

GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN 90 DAYS OR LESS

PRACTICAL TIPS AND TOOLS TO QUICKLY
MAKE MONEY IN YOUR BUSINESS



KIMBERLY BREWER

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About the Author

Kimberly Brewer is an accomplished international business coach, author and motivational speaker with a specialization in business development, strategy and small business start-up. She holds an MBA from Western Governors University, has a bachelor's degree from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is certified in smart growth for businesses from the University of Virginia. With more than 25 years of experience in sales, sales management and business development within Fortune 500 companies in various verticals, Mrs. Brewer transferred those skills to successfully build and develop a thriving coaching and consulting practice that specializes in small-business growth. Deeming herself a serial-entrepreneur, she has also launched and maintains a successful real estate investment portfolio and an online travel website.

Introduction

I wrote most of this book by iPhone on a plane to Los Angeles, sitting next to my husband and two kids. Often there was little time in my life to commit to writing. As I looked at my little ones, then ages 4 and 6, I knew I had to make the commitment. Although we were on a pleasure trip, financial commitments loomed and the idea of trading hours for dollars has long been unappealing. Those little faces and visions of the life I truly wanted, coupled with four hours of flight time, were precisely the motivation I needed.

Who I was, mixed with who I was destined to be hung in the balance. Fourth-three, a loving husband, three great kids, an MBA, coupled with years of experience. But was this all? Really, is this all to the next phase of my life? I wanted sustainable financial freedom. I wanted to work when I wanted, from where I wanted, all while making as much money or more in my passive state as my active state. It was time to jump all in. Fearfully? Yes! But I focused all of that fear and committed myself to 90 days of the hardest work I had performed. That, coupled with all the knowledge from all the books I'd read and all the experience I had accumulated over the past 25 years of my life culminated to create a series of entrepreneur portfolio books (you're reading the first one), coaching, online courses, consulting and training. All the things that I loved, all the things that I made companies that I worked for a fortune doing, but had only half-heartedly committed to for my own wealth-building and financial independence.

The time was now! No, not tomorrow. Not when the kids are older. Not once I finish this project at work, NOW! I HAD to commit to the next 90 days and the proven principles that I'd made Fortune 500 companies even richer doing. Just 90 days and my life would never be the same.

Grow Your Business in 90 Days or Less

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SECTION 1: IT'S IN YOUR HEAD

Chapter 1: Idea, Accident or Solution to a Problem

Quite often, entrepreneurs become such out of frustration of finding a solution to a problem. Sometimes they launch a business that solves a problem they experienced in the past; take Kevin and Melissa Kiernan, a married couple from Waldwick, New Jersey, who became overnight entrepreneurs when they eventually got fed up with animals raiding their garbage cans through the night. Each morning Melissa would walk out the front door to find trash and debris scattered all over the front yard. Armed with frustration, turned motivation, Kevin headed off to the fabric store to concoct a solution to the animals' free-for-all. Instead of covering their garbage can with a plastic lid, the Kiernans designed a cover made of waterproof polyester and elastic made to fit almost all garbage cans. Positive feedback from their idea and design led this couple, not at all looking to build a business, to seek financial support from the famous show (I know you know it) *Shark Tank* to scale their business. After a pretty scary retort and a few hearty laughs, Daymond John, Shark Tank entrepreneur and world-famous founder of FUBU brand, accepted a great offer, landing him and the Kiernans in a swift but successful business venture, selling thousands of units at the launch. I'd say this is one heck of a profitable solution!

When trauma plagues a family and income is lost, often cash conservation becomes paramount. This was the case with Lynsi O'Dell, when her husband suffered a debilitating brain hemorrhage. Seeking ways to save money with four kids and one on the way, O'Dell started to try different recipes for laundry detergent. After almost a year, Lynsi finally found the magic formula. Backed by the primary desire to produce a skin-

sensitive product to address her children's eczema, she found the magic bullet, which many of her friends begged to try. With that motivation, O'Dell sent an email to her friends and sold 15 gallons. Then she moved on to a craft show, selling another 75 gallons and with that, Coconut Rain was born. With five distributors across the state of Michigan and roughly 40 percent growth since joining an online marketplace, I said that's a profit solution!

Now, not everyone has such a sweetheart story to tell. Some of us couple ideas with sheer tenacity to be successful and claw our way to business excellence. Others of us still take the one thing that we excel in, stop making some Fortune 500 company rich, and take the leap to do it better, faster, and with extreme innovation. This is my story! The one thing that I knew I did better than most leaders is teach, coach and motivate people to greatness through strategy, creative business development and extreme innovation. I could do it in my sleep. It gives me extreme pleasure to see people grow, and humbly stated, I'm quite good at it. From years as a trainer, to even more years as a sales director, it was in my DNA to help people reach their destiny. For years, I talked about it. For years, I gave it away for free (more in the next section). For years, I lacked the bravery to step into the wild, shielded by a full-time job and numerous excuses for why I couldn't, shouldn't or otherwise. Finally, I took the step; I took the leap and jumped and built a ladder on my way down. Now, I am not suggesting that you walk into your boss's office and offer him your final farewell tomorrow. If you don't have somewhat of a safety net, gleefully return tomorrow to your day job and consider it a blessing that will serve you well as you SERIOUSLY and finally build your enterprise to step out and give it 150 percent of your time and attention. Oh yes, and it will absolutely take that! Long nights, early mornings, sacrifices, did I say sacrifices? It will take living like most are not willing to, to have options and the freedom that many will NEVER be able to. Whether you leap cold turkey into entrepreneurship or you take a more moderate approach, plan to do these five things for business success.

1. Decide how you pay for your current lifestyle

Will you rely on a spouse? Or work part-time or on contract while building your business? Or will you grow your enterprise while you maintain your full-time job? Whatever your plan, be sure to have an exit strategy from this support and set clear goals and objectives on how you will focus on your business 100 percent of the time.

2. Build an emergency fund

Making a decision to hang up your corporate cleats in favor of dress sweats and sneakers, and hanging out your own “For Business” sign is a tough and oftentimes fearful decision. Many are the stories of entrepreneurs with less than \$100 to their name amassing fortunes off of true determination and grit! I applaud them and relish in these stories; however, for most of us, it gives us a sense of security to plan to fire our bosses. With that, ideally plan for 12 months, and no less than six months of your current expenses in savings. This will help to keep you afloat until you can start to earn a salary from your business. (This book will help you do that much more quickly.)

3. Uncover what makes you different from the pack

If an investor offered you \$100,000 today to invest in your business and the only catch was that you had to pitch to him exactly what makes you different than your competitors, what would you say? Knowing why customers should choose you over your competitors is an instrumental component of building a sustainable business. Being able to effectively communicate that within a 30-second elevator pitch, a presentation to customers/investors, and in written communication is a non-negotiable skill set. Every entrepreneur must be able to articulate what makes them unique.

4. Identify your niche

A niche is a special area of demand for a product or service. Find yours today. Upon beginning this journey, ask yourself, “What problem does this product or service solve?” and, “How does it uniquely address a need?” The great Albert Einstein notably stated, “Genius is the ability to focus on one particular thing for a long time without losing concentration.” Many business owners fail due to their desire to do too many things. They spread their attention and funds across so many areas that they fail to do any of them with great excellence. Find the one thing that you do so well, that you enjoy doing and would do for free for the rest of your life, and you have at least found the skill set that you should wrap your product or service around. Perfect that business and drill it down to serve a small subset of the market, creating extreme value and high demand. For me, it is developing people with unique strategies and passion. That is why coaching and consulting was a no-brainer. The ability to deliver it Q.U.I.C.™ to start-ups and small businesses is my niche.

5. Decide, TODAY, how you will get your first five customers

Many of my coaching clients are thrown off by this question. In fact, the majority of new businesses don't give a second thought to how they plan to acquire clients and new business. This should be the core component of your marketing plan. Yes, you need to write a marketing plan. Under market strategy within your plan, you should look at the top 5–10 tactical action steps you plan to take to get your first five customers. Depending upon your product and service, you can start with your sphere of influence (family, friends and colleagues) to gain your first customers. They can also serve as part of your product/service research for your business. With a great product, you will receive word-of-mouth advertising from this group as well. If you are transferring a skill from a corporate job, but not in a competitive capacity, and branching out on your own, your previous employer (provided you made a proper exit rather than utilize a

10-piece orchestra to gleefully announce that you were leaving the drains of their organization and corporate America in general) always serves as a perfect first customer. After all, they know your work and trust you, HOPEFULLY! As you begin to have exit interviews, start to plant the seed on how working with you as a client in your new business solves a particular problem within the organization that you know they have. Even if you have left your corporate job long ago, reaching back to previous employers is always a great place to start. Here are a few other tactical steps to garner your first clients:

- **Online Marketplace** – Begin selling your products on popular online marketplaces such as eBay or Etsy. These popular sites have already done most of the marketing and advertising for you. Customers are already shopping there. Your job is to write (or have someone write for you; check out Fiverr or Elance for outsourced help) amazing sales copy (yes, you do have to be a sales person in some form at some point to be an entrepreneur and grow your business). Then, you can share it on social media and on all of your print advertising. These sites are a great way to start learning about distribution channels and formulating your process surrounding inventory management. Many of these businesses eventually scale to their own websites and warehouse distribution.
- **Freelance sites online** – I gained a great deal of success very quickly with this strategy. My platform of choice is Fiverr. I started out with a simple gig (as they call it in Fiverr world) that was part of my service offerings and, of course, one of the transferred skills that I did very well in corporate America: the SWOT analysis. It is still a very successful gig for me today <https://www.fiverr.com/s2/5dcc673e53>. Now granted, Fiverr is the \$5 marketplace and certainly will not be your primary source of income. However, I gave my clients EXTREME value for their \$5. The SWOT analysis took a deep look at their business from the perspective of an experienced business consultant and also gave them at least one strategy to move their business forward.

(Most of the time I gave them at least 2–3 strategies to grow their business, while simultaneously growing my own business with glowing five-star reviews.) This first gig picked up so much steam so quickly that I added more gigs from acquired skills and planned service offerings. This strategy was a way to expose my skills to over a million buyers specifically looking for freelancers. I grew this business by sharing the gig links often on social media (schedule all of your social media post at least 1–2 months in advance; more later on social media to grow your business), providing what people needed, and giving them extreme value in exchange for heartwarming reviews. The quality of my work led to additional work and ultimately led to my primary business offering: consulting and business coaching <http://bthreeconsulting.com/business-coaching/>. Many of the clients that I engaged on Fiverr are still clients today and produce thousands of dollars in revenue. I'm providing a list of some of my most popular Fiverr gigs. Read the reviews, study what made them successful, and notice how the gig extras (extra services that could be purchased from the base gig) build in more revenue and help to create a more solid customer.

- Create custom sponsorship levels for proposal for \$5 on #Fiverr
<https://www.fiverr.com/s2/b1016e7b66>
- I will send you a marketing and sales kit to grow your business for \$5 on #Fiverr
<https://www.fiverr.com/s2/2c42912ba4>

Chapter 2: Channel Your Inner B.O.S.S.

"*The secret of success is the consistency to pursue.*" -Harry F. Banks. Yes this journey is as much an exercise in introspection as it is survival and escape. As I referenced in the first chapter, many entrepreneurs are created by happenstance and others have a desire, an aching even to do something exceptional! This exception is often stifled by the structure and rules of large corporations. For many the only way to maximize this greatness is to build the blueprint. Many born entrepreneurs, for years, feel misplaced within their former professional lives. The freedom and longing to do something widely impactful represents a burning fire in the belly that must not lie dormant, but must be ignited! And despite this burn, the entrepreneurial journey will indeed require you to channel your inner B.O.S.S. - **BAD ASS, Omnipotent, Soul-Sucking, Strength!!!** While this statement does appear dramatized; it accurately explains the grit required to be successful. Entrepreneurship is very much a marathon as opposed to a sprint. If you expect instant success, your odds are better with the lottery. True success takes unwavering perseverance, dedication and the ability to commit oneself completely to fulfilling the mission. It is indeed a conquest! As you build your company, if you expect to get 8-hours of sleep each night...forget about! Be prepared to work your BAD ASS off. You will work 10 times harder than you ever have in your life. Your social life will be greatly compromised and you may lose friends (perhaps family) along the way. Entrepreneurs are often misunderstood, due to their laser focus on achieving their goals. This is often difficult for those avoid of this process to comprehend.

The entrepreneur lifestyle draws from your *OMNIPOTENT* power to achieve success. Most of your thoughts will be encompassed of strategies, tactics, milestones and achievement surrounding your

business. You will often tap into your “FLOW” in an effort to maximize productivity and get things done. Wikipedia describes flow as the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. Flow is characterized by complete absorption in what one does. Named by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, flow is completely focused motivation. It is a single-minded immersion and represents perhaps the ultimate experience in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In flow, the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. Flow is real and not some residue of productivity mumble jumble. You will use it and it will catapult to greatness!

Psychology is described as the science of mind and behavior. With that, it is clear how psychology permeates through some of the most successful business strategies around.

More than ever before, business schools are offering business classes that address psychology, as it is clear that business, its leadership and strategy are interconnected. Psychology, specifically behavioral psychology, is omnipresent within marketing strategy as it relates to the human behaviors and the knowledge therefore studied to gain and retain customers. Now, I’m not suggesting that you need to return to school to obtain a psychology degree, but you should have a basic knowledge of how psychology is utilized in business and how it informs your strategic initiatives, your leadership, and your response to customer needs and interactions.

Chapter 3: Assess Your Skills

Whether you already have a business or are struggling to find a business idea, one of the most critical steps is to take inventory of your skills and your immediate progression circle. In the beginning stages of your business, unless you already have capital or have secured substantial funding, your skills and the skills of others that you may tap into serve as your start-up capital.

If you are thinking of selling a service, evaluate an activity in which you are particularly skilled. Have you spent a corporate career as a staff accountant? Consider providing seminars on financial ledgers or maybe profit-and-loss statements for small businesses or, even greater, act as a financial consultant to organizations in your most recently worked field. Have you done work as a grant writer or fundraiser? Consider becoming a fund development consultant. The opportunities to repackage your existing skills are virtually endless. Below are five steps to take when assessing your skills:

2. What task would you do for free if money were no object?

This is often the most philosophical, yet the most fun and engaging part of the skills assessment process. What do you love? What would you do at no cost over and over again? If your answer is, sipping frosty umbrella drinks on the beach, then you had better put a process in place and monetize it. So find a beach you love, conduct market research on the need for frosty umbrella drinks, the proper licensing, liability, insurance, staffing needs, proper personnel and anticipated operating budget to run your little (one day immense; think franchise) enterprise.

To be totally forthcoming, many of the most successful businesses happen by accident. Think Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook. His ingenious idea for social connectivity started from the college campus of Harvard with essentially a waywardly, smitten college schoolmate inquiring about the relationship status of a fellow college schoolmate. The foundation of his ideas and algorithms conceptualized or borrowed is up for interpretation.

3. How effective are your planning and organization skills?

Planning in business is paramount! Do you have the necessary skills to mental process a well thought out business plan? Being a visionary with the ability to project a concept into the future and build a plan to meet your objectives is enviable, yet necessary skill for entrepreneurship. Effective planning will be your guiding light to business success. The efficacious planner understands that planning is only as good as its actionable counterpart. With that, you should hold the skill that enables you to plan, all the while maintaining flexibility. While there are multiple resources to help you develop sound business, strategic and marketing plans, it is paramount to inform both the input and the process. This calls for critical thinking skills and vision.

4. How sound is your decision making ability?

Without question, decision making ability will be a critical skill to possess in an effort to be successful. From the very beginning of your entrepreneurial journey, you must make sound decisions, first of all, about which business to go into. From there, decisions on hiring, informing your marketing, funding, sales, vendor selection, and a host of other decisions need to be made. The key is to be decisive with the freedom to learn from mistakes, rather than fearing mistakes to the point of paralysis. Ask yourself how you make decisions. Are you informed by relevant information and by weighing the potential consequences?

There are numerous decision making tools with the core of those being models such as Decision Tree Analysis, Grid Analysis, Six Thinking Hats and the Pareto Analysis commonly referred to as “The 80/20 Rule”.

5. Are you at least amenable to sales?

Without question, sales is a topic near and dear to my heart! As the adage goes “No matter what business you are in, you are in sales.” You may not be a formally trained sales person armed with Zig Zigler quotes in your head, but if you are trading products or services in exchange for money, you’re selling. Of course the more skilled you are, the more successful you will be. If you are sales-adverse you will struggle on your journey to success. Before you employ a robust sales team, you will approach your initial customers yourself.

6. Are you an effective communicator?

Of all the necessary skills, this will be most critical! In order to effectively plan you will need high-level written communication to properly execute a well-designed plan. To communicate this plan to both staff and investor, you will draw upon proper oratory skills to explain your vision and strategy. Of course, if you plan to sell anything, you will draw upon solid oral and presentation skills. The skill of communication plays a role in the execution of all of the other skills above. If you don’t have this skill, none of the other skills will be fully developed, no matter how hard you try.

Chapter 4: Setting S.M.A.R.T Goals

For far too long, consultants, trainers, gurus and leaders have been misleading us about goal-setting. We keep hearing the same myth that people with written goals achieve greater success in life. I fell afoul of this story myself; after all, it came from the pages of a famous author and I've seen it repeated again and again, most recently in an article published by the Professional Golfers Association. The trouble is that this story becomes linked with the concept of setting SMART goals, for which there is some evidence of success, but written goals? So, I felt that it was time to set the record straight, and based on just a little bit of real research...

Goal-setting is one of those things that people, it seems, are near unanimous on its importance to life, career, success, and achievement. And there are a great many speakers who advocate goal-setting. The latest 'fad' in this is *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrne's now-famous documentary which, in a nutshell, purports that people who envision what they want will attract its actualization into their life. Now, I'm not going to detract from this appealing idea, because there is something in it, but it isn't new by any means; it's been written in the Bible for several hundred years. There are others who advocate goal-setting, including Zig Ziglar and Anthony Robbins, both of whom quote an oft-used story about goal-setting's effectiveness. This is the Yale study of 1953. Some say it is Harvard, and some challenge the year – it matters not, since the study is an urban myth. Let me remind you of the story; you may have heard variations and the precise percentages vary:

Yale researchers surveyed the graduating class of 1953 to determine how many of them have specific, written goals for their future. Three percent of them had. Twenty years later, the researchers followed up

with the surviving members of the class and discovered that the 3 percent with written goals had accumulated more personal wealth than the remaining 97 percent combined!

I repeat, this 'study' is an urban myth. Whilst it is quoted by some 'authorities' and famous gurus on management and self-leadership, there is NO record of the study and NO paper on it. Yet its allure is understandable; it feeds beautifully into the concept that in order for you to accumulate wealth (aka be successful) not only must you have specific goals, but you must write them down. For someone selling a process on written goal-setting (see Zig Ziglar and Tony Robbins) it 'proves' the process.

So is goal-setting really important, or is it just a load of twaddle? To answer this question, rather than rely on stories of spurious origin, it's important to have some robust research to find out if there's anything in it.

What is a goal?

Hold on just a moment, though. What do we mean by a 'goal'? Everyone at some point in their life has heard that it is important for us to have goals. Goals provide you a map to your future, whether in business, life, career or sport. It seems obvious, but a football team playing without a goal to aim for is just kicking a ball around. Other than the more obvious physical goals such as the target of a particular game, what exactly is a goal? And how do you know when you have achieved it? Is it even very important to have goals? A sporting goal is a useful analogy, but here we are more interested in the non-sporting variety.

The OED definition of a goal is "an aim or a desired result." That's useful, but I prefer the Wikipedia version, which defines a goal as "a specific, intended result of strategy." The definitions amount, ultimately, to the same thing: the intended achievement of a desired result. The dictionary definition, however, suggests that the goal exists with or without you. Why is this important? Let me share an example:

On the horizon is a mountain, its peak visible on this glorious day. It is your goal. You are aiming to reach the peak of this mountain. According to the dictionary, the goal is the mountain peak. According to the encyclopedia, the intended result is that you reach the mountain peak as a result of the journey (intended strategy) you are making.

What's important, the existence of the goal or the journey to its attainment?

Let me refer briefly back to soccer... Is the existence of the goal at the end of the pitch the thing that makes the game, or is it the strategy (and tactics) employed by players to score (reach) the goal?

The reason for being pedantic at this stage is to stress that we refer (in English) to a goal as both an entity and as the intended result of our actions. For the purposes of this book, I refer to goal as both – an entity that we are able to describe in one or more of the five senses we enjoy, and as a specific, intended result. I believe that it is critical for a goal to be described in one or more of our senses; otherwise, we will never know what it is.

You likely know people, perhaps yourself, who would be lost without a to-do list. These are daily, weekly, or monthly tasks that result in specific intended results. Many people will consider their to-do list as their goals. Indeed, you can call them 'goals' if you wish. But I want to distinguish this concept further. I call these daily, weekly, and monthly tasks "outcomes" – they are important steps on the way to achieving goals, but they are a small part of the overall intended result.

I'll borrow from my own to-do list for today. It includes, strangely enough, writing the first three sections of this chapter. Now, is my goal to write three sections of an article? Is it to write an article? I can answer yes to both, yet it doesn't tell us the full story – my goal is to develop my business and, as a part of that, I want to reach a wider audience for the purpose of building my brand, building my reputation and establishing myself as a trusted expert that you will now consider when seeking someone to design and run a training

program or undertake coaching in your organization. This book is just one part of that strategy, and this section, just one part of this book.

It is the goal that helps us determine the appropriate outcomes necessary to reach the goal; the specific outcomes help determine the actions we undertake to achieve it. The whole series together makes a strategy.

For ease and clarity, I consider a goal to be longer-term and the intended result of a strategy. Outcomes are the result of the steps, milestones or activities that we achieve en route to achieving the goal.

When I was a child, schoolteachers and relatives would often ask, "And what do you want to be when you grow up?" I honestly didn't have a clue. My friends seemed to have gotten the hang of this and I discovered that the expected answers seemed to be focusing around jobs or careers: "I want to be a fireman/doctor/train driver," or perhaps something bolder like rock star or famous actor. Or, it could be around money... "I want to be a millionaire." Apparently, it didn't matter what you wanted to be; it still required that you studied hard, preferably got all As, oh, and it was critically important that you "eat all your greens." Quite how Brussels sprouts are necessary for success has never been answered fully to my satisfaction. By the time I was a teenager, I was at the "I dunno" stage. And by the time I was choosing my general undergraduate subjects, it seemed that my options were becoming limited. Artist was ruled out on the recommendation of my delightful art teacher, who claimed that my lovingly crafted painting "hurt her eyes," and author was ruled out because I had little taste for over-analyzing Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (my, how that notion has since evolved).

To my knowledge, none of my friends answered, "I wish to be a wage slave pushing paper from one side of a building to another, politically maneuvering myself into a position of power and authority, attending useless meetings each day and commuting for four hours." So what went wrong?

Well, perhaps it is the goal-setting process.

What is goal-setting?

Inadvertently, or deliberately, people asking us when we're young, "What do you want to be?" have set us on a process of goal-setting. They are asking us to peer in our mind's eye into the distant future and describe our goal. With little worldly experience, we most likely think of people we admire that through their job demonstrate what is valuable to our young minds.

What would you like to achieve in X years that, having achieved it, will satisfy your personal values?

Would you ask a ten-year-old that question? No? It's unlikely that they would understand – but with the massive leaps in education and increasing pressure on children to know a whole lot more than the current generation of mature adults, they may well be asking you that question and be surprised if you can't answer it. I digress, but we are effectively asking that when we say, "What would you like to be?"

Goal-setting is a process by which we choose our intended result, decide what we want to achieve in the longer term, and determine HOW we are going to attain the goal (i.e., the strategy). Therein lies the problem for many people in regard to goal-setting: the process necessarily includes the strategy to achieve the goal. When relatives with kind intentions ask, "What do you want to be?" the strategy they advise to achieve whatever you said invariably refers back to the need to study hard, be a good child, don't answer back and above all, "Eat your greens!" As you get older, the advice may become more specific and even more useful. You begin to discover which areas of knowledge and skill you most enjoy and are better equipped to clarify your personal goals as you become increasingly aware of what is important to you.

Goal-setting for your career, life and business is strongly advocated and endorsed in hundreds of books and papers and articles. Most emphasize the importance of writing your goals down as part of the goal-setting process.

Is goal-setting important?

Ask almost anyone about the importance of goal-setting and they will affirm that it is incredibly important.

Here is a small selection of verbatim responses to the question, "How important is goal-setting?"

"The difference between successful people [and people struggling] is the setting of tangible and measurable goals."

"I believe goal-setting does work and needs to be written down."

"If there are no set goals, things either happen, or they don't."

"With measurable goals you are in action to fulfill them."

"There's no excuse for failing to progress if you don't take ownership of your own goals."

"Setting yourself some goals is always going to be effective."

"I have been setting goals for myself for over 10 years. I believe that the goals enable me to achieve the things that I want."

"People who are successful tend to be the same sort that write down goals."

So there seems to be a consensus that goal-setting is important. There is some evidence to support the practice, yet, as we shall see from research undertaken for this book, having written the goal down is perhaps not the most important concern. What we will see is that the process of goal-setting is perhaps more important than the goal itself! There is some strong support for the concept of S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Goals that are **Specific** and Stretching, **Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound**. There's a great deal of common-sense reasoning that supports the idea of S.M.A.R.T. goals – and there's some excellent robust research on it, too.

Why set goals?

Edwin Locke and Gary Latham have undertaken a great deal of leading research about goals and goal-setting and neatly suggest that setting goals implies dissatisfaction with the current condition and a desire to attain an outcome (Locke and Latham, 2006).

A S.M.A.R.T. goal is defined as one that is specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time bound.

Below is a definition of each of the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria.

Specific:

Goals should be simplistically written and clearly define what you are going to do. Specific is the what, why, and how of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

Example: By August 1, 2016, implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

“Implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff” = what

“using clearly defined processes and guidelines” = how

“so employees and managers can competently evaluate performance and develop their careers” = why

Measurable:

Goals should be measurable so that you have tangible evidence that you have accomplished the goal.

Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are often several short-term or smaller measurements built into the goal.

Example: By August 1, 2016, implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

The essential metric is whether or not the system is operational by August 1st.

Achievable:

Goals should be achievable; they should stretch you slightly so you feel challenged, but be defined well enough so that you can achieve them. You must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal.

You can meet most any goal when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. As you carry out the steps, you can achieve goals that may have seemed impossible when you started. On the other hand, if a goal is impossible to achieve, you may not even try to accomplish it. Achievable goals motivate employees. Impossible goals demotivate them.

Example: By August 1, 2016, implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

In order for you to reach this goal, you must have a skill set, in this case in the area of performance management, that allows you to understand the nature of the goal, and the goal must present a large enough challenge for you to remain interested in and committed to accomplishing it.

Realistic or Results-focused:

Goals should measure outcomes, not activities.

Example: By August 1, 2016, implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

The result of this goal is a process that allows employees and managers to more competently evaluate performance and develop their businesses, not the individual activities and actions that occur in order to make the goal a reality.

Time-bound: Goals should be linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal. Without such tension, the goal is unlikely to produce a relevant outcome.

Example: By August 1, 2016, implement a new performance management system for classified staff, A&P faculty, and university staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

August 1, 2016 provides you with a time-bound deadline.

So, it is evidence-based that setting goals in your business is a critical step in achieving your desired business outcome. Every year, I plan a retreat to focus on goal-setting for the upcoming year. I utilize the S.M.A.R.T. formula and ensure that the goals are particularly specific and time-bound. I utilize my SWOT analysis tool to keep track of my strategies and process. This, for me, IS NOT an exercise in futility, but a working, living, breathing document that I review, update and revise monthly.

Now, for my more tactical, day-to-day goals that keep me on task to achieve my more strategic objectives (from my SWOT analysis), I utilize a simplified daily to-do list with no more than two major initiatives that are categorized as projects that will move my business forward, help earn money in my business and/or are time-sensitive. I complete these tasks first. This ensures that if I am derailed in my plans for the day, I have at least propelled my business. In addition to the two major initiatives, I add three second-tier tasks that are important but less so than the major two for the day. This helps me to continue to be productive and drive towards my ultimate goals. If I happen to not finish the three second-tier tasks, those tasks are

moved to the list for the next day. When I find tasks that have moved to the next day for three days or more, I evaluate these tasks to understand if they are worth doing, if someone else should be doing them, or if I have some mental block towards the tasks; if so, why; and what I can do to fix it. That's it! No more, no less. I've long since aborted the long laundry list of tasks that leaves you feeling unaccomplished and unfulfilled. This is what I use and it is very effective for me. Whatever you choose, makes sure it addresses your work, improves any poor work habits, and is productive.

Grow Your Business in 90 Days or Less

SECTION 2: IT'S IN YOUR HEART

Chapter 5: To Be Successful, First Give It Away

Give it away? What? Really? Yes, I know what you are thinking: "How can I make money in 90 days or less if I give everything away?" Well, it's proven. In the beginning, Kanye West gave away music tracks. Sean Puffy Coombs passed out flyers for record labels for free when he got his start.

Think of it as a worldly, even spiritual principle. In order to attract money and success, you must give some away. Many books, such as *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne and *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Timothy Ferriss, focus heavily on giving as part of the formula to success.

Through it all, most successful entrepreneurs began by giving their product or service away.

Giving your product or service away or at a deeply discounted rate offers four distinct advantages:

1. It offers market research for free or deeply discounted.

When entrepreneurs begin by giving their services away, it minimizes the risk taken on the client's end. Clients are more inclined to take a risk on a provider that is confident enough to give their services away for a time. With this, it offers entrepreneurs the chance to test their product/services within various industries and professions. Furthermore, it provides the entrepreneur with valuable statistics related to the selling cycle and selling process. How many calls does it take to convert a prospect to a client? What are the best talk tracks to engage the gatekeeper and ultimately speak with the decision maker? Who is the

decision maker? What are the product benefits? What do your clients care about? Literally hundreds of questions are answered for no more than expending some sweat equity.

Customers are surprisingly more inclined to give feedback when the product is free versus paying for it. As the entrepreneur, it also gives you more authority to ask for participation in surveys, special focus groups, etc. When customers receive products or services for free, they feel more obligated to offer something in the return, ultimately their feedback and time.

2. It gets you reviews and testimonials.

One of the strategies on Fiverr is to under-promise and over-deliver. The reason is, A, because it's ALWAYS good business practice, and B, it creates a platform of excellent feedback, reviews and testimonies that influence future buyers to utilize your services.

Utilizing this strategy, I quickly became a top-rated seller in just 10 days. What this means in terms of revenue, is that I had the potential to earn up to \$2,000 in extras per customer. It is a quite common-sense approach that has helped Fiverr to grow quickly and deliver a higher-quality marketplace. Once sellers complete a gig, customers are able to rate them in three specific areas, then leave comments about their experience. Because it is done with the click of a few buttons and is part of process to mark a project complete by the buyer, the review process has really engaged buyers, creating transparency in this marketplace. Sellers can then share the testimonials on social media, new buyers looking for a similar service can read about the past work experiences of other buyers, and Fiverr utilizes positive feedback

metrics to rank and place gigs at the front of the heading (sort of like Google with keywords), making the seller easier to find and making buyers more comfortable in purchasing the gig.

3. It helps grow (and retains customers) sales quickly.

Obviously, it's less of a risk to potential customers when a business puts a little "skin in the game" by offering their service as a trial or free for a period. It shows complete confidence in the product or service. Furthermore, giving it away for free (at least for a time) builds trust in the company and the brand. With a quality product/services and exceptional customer service converting trials, samples and free sessions is a relatively easy win! This ultimately, builds customer retention and loyalty. Not only does this model make it easy for clients to access your product, it makes it easier for customers that you acquire through this model to sell your brand to friends and families...word of mouth advertising!

4. Customers talk more about freebies.

The rise of social media creates a welcome (for some) and healthy stream of "free" word-of-mouth advertising. Sites such as Yelp, Angie's List and others have put a spotlight on consumer feedback. Customers are apt to talk about a good "free" or nearly free (think Fiverr) product or service. This behavior then sets in motion a snowball effect of buyers reaching out to you versus spending thousands of dollars on traditional advertising. Getting your customers to say nice things about you is, according to some research, as effective as traditional advertising, and it's almost always cheaper. And companies like Procter & Gamble are figuring that one of the easiest and best ways to get people talking about their products is to simply give them away. Studies show that people who got a product for free talked about it

20 percent more. Getting a freebie related to the product prompted them to talk about it 15 percent more, while coupons and rebates didn't make a difference.

Take, for example, Chris Zane, founder of Zane's Cycle, who rapidly grew sales from \$0 to \$17 million with large margins in a relatively short period of time. While Zane clearly sells cycles, his primary focus was on the customer experience, thus placing a high priority on branding. For Zane's and for any business, when it comes to giving it away, it's all about the numbers. How much can you afford to give away to delight your customers enough to a) keep them coming back, and b) tell their friends about you?

Let's take a look at what Zane did to set his business into high gear:

- He produced a high-quality product that needed very little service.
- Because of this, he gave away free service for life.
- Zane's cycle has an unconditional return policy. No questions asked; your money is returned right from the cash register.
- If a customer finds a bike they've purchased for a less expensive price within 90 days, they get the difference back in cash on the spot. They spend it in the store.
- As Zane got new customers and sales increased, he added a coffee bar and a kids' play area.
- Quality customer service is ingrained in each employee from the moment they begin their career there.

These are all classic examples of how to give business away and make more!

VerticalResponse CEO Janine Popick speaks frequently about the extreme value in initially giving business away. In fact, much of VerticalResponse's business model is based on free trials of the product.

Here's what Janine had to say in a 2013 issue of Smallbusinesscomputing.com:

If I told you that you can grow your business by giving away your product or service for free, you'd probably call me crazy. Sure, for some businesses -- the kind with high start-up fees or entry-level products, for example -- it might be cost-prohibitive to give a sample or trial run for free.

But for other small businesses, it can well worth the investment.

In the software business, for example, lots of companies give away a free trial of their tools. The hope is that potential customers will see the value of the product enough to pay for it once the trial period ends. Big companies such as Salesforce, Norton AntiVirus and Autodesk all offer free-trial versions of their software.

“Common sense says you should charge for your product; however, you might make more money by giving it away for free.” Says Ioannis Verdellis, COO of Flesky, the makers of the fastest, most customizable keyboard. Verdellis pointed out, in a gaining customer segment, In the early days of email, users could choose between miniscule storage limits or hefty annual fees. But in 2004, Gmail's beta upended the market by offering a gigabyte of storage—for free.

What may have initially seemed like a sacrifice of revenue was actually a strategic tradeoff. Since its public release in 2009, Gmail needed just three years to become the world's most popular email service. And with Gmail's extensive user base, targeted advertising helped Google bring in \$16.86 billion in the last quarter of 2013 alone.

So, I know what you're thinking, “I'm a cash-strapped start-up and the prospect of giving my premier product or service away seems counterintuitive to the laws of business growth.” Am I right, yes I know what you're thinking (largely because I initially thought the same thing until I used this very same principal). Yet some of the most profitable companies have built empires around free technology. The reason is simple: When you charge nothing, you attract more users.

And with a bigger user base, you get:

More word-of-mouth marketing. The more people talk about you early in the product lifecycle, the bigger increase in long-term brand awareness you'll have.

Critical feedback. Non-paying users are often harsher than paying ones, but their criticism is vital for product development.

More revenue. You were going to charge \$2 for your product; instead, you release it for free and get 20 times more users. Now, you simply need to earn 1/20th of \$2, or 10 cents, from the average user.

A competitive advantage. Especially if yours is the only free product in your market, free pricing can allow you to steal market share, even from established players.

When I first started as a business consultant, I called businesses of interest (mainly in healthcare) and offered to solve a business problem for them for free. Smartly (and gratefully for me), one company Awakened Alternatives Home Healthcare, took me up on this offer! What happened next is amazingly consistent with what the aforementioned leaders reported. The solution that I provided was innovative and highly customized, so much so that this organization hired me on as a paid consultant and have enjoyed a product business relationship ever since.

I took this same approach to Fiverr. I started with one gig—a business SWOT analysis—and gave customers EXTREME value, again utilizing innovation, strategy and customization. The responses to these gigs were remarkable. I reached Level 1 seller within my first month

Grow

SECTION 3: IT'S IN YOUR HANDS...MAKE THE LEAP

Chapter 6: Fast Start to Growing Your Business in 90 Days or Less

Barbara Corcoran celebrity *Shark Tank* entrepreneur has been quoted as saying, "I hate business owners with beautiful business plans." It's not because Barbara loathes business planning, but she believes in the value of inventing as you go. While I lean more towards strategic direction, I am a proponent of eliminating over-analysis. When I started my business, I had a concept and then sprang into action. After several months, hundreds of clients acquired and several thousand dollars later, I put a marketing plan into place.

Start with a good marketing plan.

A marketing plan takes a look at the marketplace and provides a road map to acquiring customers and growing your business. There are seven essential components to a marketing plan.

Market Research – Market research serves as the foundation to any marketing plan. Luckily, access to research is everywhere. Clearly, the Internet serves as a valuable resource to find necessary information about your industry. When conducting market research, you should look for information that identifies your customer's buying habits: how they buy, when they buy, how they select a vendor, and whether they purchase online, through a catalog or primarily a brick-and-mortar establishment. The aforementioned are all valuable questions to answer through market research.

Next, identify the size of your market. This helps to identify the potential for competitive entry and the space in the market. Finally, the market research section should identify market growth or decline as well as specific trends.

Target Market – A well-defined target market is critical to the success of any business. The target market describes your likely buyers. In addition to this well-crafted description, you should aim to discuss 2–3 levels of segmentation.

Positioning – Positioning represents the perception of your brand within the marketplace and what you have intended your brand to be. If you own a chicken restaurant intended to be a healthier option, but the marketplace believes your restaurant only sells fried chicken, this is your positioning.

Competitive Analysis – It is critical to understand your competitors and how your products and services are different. What is the price point at which your competitors are selling, and what segment of the market are they aiming to reach? Knowing the ins and outs of your competitors will help you better position your business and stand out from the competition.

Market Strategy – The most tactical part of the marketing plan! This refers to the day-to-day tasks that will drive growth. As the road map to achieving your sales goals, the market strategy answers the question, “How will I find and attract buyers most likely to purchase my products and services?” It should look at the entire marketplace and then break down specific tactics including events, direct mail, email, social media, content strategy, street teams, couponing, webinars, seminars, partnerships, and other activities that will help you gain access to customers.

Budget – Create a monthly schedule of what you plan to spend on marketing. Also include a determination factor that will help you decide when to abort a particular tactic. For each activity, establish a metric that tells you to stop if it’s not generating sufficient return on investment (ROI).

Metrics – Track your marketing success with Google Analytics for website conversions and a simple Excel sheet to compare your budget against the actual ROI. Test programs over the course of a 30- to 60-day period, and evaluate the results. Repeat any programs that are delivering sales or sign-ups to your email list, and get rid of anything that’s not.

Complete a SWOT Analysis

Before planning any marketing strategy, project or venture, a small-business owner needs to focus on planning methods as well as the best assessments in order to help their company go forward. SWOT analysis has been proven to be extremely effective, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the business. By studying this, you will be able to set goals and achieve results.

Here is a look at what goes into the process, which will help with small business growth. It will begin with the internal factors, which consist of strengths and weakness, followed by external issues, which are the opportunities and threats that come into play and that one has to be aware of.

Strengths – You will know what does well in terms of sales and how certain employees help with the growth. Keep on focusing on what you are good at and how you can improve on these areas. Clients and customers enjoy good service with some variety in products.

Weaknesses – A business needs to look at various areas where they are suffering. They may not be optimized for the Internet, and this can bring them down. Even if they do have a website, they need to focus on Internet marketing, social media and mobile marketing. Keeping statistics and records over the last couple of months will tell a business where they have not been performing as well. It is also important to look at the way your staff is working because this can bring a business down. Someone with a bad attitude is not going to help with a small business's development. Employees should enjoy what they do.

Opportunities – There are always opportunities available in the business sector. However, it is nothing that you can rush into because too big of a risk is going to damage your reputation. This is where planning is important. However, one should always be thinking of where the business can expand.

Threats – These could come from other businesses that are similar in nature. Competition is always something to bear in mind and one has to look at strategies that will help the company progress. Once you have found what the problem is, you need to find solutions and this may mean bringing in extra staff with the experience and qualifications. For example, a small business may have developed with creative and talented programmers and designers. However, one also needs marketers onboard so that word is spread.

There are certain coaching techniques and consulting firms that help with this SWOT analysis. It is not something that you can just suck out of your thumb. It is especially useful to have a professional help you with this should you have something specific to look at, such as new technology or a trend that you want to introduce.

Create and Implement an Effective Sales Strategy

If your business involves selling a product, you are probably looking for ways to improve sales. A sales strategy will focus your efforts on your most important customer audiences, existing or potential.

Here are the most important things to keep in mind when designing a sales strategy.

- **Create a sales plan.** Having a document that outlines your sales goals and strategies will help you to stay on track and assess your progress. As you begin to define your sales plan, keep these things in mind:
 - **Sales goals:** These goals should be specific and measurable, not something like selling a million units. Base them on the nature of your product and try to break them down into

manageable parts. For example, sell 50 units to end-users in 30 days and sell 100 units to local independent retailers in six months.

- **Sales activities:** These are your tactics—how you plan to make the sale. You may say you'll sell direct-to-consumer through a website or via craft shows, for instance. Or this part of the plan may include activities like developing a sell sheet to send to independent retail stores.
 - **Target accounts:** Your sales plan should also include the accounts you want to sell to. If it's end-users, for example, plan how you're going to reach them through eBay, classified ads or your website.
 - **Timelines:** Put dates to all of the above elements so you can define your steps within a realistic timeline. Don't forget that your timelines should be fluid; if you're underachieving, your sales plan can help you figure out why and define the corrective steps you need to take.
- **Expand to new markets.**  Once you have established success in your current market, consider expanding to include other markets. This will open doors to bigger buyers.
 - **Get the correct buyer:** One of your biggest challenges is finding the right buyer within a large organization, so do your homework. If you're experiencing roadblocks, consider hiring a distributor or manufacturer's rep who already has established relationships in your industry.
 - **Be prepared:** Develop a presentation and have professional-looking sell sheets ready. Your product should also have packaging that's ready to go.

- **Know your target:** Understand what products they already carry and how yours will fit in. Don't waste your time pitching to a retailer who's unlikely to carry your product.
- **Take advantage of special programs:** Some mass retailers, such as Walmart, have local purchase programs that give managers authority to try local items. And other retailers may have different initiatives, such as minority business programs.
- **Be patient:** It can take up to a year or longer before you see your product on store shelves, so don't get frustrated. And if the final answer is no, try to turn it into a learning experience.

Chapter 7: Do These Things to Generate Sales Now

Build and Create a Social Media Strategy

One of the most compelling strategies to see quick results is through a comprehensive social media strategy. By now, there are many social media platforms to inform the marketplace. Let's take a look at the most popular platforms and their communication objectives:

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE COMPARISION

- **FACEBOOK**

- Offers businesses the opportunity to interact with consumers, sharing company, industry and special-interest news. Can be grown organically and/or thru paid advertising.

- **TWITTER**

- Offers businesses the opportunity to interact with consumers as well as other companies thru Micro-blasts of content in 140 characters or less. Often company, industry and special interest information as well.

- **LINKED IN**

- Offers businesses the opportunity to share company news and discussions with other businesses. Delivers the opportunity for segmented groups, as well as talent acquisition.

Grow Your Business

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE COMPARISION

Google+

- Offers interaction with consumers on news and relatable content. Presence influences google ranking.

You Tube

- Creates a platform for businesses to share content by video i.e. care vignettes with consumers.

Incorporate these basic objectives and metrics into your 90-Day Business Growth Plan:

| <u>SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES</u> | <u>METRICS</u> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ➤ Facebook Business Page | |
| ▪ Increase company awareness | ▪ Double Facebook “likes” inside |

- among general consumers and target market while educating the population at large about the industry
 - Facebook sourced referrals shall make up 10% of overall referral source mix
 - Share a mix of engaging links, engaging content and videos
 - Engage with influencers
 - Post 3 times a week, twice a day
- 6 months
 - Engage at least 10 “friends” a week within 3 months
 - Ten content “shares” a week within 3 months
 - Capture 100 LinkedIn followers within 3 months
 - Capture at least 25 LinkedIn group members in each group within 4 months
 - Month-to-month content calendar
 - Klout scores of 70%+ within 6 months

➤ LinkedIn

- Utilize LinkedIn as a means to seamlessly engage network agencies, stay top-of-mind with MCO clients, and groom targeted agencies for acquisition
- Create a group for network providers
- Create an employment platform
 - Post career ladders
 - Post disease-specific trainings
 - Post industry best practices
 - Identify other groups to follow,
- Launch at least 3 LinkedIn discussions a month
- Month-to-month content calendar
- Klout scores of 70%+ within 6 months

- e.g., MCOs, county
- Host Q & A sessions
- Host virtual industry town hall meetings
- Post 3 times a week once a day

➤ TWITTER

- Promote content through Twitter
- Link Facebook and Twitter to duplicate efforts
- Build reputation as a thought leader in healthcare
- Follow all MCOs, targeted hospitals, nursing homes and other referral sources to build following base
- Engage with relevant conversations, e.g., MCOs, other HHA and other healthcare thought leaders
- Obtain 30 followers inside of 3 months
- 5 mentions a month, in 6 months
- 20 retweets a month within 6 months
- Develop social capital— influence of followers
- 2–5 potential referrals sent to website request for information section
- Month-to-month content calendar

➤ Google+

- Optimize for SEO
- 5 Google+ mentions a

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share engaging content, videos and relevant links ▪ Comment on posts ▪ Utilize Google Hangouts ▪ Create and promote upcoming events ▪ Post once a day, 3 times a week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ month inside of 6 months ▪ 50 Google+ Circle adds/follows within 3 months ▪ Klout scores of 70%+ within 6 months |
|---|--|

Create and Send Sales Letters

With the popularity of online marketing, particularly social media, traditional sales letters are greatly underestimated. Well, I will tell you that I wrote sales letters to targets (25 in each) within the five verticals that I specialized in. I generated a 6 percent response rate (the number of clients responding to my letter), which equated to seven clients responding. Out of the seven clients that responded to those letters, four became clients that represent about \$1,000 a month apiece. All for a printed letter and a stamp! Now of course, there is a strategy to the success of sending sales letters.

Your sales letter should be well researched. Identify the organization's problems, needs and interests. So you may say something like, "*My organization has helped organizations similar to yours improve their cash flow.*" The letter should address what you have been able to successfully accomplish and relate it back to how you will utilize this experience to garner similar results for the prospect.

Briefly discuss a larger problem that your business solves and that your prospect shares, such as small business growth and economy. For example:

*The success and growth of our nation is contingent on emerging small businesses, thus it is critical to provide them with the tools necessary for growth. The success of these organizations is contingent upon our outreach to **garner financial support of corporations and private sponsors.***

At the top of your sponsorship proposal, provide a striking (or alarming) quote or statistic headline that gets the attention of the prospect. This headline should be something that is impactful to the client. See the example below of a company marketing after-school fitness programs to schools and community centers:

“The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake.”

—First Lady Michelle Obama

Lastly, add a postscript in bold to the bottom of your letter. The postscript should be a “lapel-grabbing” statement of why a sponsor should support your event. The rationale behind the post-script lends itself to the headline. Once a reader opens your letter and reads your headline, typically before they start reading the body, or shortly after, they look to the bottom to see who sent the letter. There appears your post-script. All of these tactics are designed to get your sponsorship letter read among the hundreds of letters that are skimmed and/or tossed daily.

Now that I have shared the components to include in your sales letter, here is a sample sales letter that I have used successfully over the years:

"STRATEGY is: A style of thinking, a conscious and deliberate process, an intensive implementation system, the science of insuring FUTURE SUCCESS." —Pete Johnson

If one change in your business strategy could increase your revenues, would you want to be aware of it? Ben, I want you to know I am not wasting your time. This letter—every word of it—is about how my company can help your company make more money and be more competitive.

I am an MBA with proven experience and numerous testimonies on how my business coaching, consulting and SWOT analysis/strategies have catapulted my clients to their next production level. I have worked successfully with clients in music/production/entertainment, healthcare, real estate, travel and transportation.

Here's what clients are saying about my service:

"Outstanding experience and the work was BRILLIANT."
—IAMKELLY

"What a great experience! Far exceeded our expectations. Quick response time, excellent knowledge, incredibly easy to work with. Look forward to continued work with her."
—mydebtrelease

"Extraordinary experience! Unique ideas that will generate cash. Will work with her again."
—real_busy_girl

"I WANT TO OFFER YOU A FREE 30-MINUTE PHONE CONSULT."

After this consult I will send you a recommendation customized to increase revenues, at no cost to you.

Send over a reply with a few date and time options and I will send you a confirmation with a call-in number and password. Looking forward to working with you!

Kimberly Brewer, MBA
Kbrewe3@wgu.edu

Build a Robust Email List...It's GOLD!

The ability to connect with your customers on a regular basis is paramount! It enables you to connect with them at the critical moment that they may be struggling with a problem that your service and/or product may solve. It allows you the opportunity to showcase your expertise within your industry and presents the opportunity to educate your customer, simultaneously showcasing the skill that you ultimately want to provide to the client for a fee. Email marketing is a powerful medium for delivering messages directly to your target audience. Gigaom Research states that marketers consistently ranked email as the single most effective tactic for awareness, acquisition, conversion, and retention.

Email lists are useful when your business runs a special promotion and if you own a brick-and-mortar storefront; it improves your call-to-action to bring customers into your store. It makes connecting with customers during the holidays and special occasions a snap. With the onset and momentum of social media, some felt email marketing to be obsolete; however, there are power statistics that prove to the contrary. Direct Marketing Association reports that email marketing yields an average 43000 percent return on investment for businesses in the United States. Furthermore, Hubspot states that companies using email to nurture leads generate 50 percent more sales-ready leads and at 33 percent lower cost. The benefits to email marketing are boundless. Email marketing can be done in-house and improve overall productivity. Small-business owners estimate that getting an extra hour in their day back from doing their own email marketing is working \$273 per hour back to the company.

There are many email marketing companies on the market. I personally recommend Aweber <http://www.aweber.com/easy-email.htm?id=455722>. Aweber, like many others, allows you to create beautiful, professional-looking newsletters with powerful email marketing tools. Email campaigns can be easily automated with their drag-and-drop editor. Businesses can send a sequence of automatically delivered emails and Aweber has expert customer service. Lead-capturing sign-up forms can be quickly and easily generated through Aweber and the code can be easily copied to your website personally or with the use of a developer.

Launch a Crowdfunding Campaign

Crowdfunding has become a powerful tool in helping small businesses grow their business and maximize their full potential. If this is done right, one will see that there are various aspects in a business, such as products and services, that can reap the rewards.

Sometimes, people will donate to an online platform because of a worthwhile cause they are supporting. Other times, they will want to invest in a company and in this way they can buy a share in the business. An example of something you can invest in is green energy. This has become huge over recent times, and a company like Abundance Generation has seen much growth by allowing investors to visit their wind farm.

Another method of crowdfunding is where people are able to donate in a project, but will only get billed once they see their project is starting to pay off. An example of this is Spacehive, which allows people to fund a park in a community of their choice.

This can work well if the business has planned their project and has the research set out. You have to be prepared for questions that investors might throw at you. People who are open and are able to engage will go far in this sort of environment.

Crowdfunding is an alternative to the traditional approach of getting loans and quite possibly going into debt. One will also be able to see rewards as you become known through social media. You will be able to see this when you release a product and there are people who fund it, stating that it is a good idea. Often this will go viral.

Here are the top six crowdfunding platforms:

There are many of these platforms that you have to experiment with, but starting with the top ones is always a good idea.

- **FundRazr** – My personal favorite! FundRazr offers an easy-to-utilize platform for any cause, business or initiative. FundRazr focuses strongly on eliminating the guesswork of raising money online for your campaign. This platform has an expert approach to social media and incorporating it into the online fundraising model. FundRazr creates a flexible funding plan. You can choose to keep it all to access funds immediately or choose all or nothing to charge supporters after you reach your goal. Either way, you never pay extra fees or penalties. FundRazr sets you up for success, providing full campaign functionality on your website or blog and full campaign functionality on your Facebook page, helping to increase your campaign's visibility and help supporters find a way to donate to your cause. The fees are lower than most of the platforms, simple, and easy to understand. Have a look at FundRazr

<https://fundrazr.com/create?partner=b3consulting> to set your crowdfunding initiative in motion.

- **Kickstarter** – This is mainly for creative projects that specialize in dance, film, arts, food and photography. Ouya is one of the companies that have had a lot of success with them.
- **Indiegogo** – A lot of money has been put into this particular platform and it has grown a lot during recent times. They get 4 percent of the cut, which is about average. This is a platform that is more flexible in nature.
- **Project Travel** – As the name suggests, this is for people who are interested in the travel industry as well as education-type projects that connect with travel.
- **Razoo** – This is mainly for nonprofits that want to grow in one way or another. There are no charges for signups and you will find that it has been very popular.
- **Crowdrise** – This is basically a platform for good causes which people are able to donate to. They specialize in a wide range of causes, such as disease, education, religion, animal rights, arts, disease and crisis as well as the environment. Their pricing is lower, at 3 percent. They have had success with the NYC Marathon.

Sell Your Product or Services on an Online Marketplace

Although I discussed this briefly in the first chapter, it is worth mentioning again as it was a huge part of my 90-day success. While online marketplaces can, at first, seem saturated and daunting, it is a key strategy to launching, growing and/or scaling your business. If you are in the business idea and research phase, it is a great way to test a product or service with a network of existing shoppers within a targeted

category. Listing in a category informs your competitive research by enabling you to evaluate your competitors. How are they different? What makes them successful or unsuccessful? This allows you to create a unique selling proposition and set yourself apart.

Aside from providing valuable research on your competition, online marketplaces allow you to test your product and/or service for viability prior to making a substantial investment. Most of marketplaces offer the ability to promote and sell your product for free with only a commission taken upon the sale of your product. Some online marketplaces, like eBay, allow you to create an online store and charge you a monthly fee for a set amount of products.

Selling within an online marketplace drastically reduces your initial advertising and marketing spend as most all of the networks have a selling framework already built in. Most make great use of social media shares (why building your social media network is so critical) to help business owners reach their target market and grow their business.

Not only does this strategy prove successful for new businesses in the testing and launch phase, it is also an effective strategy for businesses looking to scale. As a business increases its sales channels, the average revenue and order volumes increase.

The same holds true with professional service-focused sites such as Fiverr and People Per Hour. The commission you pay (20 percent of the sale with Fiverr & \$36 a month with People Per Hour) to expose

your services and brand to millions in the marketplace is a small price to pay compared to the thousands of dollars to advertise in print, on radio and on TV.

Bottom line, fees are inevitable, but your revenues, when your strategy is executed correctly, far outweigh the fees charged.

Write an E-book

So, of course I could NOT conclude this e-book without first telling you to write an e-book! Over the years, the e-book has varied in popularity from the perspective of its financial value to an overall enterprise. Like most all of the strategies I have implemented and suggest that you implement, it requires a very strategic approach to achieve maximum value.

E-books have numerous benefits in addition to just adding revenue to the bottom line. First, it gives you credibility. Whether you sell a product or service, e-books give you the platform to show your knowledge within the industry, about a product, etc. In other words, it gives you the ability to “strut your stuff,” ultimately positioning you as a subject matter expert. Your e-book can then be utilized as part of your presenting portfolio to gain speaking engagements, host workshops, and provide coaching/consulting, ultimately adding additional revenue streams to your business. The e-book allows potential clients to take a glimpse at what you have to offer prior to buying. The most successful business models are those that allow customers to try before they buy.

Secondly, e-books are one of the best vehicles to improve SEO. As your e-book gains popularity (again, you start by giving it away; think free downloads) and people start to download it, the particular topic

makes its way up the Google rankings, referring clients back to your site or landing page. This action not only increases your revenue stream from the e-book, but exposes these clients to the additional products and/or services you offering. To gain traction, I sent copies of my e-book to my colleagues that could derive value from my services, gave it to all of my current and past clients, and listed my e-book on Free-ebooks.net.

Growing your business and living the life of your dreams is not just a dream, but very much a possibility when following a proven formula designed for success. When I began my business growth journey, I grew my business to a point that nearly replaced a six-figure income in less than a year following the same steps that I have journeyed and brought to you in this compelling e-book.

Grow Your Business in 90 Days or Less

Business Coaching

You've enjoyed this book and feel you need additional support in growing your business? I'd love to hear from you! Please go to <http://bthreeconsulting.com/business-coaching/> to learn more about business coaching, how it can help your business and to sign up a free 30-minute session. It has been a pleasure to depart upon you what has brought me success! Best of luck on your journey to EXTREME success!

Grow Your Business in 90 Days or Less

Kimberly Brewer, MBA