

**Rainmaker Best Practices
Special Report**



12 Secrets of Superstar Professional Service Firms

***How To Take
Your Firm and Yourself to The Top and
Stay There***

By Patrick M. McEvoy

12 Key Concepts to Boosting Your Sales And Profits NOW By Turning Your Business Into a Client Directed Marketing Machine!

By Patrick McEvoy

I know you're busy so let me get right to the point. The single most powerful professional service firm success tool on the planet is a marketing system. A good marketing system will also make your firm very successful and the people in it very wealthy and it will do it very quickly.

When I talk about a marketing system I am not referring to those academic exercises found in college textbooks or the templated, ineffective mumbo jumbo found in business planning software. I will not be asking you to determine your share of the market today versus your competitor's share. Most of you out there just need to figure out how to get ten, twenty or one hundred more quality clients.

A marketing system by my way of thinking consists of two things:

- A one page document that specifically answers who you are, what you do, who needs it, how you plan to grab your prospects by the throat (i.e. your unique advantage), when you plan to do it and how you plan to pay for it...in a way that everyone in your organization, network and client base can easily and clearly understand. It is not an 83 page "marketing" plan that no one reads, understands, follows or even prepares.
- A one page wall chart with months and weeks of the year across the top and marketing activities down the left hand column. In each week, you have a marketing activity planned with a date for execution and that you execute that plan without fail—each and every single week of the year. This is "no-brainer" management...the best kind there is!

Now that was a mouthful so let me backup a moment. Marketing is not rocket science. Marketing is simply developing a unique and simple message, communicating that unique message to the people who are qualified to buy your service, and repeating that process continuously over and over again without fail until you get rich.

The simple truth is this...most business owners and business advisors do not know how to design a real world working and cost effective marketing system. As a result, most marketing efforts are a series of "one-shot, hit or miss" adventures more akin to the game of "craps" than science. What follows is a series of "failure proof" marketing concepts that will skyrocket your business profits if you use and apply them consistently.

End Your Chronic Shortage of Clients Forever!
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Precision Marketing Concepts At A Glance

1. Understand This Truth: Marketing Is Everything
2. The Real Value of Lifetime Clients
3. Marketing Systems for Autopilot Success
4. Creating Winning Advertising
5. Leverage: Using Limited Resources To Produce Big Results
6. Targeting Your Market: The Benefits Of Niche Marketing
7. Capitalize On Your Unique Competitive Advantages
8. Help People to Buy With An Appealing First-Time Offer
9. Added Value Makes It Easy To Choose You
10. Reversing the Risk Removes The Final Barrier
11. Continuous Marketing Accelerates Success
12. Execution Is Everything

Steal These Ideas!

Here's what you can do to spread the word about "*12 Secrets of Superstar Professional Service Firms*"

1. Send this file to a friend or colleague.
2. Send them a link to www.RainMakerBestPractices.com so they can download it themselves.
3. Send copies to your clients.
4. Print out as many copies as you like and discuss these ideas at your next meeting.

1 Understand This Truth: Marketing is Everything

To succeed in business, you need to attract clients. Not just first-timers, but those who continue to buy from you on a regular basis.

It's "clients" that put you in business in the first place... and allow you keep your enterprise operating. Just the same, a lack of clients will force you out of business — in very short order.

You can never actually claim to be "in business" until you first have clients. Sure, you can register a company or a practice, lease space, buy equipment, develop or acquire a product to sell, and hang out your shingle. But until that first sale... all you have are expenses.

Few businesses fail when they have a steady stream of clients willing to spend money in exchange for their services. Companies that establish workable systems to consistently attract clients are those most likely to succeed in the long term.

Clients are the greatest asset of any business. It's the client list that adds significantly to the value of a business, especially a service business.

Clients mean revenues and profits. They're the very lifeblood of every business – large and small. Therefore... your focus as a business owner should be the continuous building and nurturing of your own client list. This is what sustains your enterprise, gives you an income and enables you to consistently expand and earn even greater sales and profits.

Acquiring new clients and then keeping them for life is what it's all about. Ideally, it should be a matter of delivering superior products and services, then renewing the sales relationship with each new client, so they buy over and over again and... are happy to do so. With this kind of client satisfaction, you'll not only turn one-time buyers into lifetime fans, you'll also automatically gain many more new first-time clients by word-of-mouth referrals.

Business success begins with the first-time client. Unless you already have a large list of clients... your primary focus (at least 50% of your time) should be in the area of attracting more and more first-timer clients, on an ongoing basis.

So where do you begin when attracting more clients is your goal?

In a word...*marketing*.

Effective marketing is "the what" that brings you in new clients. A dependable, consistent marketing plan and implementation system delivers clients efficiently, on a regular basis, and for a much lower investment than the hit-and-miss methods many business owner.

No business can achieve optimum success without solid and consistent marketing. Without an effective marketing program in action, your growth and your success in any business is unnecessarily crippled.

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What is marketing?

A simple definition of marketing would be anything that you do to get or to keep clients. Your display ads, newsletters, web sites, sales letters, direct mail packages, brochures, Yellow Pages ads, classifieds, etc., all represent part of the marketing picture. The same goes for your sales people, service staff, letterhead, business cards, as well as the sign on your office.

Every representation of your company...every contact you have with prospects or clients ... every perception a prospect or client gathers... is in effect, *marketing*. Marketing is a never-ending function of business – you're always marketing whether you realize it or not. And every facet of marketing either helps your business prosper, or it hinders growth and profitability.

Everything is marketing and... marketing is everything to your success!

If you want to expand in the most expedient, cost-efficient and proven way, you need to take a good look at your overall marketing strategy. When you realize that "*everything is marketing*"... you begin to look at your business operation in a whole new light. You'll see obvious mistakes when you consider how your client or prospect might view a particular situation, event, or marketing document.

There are 4 fundamental elements of successful marketing to consider:

1. **Your Service Offerings**– You must have a quality services with widespread appeal and you need to be either competitively priced, or offer something that's superior to what anybody else offers.
2. **Prospects** – You need to have a market to sell to. Who are your prospects? Is the market large enough to serve your continual growth?
3. **Media** – You also have to have a way to get your message across to your market. What methods provide the best, most reliable access to your market?
4. **Message** – The message is your communication with your market. It's everything you put into your advertising and marketing materials to convince prospects and clients to buy.

All 4 elements are essential to marketing success.

Think of your business as a building that has 4 main columns supporting the entire weight of the building. The 4 columns are named :Offerings, Prospects, Media and Message.

These 4 columns are the supporting structures that provide the rock-solid foundation of your business. A deficiency in any one area throws the whole building into peril and possible collapse. In your business, any weakness severely hampers your profit opportunities. When all 4 areas are strong, your chances of success are multiplied exponentially.

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The best place to start is to spot the market first. Identify a market with “wants”...then figure out which of those desires your services can fulfill. Next...decide on the media that will enable you to access this market segment and then prepare a strong sales message.

In order to attract first-time clients economically, you’ll need to develop an appealing marketing message —*one that gives you a clear competitive advantage*— and deliver it to the best prospects in the most effective and cost-efficient way.

2 The Real Value of Lifetime Clients

Clients mean everything to your business. The degree of success you enjoy in business is directly related to your ability to continually attract new clients and to keep existing clients buying from you, again and again.

In a perfect world, you might be able to just sit back and serve only existing clients. But to do so inhibits growth because every business has only a finite number of clients it can reasonably expect to serve. Whether you have 10 or 1,000 clients, in order to cultivate the maximum value from your greatest asset, you need to market to these same clients again and again.

The best strategy is to continue efforts to attract first-time buyers...and to constantly stimulate sales from those who have purchased before.

Marketing is not just about finding new clients, but keeping those you’ve already won over and encouraging them to buy from you repeatedly, for years. That’s where the real profits can be harvested.

According to world-famous marketer *Jay Abraham*, there are only 3 ways to grow any business:

1. Increase the number of clients...
2. Increase the unit value of each purchase transaction...
3. Increase the number of purchases each client makes...

The easiest and least-costly sale you’ll ever make is to an existing client. These folks have already trusted you to deliver a product or service. You don’t have to *sell* them again on the merits of doing business with you, instead of your competitor down the street.

Existing clients are *high-probability prospects* for your next related product or service. Trust has already been established. When clients are satisfied with their purchases, they’re more likely to buy again and with much less scrutiny than the first time around.

To capitalize on the true value of your client list, you need to be aware of product and service life cycles, individual buying frequency patterns and the value of typical purchases.

To fully illustrate the value of your client/customer list, let’s look at an example:

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Let's suppose that an average single purchase is \$100. If that's all "client A" ever spends with you, the actual value of "client A", in terms of revenue, is just that — \$100.

Now, let's say that this \$100 dollar purchase is a consumable product (like a tax return which "expires" annually) and it lasts about a year's time. Therefore, our client needs to replace this product every year, in order to continually experience the same kind of benefit. If this client purchases from you regularly over a period of say, ten years, that client is now worth \$1000... or *ten times* as much as the single-item buyer!

Taking this one step further...since client A is very satisfied with her purchases, she tells 3 of her friends about your superb products and outstanding service. As a result, these 3 friends also become 10-year clients. Now our original \$100 dollar client is actually worth \$4,000... over the same ten-year period! If those 3 newly acquired clients also referred 3 others, the cash- generation picture gets even brighter. And it all started with a single, \$100 purchase.

This is how a fitness club can offer 30 days of complete services for \$10, or how book clubs promise "5 books for just \$5". They don't make any money on the first transaction. In fact, they often lose money on the front end. But they also know that the value of a client who purchases repeatedly is well worth the comparatively small up-front costs. (Note: This is not to say that you should ever "low ball" fees—what it does say is that you can spend a lot more on client acquisition than you previously thought and still be wildly profitable.)

These companies are banking on building long-term relationships with clients. That's the key! Successful marketing is about building positive, long-term relationships with people. Never forget that simple fact and it will serve you well in any business.

Repeat business is where the true fortune lies. That's why honesty and integrity are so important to the business that wants to grow and flourish. Real profit is generated from subsequent sales, beyond the initial purchase.

The first sale often absorbs most of the costs associated with client acquisition. Therefore, each subsequent sale has a higher percentage of built-in profit, than the one before. It doesn't take long before it's all profit, less of course, the cost of goods sold and any overhead.

Take a close look at your own client list.

How many of your past clients have come back on their own to purchase again? How many have made purchases on numerous occasions? What dollar value has each client been worth to date? Then, start to think about ways to enhance that value by renewing the buying relationship and extending your service offerings into new areas.

Seeing the potential value of cared-for clients can help you determine how much you're willing to spend to acquire each new client. Newer businesses that don't yet have a sizable client list may need to spend more initially, in order to establish a client base of some kind.

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Once you have clients, it's always in your best interest to continually serve clients... communicate with clients... make offers to clients...and generally delight those clients who have already bought from you.

Keep in mind that satisfied clients usually welcome frequent contact (as often as 13 times per year) from businesses that have delivered superior overall satisfaction in the recent past. Often, your frequent communications simply renew good feelings — something everyone likes to experience.

Following are a few ideas for maintaining contact with your clients:

- Put in place a system of regular contact where you can mention additional products and services that might be of interest to your clients (read: automation)
- Consider using tools of communication like invitations, postcards, newsletters, thank-you cards and sales letters
- Keep clients and prospects informed and up-to-date with any changes in your business
- Let them know first about new products and services, as well as new applications for existing products
- Keep the lines of communication open so clients can easily have their problems solved – regular contact makes you seem more accessible to clients
- Do whatever it takes to make clients happy without undue delay
- Ask them to direct other people to you or if someone they know would like to receive your free newsletter, sample, catalogue, etc.
- Inform clients first about all upcoming events, new product releases etc.
- Remind clients before it's time to renew or replenish or come back in for a review
- Provide helpful tips or pass along related information clients may find useful

The quality of your on-going relationships with clients is the primary underlying value of your business. Clients *are* your business and should be treated as good friends.

Do whatever is necessary to stay in your client's thoughts. The ultimate pinnacle is to be "top of mind"... that is to be the first (and perhaps only) source your client thinks of, whenever she needs what you provide. This gives you a tremendous competitive edge over others and adds considerably to the true value of your business.

Your task is to maximize the value of your client list by continually renewing the sales relationship with those people who have already purchased from you.

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You've already invested capital and energy to win over clients the first time. Once you have a client, it's up to you to keep them.

You can never contact your existing clients often enough!

3 Use Marketing Systems for Autopilot Success

The ultimate formula for business success is really quite simple. All you have to do to ensure long-term success is:

1. Generate quality leads consistently and economically.
2. Convert as many of those leads as possible into sales and hence new clients.
3. Ensure that you delight your clients so they'll be pre-disposed to buy from you again and to recommend your company to others.
4. Repeatedly sell new services and packages of services to your family of existing clients.
5. Ask clients to refer you to others who may want the same benefits.
6. Keep going back to step #1 and repeat the pattern again.

Follow these six steps and your success is virtually assured. Of course you'll need a good service and a readily accessible, "hungry" market to begin with.

A marketing system is a process to continually attract new business and to continue serving existing clients. A *system* automates the process, making it easier to consistently and reliably attract qualified prospects. It saves you time because everything is prepared and planned in advance. It doesn't make sense to waste your time and financial resources on those who for whatever reason are not likely to buy from you now, or in the foreseeable future.

It's about boosting your business in the most cost-efficient and productive way. Essentially, you want to establish a formula for acquiring new clients regularly. You want something that can work over a period of time... something that is affordable... something that efficiently delivers plenty of quality prospects and clients. In addition, you want a system that can be implemented at any time, whenever your business needs a fresh new crop of prospective buyers.

The best systems are those that you control, 100%. When you surrender control (like over reliance on networking), or a portion of it, you lose your ability to directly monitor and adapt the system as you choose. A proven system lets you automate your marketing, so your time is freed up for the daily challenges and obligations of running a business like yours.

A marketing system can include any method of reaching your target market. Any kind of proven advertising or promotional material can be worked into a system that can bring you a steady stream of high-quality prospects, whenever you want.

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As an example, let's take a closer look at a viable marketing system.

For this example, we'll use as our product, a manual/textbook for professionals titled, *How to Sell More of Your Professional Services*. This manual was written for the professionals who want to increase sales, without adding to their overhead costs.

- A. This particular marketing system begins with classified ads and small display ads placed in specialty trade magazines and newsletters. The ad is designed to get interested professionals to request additional details about the manual. This is step one.
- B. As inquiries come in, the direct sales package is sent out. It includes a sales letter, order form, brochure and some kind of free sample or premium. (this is the offer that was promised in the ads.)
- C. A certain percentage of these packages should come back as product orders. Those who ordered are sent their shipments immediately. Along with the product purchased goes another advertising piece for a related product. This is known as a "ride along" since there's no additional cost to mail out the ad itself.
- D. Those who didn't buy, are sent subsequent follow-up letters, postcards, invitations, and the like... in an attempt to convert as many as possible into buyers.
- E. Again, a percentage of follow-ups should result in additional sales. You determine how many times you want to reach individual groups of prospects before moving on. The point is...if you only contact them only once, you'll probably miss a lot of new clients who for unknown reasons, failed to respond favorably the first time around.

There you have it: a simple — yet very effective — marketing system. There are several advantages to implementing such a basic system:

- 1. It's generally a less-expensive and more direct alternative.
- 2. It allows you to test different offers and appeals.
- 3. It gets prospects to COME TO YOU rather than you sending your material to them, without a previous request for it.
- 4. You can approach these prospects repeatedly, in an effort to convert them into clients, something you usually aren't able to do with rented mailing lists.
- 5. You can start small and expand your efforts as you gain experience.
- 6. Once your system is producing consistently profitable results, you put it on autopilot and continue to reap the rewards.

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A strong marketing system allows you to predict with some degree of accuracy, how many new prospects or new clients are gained daily, weekly or monthly. It helps you predict the number of new leads or new sales you get, based on the amount of advertising you place.

Systems allow you to test your ideas on a small scale, before rolling out with a major campaign. This is marketing with intelligence. Test small and smart and adapt accordingly... based on results.

Once you have your own system working, you can then multiply your returns by expanding your advertising efforts to larger markets that also appear to be good target markets for your products and services.

There are 4 keys to creating a winning marketing system:

1. You need to create advertising that gets attention and stimulates desire.
2. You need to create compelling marketing messages that interested, qualified prospects find difficult to resist.
3. You need a method of accessing the best possible prospective clients in order to make your offer available to them.
4. You need to find the most effective and most relevant form of marketing, or the most effective way to get your compelling messages in front of those most likely to buy.

Whatever your business... whatever products or services you sell... your ability to consistently and affordably attract a steady stream of new clients, particularly in the early stages, will prove to be the most critical factor in your ultimate success.

A marketing system, as simple, or as complex as you want it to be, is the most effective strategy for business growth because it's always geared towards maximum, measurable results, at the least possible expense.

4 How to Create Winning Marketing “Stuff”

Your business could be “number one”. You could be the best in town...with the most appealing, useful, money-saving, health-inducing, miracle product in the world! But... if you can't communicate all those advantages in an enticing way that gets people to respond in droves, your profits will be minimal and your success unnecessarily restricted.

It's true that most people are simply overloaded with marketing messages of all kinds. With the explosive growth of the Internet, the problem is only growing in scope each year. It seems as though we're bombarded with commercial messages, almost from the moment we awaken until we fall asleep.

Mass marketing is not the way to go for an entrepreneurial business. It may be acceptable for a *Coca-Cola* or *IBM* to advertise this way, but no small to medium size enterprise (< \$1,000,000,000 in annual revenues) can survive and thrive by throwing money into massive, widespread advertising

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that reaches a “general” audience. Companies with huge advertising budgets often use “image” advertising as a means of brand-building and keeping their names in public view.

Fortunately, there is a better way for professionals. The intelligent approach is to use precision targeted marketing that persuasively communicates your unique advantages in a compelling way and encourages immediate action. This strategy produces the highest rate of sales at the lowest possible cost... provided it’s done the right way.

Having a superior system for effective low-cost advertising always wins out over high- budget campaigns that attempt to reach everyone. “Everyone” is not a good target group for whatever it is you’re offering. It’s always best to narrow your approach to specific groups – individual market segments that hold greater promise as potential buyers.

Where do most of your existing clients come from? If your business is new, you don’t have the advantage of a track record to draw upon. Try to project the best possible sources of new business. What specific areas or market segments should you put most of your efforts into?

When you know who the best prospects are for your services; developing advertising that captures attention and generates response from that specific group, is much easier. Identifying the best candidates for your advertising is always a preliminary step to designing and writing ads that pull in clients.

Here’s a simple 6-step formula for creating advertising that works:

1. **Message** — Get your message delivered to the *right prospects*.
2. **Attention & Interest** — Command the *attention* of those prospects so your message doesn’t get overlooked.
3. **Self-Interest** — Appeal to the “*wants*” of your target prospects before their needs. Wants are emotional...needs are logical and the heart often overrules the head. What are your prospects interested in? What do they deeply desire? Put yourself in their shoes and speak to each reader one-on-one as though you were sharing advice with a close personal friend.
4. **Advantages** — Communicate the *unique advantages* of your product or service. What can you convey to your audience that will make them want to do business with you, or at least take the next step towards buying?
5. **Proof** — It’s not enough to simply make a claim. You also need to provide evidence of the advantages that you present. Proof makes your statements much more *believable* and *credible*.
6. **Action** — Move your prospects to *act on your offer immediately* by promising an additional incentive such as a free sample, related report, or premium.

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Your front-end advertising should focus on lead-generation. Never try to sell directly in one step from a small classified, display, brochures, sales letters or ezine ads. Unless you plan to run large, full-page ads that give you adequate space to present compelling sales copy, you're further ahead sticking to "lead-generation" type ads. You can always work towards the sale with your follow-up copy. This is known as two-step advertising. Step one is to attract interested prospects with a small ad or mailing piece. Step Two—after they have shown initial interest in what you have to offer is to "sell" them with a convincing sales letter or dynamic presentation.

Persuasive, results-oriented advertising copy gives you an affordable, dependable and efficient means of attracting qualified buyers. Subsequent sales material can then help convert prospects into clients.

Each ad you place should be part of your continuous testing. All results should be recorded and carefully monitored. Slight, seemingly insignificant alterations in the wording of ads and particularly headlines have been known to cause dramatic improvements in response.

Carefully monitor your ads and sales material. With every change made, results should be tabulated and compared to the original. This is the way breakthrough advertising often evolves. It's usually the result of a little tweaking, constant testing and accurate analysis.

Here are 6 points to keep in mind as you develop your advertising:

- Make each ad as compelling and irresistible as possible.
- Use meaningful specifics rather than vague generalities – tests indicate that using actual numbers, amounts, and results achieved, etc. produces better results than a general statement or rounded-off number.
- Include a huge promise (the "big fat" claim) – state what the prospect stands to gain by taking action NOW.
- Make it believable. Perception equals reality — as far as prospects are concerned.
- Include a special offer to encourage action NOW. Make it limited in some way. Your mission is to light a fire under the prospect to move them from a state of inertia into action.
- Be very clear in your instructions — indicate the response you want prospects to take. A confused prospect never buys.

The most effective way to launch a new advertising campaign is to start small and test. Test every element of your ads – publications, headlines, offers, benefits, special inducements, points of contact. Starting with lead-generation advertising can help you determine the strongest possible appeal for your market. The best lead-generation ads get prospects interested by offering appealing, free information. The information should relate in some way to your product or service. By requesting the information, the prospect positions themselves as an ideal target for your offer.

My List of Ten Lethal Sins

And How Avoiding Them Will Make You Very Successful

Sin 1: Failing to Understand Strategy: Strategy is the “grand master plan” for your business. 99.9% of all professional practices and service businesses have no strategy. It’s simply....work more...bill more and wait to die. Everything you do is simply about putting out fires. Those are tactics (and not very good ones at that.) You must adopt a philosophy of: “Make tomorrow better than today” and then apply that ideal daily.

Sin 2: Running Institutional Ads: These are the biggest “suck and drain” black holes of your marketing money. They don’t ask the reader to do anything. You feel “good” about them because you are a pompous professional instead of client centric “trusted advisor.” You however are not the client. That’s why your marketing is a failure. Develop humility and switch to direct response marketing. Direct response precision marketing can be measured.

Sin 3: Not Understanding and Using Customer Lifetime Value: Until you know and understand what this calculation is all about, you are running a game show (not a business.) If you want to gamble and lose, go to Las Vegas. If you want to gamble and win—then you must understand this metric, even if you understand no other number in your entire business career.

Sin 4: Not Stressing Uniqueness: Most super successful professional practices and businesses are built around a single USP (Unique Selling Proposition.) It might be “the biotech experts” or the “accountant for drycleaners” or something else. It must set you apart from the sea of faceless competition out there. Think about what makes you unique (or what you can change about you to make you unique) and then make this the entire driving engine of your marketing efforts.

Sin 5: Not Borrowing Winning Strategies: You are too involved in your own business and industry. You are doing exactly the same things in the same way as everyone else. Go outside your industry and look for things that can be tested in your industry. Did you know for instance that most insurance headlines and marketing approaches can and have been adapted and used by litigation law firms all over the country to sell more legal services?

Sin 6: Not Using Relevancy Based Marketing: Education based marketing is a great concept. Professionals have destroyed the idea by turning all client communications into “memory dumps.” Your clients are not tax accountants and they don’t want to be. They want to know exactly what is relevant to their situation, what the impact is and what they can do about it. They want all this in plain (and preferably) interesting English. They want what is relevant to them.

Sin 7: Not Using Risk Reversal: Always make it easier for your client to say “yes” rather than “no.” Offer a money back guarantee. Clients say “no” because they are scared of making mistakes. When you offer a guarantee you have removed the fear of “bad decision” in the client’s mind. Every profession from medicine to law can and are offering guarantees today. Learn how to structure a guarantee for your practice or business and start featuring that as a prominent part of your client communications.

My List of Ten Lethal Sins - Continued

And How Avoiding Them Will Make You Very Successful

Sin 8: Failing to Follow Up: Most sales are made after the 7th contact. Most of you will mail one piece of literature once or make one call or go to one client presentation and then stop. Be persistent until you have completed seven contacts with a good prospective client. Getting a new client is like getting married. You're going to have to date for a while and get a relationship started before you can get to the big prize. Automate this whole process so it's a "no brainer."

Sin 9: Having No Automatic Referral System: Referrals are up to 16 times more profitable than business you develop through any other means. Develop automatic systems which generate referrals from your clients—make this another "no brainer." Every client contact, every piece of literature mailed, every network event offers the opportunity for unlimited referrals. If your system is set up right—you won't even have to ask for a referral face-to-face. They will come pouring in as if by magic—but you'll know they came from your system.

Sin 10: Develop A One Page Marketing Plan: Put the 3-5 most important things that you absolutely must get done marketing and growth wise in the next quarter on one page of paper. Circulate that to every member of your team and focus daily, weekly and monthly on those 3-5 things until you achieve them. Everyone from the most senior member of your team to the lowliest must be able to recite these objectives from memory and understand why you absolutely must get them done. You can't do this with an 82 page marketing plan and I don't care if you're General Motors. Make it one page or nothing.

Steal These Ideas!

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1. Send this file to a friend or colleague.
2. Send them a link to www.RainMakerBestPractices.com so they can download it themselves.
3. Send copies to your clients.
4. Print out as many copies as you like and discuss these ideas at your next meeting.

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Here are 7 ways to get more for less in your marketing efforts:

- Use smaller, well-designed ads that pack a punch, as opposed to costly, larger ads. Always test small, first.
- Choose better publications or mailing lists, ones that better reflect the target market you've identified as ideal for your product.
- Take advantage of low-cost marketing options such as classified ads, co-op advertising, Internet and publicity.
- Renew the sales relationship with inactive or past clients.
- Create superior advertising that gets more people to respond.
- Rework your follow-up material so recipients are literally compelled to buy from you because not doing so would actually cost them dearly due to all the benefits they'll miss out on.
- Once your system is working, expand your marketing reach and put it on autopilot so you can free up more of your time for other activities.

Successful marketing really boils down to this:

1. Find your best source of new prospects and clients...
2. Determine the most viable, cost effective, productive, and expedient way to reach as many targeted prospects as possible at the least cost...
3. Convert as many prospects into *clients for life* – delighted clients who happily tell others all about your products and services.

Leveraging your marketing efforts helps you find more first-time clients. You can then turn that one-shot sale into a continued relationship that can last for many years and bring you thousands even millions of dollars.

Using the principle of leveraging allows you to exponentially grow your business by multiplying the effectiveness of every marketing initiative. It's like profiting from the results of 60 salespeople instead of 3, and it's like having a full-page ad instead of a one-line directory listing. Leverage allows you to duplicate your efforts and produce many times greater results – at a much lower expense.

6 Targeting Your Prospects With Precision – Narrow Your Focus

The more closely you can define and pinpoint your target market, the more success you're likely to enjoy. Many businesses make the mistake of trying to be "all things to all people". You're better off choosing the markets you want to target and then focus exclusively on serving these segments better than anyone else.

Specialize — don't generalize. Choose niche markets that are both easily identifiable and easily accessible.

Carefully examine the results you've achieved up to this point. Chances are the 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle comes into play here. This concept states that 80% of your business comes from just 20% of your clients. Run the numbers and see if this idea is accurate in your experience. In most cases, it is.

The next obvious step is to review those 20% of clients who account for 80% of your business. Do they fit into a particular niche that's identifiable and accessible? Perhaps the top 20% of your clients live in the same neighborhood, a characteristic not shared by the other 80%. Or, it could be that the top 20% fit into specific occupational or special-interest groups.

It may be your top 20% consists of a variation of professional occupations like Architects, Dentists and Chiropractors. In this case, each group could represent a specific niche, and each niche may require a separate marketing approach – one that "speaks" to them as special members of their peer group.

In seeking a niche in which to focus your marketing effort, select a target group with an already established "want" for what you offer. Success is much faster and more of a sure thing wherever there's the likelihood of a strong desire for the benefits and advantages your product or service offers.

Don't try to create a desire for your product, find where that desire and demand already exist, then offer your superior solution in the most advantageous and appealing way.

As marketing consultant, Anthony Blake says... *"There are people walking around with money to spend... money that's burning holes in their pockets... all you have to do is follow the smoke."*

You'll achieve greater success by concentrating on specific market niches that are currently underserved or not served at all. In these markets, your products and services are wanted, appreciated and placed in high esteem. You're often seen as a "savior" of sorts, for providing much-wanted, helpful solutions.

Look at what others are doing and do something different. Avoid the niches that most companies in your field cater to. Go after the markets that others consider "too small" or "too insignificant" to worry about. Just make sure that it's a large enough market to make your efforts profitable.

You also need to target market segments that can be easily reached through your advertising and marketing strategies. Groups that don't have affordable and comfortable accessibility probably aren't the best niches to approach. To try and market successfully to a market that's difficult to reach can be a frustrating, draining and costly experience.

Be adaptable and flexible. Markets and opportunities are constantly changing. Nothing remains the same, indefinitely. Change is happening all around you, whether you choose to accept it or not. Be prepared to refocus your target markets, whenever it becomes necessary. Your flexibility and adaptability is what enables you to expand and grow with a changing and constantly evolving marketplace.

When seeking target niches, look for markets that:

- Share common problems and have similar “wants” so that you can, in effect, “package” solutions that serve many, rather than customizing solutions to individual, specific requirements.
- You know and understand, or those you can gather relevant information about, that will help you to understand the best marketing appeals to use.
- You can reach easily and affordably.
- Are easily identifiable as those who are under-served by others in the market.
- Can easily pay for your products or services.
- Show a past history of buying related products or services in the recent past, where the dollar volume of each purchase is close to or more than the cost of your product.

Using these ideas will help you determine the most lucrative and productive areas in which to concentrate your marketing operations.

7 You Must Develop a Unique Competitive Advantage

Why should prospects do business with you? How are they *substantially* better off in doing business with you vs. any other competitor? The answer to these questions should be carefully and consistently communicated to your market at every opportunity.

Your most unique and relevant advantage is your strongest ally in attracting first-time buyers. This is what gives you an original perspective and a strong competitive edge in the marketplace. Your *Unique Selling Proposition (USP)* or *Unique Value Proposition (UVP)* as it is also known, is what sets you apart from everyone else — *even if they happen to be marketing the exact same products to the exact same people.*

A *Unique Value Proposition* gives your business a distinction in any competitive marketplace. Your unique advantage helps to position you favorably, in the eyes of your market.

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But just having a *Unique Value Proposition* isn't enough; it should be part of every communication you have with your market. In fact, it should also be a part of your business on a daily basis. In other words, you've got to *live* it. It can't just be some dreamed-up concept that sounds interesting and appealing. Your *Unique Value Proposition* needs to be something original... something that gives you a special advantage over others, thereby minimizing the appeal of competing products and businesses.

The key to having distinctive advantages is to make those advantages clearly and unmistakably evident to your prospects.

You simply must make it easy for people to understand your advantages. That's why free samples, test drives, and trial offers work so well; they give the prospect a "hands-on" experience, essentially providing an actual demonstration of the advantages of your product.

Think of your *Unique Value Proposition* as a ten-second advertisement for your business. What can you say in ten seconds that gives you superior positioning in the eyes of your target prospects?

Communicate your advantages everywhere. It's your most compelling sales statement because it separates you favorably from everyone else. Make your unique advantages known by placing them everywhere, including business cards, brochures, Yellow Pages ads, signs, name tags, direct mail packages, company vehicles, web sites, advertising specialties, packaging, etc.

Actively promoting your distinct advantages gives you the most valuable exposure of all. Most simply push their own company name in their ads, unknowingly committing one of the biggest entrepreneurial blunders of all time.

Your UVP actually *means* something to prospects and gives them a reason to contact you, first. Prospects relate and respond because a good *Unique Value Proposition* is created to appeal specifically to the innermost "wants" of those prospects.

Your unique advantages tell the marketplace what you offer that others don't. It's about being different from everyone else and clearly and succinctly communicating what you do for your clients. It's what they get that makes you the decisive choice over and above all other options — including doing nothing.

Developing a strong Unique Value Proposition requires a thorough understanding of the kinds of things your competitors offer, as well as superior inside knowledge as to what your market really wants. Taking the time to fully understand what your prospects desire is fundamental to supplying the "magic" solution.

8 Help People to Buy With an Appealing First-Time Offer

Try to make it real easy for first-time clients to buy from you. You don't have to sell new clients on the whole package or deluxe version of your service. Instead, offer something as an introductory level purchase. Allow these new clients an easy, lower-cost way to become your clients.

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Your mission is to facilitate the buying process by eliminating all possible obstacles that could interfere with the sale.

Some businesses make the mistake of going for the biggest sale at the first opportunity. The problem is... prospects are leery in the beginning — you need to earn their trust first. A better choice is to make a small, initial sale to a customer, and develop a client/advisor relationship – one that hopefully blossoms into a life-long partnership.

Since the first sale to a customer is the most difficult (and costly) one to close, it makes good sense to ease them into the buying experience, until they are totally comfortable and anxious to spend money, again and again.

The key is to get them on board as clients. Make it easy. Give them a “baby step” to let them experience the total benefits of your product, without fear and without risking a lot of money. Give people the opportunity to put your services to the test. Let them experience your customer service first-hand. Do all you can to ensure their satisfaction on this small purchase. Take good care of these people — they’re the essence of your business.

Do whatever it takes to make the initial sale. Additional sales can come repeatedly, even automatically, but only after you’ve earned your client’s complete trust, confidence and satisfaction.

Most people have a set figure that they’re willing to spend without hesitation, on something of interest. Anything above that figure and prospects could take days, or even weeks to make a buying decision. Make it easy for new clients to try your products and services with some sort of introductory offer.

Since it’s easier to ease people into a buying relationship with lower-cost items, you can welcome more folks into the fold that way. Grow your customer list secure in the knowledge that each customer can become a lifelong revenue stream for your business. When you keep in mind the potential life time value of a long-term client, the initial sales value pales in comparison.

The more appealing the initial offer, the easier it is to acquire first-time clients. The secret to building a large client list in a short period of time is to create a tremendous offer that is simply irresistible to your target market.

9 Added Value Makes It Easy To Choose You

Whether it’s a first purchase or the thirty-first, the key to gaining an advantage in any market is to offer *superior value*. Added value is about giving more in perceived *use-value* to your clients, than they get anywhere else. It’s not the actual price of your product or service that matters most, it’s the *value* buyers feel they get in return that makes it worthy of the price.

Give more in actual use value, than you ask for in cash value. Offer more than competitors do and the perceived value of your product increases accordingly. You could be selling identical name-brand products as others. What makes you different and gives you a clear and distinct advantage over competitors is the added value that you include.

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Added value could mean free consultations or annual reviews. It could be the bonus manual that you supply with a software product, or a full year guarantee, instead of the industry standard of three months. Perhaps it's the monthly call to remind the customer to reorder another 30-day supply of forms. There are plenty of ways to add value to whatever you sell.

Here are a few value-added ideas to illustrate the concept further:

- Free annual review
- Helpful, informative articles or reports
- Information sheets
- Maintenance or set-up tips provided for each product offered
- Offering more than is considered standard practice
- 24-hour help line for technical support
- Accessibility to private, information-based web sites
- Premiums or small bonus gifts
- Free consultations

It's important to offer extras that clients want and place a high value upon. It doesn't do much good to offer something that isn't desired by your prospects, or to offer something that is readily available elsewhere. But it doesn't have to cost a lot to create an offer that's highly desired. Often these value-added premiums can be acquired at an extremely low cost, but the perceived value they add to the purchase can be worth a hundred times the cost or more.

10 Reverse The Risk and Remove The Final Barrier

There's always an element of fear people have in doing business with a company or individual they don't really know. The degree of fear usually increases with the amount of money involved in the potential transaction.

Most of us have had an unfortunate experience or two in the past with products or services that didn't quite measure up to our expectations. We've been ripped-off by unscrupulous scam operators, or businesses of dubious character. Those painful memories have taught us all to be more cautious of unknown vendors and to make sure we have adequate recourse, should we be unhappy with our purchases.

Your prospects are in this mode right now. They fear being "taken" in some way. Unfortunately, this fear often paralyzes them from making a buying decision. If the fear is too intense, they run for cover to avoid the potential pain of loss, like the ones from previous encounters that are forever etched into their memory banks.

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Reversing the risk is about assuming total responsibility for your customer's satisfaction. It's about taking the risk away from the customer and shouldering it yourself — as any reputable company would.

Your job as a marketer is to eliminate, or at least, significantly reduce this risk wherever possible. When you do this effectively, you've removed the final obstacle to closing the sale. You've safely removed the last possible objection to the sale your prospect could have.

*Many true prospects want to buy. They want to say "Yes, I'll take it".
They desire all the benefits and advantages your product or service can
give them. But an overwhelming fear can suppress even a powerful
impulse to buy.*

You can overcome this problem and improve your sales dramatically by removing the risk from your prospect and assuming the risk yourself. In taking the risk away from your prospects and clients you make it easier for them to buy. It's one less reason not to buy. The less your prospects and clients feel they have to lose, the more likely they are to go ahead with the purchase.

Here are 8 ways you can reverse the buying risk for your prospective clients:

Provide a no-hassle, money back guarantee. Offer bonus items as a gift, simply for taking the time to try the product. This makes your guarantee, "better than risk free".

- Increase the length of your guarantee to double or triple what the competition offers (90 days vs. 30 days)
- Offer payment plans (3 easy payments of \$33 monthly, rather than one payment of \$99)
- Offer introductory version of your product or service
- Give free samples of actual services
- Give free trial packages for a limited time
- Accept post-dated checks as payment
- Pay only on client approval
- Offer guarantees in an industry where none have existed before

Your prospects want to feel totally comfortable in doing business with you. Yes, they want the promised benefits, but they also want to know that they're not "on the hook", should your products or services disappoint in any way.

The more complete and all-encompassing your risk-reversal strategy is, the more prospects will be willing to take a chance on you and paradoxically, the less you'll have to deliver in terms of recourse.

All businesses and professions (including lawyers, accountants and consultants) must have a guarantee of some type in today's competitive world. Learn how to write a guarantee and figure it prominently in your promotional literature and other activities.

11 Continuous Marketing Accelerates Success Geometrically

A system of continuous marketing enables you to routinely convey your message to your best prospects. The obvious goal is to convince prospects to become clients and the sooner they come around, the lower the cost to you in acquiring that customer.

Some prospects will buy the first time you contact them, provided your offer and ad copy does an adequate job and you've targeted the best possible prospects. Unfortunately, many people don't even see your message, or pay any attention to it the first time around. That's why it's so important to repeatedly and continuously contact your best prospects with your most convincing and appealing offer.

A marketing system is designed to deliver your message several times to prospects who haven't yet made a purchase. Many experts claim that you should approach a prospect no less than seven times before giving up on her and moving on.

The actual number of pieces in your marketing system may vary, according to the business type and your budget. It usually takes more than one contact to close sales that involve more than prospects would spend without thinking twice about it. You may be short-changing yourself if you only approach prospects a single time. I advocate a system of multiple exposures, which is any number over one.

Most of us are exposed to a barrage of commercial messages every day. It's impossible to pay attention to them all. So what do we do? We focus on only those that reach us where we "live", that hot zone that encompasses only areas of primary self-interest.

With the kind of widespread advertising going on, it's no surprise that your first message to your market doesn't always get through... let alone acted upon. For this reason, it's important to "work" a highly qualified and interested prospect repeatedly, so they can at least try out your products and services. To deprive them of this opportunity is to cheat them out of what could very well be in their best interest; buying your product NOW. Not only that, but you're cheating yourself in that you'll produce far less sales than you could through an effective system of repeated contacts.

With advertising messages everywhere, it's fair to say that many people are oblivious to most of them. Deleting 99.5% of the regular onslaught is the only way most people could function effectively in their daily lives. To pay attention to every message would leave little time for anything else.

So the best means of getting through to prospects is with spaced repetition. You want to send your marketing communications to prospects repeatedly, over time. I suggest spacing messages apart by two weeks in the initial stages, with a gradual spreading out of any subsequent contacts.

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I'd also suggest that you don't simply mail the same piece over and over again. Promote the same benefits and use similar offers, if you wish. But don't just send the same sales letter or brochure. This quickly becomes boring to the prospect – even though she may in fact be mulling over your offer. Remember, bored prospects don't buy.

Some of the pieces you may want to use in your prospect marketing system include:

- Sales Letters
- Brochures
- Ezine Ads
- Postcards
- Card Decks
- Lift Letters
- Coupons
- Press Releases
- Websites
- Invitations
- Greeting Cards
- Testimonial Letters
- Complete Direct Mail Packages

You'll want to have systems in place for both your prospect list and your client list. Often, established customer buy again and again, automatically, without the need to be "sold" each time. The best way to keep clients active is to maintain a system of consistent communication.

Your client list marketing system may include some of the following elements:

- Newsletters (electronic or print versions)
- Catalogs
- Invitations
- Special Letters
- Greeting Cards
- Thank-you Cards or Gifts
- New Product Announcements
- Product Updates or Upgrades
- Helpful Information

12 Execution Is Everything

Finally and most importantly you must actually implement your marketing strategies and tactics.

Read that again. Keep reading it until it becomes the mantra for all activities (not just marketing) in your business.

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Without execution...everything is mere fantasy.

Too many leaders (remember, you are the leader even if your business has only one person in it) fool themselves into thinking their businesses are well run.

They're like the parents in Garrison Keillor's fictional book, Lake Wobegon, all of whom think their children are above average. Then the top performers from Lake Wobegon High School arrive at the University of Harvard and are suddenly confronted with reality. The reality is that they are substantially below average.

Similarly, when you as a leader start understanding how the truly great small businesses of the world are run—how superbly they get things done—you'll discover how far you have to go before you can truly call yourself a “professional” business person or entrepreneur.

Here is the fundamental problem: People think of execution as the tactical side of business, something leaders delegate or “farm out” to the advisors while they focus on the perceived “bigger” issues.

This idea is simply wrong.

Execution is not just tactics—it is a discipline and a system. It is built into your company's strategy, its goals and its culture. You as the leader must be deeply involved in the art of “getting the right things done.”

Execution is a specific set of behaviors and techniques that you and your people must master in order to gain and maintain your unique advantage.

Mastering this art is simple. Ask yourself this question every 15 minutes of your working day: “Is what I am doing right now the single most important thing that I could be doing right now, at this moment, to ensure the future long term growth of my business?”

Do this religiously and watch your business soar!

Where do you go from here?

There are two ways for you to put the information in this book to work for you.

The Do It Yourself Plan

Implement the concepts and suggestions in this book. Continuously educate yourself about marketing.

Never, never, never stop marketing your business.

Or the Guided Plan

Hire a marketing coach. Look, you know what you do best and I'm guessing marketing isn't it. Or,

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maybe you know all about marketing, but it just never seems to get done.

Whatever you do, always remember this:

“Your business is a potential rocket to achieve personal financial freedom and satisfaction. Marketing is the propellant for that rocket ship. Marketing is EVERYTHING.”

Steal These Ideas!

Here's what you can do to spread the word about *“12 Secrets of Superstar Professional Service Firms”*

1. Send this file to a friend or colleague.
2. Send them a link to www.RainMakerBestPractices.com so they can download it themselves.
3. Send copies to your clients.
4. Print out as many copies as you like and discuss these ideas at your next meeting.

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About The Author

"Patrick McEvoy Has Helped Over 11,000 Businesses Grow and Prosper Over The Last 24 Years Using Innovative Marketing Strategies"

There are two types of people who teach marketing...those that read from books and simply regurgitate information...and those that have lived in the trenches, gotten their hands and feet dirty, and produced results. Patrick McEvoy has produced results from "both sides" of the desk...as a consultant and as a business owner.

As the President of his own advisory firm, Rainmaker Best Practices, he has worked with scores of small and medium sized professional service firms to help improve their profits.

"Patrick Has Been Both a Successful Consultant and Practitioner Working with Small and Large Businesses"

As an experienced business consultant with Ernst & Young and KPMG Consulting...two of the largest consulting firms in the world, Patrick worked with numerous Fortune 500 as well as mid-market and small businesses companies to improve business processes, select and implement cutting-edge technologies, and develop strategies and initiatives with successful results.

Patrick also served as a Partner with Orion Capital Partners... an investment banking firm that specializes in helping finance and manage high potential early stage start-up companies. He advised early stage management and company founders in such areas as executive development and marketing.

He also successfully built his own manufacturing company at the age of 30 from zero employees and zero revenues to 115 employees and \$14 million in revenues in only 18 months starting with only \$50,000 of borrowed capital.

Today, Rainmaker Best Practices is a fast growing marketing consultancy helping business and professional practices take the "pain" out of their marketing efforts.

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