Part 4 – Client Acquisition & Even More Marketing

Cold Calling and Emailing are Great.. BUT

Those 2 tactics can provide a killer 1, 2 punch combo when used properly. However, as a one man or woman operation when starting out, you can't justify continued calling for 8 hours a day, it's wise to start digging into other areas.

Let's Face It… We Want People Calling Us

There's nothing better than a warmed up lead calling you, already educated about what you offer, and wanting to use your services. Am I right? Isn't that the idea situation? Well it takes work to do that, and while email marketing is a great strategy to use in order to accomplish that, these other methods are also nice to have in your arsenal.

Remember, the more you have going on, marketing wise, the better your results will be. That doesn't mean to carelessly put together multiple campaigns, if you do that, you won't be successful. You want everything you do to benefit each other. Never become dependent on a single lead source because you will expose yourself to unnecessary risk.

When going through this book, particular Part 3 and Part 4, figure out which 3 tactics you would like to implement.

Choosing 3 tactics will allow you to split up the time invested and diversify your lead sources until you're at a comfortable point to expand and add another tactic.

Using LinkedIn to Get Clients

LinkedIn is pretty popular, it's for business people, professionals, the tone of the social network is different on Linked In than you will find on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. LinkedIn can be a gold mine for some people, and even though this isn't one of my favorite activities, it has been beneficial to be on there.

I won't be taking you through obscure and gimmicky techniques to get clients through LinkedIn but I will show you how to make good use out of it and get started in the right direction.

I have had a handful of clients that I acquired from LinkedIn, and probably more than I realize. The reason I say more than I realize is because I've always used LinkedIn mostly for traffic generation which ends up being lead generation. For someone relatively new, I have no doubt that you can end up generating a hundred unique visitors a day to your website within a month or so.

Anyway, why don't we get started?

Your LinkedIn Profile

Like everything else in marketing and running a business, your LinkedIn profile is no different. It has to be optimized in order to be as effective as possible. However, in order to be able to benefit from the huge amount of traffic that LinkedIn provides, you have to have some sort of network! The larger your network the more opportunities you can have, especially from LinkedIn search.

Here are a few tips in optimizing your profile.

Your headline is important. It will help if you have a headline with certain keywords that are applicable. For example:

John Smith – New York City's premier reputation management specialist.

Notice how it has a location along with a main keyword, which you should change to make it represent what you offer. If you're in a remote area, you will probably want to put the nearest major city so you can have the potential for more internal searches within LinkedIn.

Your Summary – So a lot of people try to summarize their skills, what they do, yada yada and while that might work for some, it isn't the best approach. It isn't about you. It is about what you can do for the people that are seeing your profile. Relate to them; show how you're able to help them. Don't rattle off a list of classes you took that makes you a qualified web designer, talk about the things that really matter. Talk about how you've worked with numerous clients or are capable of producing better results for them online.

Your contact information – Have as much contact information as possible. Max out the link amount you're able to have, connect your LinkedIn, facebook, twitter, Skype, whatever is available. In the website link section link to your home page, blog, other important pages, add as much as you can. The more the better, because the more complete your profile is the better you will show up for internal searches. Another added bonus is for SEO purposes, distributing link juice throughout your brand properties and to your website.

Skills and Expertise – This is a cool little feature, even if it may be slightly useless in actual endorsements. You want to fill this section out with skills and services you provide. This gives some of your other connections the chance to endorse you for these skills. What usually happens is that people will mass endorse in order to get an endorsement back from you.

I don't think I've ever endorsed anyone but still end up having hundreds of endorsements.

While this may not really benefit you much, it does look good to potential clients and gives you some sort of social proof.

Other Areas in your profile – For your experience, if you don't have prior experience in the field you're entering and previous work experience is less than

flattering, then don't put it in there. If you've been flipping burgers to survive, I understand, you have to do what you have to do but when you're asking business owners to trust you with large amounts of money to help their business it isn't exactly something that is going to build a lot of trust. Instead of listing prior work experience, just list your company.

Make sure to add a picture to your profile.

Another feature is projects, where you can show samples of design work that you've done and other related things. It's a really great way to show off your work if you're trying to have any sort of lead generation or prospecting done on LinkedIn. Another thing you can do with this is show off case studies. Case studies are an awesome thing to implement, everybody wants to see proof of something and when you have proof of the success you create it is only going to help your conversions and ability to build trust with complete strangers.

Everything else, like awards, volunteering, etc. aren't of huge importance but you should want to fill out your profile as much as possible. The more fields you have filled out, the better off you will be.

There is an option to showcase publications, so if you have any write ups or articles that feature you it would be a good place to showcase that. If you don't have anything like that yet, don't worry, you will eventually.

Another cool profile feature that was somewhat recently added is the ability to have a background photo on your profile. If you can't do graphic design, have someone do it for you, you can even go to fiverr to get it done. You want something that is appealing and conveys what you offer. Keep it as professional as possible and if you do design work as part of your service, it is important to showcase your abilities in that background image.

Update your status regularly. Like with any social network, you want to regular update your statuses but make sure to add value in everything you do. You want to establish authority and build trust. You should also be using LinkedIn status

updates to promote your own content like new blog updates, case studies and eBooks. You can also promote guest posts on other blogs or websites.

The more active you are on LinkedIn, the more likely you are to build relationships, connections, and generate leads that could lead to a fruitful business relationship.

Doing these basic things outlined above will allow you to have a deeper reach in the world of LinkedIn, especially with their internal search.

Groups are possibly the most important part of LinkedIn. I love groups on LinkedIn, it has allowed me to build massive traffic that ended up converting into leads. There is so much flexibility that the groups feature gives you. If you spend time on LinkedIn at all but you aren't active in different groups then you're wasting a lot of that time.

The first reason I love groups, is because you have the ability to kind of syndicate your content throughout your network and the groups you're in. This will result in a lot of clicks to your website or whatever content you promote. Many group members subscribe and get a daily or weekly digest with a list of discussions in the group. Even if people aren't very active on LinkedIn they can get the chance to see the value you shared by checking the email digest.

The next reason I love groups, is because I don't have to be a connection with someone in order to message them. I can reach out, soft selling or just trying to build a relationship if I think they can be a fit for what I offer. This concept is similar to cold emailing but a bit different, as you already have established some sort of "in" with the prospect.

The third reason I love groups is because of the top contributor section in the sidebar. This really isn't some sign of your abilities or expertise but it gets you noticed. It builds you connections, network, and strangely has some sort of associated trust that will help you in your content marketing, prospecting and lead generation.

How can you become a top contributor in a group?

First things first, you want to join groups. My recommendation is to search for local groups, use nearby cities as keywords. Also search for industry related groups that you can join. Join as many as you can. You're not doing this to spam, and be in as many groups as possible just to look good, you're doing this because you're going to end up analyzing the best groups to be in.

The groups you want to prioritize are the ones that have a lot of discussions, lots of comments, lots of sharing. You will want to join in the action, not by just posting your own content. You want to comment on other discussions, "like" other comments, start getting your name seen around the different groups you join. When you start sharing your own content, make sure to make it as relevant as possible to the groups you're in. You don't have to write a general piece of content to share in every group; you want to write content that can be useful to certain groups not every group.

If a roofer is in a local chamber of commerce group and shares content on the technical side of roofing, it likely isn't going to be beneficial to him nor will it benefit the members of the group. However, if it was targeted content specific to the group he could create content based on the local area, mention different things to look for during specific weather that is coming to the city or region. This is something more people will care about, it's better targeted and more likely to grab a bit of attention.

The same thing applies to you. If you're offering web design services and you're in a group for Sales People in Chicago, you don't want to get into the advantages of HTML5 and expect them to respond, care, or engage in the content. Instead you want to cater content to them, like 5 Simple Website Changes That Will Help Your Sales Team Close More Leads. That stands out to them. Even though sales people rarely are decision makers, executive sales people and ones that have a certain amount of clout in their company could end up selling their boss on YOU.

It doesn't matter what kind of group you're in, if you're sharing your own custom content it has to be relevant to them. If you're trying to appeal to everyone, you will appeal to no one.

Ask Questions – Asking questions isn't a sign of weakness. Asking questions will stimulate discussions. If you're in a group of business owners, ask what types of internet marketing they have tried, what has worked and what hasn't. What's their favorite social network? If they could have any type of online advertising that costs money, for free, what would they want?

The biggest thing though in becoming a top contributor is just generating activity and getting comments in the discussion you created, whether if it is linking your own content, or just asking questions.

Prospecting on LinkedIn With Groups.

First of all, you have to understand that using LinkedIn successfully is not about selling. It is about positioning, and general networking. If you mass message everyone with the same copy and paste message your results are not going to be very promising. Give them insight on things others haven't shared, steer them away from common myths that can lead to them wasting money and time, give them things your competitors won't.

However, in order to do those things, you need to have them in your network, don't you?

Well with LinkedIn, one of the biggest problems with expanding your network is the "how do you know this person" selection. If you don't know the person, you usually can't send them an invite to connect. Being in the same group as a prospect gives you the opportunity to connect with them by selecting the group as the way you know the person.

In my opinion, the best way to build up your connections with ideal prospects would be using the advanced search feature. Select a group you belong to, fill in the title section with owner. You can also look for CEO, President, etc. but I find

that searching for “Owner” in the title of the advanced search produces better results than the other keywords. If you’re literally starting with 0 connections, you may want to search an open networkers group to join so you can get some connections pretty quickly.

Next you will select these people and send them an invitation to connect. How I usually layout my invite is like this:

Hi Bob,

How are things going? We’re both members of such and such group and I thought it would be good to connect. I enjoy getting to know fellow business owners in the community. I look forward to networking with you.

Thanks,

Nathan

Usually they will accept the connection request, and when they do I will wait a day or so and write them a quick thank you note, like this:

Hi Bob,

Glad to see you accepted by connection request. I have just one more thing to ask from you if you don’t mind. Is there an area of your marketing, online or offline that has been troublesome for you or your business? The reason I ask, is because I like to know all the issues other business owners are having when it comes to marketing, or advertising online. This allows me to provide more value to those in my network.

Thanks,

Nathan

This usually brings a response more times than not. When they respond with an issue, they’re usually a decent prospect. How you handle it from there determines where this new relationship can go. You should always provide as much free value

as possible when it comes to LinkedIn. For example, if bob emailed back saying how he's used 5 different SEO services in the past year, I would write a detailed response on why they aren't generating ideal results, show him what should be done, mention your past experience with clients about what has worked and what hasn't. Be understanding, show empathy. Get them on the phone; put a voice to the text, picture and profile. They are now a great lead that trusts you, and sees you as the authority on the subject you're talking about and helping him or her with.

With the technique I've shown you, it is beneficial in many ways. The first way is building up your immediate network by becoming connections. The 2nd way is by using it as a lead generation technique, even though you're just providing free advice, adding value. The 3rd way is that when you're getting the responses on what problems they're having, you're building up a great content idea list that you can use for content marketing purposes and distribution through the LinkedIn medium.

Video, Slideshows and other Rich Media

LinkedIn allows you to showcase videos of yourself, product, office tour, whatever you feel is relevant to share with people on LinkedIn, make sure to include on your profile. I know, for some of you video is a bit intimidating and you may not have the money or skills necessary to get something professional enough to showcase. That's okay. Just because you don't have video doesn't mean you can't have some other form of content on your profile. Go to slideshare and get started making presentations to share and showcase on your profile.

Bonus Tip for LinkedIn Lead Generation – Find someone that targets the same market you do. If you're an SEO guy but don't offer web design, try to build a strategic relationship to where you can both share referrals. The same goes for accountants, bookkeeping services, commercial cleaning companies, merchant processing companies, incorporation services.

One of the best strategic relationships I built was with one of the biggest merchant processing companies in the country (that are not part of the major banking systems). This relationship provided me with hundreds of leads each day. Some were crap, but they were people I had an in with. I guess you can call them prospects but I've generated many leads and many dollars in that relationship.

Another strategic relationship that I built was with an incorporation service. They only had a few leads for me each day, but these were people incorporating their business, maybe it was an existing business operating as a sole prop, or maybe it was a brand new business. What they all had in common is that they all need some sort of marketing or web related service. And you know what? I had exclusive access to them even before the Secretary of State approves their filing.

I would always throw a commission or kick back to those strategic partners I had because I simply didn't have the amount of referrals to send them and never will. However, you should always give referrals when appropriate even if you can't match the volume, but just because you're new, doesn't mean the relationship can't be mutually beneficial. You can certainly send them cash money as a thank you, maybe some nice wine, sports tickets, something to show that you appreciate them.

Bonus tip #2 for LinkedIn Lead Generation

This tip isn't exactly something that directly brings in massive amounts of leads but it is very strategic to position yourself and have other top influencers in a group promote you. If you see someone that is always posting in a group and it is high quality stuff, they always respond to discussions and feedback you can use this person in your content marketing efforts. This person can be someone that you interview on your blog, get insight from them about their industry, what they do to market themselves, what makes them special, so on and so forth. This is a great strategy because it's more content you can put out, you're building a personal relationship with someone that has some sort of clout in the communities you're in, and they will likely continue to promote and show off the

interview that you post on your blog, which can lead to different lead conversions assuming you have some sort of decent funnel through your website.

Creating a Company / Business Page on LinkedIn.

Another thing you should do besides just creating and filling out your personal profile to the max, is creating a LinkedIn company page. This is a brand page, more internet real estate that you control. You can list services you offer, you can share updates on the company page, you can do a lot of things, similar to the personal profile page.

If you have employees, it promotes your company if they have it in their profile. I have outsourcers that do this sometimes, they put the company in their profile and even if it might not attract a lot of views to the company page, it provides internal linking power through the social network which makes the company page a valuable piece of property that of course links back to the website and other properties I choose.

If you generate a few followers on your LinkedIn company page it will also show up on THEIR personal profiles under companies they follow. This is great organic publicity for your business. Does it generate leads? Eh, maybe not, at least not enough to be very measurable but you have to think of it as a tool that puts together the pieces of the puzzle that creates a masterpiece of your online brand and company controlled properties. It does have value, it is an asset and it's something you want to do.

Social Media Marketing For Your Business

For consultants, marketing agencies, web design companies and freelancers social media seems like it is something we're supposed to use to show a level of competence to our clients. It seems silly when a marketing company or web related agency has very little social media presence, doesn't it? Isn't that what bothers us when positioning ourselves as experts in the space to potential clients?

There are many ways to use social media for any business and you want to make sure that you're able to use the right platforms, properly. The problem is, how many business owners are on social media other than LinkedIn to really connect with B2B businesses?

I'm not going to lie to you; I do not have much faith in using social media to drive sales for our type of business. Facebook is great for most business to consumer companies but can you really have a viral post or build a lot of engagement as a web designer, or SEO company? I'm not saying it's impossible, it just isn't very likely.

Twitter is a platform that is also almost useless as a form of generating good leads. I know this is kind of shocking to hear, and probably the opposite of what you always believed and maybe you think I'm crazy for saying any of this. I kind of feel crazy for saying it but really it is the truth.

Now that I've shared my disdain for social media as a tool for lead generation itself I'm going to tell you why you SHOULD use it as a tool for your business.

Facebook is great for lead nurturing and customer retention as well as network wide support.

I know it doesn't make sense on the surface saying facebook isn't good for B2B companies to generate leads but now I'm telling you it is great for lead nurturing. There's a difference between the two. When using facebook (not talking about any paid options on facebook we'll get to that later) you're simply not going to

generate a lot of leads through the platform itself. However, your other lead generation activities will ultimately lead to interested parties liking your facebook page.

You should continue posting content and doing what you can to encourage engagement on facebook so you can constantly be reaching those leads and anybody else that may be interested in the content you're putting out there.

When you have someone you talk to that becomes a qualified lead but they aren't quite ready to buy yet, you have to have a plan in place to continue staying in front of their face. The whole concept of marketing to begin with is positioning you in front of your target market. The concept of lead nurturing is to continue putting yourself in front of qualified leads and bringing them from one step of the sales process or sales funnel, into a further spot. You should be doing this through follow up calls, staying in front of them through email marketing, being active on facebook and setting up retargeting campaigns.

There's been so many leads that I didn't convert due to a lack of lead nurturing plan and I could have easily done that and probably convert at least 20% of those leads. That's a lot of money I left on the table. Perhaps I made that mistake so you won't have to!

I assume you already have a facebook page for your business but if not, here is a quick outline for what you should do, and you should do it if you're not on there!

There are nearly a billion people on facebook daily. You have to be on there even if you aren't expecting to generate a lot of leads.

First things first, go here: https://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php this is where you will create your facebook business page. There are many options to choose from, and most people will choose local business as the category, but you can also select company instead of local business or place. I usually choose company unless it is for a client then I select local business or place. This also depends on the type of customers you want. Do you want to stay local? Then go

ahead and choose local business. If you're going to want clients across the country or world, then choose company.

Enter your company name, not some keyword infested name that isn't going to help your brand. Yes, brand. The goal with all this information in this book is to guide you through very difficult things but also position yourself not just as an expert but as a trusted brand.

Complete your profile information.

Add a profile picture, this can be a picture of your team, your logo, yourself, whatever you want to do you can do it.

Add a cover photo as well. This is the big image on a facebook page. I would normally recommend putting your contact information on the cover photo along with your logo and whatever else you want to include in the design but the tricky thing is it is actually against the rules to do it. I do it in some situations because the reward is worth the risk. I've never had a facebook page shut down or even received a warning for having the contact information posted but it would be wrong of me to not warn you of the risk.

Complete your about us area. Remember how I mentioned in the website section and LinkedIn section that you don't want to ramble on about yourself, you want to connect with visitors by showing why you're the option they should choose. Granted, you don't exactly have a large area to persuade someone since you probably can only have a sentence or two but do your best to be straight forward with no fluff, be concise.

Choose your custom URL. Above I said to not put keywords in your business name on facebook, but this is where you can put some keywords. In some situations, you should just put your business name so it would be facebook.com/business-name but if you want to take advantage of a little bit of SEO luck you can put keywords like business name + city SEO or whatever your service is. I've seen facebook business pages rank when they choose city + service like

facebook.com/Seattle-web-design. If you're lucky enough to rank well with little effort, it certainly could bring you some additional leads through facebook.

You can end up changing your URL once, so be careful in what you choose. Usually when you have a known brand, you don't have a need for the extra keywords in the URL but when it comes to generating leads, you can't ignore the fact that more leads equal more money.

Now we're going to talk about content. Which content should you populate your page with? A little bit of everything. That way you can see for yourself which content provides the most engagement, the most clicks, and what works for your individual situation.

Types of posts:

- The basic status update (text only)
- Image, memes, picture with caption
- Video with captions
- Link to blog or content with caption

Each one of those types of status updates or posts have a place and should all be used in order to be effective. Basic status updates can announce upcoming case studies or eBooks, they can ask questions to drive response and engagement, they can do a number of things.

Images with caption, memes and other pictures seem to be the type of updates that drive the most engagement in my experience. People love to share images, especially if they're funny. This will probably be the thing that gets you the most likes and shares.

Video with captions are also useful, show off your most recent speaking engagement, someone else's video on a topic that you specialize in, etc. Don't be afraid to share content other than your own. Your goal is to drive engagement, educate your followers, and nurture existing leads through education.

Use Facebook for your blog content or general content marketing. It doesn't necessarily have to be your own, just something that resonates with your target market. If you're offering SEO, you can link to your own educational content, but the Moz blog, as well as search engine land are additional sources of great content you can link to.

Getting likes on your facebook page.

The first thing you should do to populate your facebook page with likes, is to send an invite to your friends, family, and other people in the industry you've networked with. This will make it seem not so dull and empty.

The second thing you should be doing is to put a like box or some sort of social integration onto your website. Everything you do in marketing should complement each other. If you're driving traffic to your blog or via content marketing through any social medium, you want everything to complement each other. Social integration on your website is something that will allow you to do that. When someone goes to your website to read some awesome content you linked to from LinkedIn and they like the content then see the facebook box to like your page, this gives you more reach for your content. This helps you.

The third thing you should do is add facebook URL to your email signature line. This allows your prospects and people you've been interacting with to like your facebook page as well. It's also good for current client communications to get your current customer base to like your page.

Next, and this is completely optional to do is use sponsored ads or updates. This can really help your page take off and if you have an awesome status update with great content, you may want to use a sponsored update to increase the potential reach. It's usually a good use of money but it isn't necessary. I actually ran a job ad on Facebook which itself kind of failed because the quality of applicants I received were incredibly low. So bad it made Craigslist look like it produced premier quality applicants in comparison. So, essentially, my main goal with paid

ads on facebook failed. However, it did generate about 400 likes on my page which helped as far as image and perceived value goes.

Customer Retention via Facebook.

Customer retention is important. It's easier to sell to an existing client base so you want to make sure customer retention is one of your priorities. Most of your customers will already have "liked" your facebook page so it is an excellent avenue to reach out to your current customer base and send promotional offers for existing clients.

If you think about facebook and the reason why it even exists, it really is meant to be more of a retention platform than an acquisition platform. It's meant for that in our personal lives and the same applies for business.

Sometimes you have to give a little to get a little. A great way to increase customer loyalty is something that takes very little time and almost no effort. When you finish a project like web design for a company, and they have already liked you on facebook, create a status update with a link to their newly designed website while tagging them in the update. This does a few different things. It shows appreciation for their business, and essentially is giving them a shout out by linking to their website. It also shows your potential leads that are engaged with you on facebook, some examples of work, happy customers, it is social proof that what you do is working. It's obviously easier with website design, but even for those performing SEO, every time you rank for a keyword you can make a status update tagging the customer, "Just notice Dan's Lawn Care is now #2 from #32 for Lawn care in Atlanta, glad to be able to provide results!"

Part of Customer Retention is Amazing Support

I've made many sales and my team has made many sales just from the fact that the current company they were with wasn't providing great support. Some were charging blocked time for support, meaning if they needed something simple fixed they would be paying $100/hr for a minimum of a 4 hour block. That's not

valuing your customer, that's taxing your customers. Not a very good customer retention strategy in my opinion.

You likely won't have a need to provide a lot of support on facebook or twitter until you have a pretty massive customer base. However, that' doesn't mean you can't provide general support announcements on facebook.

I took over a web design company that managed over 800 websites in one industry and we needed to do a major server migration due to the previous company having a seriously awful hosting environment. We rolled out the migration by doing 25 websites each day, transferring them to a new server. We used the facebook page along with email to reach out and announce the websites being migrated each day. We gave a week notice just in case they had some sort of major PR happening.

I had the idea of announcing it and breaking it down when that server crashed on a weekend and literally received about 500 calls in a period of 3 or 4 hours with 150 support tickets and another 100 or so emails.

Announcing the migration daily on facebook allowed us to keep customers happy, everyone knew we were working hard to improve their experience, and it was convenient. They didn't have to email; they didn't have to call, because they saw it on facebook.

Another useful thing is if you're not going to be available, if your office is closing, whatever the issue is that may prevent you from being as responsive as you usually are, let people know. Holiday schedules go ahead and announce it for your customer base on facebook.

Keep your customers happy. There have been many rough patches I've had that I wouldn't have made it through without my existing customer base through monthly payments, up sells, cross selling, referrals, etc. What you think may not be a big deal to reach out about, may actually be a big deal to your customers.

Using Twitter for Additional Promotion, Staying Current with Industry News

Like I said above in the beginning of this social media chapter that in this industry, Twitter is almost useless for generating leads for your business. Most of the business owners you will deal with aren't on twitter, they don't have time for twitter, it likely isn't going to be a customer support tool or retention tool unless you have a massive customer base.

There is a good use for twitter though. I like twitter for two purposes. The first is for news, staying current with content related to what I'm trying to accomplish, what I offer, see what my competitors are doing, etc. The second thing I think twitter is useful for is content marketing and SEO purposes.

You should be using twitter for:

- Brand promotion
- Promote Thought Leadership
- Blogger Outreach
- PR outreach and relationship development
- Promote Content

To get started, assuming you don't already have an account, go ahead and create one. Fill out your information; customize everything so you have a professional looking brand profile. Custom background, header, and avatar are all necessary for a professional look.

What you should tweet about?

- Industry news
- Your own content
- Other industry content
- Conversation with other users
- Retweets
- Attending an event or conference? Live tweeting

For your tweets to ever reach anyone naturally, you're going to want to have some followers. That's the trickiest part. If you're an active tweeter you can use hashtags to further your reach but chances are you're not going to get a lot of followers just by doing that.

The first thing you need to do before getting followers, is finding people you want to follow. I recommend following hubspot, active tweeters using the #inbound hashtag, searchengineland, moz.com, and other related brands and companies. One strategy some people use to get more followers is to follow in order to get followed. Reciprocated following it is called, and can be somewhat effective but you don't want to follow random people that you have no interest in. Don't fall for the train following and team follow back crap, because it's useless to what you're using twitter for. Leave that to the teenage girls that need validation on a social network.

Make your twitter handle easy to find. Put it in the signature of your email with your facebook, and every now and then ask your facebook fans to follow you on twitter as well. Have a social icon for Twitter on your website, and even add it to your LinkedIn. Definitely make sure to include a follow button on your blog, not just for twitter, but for all your social profiles.

A problem a lot of people have on twitter is that they make things too promotional. They struggle building up enough followers to make an impact because every tweet is about their company or promoting company content. It's not a bad thing to promote your own stuff but you can't go overboard. You want a nice mix of conversations, promoting your own content, other peoples content, and just general observations.

I had this friend a few years ago, actually it was about 7 or 8 years ago, time has been flying! He's not a friend anymore, and probably never really was. The group of people we hung out with was all equally annoyed with him. He was the type of person that became sold on multi level marketing and pyramid schemes every month or so. There was never a time any of us hung out without him trying to

promote his new interest to us. It was annoying, obnoxious and it isn't a good way to make friends or keep friends!

When you're on twitter, you don't want to be that guy. Like almost anything in the social arena it is about building relationships, not over promotion.

On Twitter, you of course want quality followers, but that isn't an excuse to have a lame number and an awful ratio. If you see someone that is following 1,000 people and only have 25 followers, a trigger sets off in your brain and you probably realize something isn't right there!

You want to become an authority in your industry, and having a decent amount of followers gives the perception of social authority. The more followers you have the more you can extend your influence and your content can echo throughout the twitterverse.

My favorite way of using twitter isn't for trying to get sales, or any kind of lead generation. If it happens, that's great, but it isn't the purpose in my opinion. I think it is part of a great SEO and content marketing strategy to implement in order to get additional promotion and natural link building.

Many bloggers use twitter, and those that are practicing an inbound marketing strategy tend to always be looking for content to link to, reuse, and promote to their followers.

You can also use twitter for ideas to blog about, or content to release.

Overall, Twitter is another brand property you can control but it is also very important for the promotion of your brand and medium for content marketing which will end up bringing you top of the funnel leads indirectly.

YouTube is an awesome tool for SEO and additional search real estate.

Video is such an awesome tool that is at our disposable. There are obvious benefits in using video, like a whiteboard animation video on our home page or a

landing page in order to help us convert traffic into leads. With YouTube being the second largest search engine (and Google owned property) it is definitely something that simply can't be ignored.

My favorite use for YouTube for clients is to pick up on easy long tailed keywords with simple and basic animoto slideshow style videos. While one can debate how well it works all they want, and how you should use a higher quality video if you want real results, the proof is in the pudding. One client of mine who owns a tree service and tree removal company in the south has had over 1,000 calls in 18 months from one stupid simple slideshow video that is ranking in the top 3 for tree service and tree removal in one of the cities he's targeted. We also made videos for surrounding cities that have generated additional 500-600 calls.

You can use that strategy for yourself too, but it is definitely a great service for clients. Even with basic videos created with a $5/mo account with animoto, you can still charge a decent fee for the creation of the video along with the ranking of the video. I've seen people charge anywhere from $50/mo to $500/mo and customers have no problem paying those amounts because it works. It provides value. For some of these customers if they were with a pay per lead program they would be paying anywhere from $10-$75 per lead. The value they gain from this is truly exceptional, as long as you're able to get results.

Google has integrated regular organic search with videos being pulled from YouTube, dailymotion, vimeo and other video providers. You will want to optimize your video titles and descriptions to pick up on valuable keywords. One of the reasons I've been able to get clients some very good success with this strategy is because I fit the phone number of the company (tracking number) into the title of the video so when people see it in the SERPs, they don't have to click the video to watch it, they see the number right there in the results. You will be surprised when you look at the tracking number and the calls and see nearly triple or quadruple the amount of calls than there are views for the video.

There are other social networks you can use, like Pinterest, Instagram and more. While I do use them for reputation management purposes and to have a strong

profile of branded platforms, they aren't as easy to use to make a difference in what we would accomplish in this industry. They may be decent properties for some clients we may come across but for us, it isn't going to be a medium that we're going to have a lot of success with. If you like those or other social networks go ahead and use them, but they aren't a priority for me.

If you work with photographers, and visual businesses then Pinterest and Instagram would be great for them. You may think web design would work well for these networks, but in my opinion it is not worth the time. You can better invest your time in other resources.

Direct Mailing For Lead Generation

Direct mailing is a medium everyone should use when diversifying their lead generation. There are so many ways you can do it, and it's effective. The best thing about direct mailing for me is that when you have an actual lead produced from a campaign there is usually very little competition. I've noticed most people who call in from direct mailing aren't trying to do some price shopping, they don't need to compare with competitors to see if what you're offering is really the best deal or not. It produces very high quality leads when done properly.

My very first direct mailing campaign was for website design, and it was using 4x6 postcards. I generated a list of businesses in my state from infofree.com, addressed the postcards with my own handwriting for the address as well as the return address and sent away waiting for the phone to ring. I sent out 1,000 postcards with kind of a crappy design now that I look back at it. I think the total cost of printing and postage was around $300-$350 so it wasn't really too much of an investment but I don't like risk and was worried how it would perform. I like to have an ROI on every method I use, and didn't know if it would happen or not.

The phone calls started coming in, in about 3 or 4 days and the results were pretty good. I had 16 very good leads from that mailing and ended up closing 5 of them within 30 days for a total gross sale amount equaling $6,800. That is about a 2,000% ROI which is unbelievable. There were 2 others that ended up buying in the next 6 months but I wasn't sure which lead source I should have put them under and which campaign it was that got them to buy. The first form of contact wasn't through direct mailing, so I didn't include them in the statistics for this.

A lot of people talk about direct mailing and they aren't against it, they know it works, but for some reason they hate on postcards. Postcards are cheap, they work, and you can have a hell of an ROI when using that in your marketing.

The problem though with direct mail and using postcards is that about 50% of campaigns fail. I think that maybe the word failure needs to be defined when you take that statistic in consideration. Hubspot and salesforce have also reported about a 50% fail rate in direct mailing but what really determines if it fails or not? Is breakeven a failure? Is not making a profit failure? Is not meeting a certain ROI failure?

For me, I always considered that if I didn't make a 300% ROI on any campaign, then it was a failure. When you're going for a higher volume of sales in order to make profit then of course the ROI can go down. I like having a higher ROI on everything I do. With direct mailing postcards, all I need is one sale in 30 days for it to be a success. For other companies, if you have lower prices you might be able to get more leads but you also have to remember that it will take more sales in order for you to have a better ROI.

In my experience, and with my definition of what campaigns fail, I've had different mailings not meet expectations at all. One of the worst failures I've had with direct mailing was another postcard mailing about a year or so ago of 10,000 postcards. I was running an office at this point and knew I wanted to expand; it was a slow time and needed to get something going. We were able to get something going but it wasn't through that campaign. We generated 6 calls, and no sales. Not a single sale from that campaign. It makes me wonder if the post office delivered them, if they got lost, I don't know what happened. The design was one of the best in my opinion but apparently it didn't work at all.

I needed to make 2 sales to break even from that campaign. With 10,000 postcards the average amount of leads I should have generated should at least be 100 new leads. Sales should have been 20-25. I needed the 300% ROI because when you consider labor, hourly pay, commission on the sales, all the overhead that needs to be covered, you need some money coming in.

That wasn't the first nor was it the last direct mailing campaign that I didn't break even on. It happens every now and then, even when I use the same mailer to a

different list. Usually I'll send 1,000-2,000 monthly, on a regular basis. Not too much, just enough to supplement my leads and scale up when appropriate.

25% of my direct mailing campaigns with postcards are absolute failures. I'm sure copywriting experts could pick things apart, and give suggestions for better conversions but the copy was never a problem in any mailing I've done. In fact, every mailing I've done has been successful overall. Sometimes the sends of a mailer at certain times just don't work. The 10,000 postcards I sent out and got nothing from, I sent again to businesses in Michigan, only 1,000 postcards that time and generated 13 leads and 5 sales. Obviously the postcard works to a degree.

What you need to realize is that sometimes certain campaigns aren't going to meet expectations. It's important to realize this because once you get going, you will see success. You will see enough success that you feel you can predict the amount of income you're going to get each month from a variety of methods, and if you are that confident you will have a reality check to wake you up from your agency utopia. This is why it is important to have different methods working for you and complementing each other. You HAVE to keep pushing forward because what is your main money make one month might disappoint you later on. Don't get yourself in a bad position. I've done it too many times to allow you to go through the same thing.

Here are some tips for postcard mailing:

Generate a good, current list.

The first campaign that worked so well for me, which sold me on direct mailing, I generated a list through infofree.com and it was a good list. I continued using info free for my cold calling lists and direct mailing for a while until I switched to Mobile Renegade to scrape the lists for me. It made sense, because I don't just cold call, I do email marketing, direct mailing, and it just made things more convenient for me.

Info Free is a good company and it is pretty high quality. It's probably better than most of the other list generating companies and cheaper too. The problem I found with it was some outdated information for numbers, contact names and business addresses. Out of 1,000 postcards with infofree I would end up getting anywhere from 80-180 returned to me. You're going to get postcards returned to you no matter what you use, but 8-18% is a wide range to be returned and the more you get in front of your target market, the better off you will be. 18% is just being wasted and returned. When I use mobile renegade to scrape, out of 1,000 postcards sent I get on average between 30-50 postcards returned. 3-5% is a lot better than a wide variance of 8-18%.

Looking for a free option? You can create your own list by searching local keywords or city specific keywords and putting the information in a spread sheet. Some people will search their local chamber of commerce and find the information that way. You could also go to yellowbook, or yellow pages or any other directory for that matter and create your own list.

Take off returned postcards from your mailing list, & send multiple times.

One reason a lot of campaigns fail for people is because they send to them once, and that's it. You need some follow up; send them a sequence of postcards once a month for about 6 months. I've noticed in my experience that some of the best campaigns are in their 3rd or 4th send to the prospect. You will generate sales with most of your mailings but you're leaving a lot of money on the table if you're just sending once and stop to move on to another list.

I suggest sending to a list 6 times before killing it.

If you do decide to continue mailing to a list after the first send you want to make sure you remove the returned postcards. There's no sense in throwing money away by continuing to send to an address that isn't there. This helps you maintain a clean mailing list so your mailings will be as profitable as possible.

Never stop sending to leads generated from direct mailing.

One mistake that I made in the first year or two of doing direct mailing was taking leads off the mailing list since I already had their information and have them in my CRM. You might think that just because they called in, expressed interest but didn't buy, you can just follow up with them by email or phone call. Sure, you can follow up with them by phone or email but why would you overlook the way that they became a lead in the first place?

If you follow my recommendation of sending to a certain list 6 times before killing it, you will generate a lot of leads. If you generate only 1% response rate, your first mailing will be 10 leads. Maybe month 2 will be 8 leads, month 3, 7 leads, and so on. When you do a lot of direct mailing, the leads add up and not everyone is going to buy from you. What I like to do, in addition to emailing, and calling to follow up, is to build a separate lead list. This separate list would be your existing leads through direct mailing, and you would construct a mailing specific for them.

Test your mailings

As with anything, split testing is pretty important. With direct mailing, I've noticed a lot of variance in my results from send to send even with the same exact postcards so my general method of split testing isn't really as controlled as I want it to be.

What I do to split test is build the list of 1,000 and split it up into 2 lists, 500 each. It is a small sample size but I usually test at least twice. What you might want to do is print 1,000 of each postcard since the price is only a few bucks more. This will allow you to do 2 different tests in 2 markets to see if the results are the same or if there isn't much of a statistical difference. If you're on a budget, then just stick with the test run of 1,000, 500 of each post card.

You will want to keep track which postcard generates calls from which leads, and which leads to more sales.

You can test color, headlines, images, font size, etc. You'd be surprised which little things will make a big difference and lead to a more profitable campaign. This especially helps when you're sending out the same sequence of designed postcards across the country and you want to improve your response rate instead of using different cards each mailing.

Tips for a better response rate:

- Free giveaways
- Use short copy
- Use color and graphics
- Use a P.S.
- Offer a discount or exclusive offer
- Use a toll free number unless you're sending local
- Don't use a 3rd party company for sending

I want to expand a bit on the whole not using a 3rd party company for sending your postcards. I'm sure there are many qualified companies that do great work. The problem is there are many that don't. It decreases your overall profit but the real issue is that you may never know if they really did what they were supposed to or not.

One of my clients has a lawn care and landscaping company and he was using a print shop to print and mail his postcards and the results were dreadful. I couldn't believe the results and told him to just order the postcards and I'd send them for him, targeting the same postal routes they supposedly targeted through EDDM. We sent them off and he ended up with a 600% increase in leads generated from the mailing. This leads me to the conclusion that they either were sending to the wrong routes, or the more likely scenario that they didn't really send to the people they said they would. I've heard of many other issues with using a 3rd party and understand the appeal of why you would want to but in my opinion, you're better off keeping it in house. Leave the printing to a 3rd party but handle the sending yourself.

Another way to use direct mail is for sales letters, with envelopes, not postcards. The problem I have with this method is that it is difficult to scale. It definitely isn't a quantity type thing; it is all about quality when you're sending letters. With postcards, you can simply address them to the business without knowing the owner's name. It doesn't really matter with postcards but when you're addressing an envelope and you're sending a professional letter without knowing the business owner's name, it looks kind of silly. The key to letters is personalization. Make sure you personalize the letter as much as possible.

I've used letters to get quality clients for a while now but I have to admit, I slack and don't stick with it, mostly because the way I do it is very time consuming.

One client I got from a sales letter, or I guess you can say a presentation letter, was for PPC management. They were spending about $7,000/mo and I discovered them by doing some keyword research for a potential client. Well, the potential client kind of burned out at the time and I wanted to "stick it to em" like I do whenever it's a no brainer to buy but they don't, and in order to make it hurt less (yeah, I still take it personal) I go out and try to find someone in their area, even the same industry to become a client. I put together a small presentation about where they were wasting money and basically told them I could get them better results. I took screenshots of where problems were and included them in the letter.

Within a week, I was actually about to look up their number in my CRM to follow up about the letter I sent and my phone started ringing. It was the owner of their company wanting to talk, first call and we discussed pricing, strategy, and I took the payment over the phone that same call.

The reason it worked was due to the incredible value that I provided up front. They could have easily used the information I provided to take care of the issues themselves, or send it to the current company they were using. They obviously didn't send it to their current company because at that point they trusted me more than the company that earned their business for however long they were with them. They could have done it themselves but they would likely have to

learn the platform, learn all about CPC and CTR and how to optimize ads and the website so it would have been too much for them to handle.

This strategy has worked for many different things, not just pay per click with Google Adwords, but it has worked for website design, search engine optimization, and reputation management. My favorite services to offer using the letter presentation strategy is reputation management and search engine optimization.

With reputation management it is as easy as sending screenshots with a Google search of their business name and where negative reviews are showing up. Explain to them that I can essentially burry the reviews with company controlled properties and also implement a plan to drive more positive reviews from current customers.

If you use this strategy with search engine optimization you can essentially do the same that are reputation management, showing their competitors who are ranking and explain what you can do to rank their website better.

Remember, the more value you can provide the better your results will be. If you're just pointing out the obvious but providing no value you won't have as good of results.

Then there is EDDM.

EDDM stands for every door direct mail and we're not really going to be detailed on this. The reason why, is this really isn't a method I use or you will likely be using for your own marketing. This is a great service and there are many great business plans and models that revolve around EDDM (Search for Bob Ross's 9x12 product)

The advantage of EDDM is the cheaper postage. It allows you to target specific neighborhoods by postal route so you can develop highly targeted campaigns with postage at a much cheaper price point.

The reason why I don’t use this for myself is because only a fraction of the postcards will go to businesses. Why send thousands of postcards out to regular employees of the businesses I want to target? It doesn’t make much sense. Although, if you wanted to you could narrow in on commercial areas where you will have much more success targeted businesses.

Tip to save money with mailing.

If this is something you’re serious about doing and you want to send postcards on a monthly basis or at least a regular basis you might want to consider getting a bulk mail permit from your local post office. It usually isn’t expensive, I think it is in between $200-300 this year, but it may go up in the future. This is an easy way to have a more profitable mailing by cutting some costs. It doesn’t take much to recoup the permit cost.

Networking

There's something about networking that just makes me cringe. Maybe it is the small talk and going into a situation pretending to care about the people there and they pretend to care about you but it's all an act. At least at first it's an act because the number one thing on your mind is yourself, and how you want to be able to manipulate people.

With all that being said, I understand the importance of networking. I hate the word networking and how it is used all the time, I'm not opposed to networking, just opposed to how a lot of people view networking in the wrong light.

Every time I think of networking, it reminds me of a friend's mom about 10 years or so ago. She was a hardcore sales person; she sold everything from radio advertisements to TV, to tradeshow sponsorships and exhibitor booths. She did well, she made a lot of money but I remember how determined and focused she was to network. I remember going to a networking event with her before and she was ruthless. She wasn't the type to go in order to provide value, and she didn't pretend to give a damn about the people there she was just a shark wanting to snack on all the little guppies. I remember her screaming because she was running late, "Where's my fu#&ing purse I have to go networking NOW!"

I liked her style; it wasn't a bunch of manipulating or wine and dine type crap. She was straight forward and it made me wonder if she's really built valuable connections when "networking". I remember her saying a couple years ago once I started attending a few networking events, and meetings that she doesn't bother with building a relationship in a networking event or meeting. I was a little surprised that she would be so straight forward about that. She later explained that if you try to build a relationship with someone under the pretense that they will buy from you, you will waste almost all of your time and will have made too many enemies.

It makes sense, who wants to become friends with someone and then find out that the only reason they wanted to become friends is to get your money. Even though she comes across as slightly abrasive, it works. She does develop relationships with people at these meetings and events, but it is usually after they have bought something from her. It's unique when I think about it, all these other people are building a relationship before someone buys, and then they buy and the relationship matters less. With her, the focus is the sale, not the relationship and once they buy, the relationship is much more important.

There are so many forms of networking and attending those meetings are just on the surface. Anyone can easily get started with their local BNI chapter or local chamber of commerce. BNI tends to be a bit more aggressive but I would recommend it to anybody to at least have that experience.

Why should you network?

Networking plays a part in our lives, both personally and professionally. Knowing the right people can give you opportunities that you have never had before. I know countless people who have gotten a job based on who they know. They had the advantage in the hiring process because they already had an in with someone that was important to the hiring manager. Heck, I remember a few contracts I got simply because I knew a couple important people that opened the door for me.

When things get tough, and believe me, they will get tough for you in one way or another, a client can and will leave you. Friends don't leave you. This may seem a little hypocritical in comparison to the above story about the lady who was very direct and against building a relationship on a pretense, but it's not. Networking is not just about making sales, or building a false relationship; it's about being able to offer value in a relationship in my opinion. The lady in the above story offered value in the way of being true, honest and not superficial whatsoever. People saw how genuine she was professionally and wanted to know her personally. She didn't have to pretend to like somebody or pretend to care about everything that is going on in their lives just to make a sale. She made it clear in those events what she does, why she is there and why you need to buy from her. The value she

would provide in the relationship up front wasn't nearly the amount of value she would provide throughout the relationship. For me, her style isn't exactly what I want to emulate. I'm more of the type of person that wants to strike curiosity first, then provide value and hopefully build a connection that can either buy or be a valuable business connection.

I look at networking in a different light than most people and I really find it to be one of the most important things you can do in your life whether you have a business or not. I go to chamber of commerce get togethers as well as BNI groups and some general LinkedIn networking but the truth is that these events are dull to me. They provide some great leads, and I believe anyone can start joining and stay pretty busy with work. The problem I see is that the people that are going to these networking events usually aren't the right people for you to start building up your network with. These people usually aren't going to be someone that is going to get you that coveted 6 figure government contracts. They are in the same position that you are, someone that has to go to a networking event just to network. That is why it is hard to give networking advice in relation to BNI and chamber of commerce groups. It isn't really networking. Nobody is really there to provide value.

The most successful networking you will ever do will be every day contact and social skills with regular people you meet in life. How you treat people, how much you care about people, will matter in how successful you are in networking.

My grandpa is a pretty well known man, successful attorney, and rotary club member, active in church and other organizations. He has never networked in the general sense we hear about with BNI groups and stuff like that, but he has always treated people fairly, was active in organizations that helped people, he cared about the relationships he built and he cared about people whether they were good friends or not. He sends thank you cards, flowers, birthday gifts to friends and regularly has lunch with people in his network.

I learned a lot from my grandpa and try to replicate his networking skills. It has worked so far, to the point where I was asked to become a consultant for the city

in regards to their new website. I'm the "computer guy" for 6 judges in the area because they don't trust anyone else with their records. I have been asked to help run political campaigns, plan major events, and a lot of very exciting things that most people never have an opportunity to do in their life.

Networking really is all about helping people. In my opinion, networking is the most difficult thing to teach someone because in many situations it comes across as fake. You have to have certain things just engraved in you and mold yourself into a person that lives life without thinking about networking related activities. You have to be real. You also have to be able to have an interest in other people.

You can join BNI and chamber of commerce, I recommend that you do because it is a decent supply of leads and you can make some decent money by "networking" there. Please remember though, that the real world is where your real networking happens. There's a difference between money and power. Anyone can make money; few people can have real power to change someone's life. I prefer the latter.

Here are some general tips when networking no matter where you are.

Visibility – You have to give yourself visibility in order for you to even be approachable to other people. You have to make the effort necessary to be seen and be someone that others should want to network with. That outgoing, slightly drunk girl at the chamber of commerce monthly mixer event knows what she's doing. Maybe you don't want to be noticed and visible in a bad way but you need to be outgoing enough to be someone people want to talk to. Sometimes creating visibility for yourself is as easy as communicating with someone new, someone you don't know.

Listening instead of pitching is going to be key in any relationship whether it is a business relationship, friendship or something serious. I have an ability that people always comment on when observing, and that's the ability to seem interested in the most boring things. It usually isn't an act either, it's usually something you would think people would find dull, boring, and have no interest in

talking or listening to someone go on but I'm actually interested. The reason I'm interested is because I am interested in the people talking.

The more someone talks, the more they trust you. Everyone likes talking about themselves but it's a bit rare when you find someone that wants to listen and retains any of that information. When you're listening and being attentive to somebody you are likely to get appreciation from them and they will be more than happy to listen to everything you have to say or answer anything you would like to ask. I forget the quote and who it was originally from but to paraphrase, if you want people to be interested in you, show interest in them.

Give as much as you possibly can.

You want to offer incredible value to your network. Whether it is giving information and educating them in areas you have expertise or whether it is being a connector to other people that can help them in some way, you want to give as much as possible. Some will even take this to another level and give financially to their network. Not just handing people money but being active in charities helps a lot of people be better connected in their communities.

The best form of networking is being active in your community. The best way to be active in your community and gain personal as well as professional visibility is to talk.

Community involvement is huge, not just for networking but for the visibility of your company, yourself, and your care for the local area and economy. It's no coincidence that successful companies are also the ones that are always active in the community.

A lot of people think community partnerships and "giving back" to the community means you need to spend some money, sponsoring events, 5k races, giving money to politicians, local charities, but it isn't all about money all the time. Those things can help I guess but that's not really community involvement.

I know all my neighbors, I know everyone that lives around the office, my house, I know the city politicians, council members in my precinct. Everyone knows what I do. Everyone from my neighbors, local politicians, gas station clerks, bartenders, everybody I come across in everyday life I try to make an effort to be personable, polite (except when necessary to be shrewd), caring, and most importantly I try to learn about people. The more you learn about people, the more they in turn learn about you.

I've had many people call me saying so and so at so and so place gave me your information. I'm always shocked how some of these people know business owners and have a conversation that I come up in when I have no real friendship with most of those that have been giving out referrals. My local postal carrier brought me 3 sales in the past year. A bartender at a bar I go to for lunch every now and then accounted for a couple sales. The reason for me sharing this isn't to boast, but to show that sales can come from unexpected places when you put yourself out there and make an impact in one way or another.

As for community involvement, it is so important to be a part of your community. It leads to so many opportunities you never would have otherwise had. If it weren't for the local community even though the majority of my work comes from out of state, I would not have survived as long as I have due to so many opportunities that come by, and people looking out for you.

Really being active in your community gives you access to movers and shakers. These are people that can be very valuable for you to have a direct line with.

How can you get involved in the community?

- Offer free work for nonprofit organizations. Their board of directors are very powerful people and while they most likely can pay for your services, the favor that they owe you in exchange can often be more valuable.
- Attend Chamber of commerce meetings and events. General networking with the chamber is very mediocre but the events usually bring out a better group of people and it allows you to meet the people you want.

- Neighborhood watch meetings and precinct meetings by the local alderman or council members are a good way to meet people in your specific area that cares about what will happen.
- Take part in fundraisers whether it is for a nonprofit, or political campaign, it allows you to meet other people who like to give, and usually those are the people you want to network with. If it is a political fundraiser, it is important to put your politics aside and care about the person, not the politics.
- Sponsoring community events can give you additional name recognition. However, you usually want to sponsor an event small enough that you actually make a difference. An event that allows you to be a part of the event and interact with people.
- Volunteering helps your community and yourself. I made it a requirement for employees to volunteer somewhere, some volunteered at a local hospital, others have volunteered at different non profits, churches, etc. Be the person that people know they can count on.

The last tip I should provide when it comes to networking is that once you build a network of people and have relationships the work isn't finished. You have to work to maintain those relationships. How many times throughout life did you lose touch with a friend, when you could have easily maintained that friendship with just a call? Don't make that mistake anymore! Whenever you have a chance to help someone, do it. If you haven't heard from someone in a while, reach out to them.

Pay Per Click Campaigns

Pay per click is awesome and one of my favorite things to do because it's mostly automated. It's a great way to scale but a bad way to start off if you don't have money. It's expensive, or I should say, it can be expensive.

I can't go too in depth on this topic or else it would be a course in itself. There's a lot to learn, whether you decide to use Facebook or Adwords, or another platform.

PPC is a great way to expand your customer base. It's very easy to turn on and off, and let the leads roll in. It's the type of tactic that can work for any business, your clients, and yourself. If you pay $10 per click and you're making sales for $1,000 and up, it's easy to make money through PPC campaigns.

The problem most people have is executing.

Here are some general tips when doing any kind of pay per click campaign:

1.) Split Testing – Like everything, split testing has its' place here in the PPC world too. You can split test your landing pages of course to increase your conversions but you also want to test your ad headline, your ad copy, keywords, etc.
2.) Remarketing – When using Adwords, there's something that a lot of people leave out, and that's remarketing/retargeting. It's when you place a tracking code in your website and you market to those people for a certain amount of time you decide. This allows you to continue marketing to people who came to your website but didn't become a lead. It increase lead generation efforts and helps you close more sales in the end. It's also amazing for branding purposes.
3.) Negative Keywords and IP bans – If you're using Google adwords make sure to include negative keywords. This allows you to get more for your money without wasting previous dollars on useless keyword combinations. Also, Google is very good about invalid clicks and click fraud being conducted by

competitors, but just in case they aren't, you make want to ban IP's from your ads. Last I checked they allow you to ban 50 IP addresses.

4.) Quality Score and Relevance can give you much more for your money. Spend time researching quality score, and how to optimize for a better quality score. It's difficult at times and can be frustrating but the better your quality score is, the cheaper your cost per click will be. This means you will have a better CPC than competitors that are bidding on the same keyword. I had a client whose cost per click decreased by 400% with just a few tweaks.

Here are some resources to learn PPC for free:

http://www.wordstream.com/blog

http://www.wordstream.com/learn

www.ppchero.com

5.) You will also want to have an MCC account with Google. Click here to get it and go through their basic training. http://www.google.com/adwords/myclientcenter/

6.) You can also become Google Certified: www.google.com/partners/

My recommendations for PPC platforms:

- Google Adwords
- Yahoo Bing Ad Network
- Facebook Ads
- Advertising.com
- Outbrain

Google Adwords of course is the biggest and covers the most territory. It is probably the best but involved the most learning curve in my experience.

If you want to save a bit of money and try something new, Yahoo and Bing ads are great. In fact, I have had many campaigns be more profitable on bing than

Google. There's less competition and lower cost per click. One could also argue that bing users are more likely to buy instead of just researching.

Facebook ads are great because they're so cheap. You can also do remarketing on Facebook which is a huge bonus. This is probably where I would recommend beginners to start. It's easy to use, it's cheaper, and can reach a massive audience. The only negative I can think of is that it has significantly lower conversion rates than both Google Adwords and Yahoo/bing.

Advertising.com is an easy way to get some ads up and you can then use the cool logos saying you were featured on the Huffington Post, ABC, CNN, etc. It's not too expensive, but the conversions are pretty crappy and the click thru rate is pretty sad too. Not a bad platform overall but for what we do, it's going to be almost useless.

Outbrain, one of my favorite tools and should become one of your favorites as well. This is all about making your content explode and not about client acquisition or direct lead generation. This is a great way to get your blog content in front of readers which could in turn pave the way for top of the funnel leads for your company.

Pay per click can be a useful tool in lead generation and the branding of your business. If you are on a bootstrap budget, it will probably have to wait, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't learn about it right now. After all, PPC is a service you can offer your clients. If you're already generating decent income from your clients, then maybe it is the right time to start dipping into PPC so you can scale up.

Print Advertising

Why is it that most people doing online marketing or offering any kind of offline service want to avoid print advertising, like it's something that is so old and useless? I think there's a common misconception about effectiveness of print advertising. You could lump direct mail in this category but I think it's different, print ads that I'm talking about are more for newspapers, magazines, newsletters, etc.

Billboards are another form of print advertising I suppose, and while you can get very good deals on some billboards, it generally isn't profitable.

The print advertising I'm going to talk about is areas that you can actually make a good profit from and bring in a steady stream of leads.

Business Journals

Most areas have some sort of business journal. Sometimes there are state wide business journals and metro area business journals. These usually get distributed directly to businesses. Some are printed and delivered for free and others are a subscription based services.

These are great areas to advertise in, because they usually have special deals on advertising that you wouldn't find in a regular newspaper. Some have business card sized ads, which are absolutely a great way to bring in leads and establish authority in your market, or any market that you're entering. The most recent business journal I advertised in, I had a 3inx5in ad for $70/mo. On average it brings me about 10-15 leads a month which leads to 2 sales within 30 days. Usually 1 or 2 more leads will buy eventually, but due to budgeting or whatever excuse they have, it's not happening within 30 days.

The great thing about business journals, is that you have the ability to request a column on a short information month, which gives you additional authority, PR, and can bring in many more opportunities.

When you call or email for an ad rate sheet, these are the prices listed that you're getting and they usually offer a multi month discount included on the rate sheet. These are NOT the rates you have to pay. Always talk them down. Worst case scenario you can usually get a 20% discount on any ad you want. Some will be so desperate that they will give you 50% off. If they are big enough to where they have a sales staff, contact an editor, they can afford to give you a higher discount since they are avoiding commission paid out to the sales department.

Trade Magazines

This is a risky move in advertising, but it can work as long as you're not paying too much money. The problem is, the magazines usually have very high ad rates and the ads don't convert nearly as well. It makes it difficult to provide a good ROI when advertising through these mediums. However, there are some that are an absolute gold mine. It's difficult to scale up because success in one magazine doesn't necessarily mean it will translate to future success in another trade magazine. One very positive thing about advertising in a trade magazine is that you benefit from longer shelf time. People hold on to magazine for a longer period of time, they're pretty; they don't instantly go in the trash even after someone has finished reading it.

Trade Newsletters

There are usually multiple industries that have a newsletter. There are many dentists, lawyers, HVAC technicians, etc. that receive an association style newsletter on a monthly basis. These newsletters sometimes don't have anyone advertising in them. This is awesome news for you because they are usually more than willing to have you dampen the cost of printing in exchange for putting your ad in the newsletter. Rotary clubs, chamber of commerce, even city newsletters will have plenty of opportunity for you to advertise in their newsletters.

These can be cheap, and provide one heck of an ROI. Don't be afraid to negotiate on price.