase your total sales by 50 percent or more if you periodically follow up with them.

Your follow up procedure can be as simple as contacting previous prospects every month or two with a new offer. Or it can be more elaborate such as publishing a weekly newsletter with information and articles related to your product or service.

#### *Problem For Internet Marketers:*

Many visitors to your web site want what you offer - but they're not ready to buy right now. You can't follow up with them if they click away from your site before you find out who they are and how to contact them.

#### *The Solution:*

Post a free offer on your site for something valuable to prospects in your targeted market. Deliver it ONLY by e-mail. This enables you to capture the e-mail address of each visitor who requests it. For example, offer a free subscription to your e-mail newsletter if you publish one. Otherwise, offer a special report, a source list or other valuable information they cannot get anywhere else.

*TIP:* Try to get each prospect's first name too. Use it to personalise your follow up messages. People can't resist reading something that's personally addressed to them.

You'll never be able to convert every prospect into a customer. But you can convert more of them than you do now by implementing these 2 procedures. And these additional sales will be very profitable because you don't have to spend more money on advertising to get them.

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## Reducing Scepticism and Increasing Desire

Prospects buy from you because they want to enjoy the benefits produced by your product or service. Their desire for those benefits makes them want to believe everything you tell them. But scepticism makes them reluctant to buy. When their scepticism is greater than their desire - you lose the sale.

You can get more sales from prospects by reducing their feeling of scepticism - AND by increasing their desire for your benefits. Here's how...

### How to reduce your prospect's scepticism

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Your prospects bought things in the past that didn't produce the promised results. It's natural for them to be sceptical of your offers and promises. Here are 2 techniques you can use to overcome their scepticism.

#### 1. *Eliminate Risk*

The main cause of your prospect's scepticism is their fear of loss. They don't want to risk losing money if your product or service doesn't produce the results they expect. You can eliminate that fear by guaranteeing their satisfaction. Offer to refund the buyer's money if they don't get the results you promise.

A money back guarantee is a powerful sales tool. But it may not be practical for you if you sell a service.

You can't recover all the time and labour you already invested in a job. Instead of a money back guarantee, provide a guarantee to continue performing services until your customer is satisfied with the results. This eliminates your customer's fear of loss without creating a big risk for you.

#### 2. *Provide Proof - Include Testimonials*

Another powerful tool you can use to overcome your prospect's scepticism is testimonials from satisfied customers. They provide evidence that you lived up to your promises in the past.

Testimonials promote your prospect's confidence in you and in the claims you make about your product or service.

Develop the habit of asking your customers and clients for testimonials. Then use them in all your marketing efforts.

*TIP:* Get permission from your customer to include their real name and address with their testimonial. Testimonials from real people are more believable than anonymous testimonials.

#### *Internet Marketers:*

Testimonials are highly effective for building your credibility online. Don't limit their use to web pages promoting the product or service mentioned in the testimonial. Include a few on your home page too.

### How to increase your prospect's desire

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Convert the benefits provided by your product or service into vivid word pictures. Put your prospect in the picture by dramatising what it feels like to be enjoying those benefits.

Be specific. If you sell financial products, describe what it feels like to enjoy an affluent lifestyle without debt. If you sell boats, describe what it feels like cutting through the waves with your friends onboard. If you offer an MLM or other home-based business opportunity, describe what it feels like to work at home without a boss.

#### *Important:*

Be sure your word pictures are dramatising benefits and not describing features. People don't really care about the new high-tech insulation used in their new picnic cooler (a feature). They just want to be able to enjoy ice-cold beverages all day long when they're outside on a hot day (the benefit).

Use these techniques to help your prospects reduce their feeling of scepticism and increase their desire for your benefits. Once their desire is greater than their scepticism - you'll gain a new customer.

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## Don't Overlook the Three Special Benefits Every Customer Wants From You

Every customer looks for three special benefits when they do business with you. They may not specifically ask for these benefits. But you're losing sales if you don't automatically provide all three.

### 1. Fast Results

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Prospective customers may take a long time deciding whether or not they will buy from you. But once they decide to buy, they expect instant results. When people buy a car they want to drive it home today. When they sign up with a health club they expect to look and feel better by the end of the week.

Look for ways you can reduce the time your customers have to wait after a transaction before they can start enjoying the results of their decision to buy. Try to deliver your product at the point of sale. When that's not possible, look for creative ways to provide a benefit your customer can start enjoying immediately.

For example, a publisher I know recently created a special package combination of his latest "how-to" book in print and several eBooks on the same subject. When customers order his new book, they can immediately download the eBooks on their computer. They don't have to wait for the hardcover book to arrive before they can start enjoying the benefit they paid for.

### 2. Easy Procedures

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Customers want products that are easy to use and services that produce results without disturbing their daily routine. You can increase your sales by stressing the "easy to use" characteristics of your product or service in all your promotions. Convenience and ease of use are often more important to customers than price.

Simplify your buying procedure too. Make it easier for customers to buy from you and you will get more sales.

For example, many online shoppers are impatient and won't tolerate a lengthy ordering process. Minimize the number of times your customer has to click to another screen when ordering online. Use a simple order form instead of a shopping cart if you only offer one or two items. And don't ask them to give you more information than you need to process their order.

### 3. Personal Attention

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Every prospect and customer wants personal attention. One way you can provide it is by giving them an opportunity to ask questions.

Only interested prospects will take the time to ask questions. Many will buy from you if they get valuable information from your answer. You can often include a promotion for your product or service as part of your answer.

Answering questions is not time consuming. The same questions will be repeated over and over again. But you only have to answer each question once if you save your answer to a permanent file. Copy it into your reply whenever you get that same question again ...and revise it slightly to personalize your response. You can answer questions quickly and your prospects will appreciate your personal attention.

*TIP:* If you find yourself personally answering a lot of questions, add a Questions and Answers page to your web site. Post the answers to your most frequently asked questions. It will reduce the number of questions you have to answer individually. But remember, it also deprives you of an opportunity to impress prospects with your personal attention.

Every customer wants fast results, easy procedures and personal attention. Most won't ask for these benefits. But they won't buy from you unless they get them. Make sure you provide all 3 of these special benefits ...and look for ways to improve the quality of each. Then watch how quickly your sales increase.

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## Energize Your Sales Copy to Increase Your Sales

Would you like to capture more sales with your web site, sales letters, and other promotional messages? It may not be as difficult as you think. Here are five proven tactics you can apply to energize your sales copy - and increase your sales volume.

### 1. Replace Generalities with Specifics

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Look for general statements in your web pages and sales letters. Replace them with specific statements.

For example, a general statement like, "Our clients get more sales", is dull. Replace it with "Most new clients enjoy at least a 23 percent increase in sales within 60 days" to create excitement. This motivates prospects to sign up now so they can start enjoying that 23 percent sales increase.

#### *Important:*

Make sure your specific statements are accurate and believable or your credibility will be challenged.

*TIP:* If something sounds too good to be true your prospects will assume it's not true and they won't buy. Understate any specific claim that sounds exaggerated ...even if it is true.

### 2. Shorten Paragraphs, Sentences and Words

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Long paragraphs and sentences bore your prospects. It causes them to lose interest before getting to the end of your message. Short paragraphs and sentences are easier to read. They hold your prospect's interest.

Divide long paragraphs into shorter paragraphs of 7 lines or less. Break up sentences longer than 18 words into 2 sentences. And look for long or uncommon words you can replace with commonly used words. For example, replace words like "originate" with "start" or "receive" with "get".

### 3. Convert Passive Words and Phrases into Active Ones

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Your sales letter or web page must build the prospect's desire for your product or service then motivate them to place an order. It must also hold their interest and keep them emotionally involved through the entire process or you won't get the sale.

Active, stimulating words and phrases keep your prospect involved and interested in reading your sales copy. Look for dull passive words and phrases you can eliminate or replace with active ones. For example, change a phrase like "...it's practical and inexpensive" to "...it's fast, easy and you'll save \$99"

### 4. Get rid of Humorous Remarks

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Humour can be effective in some media - but not in written sales messages. It distracts your prospects by interrupting their mental focus on your message. This distraction can cause you to lose some sales. Get rid of any humorous remarks in your web pages and sales letters.

*SUGGESTION:* Replace your humorous remarks with real life stories from customers describing how they benefited by using your product or service. Real life stories add human interest and draw prospects into your message. Humour distracts their attention away from your message.

### 5. Include a Motivating "P.S."

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Most prospects glance at the beginning of your web page or sales letter then jump to the end before reading anything in between. Take advantage of this and put something at the end of your message to stimulate their interest. Create it as a "P.S."

For example, use a "P.S." to emphasize your offer, highlight a deadline or to dramatize a significant benefit. All of these will pull the prospect into your message.

Use these five proven copywriting tactics to energize your sales copy. Your web pages, sales letters and other promotional messages will immediately start producing more sales for you.

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## Three Easy Ways to Get More Sales

Most successful businesses use these three marketing tactics to maximize their sales results. But many businesses struggle to get enough sales because they don't know about these tactics - or don't use them. Are you one of them?

### 1. Sub-Divide Your Market

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Prospective customers are more likely to buy your product or service when they believe you understand their needs.

Give them what they want and you'll get more sales.

Segment your targeted market into several more narrowly defined sub-markets. Then customize your sales message to appeal to the specific needs of prospects in each sub-market.

For example, a network marketer can focus on the advantages of working from home on your own schedule when promoting the business to young mothers. But she can focus on the advantages of independence and high-income potential when promoting the business to corporate employees.

### 2. Highlight an Exclusive Benefit

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Another way to increase your sales is to capture more of the sales you're losing to competitors. Tell prospective customers why they should buy from you instead of from your competition.

Highlight a benefit your customers get from you but cannot get from your competitors. Here are some exclusive benefits with examples of how you can dramatize them.

\*\* Faster Service: *"Free overnight delivery of every order"*

\*\* Better Guarantee: *"Exactly what you want, when you want it, every time - or it's free"*

\*\* Personal Service: *"Your own service representative with a real name and phone number you can call anytime"*

If you don't have an exclusive benefit, create one. Add something to your business you're not already doing. Promote it in all your advertising. Include it on your letterhead, on

your web site and anywhere else your company name appears.

*TIP:* The most effective exclusive benefit is one your competitors cannot copy ...or one they're not willing to copy. One business owner I know includes his personal phone number on every order. His competitors don't. And they're not likely to make themselves that accessible to customers.

### 3. Follow Up Every Sale With Another Offer

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You'll always need new customers. But don't overlook sales you can easily get from your existing customers. It's easier to get more business from them than to get any business from new prospects.

Your customers are especially receptive to more offers immediately after they buy from you. Offer them another product or service related to the one they just bought. Many will accept your offer ...even when the prior sale automatically generates repeat business for the original product or service.

If you don't already have additional products or services, find or create some. For example, offer instructional material related to your customer's original purchase. It can be a book, a series of books, a training course, computer software, membership in a fee-based web site or any other type of instructional material related to their original purchase.

*TIP:* Look for an affiliate program set up to sell instructional material you can use. All you have to do is sign up as an affiliate and announce the product or service to your customers. The affiliate program handles everything else and pays you a commission for each sale you generate.

Most successful marketers use these three marketing tactics to maximize their sales results. Don't overlook any of them. They're easy to use and highly effective. Start using them now to get more sales for YOUR business.

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## Five Selling Tips to Increase Your Sales

Here are five selling tips to help you increase your sales.

All five work for any business. They're effective for both online and traditional offline marketing. And they won't cost you anything to implement.

### 1. Promote One Thing at a Time

Promote only one product or service at a time. It limits your prospect's buying decision to either "yes" or "no". Every "yes" answer produces an immediate sale.

Avoid promotions requiring prospects to make more choices after making the decision to buy. Some won't be able to make a clear choice. They'll avoid the risk of making a wrong choice by making NO choice -- and you lose the sale you already had.

You can develop separate promotions for each product or service you sell. Or you can combine several products and services into one package for one price. But always make your prospective customer's buying decision a simple "yes" or "no". It produces the maximum number of sales.

### 2. Lead With Your Biggest Benefit

What's the biggest benefit you offer to customers? That benefit is your strongest selling appeal. Use it to attract prospects to your promotional message.

State your biggest benefit in the headline of your ads. Put it in the first sentence of your sales letters. Include it in a title at the top of your webpage. Use it as the opening of your audio or audio-video promotions. Leading immediately with your biggest benefit captures your prospect's attention and provides a compelling reason to continue reading or listening to your message.

### 3. Personalize Your Approach

More people will buy from you when they feel you are talking directly to them about their individual needs. Develop customized versions of your sales message to cater to the specific interests of prospects in each market you target. Use the language and style of prospects in each market to communicate your message to them.

It's easy to use different versions of your sales message when you control who gets it. But how can you personalize your web site to appeal to prospects in one market without losing your appeal to other prospects visiting your site?

One way is to create special web pages for prospects in each market you target. Customize the content of each to appeal to prospects in that group. Then add a link to each of these special pages on your home page.

### 4. Provide Specifics

Marketers often describe their product or service with words like, "It's fast, easy and inexpensive". But a specific description of how fast, how easy and how inexpensive will generate more sales.

For example, a general statement like, "Our clients get more sales", is dull. It won't produce sales. Replace it with a specific statement like, "Most of our new clients enjoy at least a 17 percent sales increase in the first month". This statement creates excitement. It motivates prospects to sign up now so they can start enjoying that 17 percent increase in THEIR sales.

### 5. Dramatize Feelings

Customers usually buy on impulse, not logic. They base their buying decision on how they feel about your product or service. Get them excited about using your product or service and you'll increase your sales.

Revise your ads, sales letters and web pages to dramatize the emotional rewards your customer will experience when using your product or service. Use vivid word pictures to help them imagine themselves already enjoying those benefits. For example, a financial planner could describe what it feels like to enjoy an affluent lifestyle without debt.

Each of these selling tips will help you increase your sales. They produce immediate results. And they won't cost you anything to implement.

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## How To Grow Your Business In An Economic Slowdown

Bad economic news doesn't have to be bad news for your small business. Your business can thrive and grow in a slowing economy if you make it recession-proof. Here are three things you can do immediately to start recession-proofing your business.

### Get More For Your Advertising Expense

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The return on your advertising expense will shrink during bad economic times unless you take specific actions to prevent it. Look for ways to keep your sales volume growing without increasing your advertising expense. For example:

#### *\*\* Negotiate Prices with Advertisers*

Advertisers are hit hard during an economic slump. Many are willing to negotiate a special discount to keep your business - or to get it away from their competitors. Take the initiative when you're placing an ad. Ask for a discount or a bigger discount than one already offered.

#### *\*\* Trim Your Ads*

Reduce the size of your ads so you can run more ads without increasing your total cost. Don't be surprised if some of your short ads generate a bigger response than your long ads. The most effective ad I ever used was only 11 words.

#### *\*\* Generate Free Publicity*

Start a publicity program for your business ...or expand the one you already have. Publicity produces sales for a much lower cost than advertising. For example, find something newsworthy about your business. Write about it in a news release and distribute it to publishers.

### Take Advantage Of Your Existing Customers

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Your customers already know you and trust you. It's easier and cheaper to get more business from them than to get any business from new prospects. Here are two ways to use your relationship with customers to generate additional business.

#### *1. Offer Them Related Products or Services*

Find or create additional products and services you can offer to existing customers (and to new prospects). Your new products or services should be closely related to those your customers originally bought from you.

For example, I recently spoke with a network marketer selling nutritional products. She also works with a health club that pays her a commission for each new member she signs up. Over one third of her income is generated by offering the related product to her customers.

#### *2. Ask Them to Help You Find New Customers*

Ask your customers for referrals. Reward them for each referral that becomes a customer. Your reward could be a discount on their next order or a special bonus item. Announce your referral program to customers with low cost communication tools like e-mail, postcards or personal phone calls.

### Offer Some "Big Ticket" Items

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Some of your potential customers are not affected by a poor economy - or they benefit from it. Others may place a higher value on your products or services when the economy is bad. These prospects are willing spend much more with you than your average customer. Don't forfeit this income. Find or create additional products or services similar to those you now offer ...but with a much higher price.

For example, one online marketer recently packaged her latest "how to" book with several eBooks and a "members only" website. She priced this special package about 8 times more than the average size order placed by her customers.

Her number of sales declined when the economy slowed down. But her sales volume and net profit are still growing. The money produced by a small number of these "big ticket" sales more than replaced the money she lost because of fewer average size sales.

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**Thrive and Grow**  
Your business can thrive and grow during an economic slowdown if you make it recession-proof. Use these three proven marketing tactics to start recession-proofing your business.

## Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues.

We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

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