

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, let me say a big 'Thank You' for investing time, money and effort into starting this programme. As obvious as it may sound, the first step in any endeavour is to get started – you've taken that step!

If you're studying this course then you're probably a sole trader or part of a small business, seeking to gain new knowledge about how to develop and grow your business, and put that knowledge into action. This programme has been written to help a wide variety of individuals, from specialist practitioners, complementary therapists, consultants, coaches, writers, teachers and creative professionals. Whatever field of expertise you are developing, the ideas, techniques and tools that we'll be covering will help you:

- ✓ Understand more precisely how your business can be described to make it clear and compelling for potential clients
- ✓ Develop a step-by-step plan of action to start (or continue) building your business
- ✓ Select and implement new marketing and promotional techniques to generate enquiries from the right kind of clients, at the right time
- ✓ Learn what to say and how to say it when following up enquiries, without worrying about being 'pushy' or 'sales-y'
- ✓ Ensure that every new customer becomes an ambassador for your business, spreading the word to others
- ✓ Create marketing 'systems' and 'processes' which are easy to use, repeatable and effective, so that you can focus on what you do best – serving your clients.

Throughout the programme, I may use words like consultant, therapist, practitioner, teacher and so on. I personally work with all of these types of entrepreneur. Whatever word I may use at different points in the programme, I am talking to YOU.

WHY IS THIS PROGRAMME DIFFERENT?

I been in business for more than 30 years, and have been working as an independent marketing consultant since 1999. During that time I have read, watched, listened to or attended thousands of training programmes. I make it part of my working life to study something new each week, whether it be a book, course, video programme, specialist article, or market research paper.

I do this for one reason: so that you don't have to.

It's my job to keep my clients and contacts up to date on the latest trends, new ideas, most effective techniques and seasonal opportunities. Most marketing courses either give you

ONLY the theory without the practical 'how-to-do-it' bits, or they only tell you part of the story. In this course, we will naturally study the theories, but I'll then be asking you to take ACTION and put those theories into practice. And I'll provide tools to help you do that as effortlessly as possible.

TAKE PART

Allocate 1-2 hours a week minimum to following the programme, completing the exercises and implementing your plans. Marketing is never going to be a simple process, but it can be an easy one, if you take it step-by-step.

One of the biggest excuses I come across from sole traders is that there is never enough time. They are too busy doing their job to be able to 'do any marketing'. And yet, everybody always finds time to eat, sleep, shower, shave and dress. Somehow we manage to squeeze in time for our favourite TV shows or past-times. The truth is that most people have plenty of time – they simply CHOOSE to spend it on other activities.

Make a commitment to yourself RIGHT NOW, that you'll sit down and spend time on this programme EVERY WEEK, as part of your normal routine, and that you'll persevere with it even when there may be many other demands and distractions.

SO WHAT IS MARKETING?

I define marketing in these, much more direct terms:

GETTING THE RIGHT MESSAGE

TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE

AT THE RIGHT TIME

That's it. Sounds simple doesn't it? And it doesn't mention your product or service, or your pricing, or how good you are. In fact, those are secondary and I'll tell you why. Think about these:

PEOPLE DON'T BUY SERVICES, THEY BUY SOLUTIONS.

(so you need to know what their urgent problems are)

PEOPLE DON'T BUY BASED ON PRICE, THEY BUY BASED ON VALUE.

(so you need to communicate that you offer huge value for money)

PEOPLE RARELY BUY THINGS THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL, THEY USUALLY BUY THINGS THAT WILL BE USEFUL, RIGHT NOW.

(so you need to be there when they are ready to buy)

PEOPLE WILL BUY FROM YOU BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU, OR BECAUSE YOU HAVE A GREAT REPUTATION.

(so ALL your marketing activities need to achieve those two outcomes)

You may have your own opinions on some of those statements but I've found these are the norm. Once again, none of these statements are dependent upon offering a specific service, or being the cheapest, or being unique from your competitors. Sometimes it can help, but not always.

We're going to start this course by looking at those three steps – developing a compelling MESSAGE, thinking about who our perfect CLIENTS will be and working out HOW and WHEN to reach them.

Think about those two sets of statements. Come back to this page at any time to remind yourself.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Most people start a business because of something they want to do or achieve. It may be a particular therapy they've learned, or an invention they've designed, or a style of teaching they are passionate about. This is all well and good. Being passionate about your work is vital for success and utilizing your knowledge and skill is, of course, at the heart of your business.

But in order to be truly successful, you need to take a step back and understand who your customers REALLY ARE.

- What are they like?
- What are their problems, worries and fears in life?
- What are their needs and desires?
- What are their beliefs (both spiritual but also beliefs about themselves and the world)?

Once you get 'inside the mind' of your typical customers, you will have a much clearer picture of WHY your passions and skills can help them. And, in turn, it will open up opportunities to create VALUABLE, sought-after products and services.

YOUR WORK

Your name is

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What you do – describe your product(s) or services(s)

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What qualities do you bring to this work? Think about:

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Background | <input type="checkbox"/> Qualifications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Skills You Have | <input type="checkbox"/> Unique Knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any unusual or unique approaches you take, or techniques you use | |

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When and where do you offer these product(s) or service(s)

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YOUR CUSTOMERS

Describe your typical customers

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What would your typical customers be looking for?

Think about...

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To Solve Problem(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> To work with an expert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To Get Qualified | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve Life / Work / Relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To Learn a Trade | <input type="checkbox"/> Become Healthier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earn More money (or Save Money) | <input type="checkbox"/> Become Happier |

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What do they really need...

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Why people use you – describe briefly why you think people come to you.

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How you help people – describe briefly how people benefit from your work.

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FEATURES AND BENEFITS

When describing your products or services, it's worth making a list of the most important aspects of what you offer. These fall into two categories:

FEATURES – a physical or factual attribute of the service. Examples would include:

- I am available from 8am to 8pm six days a week
- I have the very latest technology
- I am the cheapest in the area

BENEFITS – what your customer gains from each feature. Using the above examples:

- It's convenient for working people to see me early in the morning or early evening
- The treatment I offer is more effective than my competitors
- People will save money by using me, and still get the best service

Use the chart on the next page and list as many as you can think of for your business. If it helps ask a friend, colleague or client for their ideas about what you offer and how they would benefit. Most benefits fall into one of these areas – better quality, more effective, faster, cheaper, more convenient, or something unique that no one else offers.

Feature
(Attribute)

Benefit (Gain)

WHERE DO YOUR CUSTOMERS 'HANG OUT'?

One valuable way of learning more about your customers is making a list of the places they go, organisations they are part of and the kinds of things they watch, read or listen to. So, for example, if your typical clients are spiritual, they may be followers of well-known spiritual gurus, or read spiritual magazines. Perhaps they read certain authors or watch particular TV shows.

Spend time either now and over the next week trying to create as comprehensive list as you can of all the following subjects. Feel free to do some Google searches to see what you can find, visit some Facebook groups, or even ask some of your customers, friends or family.

THIS LIST IS INVALUABLE.

Not only will you gain some insights as you plan your business, it will be essential when we start looking at targeting – the methods we use to seek out and find new customers.

For the typical kinds of customers you think will be attracted to your work, make a list of:

The EXPERTS or GURUS they might follow...

The AUTHORS they may read...

The MAGAZINES they may subscribe to...

The SHOWS and EXHIBITIONS or other events they may attend...

The TV shows or styles of MOVIES they may watch...

The RADIO SHOWS or PODCASTS they might listen to...

Any BLOGS, YOUTUBERS, INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS or other social media personalities they may follow...

Any professional ORGANISATIONS they may belong to...

Any INTERESTS, HOBBIES or PASTIMES (related to your work) they may have...

You may not be familiar with some of these channels of communication. If not, do a little research online and see what you can find. Your list can include names of individuals, company names, website links etc. We'll be using this information later so start your list now and keep adding to it whenever you spot something that might be relevant.

CREATING RAPPORT

Now for something a bit more creative. Remember the list from the introduction, and in particular...

**PEOPLE WILL BUY FROM YOU BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU,
OR BECAUSE YOU HAVE A GREAT REPUTATION.**

You can start building a relationship with clients even before you talk to them, by using words and phrases that create 'rapport' – a feeling of being in sync with your customer. You can do this by speaking directly to the reader using 'I' or 'we' and with simple 'personal phrases' such as:

If, like me, you have...

I used to have a similar problem...

I know how it feels to...

I've worked with people just like you...

Rapport can also be created by injecting enthusiasm, fun or intrigue into your phrases. A genuine sense of enthusiasm shines through, adds to your credibility, reassures your customers and creates a heightened state of awareness. Look at these examples:

FIRST DIRECT BANK – We are known for heroic customer service, leaving people feeling totally taken care of.

GARLIC – We illuminate the digital world, leaving people safe and free to enjoy themselves

EGG – We are known for dancing with our customers, leaving people feeling unleashed

APPLE – We make advanced technology useable by mere mortals. Our customers feel 'cool' using our products and our staff feel like Gods when they come to work

On the following page be as creative as you like and come up with some phrases that you could use to create personal rapport, excitement, interest or intrigue. You might like to consider:

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your feelings in your work | <input type="checkbox"/> Your customers' feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How you'll work together | <input type="checkbox"/> Having fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creating achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> Solving problems together |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An intriguing solution | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected words & phrases |

A series of 25 horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing a template for handwritten notes or a list.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Think about all of the elements that you have noted over the past few pages and try to create a short, concise description for your business. There are some examples on the next page. You could include any of the following (although it doesn't have to be all of them):

- WHAT you do – described concisely, yet accurately
- WHO you offer your products and services to
- WHEN and HOW you provide them
- WHY your customers come to you
- The main BENEFITS your service provides (plus a feature if appropriate)
- WHY you are different and/or better than your competitors

Your description:

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Now try saying this out loud. Does it sound natural? Does it sound interesting or exciting? Can you make it more conversational?

ACTION:

Over the next few weeks, try out your elevator pitch on friends, family and, if you wish, a few friendly customers. Ask them what they think of it and whether it's a true reflection of what THEY think you do. Note any comments you get and re-visit this exercise to see if you can improve your elevator pitch. **WE'LL BE DOING THIS ON OUR WORKSHOP SO YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!** 😊

ELEVATOR PITCH EXAMPLES

Here are a few examples of great elevator pitches.

The Question: "What do you do?"

BUSINESS CONSULTANT

"I work with small and large businesses to streamline and improve their performance using a seven step process I developed when I worked as Chief Analyst at IBM. It sounds a little dull, but you'd be surprised how much you can change the culture of a business by getting people around a table and having some fun."

THERAPIST

"I'm a qualified Reiki healer, which I was drawn to after a near-death experience I had with Meningitis four years ago. I studied under one of the world's most respected healers and now provide energy healing for people of all walks of life, and train others to give healing too. Reiki is still regarded as somewhat mysterious, but it has literally changed my clients' lives."

WRITER

"I'm a freelance writer. I've just finished a double page spread for the Guardian on poverty among Britain's travelling community. It's one of a number of areas I specialize in, and hiring a freelance writer saves magazine and newspaper editors a huge amount of time and money. The research can be a slog, but I love the writing process – it was my dream job ever since I left school."

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR

"I run workshops and seminars on Health and Wellbeing in Hertfordshire. I originally qualified as a counselor but now I get groups of 8 to 10 people together and we explore ways of dealing with the stresses and strains of relationships, family and work. I like to think that people leave my workshops feeling light as a feather and free as a bird!"