

**Actionable tactics that'll kill the competition!**  
What every budding entrepreneur needs to know...

**101**

# **WAYS TO A KILLER SMALL BUSINESS**

**Make money  
and be happy  
in your small  
business!**

**RAELS ROBERTSON**

# 101 WAYS TO A KILLER SMALL BUSINESS

Being a small business owner is tough! You have to be a jack of all trades – while often feeling like a master of none. When you're spread thin, it's essential to choose battles worth fighting, nail those, rather than trying to be all things to all people and failing at all of them.

That's what I want you to do with this ebook. Don't try to do everything at once. Read through the content, see what resonates with you, and prioritise what you'd like to change about your business right now. There will be plenty of time down the track to achieve many great things - and I know you can - but first, let's put out any fires you have and tick off a few quick wins.

Hear that... quick wins. It isn't meant to be laborious.

You're great at what you do; that's why you're in business. I'm just here to help you tweak your practices to see real, measurable results, win raving fans, and convert more sales.

**Oh and at the same time have a good and happy life. Cheers!**



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# BEFORE WE START

## **I am all about balance.**

I want you to wring as much knowledge and as many tools out of this ebook as you possibly can, but I don't want you to do it to the detriment of your family, the nuts and bolts of your business, or your own sanity.

My staff know I am all about the 55% rule. What's the 55% rule? That's where you give yourself permission to say 'good enough' and move on. Not for everything, of course. Some aspects of your work require precision and perfection. If you're a heart surgeon, please concentrate on the surgery aspect with all your might. And if you make beautiful jewellery, of course you should ensure those earrings are symmetrical.

What I'm talking about is not wasting time on those tasks that can be performed at 55% of your capacity, and still be totally fine. Get stuff done and move on. Choose a few priorities and save your energy for them. That's the way I work, and it works well for me.

The other thing I want to say is this: **you can't climb Mt Everest in a day.**

There is much to do, and now you've got the tools to do them, but you can't expect to turn everything around straight away. You'll burn yourself out and you won't see the results you want.

What I want you to do is to find that middle ground between getting out of your comfort zone and being completely overwhelmed. Find that sweet spot and ride it like a wave.

Your business is a work in progress; there are always ways to improve the way you do things. Pick a tip, implement it and see how it helps. Once you've mastered it, move onto the next one.

Now let's get to it, here are 101 tips that can improve your business and create Your Business Life.

# TARGET THE RIGHT CUSTOMERS

1

## Don't try to market to everyone.

Trying to make your business appeal to absolutely everyone isn't doing you any favours. Instead, choosing a smaller target market means you can get to know them accurately and understand what they want from your products.

“Businesses with too large a target market (i.e. everyone from 18-65) struggle to get any customers at all, and here's why: not understanding who your customer really is keeps you from being able to better serve that customer.” [SUSAN PAYTON](#)  
[\(SMALL BUSINESS TRENDS\)](#)

## 2

# Who wants what you are selling?

List the features and benefits of your products or services. What problems can they solve or needs can they fill? Then list the people who have these types of problems or needs.

Do your products fill the needs of a business or an individual? Is the market big or small, local, or international? Is the individual young or old, married or single, rich or average social standing?

If you are targeting individuals, it will help if you can create a buyer persona – a semi-fictional character that represents what your ideal customer is (or as we prefer to call them your dream customer). Give your dream customer an actual name and fill in his or her background. Also, write down what kind of lifestyle they have and what their pain points or struggles are. Think about where they get their information. Are they on social media? If they are, what platform are they using?

Once you have an idea who your customers are, you can create the right marketing plan and communicate more effectively. Knowing your customers can also help you set the price point for your product and develop more products that will appeal to them.

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### TIP

*We all change over time. Our lifestyles change, we marry, we divorce, we have kids... we like products, and we hate them. We're on social, and we're not. Your customer changes over time, too, just like you. So keep your intel fresh. Get to know them and keep knowing them.*

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### 3

## Get to know your current customers.

If you took the plunge in your business without really defining who your target customers are, now is the time to look at your current customer base. Or even if you think you already did your market study before establishing your business, it still helps to revisit your customers.

Find out what their common interests are. Aside from the demographics, also consider the psychographics of your customers – their personalities, behaviour, lifestyle, and values because these traits may tell you why they buy your products.

To do this, you can send out a short survey to your customers and maximize free or paid analytics tools for your websites.

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**TIP** *Your current customer base may not be your actual dream customer. Taking the time to define both can be a real eye-opener.*

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**TIP** *We love a good [Google Survey](#). They are pretty inexpensive to send and very VERY easy to setup. Don't be fooled into having to do a massive survey with a thousand questions using hard to setup software.*

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## 4

### Redefine your niche.

If you are finding it hard to compete, maybe it is time to redefine your niche. Check out your competitors' customer base. If you can't win on a head-on collision with them, consider finding a niche segment that your competitor might be overlooking and concentrate on that.

Finding your niche is not as tough as it seems. My top tips for finding your niche are:

1. Know who your dream customer is.
2. Research what your competitors are selling and what offers they are presenting to their customers. Have a solid good look (not just a glance). Write it all down.
3. Look for areas that your competitors are missing. Do they have poor delivery times? Is their quality less than yours, and can you prove it?

# MASTER EMAIL MARKETING

## 5

### Build your email list.

We'll start with the obvious since it's the advice you're most likely to have already heard online: "The money's in the list!" People keep saying the same old thing because it's *true*.

You might be thinking you should focus on getting search engine traffic, or social media likes and fans. The bottom line is, although this works, you can never *fully* control whether Google chooses to place your site at the top of the search results, or whether Facebook chooses to show your updates to all your fans.

An email list is something you have a lot more control over. If your site disappeared from the search engines overnight, you could still make a living from your email list. Plus, email marketing is a more direct way to get in touch with people than social media or search engine marketing – people are far more likely to hear what you have to say (even though you do still need to work hard to earn their trust).

***"If you're not building an email list, you're an idiot."***

**- Derek Halpern (Social Triggers)**

Remember, the best time to start your email list was yesterday. Failing that, start today!

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**TIP** *Most people I speak to are concerned about two things when it comes to their list:*

- 1. Privacy*
  - 2. Annoying or spamming their customers*
- 

Here's the thing... email marketing to your customers is a privilege, not a right. Treat your customers with respect and only send them things that are truly valuable to them. Obey your country/region privacy laws.

And lastly, don't see an unsubscribe as 'world-ending'. If you are building your list, it's the quality of the list that counts. You don't want people who don't want to be on your list.

## 6

### Collect your buyers' emails.

If you sell products (and you really should!), then make sure you're collecting your buyers' email addresses. Building an email list full of prospects is great, but building a *buyers'* mailing list is even better.

By collecting their email addresses, you can market to them again in the future. And remember, it's far easier to sell more to your existing customers than it is to find new customers!

The good news is that most online shopping cart systems have functions that allow you to collect email addresses automatically. These work with the most popular email marketing services like [Active Campaign](#) and [ConvertKit](#).

If not, you can add buyers manually, but make sure you use a double opt-in process that requires buyers to confirm that they wish to be added. Although in most regions you can legally contact your customers by email once they've bought from you, it's best to avoid annoying them by adding them to email lists they don't want to join.

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## Convert social media fans to subscribers.

Social media shouldn't be seen as an end in itself. What good is it to have a million fans on Facebook if it doesn't help your business in some way?

And contrary to popular belief, social media isn't free! You heard that right. Social media isn't free because it takes time, and when something takes time, it costs money.

Try collecting email addresses from your social media profiles or add a subscription landing page in Facebook to your tabs using software like [Clickfunnels](#).

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**TIP**

- *Promote free webinars on your Facebook page (where people have to opt in to register).*
  - *Use Facebook ads to get your links seen by more people.*
  - *Do a Facebook live about your product or service and link it back to your landing page.*
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**8**

## Contact your customers personally.

Building a successful business, whether online or offline, is all about building relationships. Building relationships with your customers means they will keep coming back to buy more from you. And building relationships with other business owners means that they could help you grow your customer base.

If you want to improve those relationships, start making an effort to contact some of your customers and business contacts personally. Some ideas include:

- Sending your top affiliates a birthday card (don't know what affiliates are? Go to tip 34 and you'll see how awesome they can be).
- Emailing a top customer thanking them and asking if they have any product requests.
- Emailing a blogger who you admire and giving them your positive feedback.

Yes, this is time-consuming, but you can set a doable goal; for example, two emails per week. You'll really notice the results if you do this consistently!

## 9

## Respond to emails quickly.

As an online business owner, you probably get so much email that responding to it becomes a task in itself. Unfortunately, responding to emails is a necessary evil, especially when it comes to answering customer problems and questions.

One way to improve your business is to start responding to emails quickly so that they never build up into an unmanageable mess. Choose a couple of set times a day for email (for example, once in the morning and once in the afternoon) and respond to emails as soon as you receive them.

This rule can apply to almost all emails unless they need further thought or research. In which case, archive all the ones you've responded to and add the rest to your to-do list for the day.

Responding to emails quickly helps you get more done, and it shows customers that you care about their emails.

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**TIP** *Batch your emails. It's easy to get overwhelmed with all of your emails or think that the best way of handling them is to answer them right away. Batching, or setting specific times during the day to answer emails will get it over with quickly and leave you time to work on your business.*

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## Use email marketing software.

Tools like Mailchimp and Active Campaign, ConvertKit and Campaign Monitor can store your customer details and help you automate your email campaigns. You can send out a series of emails to your potential clients to introduce your product and company, build trust, and then lead them to buy your product.

These tools are very affordable if you are consistent in using them.

But remember, most importantly, to keep it simple! A simple tool is better than no tool at all or an overly complicated tool that takes you bazillions of hours to set up.

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**TIP****1. Segment your database from the very beginning.**

*Focus on your marketing goals rather than gathering a big bucket of names that mean nothing.*

**2. Design your email workflows.**

*It sounds complicated, but it's simple logic. For example, send the first email when your customer signs up, then future emails to come out every three weeks.*

**3. Be respectful.**

*When a person subscribes, they don't just want to receive emails from you. They want to be in a relationship with you. Email is personal, and people guard their account information more than ever before, so you are in a trusted position. You wouldn't go into someone's house and kick down the door and start shouting at them, yet that's what many marketing emails do.*

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**4. Always try to personalise your email.**

*Gather first names when people sign up and use those names each and every time you get in touch (programs have tools that will insert names for you automatically).*

**5. Don't be afraid to break up with people who have disengaged.**

*Keeping your database clean is very important. There is no point in having a massive database if a lot of people never open your emails. Statistics show people actually don't want you to break up with them so sending a break-up email can serve to re-engage some of your list.*

**6. Align your on-and off-line interactions if relevant.**

*Look at times your list may be interacting physically with your brand (for example, at an event) and send emails relating to those visits.*

**7. Use automation to do the heavy lifting.**

*There are tools for everything. Learn how to automate your email flows and save your sanity.*

**8. Review your email stats often.**

*Do more of what's working and less of what's not. Simple!*

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# STEP-UP YOUR MARKETING GAME



## Know Your USP.

The great thing about the internet is there is opportunity for anyone to get out there and create a name for themselves. The bad thing is that, because so many people are doing it, it can be hard to get noticed!

This is why you need to know your USP. This stands for Unique Selling Proposition – the feature that makes you different from your competition.

It could be that you're the cheapest (although this isn't usually the best way to go!), or that you promise to make things as simple as possible for your customers.

Some real-life examples include KFC's unique blend of herbs and spices or Apple's beautifully made products. People are willing to pay for more expensive products because they have that something unique compared to their rivals.

How do you figure out your USP? You'll need to sit down and do a lot of brainstorming. Think about *you* and *your clients* – and how you can combine what you have to offer with what they need.

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**TIP**    *Your USP and your niche can often be the same.*

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## Highlight benefits, not features.

Just because you run your own business doesn't necessarily mean you're any good at copywriting. Unfortunately, however, copy sells, and it is essential to try and perfect specific techniques to improve your conversions.

One simple trick is to start telling customers about the *benefits* of your products, rather than only listing the *features*.

For example, if you're selling a new kind of microwave, here's how the features and benefits differ:

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**Feature:** Uses 20% less power than previous models.

**Benefit:** Saves \$10 on the average monthly power bill.

**Feature:** Quicker at cooking than previous models.

**Benefit:** Spend 25% less time in the kitchen!

**Feature:** Voice-activated controls.

**Benefit:** Easier to use than ever before, even when you're busy doing something else.

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So next time you're trying to sell something, think about ways you can turn it around and think about the benefits instead of the features.

## 13 Use landing pages.

A landing page is where a potential customer “lands” after clicking an ad or a link in your email. It is specifically designed to convert a potential client’s interest into action – either to buy your product or sign up for a subscription or membership.

A well-designed landing page is essential to increase the chances of conversion. Here are the things to keep in mind when creating your landing page.

- A clear call to action prominently displayed on the page, preferably positioned near the top of the page to eliminate the need to scroll down just to find it.
- Use simple language for your copy.
- The design and feel should match the ad that leads the visitor to the landing page. This is crucial. If your ad and your landing page don’t match then it can create a disconnect in the customers’ mind and lead to those dreaded bounce rates being astronomical.
- A minimalist design is better. Don’t clutter the page with other elements that can distract the visitor.
- Only ask for the vital information-email and name for sign-ups and billing information and shipping information if you are asking them to buy. You don’t want to annoy your potential customer by making them fill up long forms.

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**TIP** *There are some great landing page tools out there that can have you creating landing pages like a pro. One of our faves and the one we use most often is [Clickfunnels](#). There is a tonne out there, so take a look as these can really pay off.*

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## 14

# Network.

Networking can bring your business to new levels that just wouldn't be possible by doing it all alone.

Your contacts can introduce you to influential people, share your content, help you come up with new ideas or even become friends!

I hear you though... networking takes time and time is precious in business. But here's the thing... networking doesn't have to be about getting out to the local bar for 'networking drinks' it can be going to a seminar or joining groups online.

There are several ways to network more in your business:

- attend live events
- make personal contact with some of your customers
- email bloggers you admire just to say hello
- have conversations on social media
- arrange to meet your online colleagues in real life
- chat with others in marketing forums
- comment on other people's blogs
- respond to comments made on your blog.

Make a goal to spend just 10 minutes a day doing activities like this and you'll improve your business network.

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**TIP** *The essential thing with networking is to make it enjoyable for you. After all, if it's not enjoyable, it's pretty hard to do.*

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## Create your own products.

Having your own products is one of the best ways to increase your earnings as an online marketer. It's one thing selling hour for hour services or promoting other people's products as an affiliate; it's another thing having products yourself.

When you have your own products, people see you as more of an expert. They start listening more to what you have to say, and they're more likely to buy when you promote other people's products.

You can also set these products up to sell 24/7 on your website, so it's possible to make money while you sleep.

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**TIP** *Making your own products doesn't mean you need to become a manufacturer. You can get a leg-up by using dropshipping companies like [Printful](#) and [AliExpress](#).*

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## Prioritise your marketing strategies.

Things are always changing in the world of online marketing, and there are always new strategies to try. Unfortunately, however, we are all working with limited time and it will never be possible to try out every single marketing strategy there is!

That's why it's important to prioritise. This will help reduce overwhelm and help you get on with the things that *really* need doing.

How do you prioritise? Start by thinking about what brings you in the most money. This might mean focusing on your email marketing efforts. Then, if you want to try a new marketing strategy (such as social media), schedule this in so that you don't spend more time on it than necessary.

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### TIP

*As a business owner, your first concern should be revenue and then after that everything else. When thinking about your marketing strategies, think "will it generate revenue?", pick those strategies that do just that and then leave the others to the "later list".*

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## Don't always go for short-term profits.

It can be tempting to go for short-term profits as an internet marketer. After all, it's easy to send out email promos to your list and make some fast cash.

But you'll be doing your business and your customers a favour if you start thinking more about *building long-term relationships* instead.

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't promote products to your list. It just means that you need to think carefully about precisely what, and how often, you choose to promote.

This might lose you some money in the short term, but you'll build a stronger business in the long run.

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### TIP

*Some might say that this flies in the face of (16) as it's all about revenue when you are in business. But here's the thing... revenue generating strategies can sometimes mean short-term profits but more often than not they are profits for the long haul. Adding these long-term relationships to your business goals will build business resilience.*

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**18**

## Take advantage of social media.

Social media is low-cost high-impact marketing. It is practically free. But if you want to reach a broader market, you can promote your post or create an ad with a specific target audience in mind for less cost than with Google Ads or traditional channels. Just ensure you know which social media platforms your target users are using and concentrate your efforts on that.

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## Create consistent social media profiles.

Creating a consistent brand across all of your social media accounts helps to make sure you're instantly recognisable to your customers.

If your Twitter username is @bobsonlinestore and your Facebook page is called "Bob's Bargains", then customers might not realise that both pages are for the same business. This is why it's important to create consistent social media usernames and profile images.

Once you've taken the time to do this, people will be more likely to engage with you on the platform of their choice. And when they see your name and face popping up all over the place, they will start to trust you more, be more likely to open up your emails, and more likely to buy from you.

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## Integrate social media buttons on your website.

Put social media buttons on your page so your readers can follow you on social media and share your content.

You can use *ShareThis*, which is totally free, or you can explore other options that offer free and paid plans like Shareaholic, AddThis, SumoMe, and more.

The best thing about these sharing tools is that they can also provide you with analytics to help you determine what's working and what needs to be improved.

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## Take advantage of cross-selling.

Many marketers leave money on the table by failing to cross-sell to their customers. How many times have you been asked, “do you want fries with that?” only to go on and buy more than you had originally intended? That’s smart marketing at work!

The way you apply this will very much depend on your line of business, but here are a few examples:

- If you’re a writer, you could offer to write a tweet to complement each article for an extra fee.
- If you have a shopping cart, make sure you display a “Customers who bought this also bought...” section.
- If you sell digital downloads, make sure to cross-sell related items on the download page to encourage your customer to buy more.
- And my personal favourite, use follow up funnels to offer products that add value to your customers’ lives.

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## Sell more to existing clients.

You've probably heard it many times before: it's far easier (and cheaper) to sell to existing customers than it is to find new ones. If you want to improve your business, focusing on existing customers can pay off big time.

Here are some ways you can sell more to your existing customers:

- Make sure you are growing your buyers' email list so that you can contact them again in the future.
- Take time to build relationships – give your customers free information and help them out when they have questions (supportive customer service is a great retention technique!).
- When you release new products, offer existing customers an additional bonus that the general public doesn't get.
- Occasionally, create sales *only* for your existing customers. It'll help make them feel special!
- Listen to their needs and create new products based on what they need.
- Create an entire product funnel, starting with low-cost items, getting more and more expensive.
- [Take advantage of cross-sells and up-sells.](#)

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## Don't overwhelm your customers with too many choices.

It is one thing to cross-sell and upsell. But it is another thing to bombard your customers with dozens of choices in a single email or advertisement.

Chances are, your potential customers might get overwhelmed with the tons of information you have just given them and might not purchase anything at all.

This is called the paradox of choice – the more options one has, the less decisive one will be.

It doesn't necessarily mean that you should give your potential client only one choice every single time. Sometimes offering just one option does not work out either, as the potential customer might feel there is no choice at all.

Some marketers or companies offer three choices at three price points. Usually, the customers choose the middle ground--the one with just enough features for just enough price (compared to the lower and upper tier).

This is not set in stone though. You can find your optimum number of choices by doing a test. Float two versions of your email, ad, or sales page, and see which one will convert more.

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## Tie Your Content and Promos Into Holidays.

Different holidays can be an excellent opportunity to run special promotions and sales in your business.

Some of the more popular holidays, such as Christmas and Valentine's Day, are "shopping" holidays, so it makes sense to take advantage by offering discounts, bundles and free shipping deals. Even if the products you sell aren't directly related to the holiday, people are more likely to buy when they're already in the shopping mindset.

You can also use special days like "National Chocolate Day" as a fun excuse to do something special in your business. Again, it might not be directly related, but if you want to run a sale anyway, it always helps to have a *reason* or a *story* behind it.

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## Give things away for free.

You've probably heard a lot of top marketers recommending you give things away for free. This can be hard to take in, especially if you're not earning much money yet.

However, giving things away for free has the power to earn you a lot more money in the long run. People like Pat Flynn of Smart Passive Income have built huge levels of trust this way, and it has paid off big time ([listen to his podcast episode "SPI 013: Is Giving Away Free Information Bad? Here Are Some Answers" for more information.](#))

Don't be afraid if people won't want to buy from you straight away if you give them something for free. In fact, it makes them more likely to want to buy from you in future.

Things you can give away include interview transcripts with other people in your niche, eBooks solving a common customer problem, advice in the form of emails, and so on.

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## Always include a call to action.

Sometimes in marketing you really have to call people to action – tell people what you want from them. How do you do that? With a call to action of course!

You can boost your marketing goals by making sure there's a sentence or graphic in each blog post, email, etc. that tells people what to do next.

This could mean an opt-in form for your email list, or a link to learn more about your paid product. It could even just be asking a question and inviting people to answer in the comments section.

If you're still unsure about how to create the perfect call to action, [see this guide from HubSpot](#).

## Focus on inbound marketing.

Inbound marketing is a kind of “new” marketing that’s all about customers coming to *you*, rather than you having to go out and find them through traditional advertising methods.

There are several benefits to this kind of marketing: it helps you build real relationships where customers are happy to refer you to others, it helps build trust, and it can help get you noticed in a world where people are more and more infuriated by junk mail and intrusive ads.

How can you incorporate more inbound marketing into your business?

- Give out free reports.
- Make connections on social media.
- Provide free education to your customers.
- Run a blog or podcast.
- Create shareable content.

In other words, work hard to build the trust of your readers and customers so that *they* go out and spread the word, doing your marketing for you, and helping you get higher up in the search engines.

*“Rather than doing outbound marketing to the masses of people who are trying to block you out, I advocate doing “inbound marketing” where you help yourself “get found” by people already learning about and shopping in your industry.”*

[- BRIAN HALLIGAN \(HUBSPOT\)](#)

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## Take advantage of strategic sales.

If you have your own products, strategic sales promotions can make a big difference to your income.

If you need some extra cash or want to shift more of your products, then running a sale is a good idea. You could:

- Give customers a discount when they spend \$X.
- Run a free shipping promotion for a set period.
- Give customers a \$X savings coupon code.
- Run a “buy one get one free” sale on specific categories.
- Give a flat percentage off every item.

Sales are a great way to help customers make quick decisions, give your affiliates a special to share with their customers, and help create word-of-mouth marketing opportunities.

Just be sure to use sales wisely. Run them every few weeks and people will come to expect them, avoiding full-priced items and waiting for the sales instead.

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## Make sure your website is mobile-ready.

Mobile use overtook computer use for accessing the internet in 2014, and it's showing no signs of evening out again, according to [Smart Insights](#).

There's no getting away from the rise of the mobile internet. A considerable percentage of the population uses their smartphones and tablets not only to browse websites but also to shop for products.

How do these stats affect online marketers? You MUST make your website mobile-ready if you're going to sell to those users accessing your sites and products from their mobile.

Thankfully, this is easier than ever. Look for responsive website themes, or use a plugin such as [WPtouch](#) to create a mobile version of your website. And make sure to test your site on your own smartphone or tablet.

For more information, read "[How to Set Up a Mobile Website in 4 Easy Steps](#)".

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### TIP

*Always check your analytics for the breakdown of your site visitors browser and device usage. It can yield some surprising results. In some industries the desktop usage is still powering on and far outweighs mobile. When you build your site, make sure that you test across all the browsers and devices your site analytics are telling you your visitors use.*

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## Host a pitch-free webinar.

Webinars are great ways to sell products, so you might think that more promo webinars will be a great way to boost your business. But this tip is all about hosting webinars that *don't* promote anything.

How will this boost your business? Well, it's all about inbound marketing and building trust.

Firstly, you won't come out of things empty-handed as you can still ask for people's email addresses when they register for the webinar. (You can make people a special discount offer in follow up emails if you like.)

Secondly, providing people with so much value for free is a great way to build trust for the future. It'll make your customers more likely to buy from you at a later date.

You can then recycle the recorded webinar and use it in future products. It's a win-win situation for everyone!

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## Start using ethical OTOs.

If you have your own digital products, then it's vital to get customers to buy more in each transaction. This is where one time offers come in.

One time offers (OTOs) are special discount offers that are displayed to the customer immediately after purchasing something else. In theory, the customer only has one chance to either accept or reject this offer before being taken to their product download.

In reality, many OTOs are not shown just once, but the idea behind them is the same. It's all about presenting an offer closely related to the main offer, in the hope a customer will take it all.

You can do this manually by creating a web page to redirect to after the payment is made, or you can use the feature built into shopping carts to make this easier. Affiliate systems like [JV Zoo](#) make the entire process super easy – it's well worth doing, and you can significantly increase your product earnings.

Just make sure you use them wisely and ethically. A sure-fire way to annoy your customers is to create an incomplete product and then try to sell them OTO after OTO to “complete” the package.

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## Create a loyalty program.

You already know that it's essential to focus on selling to existing customers as a cheaper alternative to finding new ones. One way to do this is to create a loyalty program.

Many online stores have loyalty programs built-in, or you can use a simple referral system without any software.

An example could be giving your customer 1 point for every \$10 spent with you. Then, when they get 5 points, they get sent a \$5 voucher.

Or, for a more straightforward system, let people know that when they refer a new customer to you, you'll give them 10% off their next order (this works for service providers and product creators).

Whatever you do, [make sure you go about it the right way](#). Create a loyalty program that appeals to customers and follow up with them about how to use it.

33

## Improve your website load time.

Your website load time can make a *big* difference to your bottom line. People are more and more likely to abandon your site altogether the longer it takes to load - even just a couple of seconds.

**Step 1:** Use a free online tool like [GTMetrix](#) to see how fast (or slow) your website is.

**Step 2:** [Improve the load time of your website](#) by keeping the number of plugins down to a minimum, optimising image files, using caching plugins and more.

**Step 3:** Check your website over time, always ensuring it stays fast. Ensure you upload online the right size and well-optimised images. Stay up to date with all of your software and plugin updates or better still sign up to a digital support plan and have an expert do it for you.

34

## Start an affiliate program.

If you have a product to sell (and you should), then you'll shift a lot more copies if you enlist the help of others. And an affiliate program is the best way to do this.

It's not hard to put together an affiliate program. There are many affordable programs out there, including [E-junkie](#), [JVZoo](#), [WP-Affiliate Platform](#) and more.

Once you have your program set up, be sure to let your customers know that they can promote your product to others. And start networking with other marketers in your niche who might also be willing to promote you.

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## Give affiliates special incentives.

It's not always easy to get affiliates to promote you, which is why it pays to give them extra incentives from time to time.

Here are a few ideas:

- Make sure to offer a generous standard commission; for example, 50% for digital products.
- Offer 100% commission on specific items for a fixed period.
- Run affiliate contests from time to time where you give away prizes like Amazon vouchers or iPads to affiliates who refer \$X amount in sales.
- Put together exclusive coupons just for individual affiliates to share with their subscribers.

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## Collaborate.

Collaborating with other marketers can be an excellent way to improve your business.

Say, for example, that you're great at writing, but you don't have a big audience. You could write an eBook and release it with another marketer who *does* have an audience to market to.

Or you could simply pool your skills and resources to create one mega product that benefits from having both your names on it.

Collaboration is far easier in the online world, so take advantage of that. Use it to get your products in front of a larger audience than you would have been able to otherwise.

**37**

## **Reach out to influencers who can promote your product or service.**

Many people on social media have built big reputations and command a large following. And no, I am not only talking about celebrities, although they do make up a large portion of the social media gurus. I am referring to those who came from average backgrounds and have managed to build hundreds of thousands or even millions of followers on social media.

When these influencers speak, their followers listen. So when they recommend a product or service, it is likely that many followers will also want to try out their recommendations.

Nowadays, small and even big businesses are tapping the power of influencers to promote their brands and products. See if this could also be an option for you. For instance, if you have a travel agency, maybe you can reach out to a travel vlogger who can put out an honest review of your service.

38

## Collect testimonials.

Testimonials can make a big difference to your sales. You can provide your potential customers with as many facts and statistics as you like, but a genuine testimony from someone who has successfully used your products will mean so much more.

But how do you go about getting these testimonials?

- Every time someone emails you with a positive comment, ask them if you can use it as a testimonial.
- Keep a file full of links to places where people have blogged about you.
- Ask your customers for testimonials and honest feedback in exchange for a reward (for example, a discount coupon).

And, once you have the testimonials, be sure to display them proudly on your websites and sales pages!

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## Cross-promote.

If you think you have done your messaging right and reached out to the right target audience, but the conversions are still not coming that fast, ask yourself: is there something that could be holding your potential customers back?

Maybe they are thinking about the last time they were duped into buying something or experienced buyer's remorse. Perhaps they are quite convinced of your product but just can't quite take the plunge.

Why not make it easier for them to make that buying decision by offering a money-back guarantee for a limited time if they are not satisfied with your product?

Now, this may not apply to every product, but it is worth taking a look.

40

## Don't focus all your efforts on sites you don't own.

If there's one thing that's certain in internet marketing, it's that everything can change! Unfortunately, so many marketers have built up fortunes on third-party services just to see it all come crashing down when those services become the victim of the latest Google update.

If you rely on third-party sites – like [HubPages](#), your Facebook page, etc. – for most of your income, then have a long, hard think about what you'd do if you lost your account on those sites. If you wouldn't be able to make ends meet, it's time to make some changes.

Instead of relying on third-party sites, try to spread things around a bit. For example, have your own blog, but also collect email addresses in case your blog disappears from the search engines.

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## Get your Google My Business listing sorted.

When someone searches for a business or establishment in a locality (e.g. coffee shop nearby), Google usually displays three business listings near the top of the page, in between the paid ads and the organic results.

You can improve your ranking by managing the listing through Google My Business. Make sure that you enter complete and accurate data which include your physical address, phone number, category, business hours and more. Also, verify your location in Google Maps and add photos.

You can also manage and respond to reviews in Google My Business to show that you value your customers' feedback.

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### TIP

*Your customers are actively seeking answers on Google to their questions every single day. One of the best (and quickest) ways you can appear on a Google search is to have an answer to one of those questions in your Google My Business listing. Google allows you to put in questions and then the answers.*

*When you do this, think about what questions customers most often ask you. You can also get software like [Ubersuggest](#), [SemRush](#) and [Answer the Public](#), which will give you questions that are most searched for by people.*

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## See link building as relationship building.

Here's an eye-opening thought that could change your business: start seeing link building as relationship building instead.

This might not make sense at first, but think of it this way: the more you build deep relationships online, the more people will spread the word for you. People will share your content on social media, and they will tell people about it on forums, they will also link to it from your blog.

This is all part of the new wave of inbound marketing. See how it affects your business.

Opportunities like this can snowball very quickly if you are diligent in setting up these relationships. And, with all of the online tools available, it beats the heck out of traditional networking for time efficiency vs effectiveness.

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## Keep an eye on your competitors.

Keeping an eye on what your competitors are doing can help you improve your own business. It can apply to all areas of business: customer service, product creation, blogging, social media, and so on.

Every time you see your competitor do something you like, note it down in a file. Every time you see some sales copy you love, keep it filed away for future reference.

Take a look at the kind of people your competitors are talking to, and the type of products they are releasing. Although your own market is different, it might just give you some new ideas.

What you *don't* want to do, though, is to try to copy someone else. Remember, you are unique and that is your selling point.

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### TIP

*When you are noting things about your competitors, make sure you keep your notes in one spot. [Evernote](#) or Google docs are great, but on the run, I'm a fan of good old Notes for its ease of use on mobile.*

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## Help others.

Stop seeing your business as a way to make money from others and start seeing it as a way to help other people.

When you go out of your way to help other people who are desperate for solutions, they won't forget it. They will spread the word and grow your following for you!

*"If you are serious about starting a lasting business, stop focusing on your own goals and instead focus your attention on serving others, discovering their needs and how to help them."*

- NEAL CABAGE (INC.)

45

## Keep up with trends.

Keeping on top of trends in your niche is a great way to make sure you're always putting out information and products that people are really interested in.

For example, if you know that Facebook has just changed its page algorithm, you can put out an informative blog post helping people get their fan pages seen.

Here are some ways to keep on top of the latest trends:

- Subscribe to the top blogs in your niche.
- Keep an eye on [Google Trends](#).
- See what people are talking about on social media.
- Take note of the questions people are asking in the forums.
- Speak to your suppliers regularly. Suppliers are often full of useful information.

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## Test, test, test.

Did you know that even the subtlest change to your sales copy can make a big difference to sales?

If you didn't know, it's because you're not testing enough! Start using A/B tests to see which elements impact your conversion rates. It could mean something as simple as changing the colour of your buy button and seeing which converts best.

There are several tools to help you with your A/B tests:

- [Optimizely](#)
- [Visual Website Optimizer](#)  
(who also have a great guide to split testing)
- [Google Analytics](#)
- [Convert](#)

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## Track your marketing efforts.

It's all very well trying new marketing methods to improve your business, but if you aren't tracking them, then you'll never know where your time and money are best spent.

Whatever new method you try, make sure you're tracking it. For example, you want to track how many new leads are coming from different sources, how many people are engaging with you on social media, and what ads are converting for you.

Google Analytics makes tracking pretty straightforward, but for granular tracking, we always set up Google Tag Manager. It's worth also taking a look at Google Data Studio for its simple reporting of all of your platforms.

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## Share stories in your content.

Stories are always used in marketing to sell you more products, and they work very well. This is especially true in industries like weight loss, where the stories show individuals having success with the product (see [“Why Stories Sell” by Neuromarketing](#)).

But stories are also a great way to build your brand, even if you’re not directly selling anything. This could mean telling personal anecdotes through social media or using something that happened in your life as part of a blog post.

Practise telling more stories in your content and you’ll build trust and deeper relationships as a result.

*“Stories provide insight into who you are, although not all the stories have to be about you. Even when you tell stories about other people or even fictional stories, how you tell them reveals a lot about you.”* - [ALICE SEBA \(CONTENTRIX\)](#)

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## Add visuals to your content.

Although words have always been important in online marketing, visuals are playing an increasingly more significant role. If you want to grow your business, you should definitely start incorporating visual elements into your content.

[It's already clear how important visuals are on social media:](#) images on Instagram get more than 1 billion likes every single day. Pinterest saw a 1000% increase in visitors in the space of a year, and more and more of us are using smartphones and tablets, where visuals are the key to standing out.

Some more stats on visual marketing (from [Sprout Social](#)):

- Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than words.
- 70% of search results are videos.
- Photos are “liked” twice as much as text updates.
- Videos are shared 12 times more than text and links.
- So make visuals a crucial part of your online content strategy, starting today!

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## Recycle your content.

Content is essential to your online business, but it can be challenging to find enough time and money for constant content creation.

Why not try recycling your old content? There are many ways you can do this:

- Create “best of” posts linking to your past blog posts on particular topics.
- Turn emails into blog posts.
- Compile related blog posts into Kindle books.
- Turn transcripts of video/audio into free reports.
- Take an email course and turning it into a webinar.
- Flesh out one of your FAQs into a more substantial blog article (and include images and diagrams to explain further).

As you can see, if you get creative, there are a considerable number of ways to recycle old content and make the very most from it. [See “Content Marketing: A to Z” by Content Marketing Institute for more ideas.](#)

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## Experiment with different types of content.

Any online business owner needs content to build relationships, make sales and grow their business, but some of us are stuck thinking that this simply means articles and eBooks.

Experiment with the kind of formats you offer your readers. Think about things that can make your content more useful to them. For example, if you put together a tutorial on starting a new blog, add a checklist of the most important tasks. Or record a video to highlight something in a way that's easy to follow along.

Want more ideas? [Check out this blog post from HubSpot.](#)

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## Write product reviews.

No matter what niche you're in, product reviews can increase your profits (it's proven!). Nowadays, it's more and more common for people to head online before deciding on what product or service to buy.

If you write reviews about the products you've *actually* used, then you're in a much better position to get that affiliate commission. Although it's easy for people to find general information about a product, you can offer a unique perspective through your personal experience of the item.

Just remember to be honest. If there's something wrong with the product, then say it! For more product review writing tips, [see this guide by Lynn Terry at Clicknewz.](#)

## Start using video.

The internet has moved way beyond the days of everyday text articles. People consume all kinds of media these days, and your business needs to keep up with the trends. If you've never tried it before, it's time to incorporate video into your content marketing strategy.

YouTube is the world's second-highest referrer of traffic after Google. Add to that; video can help people connect to you personally in a way words on a page, and even still images, never will.

If you're not yet confident enough to appear on video, start by using screen capture software like [Camtasia](#). Practise speaking over the top and eventually move onto video when you're ready.

To be honest, with the new phone cameras out there these days video content really is a no-brainer. I have an iPhone 11 Pro, I can shoot awesome video. To get my audio better I use a simple lapel mike which you can pick up for as little as \$24.

Remember that "pro video" is not necessarily what your customer is searching for. They are searching and actively engaging with authentic and meaningful (for them) information. Produce videos that engage and are full of information they can use and they'll be more than happy to forgive your so so production quality. Just make sure it is shot well (use a tripod in good light), and the sound is not muffled or scratchy and Bob's your Uncle (he really is my Uncle!).

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## Get transcripts of all audio and video.

Every time you create a video or audio recording, there's an easy way to get more out of this content. Simply hire a transcriptionist to turn the audio into words.

There are several benefits to using a transcription in your online business:

- You can send it as a bonus to people who opt into your email list.
- You can use it to create a blog post from the content.
- Use it to release short free reports.
- Publish the transcripts alongside the other media to get more significant SEO benefits.
- Increase engagement from people who prefer not to have to sit through video/ audio and like to read instead.
- You get more content from less work.

There are many subscription services out there. Some use robots, and some use people. I'd suggest experimenting with one called [Temi](#), I've used it and the results are great.

# QUALITY CONTENT STILL MATTERS

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## Stop thinking you need to blog every day.

Having a blog is an excellent way to build your audience and gain their trust before trying to sell them anything. But don't make the mistake of thinking you must blog every day.

There are no strict rules when it comes to how often to blog. If blogging every day is taking your time away from money-generating activities, then you shouldn't be doing it. As a small business, revenue-generating is always your number one priority.

In fact, [some leading bloggers advise against blogging every day](#), especially for smaller bloggers. Why? Because posting so frequently does not allow enough time for each post to get the attention it deserves, and some readers can even get annoyed.

Remember, less is sometimes more.

Instead, build out a blog schedule that fits with your time available, what your readers are happy to consume, and the return on investment you get from it. It may take time to perfect your schedule but with the right data and a little bit of supervision time you'll find this schedule will make you more efficient and achieve better results.

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## Use sticky internal links.

If you want to improve the experience of visitors to your website and keep them sticking around for longer, then it's essential to have a sticky internal linking strategy.

This means that you make a point to link to related posts within other posts – always give your reader something new to read (and relevant).

Not only will this help create new fans for your site more quickly, but it'll also help improve your search engine rankings.

*“What should you link to? To your best content – what we call your cornerstone content. Your best advice, your best thinking, and your best answers to the questions readers come up with again and again.”* - [SONIA SIMONE \(COPYBLOGGER\)](#)

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## Spend more time on your headlines.

If you're going to do one thing to improve conversions, then spend more time crafting your headlines. This applies to blog posts, email subject lines, sales pages and even social media updates.

*"On average, 8 out of 10 people will read headline copy, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest. This is the secret to the power of your title, and why it so highly determines the effectiveness of the entire piece."* - [BRIAN CLARK \(COPYBLOGGER\)](#)

Your headlines can make or break the success of your copy. After all, if your headline doesn't lure people in, then people won't even bother reading what you have to say!

You should spend *just as much* time writing the headline as you do writing the rest of the copy. Start practising this new rule and see the results you get.

There are some awesome headline writing tools out there. I use [Funnel Scripts](#) as a great way to get me started.

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## Use content creation shortcuts.

If you want to get more done with less time and less money, then start using smart content creation shortcuts in your business.

Here are a few ideas:

- Purchase topic ideas for your niche to save brainstorming time.
- Purchase article outlines in your niche to save time but still create unique content.
- Use PLR (private label rights) content for your websites, emails and products. Just edit it a little so that it's unique to you.
- Start curating content on your blog (sharing quick snippets and pointing your readers to external sites).

[See this post from Pro Blogger for more ideas.](#)

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## Share your content in as many places as possible.

When you produce a new piece of content, don't only post it to your blog and then forget about it. If you've written something particularly noteworthy, try to share it in as many places as possible.

For example, if you've just written top 10 tips for people new to a vegan diet, you can repurpose that in several ways. Create a PDF checklist and give it away to your subscribers, create a 10 part presentation and upload it to [SlideShare](#), then record that presentation in a video and upload it to [YouTube](#), and so on.

If you've got a *paid* eBook, then why not also upload it to [Amazon Kindle](#), and then create a course on [Udemy](#)?

Publishing your content in as many different places as possible will increase your possible audience size.

60

## Focus on your readers, not Google.

If there's one thing we've learned about SEO in recent years is that gaming the system doesn't work. People have had massive success from black hat SEO techniques, only to have it all come crumbling down again in the latest search engine update.

Instead of thinking about Google, think about your readers. Aim to provide the best reader experience possible, full of high-quality content. Not only will you keep Google happy, but your readers will subscribe to your mailing list, follow you on social media and give you a following *outside* of Google.

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## Create a recommended resources page.

Here's a quick way to increase the income potential of your website: create a recommended resources page (check out ours here).

This page is where you list all of the tools and programs you've found useful in your business. For example, if you run a healthy eating blog, you could list links to your favourite cooking products, cookbooks, and so on.

This page comes with two main benefits:

1. It'll save on customer support time. If you often get questions about recommendations, you can point people to this new page instead of taking the time to answer every question.
2. Make sure you sign up as an affiliate of the products you recommend, and you'll also earn money when someone buys on your recommendation!

# STRIVE FOR MORE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

62

## Stop doing tasks you hate.

Improving your business isn't just about improving your profits. It's also about creating the ideal business for you. This is why you should take steps towards avoiding all the tasks you hate (or aren't exactly great at).

Everyone has to do things they don't always enjoy in their business, but the more your business grows, the more opportunity you'll get to eliminate them.

There are two ways to go about this:

1. You can outsource those tasks to someone else (start small if your budget is limited and keep increasing the amount you outsource as you go).
2. You can eliminate those tasks from your business. This second option isn't always feasible - for example, with day-to-day admin tasks - but if you're not enjoying something, it could be a sign that your business needs to move in a new direction. Instead of ignoring why you aren't enjoying something, dig a little deeper, is there an issue here in your business that needs addressing?

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## Start outsourcing.

You'll reach a point in your business when you simply can't continue to do everything yourself. And, if you try, your business won't grow. That is the time to start outsourcing.

If you don't have a big budget, you don't have to outsource too much straight away. But just remember that every dollar you spend on outsourcing is an investment in the future of your business.

These days there are tonnes of ways to outsource including:

- Local freelancers.
- Recruitment firms - yes, they do cover contractual staff.
- Offshore recruitment.

Remember, when recruiting offshore to look into the company or group you are working with to ensure they provide the right benefits to your team member.

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## Track your time.

If procrastination is getting in the way of growing your business, then it's time to start tracking your time. Install an app like [RescueTime](#) and go on about your day as you usually would.

After a week or so, take a look at the results of the tracking. You can see, at a glance, whether you spent too much time watching online videos or social networking. This can help you identify your weaknesses and let you work on improving things.

It's scary but very rewarding. Even an hour a week of more productive time can make a massive difference to your business.

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## Take advantage of automated systems (where appropriate).

One of the biggest struggles for online marketers is not having enough time to do everything they want. This is why it's essential to take advantage of systems and automation wherever you can.

*It doesn't* mean using spammy software to leave fake comments on blogs, or scraping content from the web and posting it as your own.

What it does mean is taking advantage of smart tools and plugins that can automate things in a way that won't negatively affect your customers.

Here are some examples:

- Schedule posts in advance on social media using tools like [Buffer](#) (but also logging in to interact in real-time).
- Have a bank of canned answers in your support desk, but personalise them for every customer that contacts you (I have our canned answers in our company intranet and it saves loads of time!).
- [Schedule autoresponder emails](#) to send out at set intervals after someone signs up for your mailing list.

It'll take some time to find the best tools for you, and get them all set up right, but it'll save you hours and hours in the end.

66

## Don't waste time on social media.

It's easy to get carried away on social media. Although it's a valuable way to connect to your market and brand your business, it won't help your business if you spend hours just chatting there!

Make a smart plan to incorporate social media into your daily schedule without letting it suck your time:

- Start by deciding how often you want to post.
- Then use tools like [Buffer](#) or [HootSuite](#) to schedule posts in advance.
- Choose a time to check in each day for a fixed period – for example, 15 minutes – to reply to people and comment on other people's posts.

By using this smart combination of scheduling and real-life interaction, you'll be able to show up in your followers' feeds throughout the day, but you won't waste all your time on actually being there 24/7.

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### TIP

*If paying the monthly subscriptions for all of these little utilities is getting you down then you could always use one of our [Content Plan templates from Business Lifers](#).*

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## Set up a project management system.

Even if you're not yet outsourcing, getting your business organised should still be an essential goal. That way, you know exactly what needs to be done, and you'll be in a position to hire other people to do it for you as soon as possible.

One of the best ways to get organised is to use a project management system. A project management system can help you organise your calendar, plan tasks, share files and collaborate with other people.

Project management systems still let you communicate with others via email, but all of the information is stored within the system. You and your subcontractors will also get automated deadline reminders, which is a great way to keep everyone focused on the project.

Some of the top project management systems include:

- [Asana](#)
- [Basecamp](#)
- [Trello](#)
- [Podio](#)
- [Accello](#)

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**TIP** *It's easy to get a project management system that is a one-stop-shop. It is jam-packed with every feature possible. But here's the thing... sometimes these more complex project management systems can be onerous to set up and take an absolute age to administer every day. In my business, I use an ecosystem of products that work together and are specialists in their field. This way not only do I get a product that is the market-leader in their specific area, I generally only get the features I truly want and not the features of a bloated product.*

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Here's what I use:

- [Xero](#) for accounting
- [Trello](#) for tasking
- [Everhour](#) for time management which is linked directly to Trello

There are loads more little bits and pieces, but these are the big ones.

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## Simplify.

The best way to maximise your profit is to work *smarter*, not harder. It's why you should start looking for ways to simplify all the tasks you regularly do in your business.

For example, if you have a virtual assistant who regularly sends you files by email, why not create a shared folder on [Dropbox](#) so your files are automatically synced to your computer each day.

Or if customers regularly ask you how to log in to their account, create a tutorial showing them how to do this. Put the link to the tutorial within your help desk to avoid the chances of them even emailing you in the first place.

Or, instead of having your writer email you blog posts and you posting them yourself, give them a direct login to your WordPress account and have them do it themselves.

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**TIP** *I've found over the years in business I've actively pushed away doing some of these things because they take time to set up. But trust me... this time is SO well spent. One hour of setting something up can save days and even weeks sometimes in the long run. Trust me, spend the time now and you'll never regret it.*

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## Learn how to fire clients.

If you work directly with clients, then you'll know some of them are more demanding than others. Every now and again, you'll get that one client who expects the world and gives very little in return.

This is when you need to get tough in your business. Sometimes it's not worth the mental drain for the money that one client brings in. It's time to email them, politely, saying that you would like to end your working relationship.

There are other times when it's a good idea to fire clients, even if you do like working for them. That's when you start to scale things up, if you decide you want to stop trading time for money. In that case, simply send your clients an email letting them know you're moving onto new projects but that you wish them all the best.

70

## Hire a virtual assistant.

Hiring a virtual assistant could be the best way to take your business to the next level. Think about it: is your time best spent managing day-to-day admin tasks and customer emails? Or would you increase your profits by coming up with new ideas and implementing marketing strategies?

There's no point in doing all the everyday tasks yourself when you can hire someone else to do it for as little as \$25 an hour. You can even find cheaper help if you look for virtual assistants from abroad.

Worried that you won't have enough tasks to send to your assistant? Don't be – see this list of [101 things you can outsource](#).



## Create an FAQ page.

It's important that you see to customer emails promptly, but they can be a massive time suck. This is why it's a good idea to create an FAQ page on your website.

Every time you are asked a new question that could apply to other customers, add the question and answer to your FAQ page.

Make your new FAQ page easy to find on your website, and link to it from your contact page. That way, customers are more likely to read your FAQ page before even contacting you. If they do still contact you, point them to the FAQ page unless the answer needs a personalised reply.

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**TIP** *Once you've built out your FAQs, add them to your Google My Business account and rank for these queries!*

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## Batch small tasks.

Group similar tasks together and tackle them all at once. This way you are not switching your focus in between different tasks.

Here are some instances you can do batching.

- Choose a day in the week to create short social media content and use [Buffer](#) or a similar tool to schedule these posts.
- Set a time to read and answer emails so you won't have to be distracted all day long.
- Divide a big task into steps. Then work those steps in batches. If you have a regular podcast, for example, you can set a time to brainstorm topics in advance. For another time, think about the guests that you want to invite. Set another day to write the outline, and so on.

# KEEP ON TOP OF YOUR FINANCES

73

## Take a regular look at your finances.

Working for yourself means that it's up to you to keep on top of your finances. But it's important to look at your finances *regularly* – don't just leave it all up to a week before tax time!

Knowing your finances doesn't just help you prepare for the tax bill (which is important in itself); it also enables you to keep track of your business. You'll see which products and services are selling best, where you're overspending, how much money you have free for outsourcing and so on.

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### TIP

*In this age of subscription services, my monthly expenditure was getting out of hand. To get it back on track, the first thing I did was to cancel my credit card. All of the monthly expenses were being automatically drawn from this card. Instantly a tonne of subscriptions were wiped from my financials! These were things I wasn't using or rarely used and were a total waste of money.*

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I then set about creating a report in [Xero](#) of these expenses. I check this report each month and can keep a lid on the money I spend on them. The savings each month have been incredible!

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## Raise your prices.

A straightforward way to improve your profits can be to raise your prices. You might be worried that higher rates will turn customers off, but this isn't always the case.

Your price point can have an unexpected psychological impact on customers, [and sometimes you might find that higher prices can lead to more sales](#). Of course, it's essential to test this out for yourself.

My team and I have written an awesome little ebook about called "[Raising Your Rates](#)", why not check it out.

75

## Don't overspend.

Although it's important to spend money to get your business off the ground and growing, be careful not to overspend.

Many newbies make the mistake of spending a lot of money on training, always thinking that the next thing they buy will be the one that takes their business to the next level. This kind of thinking will only hold you back.

Make sure you keep on top of your bookkeeping, so you know exactly what position you're in each month. If you've got extra money at the end of the month, then you can afford to spend it on a new program or training.

76

## Pay your bills on time.

Late fees on vendor and utility bills can add up. It is money better spent elsewhere. Also, pay your taxes on time to avoid penalties.

Set up monthly reminders to ensure you pay your bills on time, every time.

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### TIP

*Set up a separate bank account to save for your taxes. That way, when tax time comes around, you'll have the money ready to go. I have an account which I use and every week I put money into it. What I put in depends on how my cashflow is going at the time. The more I save, the easier it is to pay big expenses like tax, employee holidays and superannuation commitments.*

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77

## Start a cash reserve.

A business will always have highs and lows. To prepare you for anything unexpected, open a separate savings account for your cash reserves and deposit regularly. Sometimes this is the same as your Tax saver account and sometimes not.

**78**

## **Choose the best way to receive money.**

It is a must that you provide your customers' various ways to pay. These days, PayPal, credit cards, and electronic cash are the norm, especially for online transactions. Look at your options and see which of these services have the best prices.

# ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY

79

## Build a credible website.

Make sure that your website looks professional, design and content-wise. Just imagine if you are offering writing services and your website is peppered with typographical errors. That's a sure way to turn away your potential customers. You have to be meticulous about this. Hire a professional to do your web design and content if you must.

Ensure that the information on your website is complete. Include an *About Us* page, and *Contact Us* page. Your visitors want to know who they are dealing with.

You can set up a section that highlights your professional partnerships and certifications. If your business has been featured in a magazine or received an award, put it there on your website. You should also include testimonials from your satisfied customers.

80

## Be an authority in your niche.

If you really want to improve your online following, then you've got to become an authority in your niche. Even if you don't feel like you are, if you have followers, then you have people who rely on you for their information.

This means sharing useful content with your readers through social media, keeping up to date with the latest trends and letting your subscribers know about them, and educating them as much as possible.

Other ways to help boost your new "authority" status include releasing a Kindle book, guest blogging on other people's blogs, and being interviewed by others (and you can interview them, too.)

81

## Only recommend products you've used.

Being an affiliate for other online business owners is a great way to make additional income from your readers and customers. But it's critical that you choose your products carefully.

If you've been blindly recommending affiliate products that you haven't personally used, then you'll significantly improve your business by stopping now. Instead, only promote products that you have genuine experience with.

This helps in two ways. Firstly, it'll build a greater level of trust, as your readers know you only promote things you've actually used. Secondly, it means you're in a better position to explain the real benefits of that product and pre-sell it to your customers. This means better conversions!

82

## Don't be afraid to show your personality.

Online marketers often build a brand around themselves, rather than a faceless company. This is an excellent marketing strategy, as it means you can make real connections and provide value by helping people personally.

But it's hard to connect with people properly unless you show your personality. This doesn't mean telling people about every aspect of your personal life. It simply means letting some of your character shine through.

*"To rise above the competition, you have to find out what YOU have to offer that nobody else can, and milk it."*

[- PAT FLYNN \(SMART PASSIVE INCOME\)](#)

Pat Flynn is one marketer who uses this to his advantage. People see him as a genuinely nice and helpful guy, and he's always transparent about his online business. Sometimes he shares personal stories about his family, too.

Derek Halpern is another great example. He's a "love me or hate me" kind of guy and people love the character in his videos. And, if you're worried about showing more of your personality online, [he has a great video on dealing with haters.](#)

83

## Write a Kindle book.

If you want a simple way to improve your brand and your passive income, releasing a Kindle book is a perfect starter.

You might think you don't have time to write and release a book, but don't forget you can recycle content you've already written in the past. Even if your Kindle book is simply a compilation of several blog posts on a similar subject, buyers will still appreciate the fact that they can find them all in one easy-to-digest format.

Once you have books published in your name, it helps you get seen as more of an expert. This, in turn, can build trust in potential buyers and help you land future work!

84

## Provide great customer service.

Act on customer complaints immediately. Just one unsatisfied customer that decides to lash out on social media can undermine your credibility. Be sure to respond calmly no matter how riled up your customer is. Apologise, and find a solution.

Likewise, take the time (or assign someone) to answer customer queries about your product or service. Acknowledge their feedback if any.

Set up your business for success!

# SET UP YOUR BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS!

85

## Set yourself a challenge.

All online business owners have times when they just stop moving forward. You might find yourself procrastinating more and in need of something to give you and your business a kick start. A challenge can do just that!

A challenge means setting a goal for a short period; for example, 21 days or a month. During that time, you'll do something above and beyond what you usually do – like posting on your blog every single day, interacting with 20 people on social media, or writing 2000 words.

Not only will the challenge push you to achieve more, but it's also a great time to test how much of an impact these activities have on your business.

If you have a blog, make the challenge public! Invite people to join, and you'll be building your brand and community in the process!

86

## Set goals.

You can only improve your business if you have a clear idea of where you want it to go. This usually means setting goals. Sure, you can achieve success without goals, but that's kind of like stumbling upon some buried treasure without a map. You'll have much more chance of finding that treasure if you know where you're going!

You should set both short-term and long-term goals, and make sure that every goal you choose is "SMART".

That means it's:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic, and it has a
- Time limit.

87

## Finish your projects.

Remember this: a project is never going to make you money unless you see it through to the end.

Simple advice, yes, but ask yourself how many unfinished projects you have right now. You've probably put hours and hours of work into some of them.

Is there a legitimate reason they're still not finished? Or is it just because you're a perfectionist, or that "shiny object syndrome" has caused you to move onto something else too quickly?

Be honest with yourself and choose a project that you'll commit to taking through to completion.

*"Real artists ship."* - [STEVE JOBS](#)

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### TIP

*When you're in business, it's easy to get pulled in all different directions, and this often means you get pulled off a project and onto something else. I know I have had countless projects I've started and never finished. Here's the thing... pick a project to finish that has real revenue-raising potential. Finish this one first. In my experience, getting a revenue-raising project up and running first gives you momentum (and enthusiasm). You'll want to do more, and at the same time, you'll have revenue coming in to do it.*

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Some revenue-raising projects:

- Write an eBook in your chosen niche.
- Build out a new product line.
- Learn a new "technique" to aid or enhance your service delivery.
- Optimise your expenses (I consider optimising costs as revenue raising. It's money you'll now be able to keep instead of giving it to someone else).

88

## Escape the perfectionism trap.

Have you been avoiding a particular project for a while now? Do you have a pile of unfinished business on your desk? Do you obsess over minute things and spend a lot more time on them than you should? Is there a near-finished project that you haven't launched yet because you feel it is not good enough?

I hate to break it to you, but you have fallen into the perfectionism trap.

At first glance, perfectionism seems to be a good trait. You only want to give your best, isn't that commendable?

But perfectionism has a paralysing effect. In reality, no one can achieve perfection. So why spend a lot of time and emotion on it?

This isn't a leave pass to do a sloppy job. It means setting up realistic goals and focusing your time and effort on the bigger picture rather than agonising over tiny details of your work.

Whenever you feel that perfectionism gets the better of you, pause and think. Take a good look at your ebook, or blog, or whatever it is that you are working on. In its current state, will it accomplish the goal at hand? If yes, then it is good enough. Go ahead and launch it!

89

## Create more than you consume.

Here's a quick thought that could help give you the kick you need to achieve more in business: ask yourself whether you're creating more than you consume.

If the answer is no, and you find yourself spending more time *reading* about things than actually *creating* them, then it's time to change. Creating more than you consume means you'll always be educating your customers and creating new products for them to enjoy.

In short, creating more = profiting more!

90

## See competitors differently.

When you run a business online, you really can carve your own unique niche and customer base. And, instead of having direct competitors, you have a chance to network and benefit from the competition.

There are so many benefits to [seeing your competitors as friends](#):

- When we promote our competitors, they will promote us too – broadening our reach.
- They can help us improve our own business.
- They give us someone to talk to about our struggles.
- They can increase our profits!

91

## Don't be afraid to ask.

Sometimes when you want something, you have to be bold enough to ask for it directly.

Here are some things you could ask for to improve your business:

- Ask some of your top customers to provide testimonials or feedback on a new product.
- Ask affiliates to promote your next product launch.
- Ask your social media followers to leave your product a review on Amazon, Google or Facebook.
- Ask your email subscribers to reply to your email.
- Ask your customers to refer you to other customers.

Of course, it doesn't make sense to ask things of people unless you've built up a prior relationship. If you have, however, you'll be surprised at how willing people are to help you out.

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### TIP

*We use a tool called [Grade.us](#) to gather reviews from our customers. It's a great tool because it does all of the hard work for you. All you need to do is enter your customers email address and it sends the review request. It will also direct them to your social channels including Google and Facebook to write their reviews.*

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92

## Share your happy customers with the world.

Has the greatest new idea just popped into your head? Does it make you want to stop everything you're working on and start a new project? If so, put that idea to one side now!

The problem with entrepreneurs is that we often have more ideas than we can ever hope to keep up with. Some ideas are good, but some are a waste of time.

New ideas can stop you seeing the old ones through, and this turns into a vicious cycle that stops your business from ever moving forward.

Try to break the cycle by making a vow never to act on a new idea on a whim. Instead, write it down in a notebook (or an app like Evernote) and then put it to one side. Revisit it in a week or a month. If you still think it's a good idea, schedule time to work on it in the future when your current projects are complete. Chances are, though, that there will be many ideas that never see the light of day once you've had the time to really think about them!

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**TIP** *I use a Google sheet to write down all of my ideas. That way I can prioritise and categorise them.*

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93

## Hire a coach.

There are times when it's worth it to pay to move your business forward. If you're doing okay, and you've got some cash to spare, but you're just not quite sure what to do to get to that next level, it could be time to hire a coach.

Finding the right coach for you will take time. Everyone has different needs. Start asking around in your circle of online colleagues, and ask any marketers you admire whether they're taking on any new coaching students.

Yes, coaching is more costly than a generic training program, but the one-on-one insight you get is priceless.

94

## Aim for semi-passive income.

Many online “gurus” talk about earning a completely passive income from your business. Unfortunately, however, this is not really possible. Some people even call it [“the biggest lie on the internet”](#).

Why? Because although marketers can indeed and do make money while they sleep, they still have to work before that money comes in, and they still need to do the work *after* it comes in to keep things going.

Your aim should be to maximise the returns from every bit of work you do, but not to quit working forever. Understanding this might just set you free from the “guru trap”!

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**TIP** *The whole idea of “making money in your sleep” has been warped because people are led to believe it is an answer to all their prayers. The secret to “making money in your sleep” is to have a way for customers to buy from you when you aren’t there. If you sell products, you should sell them online and use your website to offer transactions. If you sell a service, work out a way that you can have your customers buy that service online or at the very least interact with your business when you’re not around to answer their queries.*

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95

## Get input from others.

Want a simple way to improve your business? Start getting input from others. Although you probably have loads of great ideas about your business, sometimes other people just bring up a totally new perspective.

Here are a few ways to get those ideas:

- Ask your customers to reply to your email asking their biggest question.
- Create a survey and send it to your customers.
- Ask trusted colleagues about what they think about your new project.
- Join a forum and brainstorm with members.
- Ask people *outside* of your business.
- Hire a mentor.
- Have a drink with a good friend. Some of the best inspiration I've ever had has been when relaxing with friends.
- Another great one is to get outdoors. Go for a bike ride and you'll be amazed how it frees up your mind.

96

## Hire the right people for the right job.

Finding the right person for your team can be quite challenging. It is crucial that you attract the right people for your company, someone who is passionate about their roles and is willing to learn and grow with you. Look for these traits when hiring. Experience and skills are important, but so is the right attitude towards work. Remember that experience can be earned, and skills can be learned.

That said, there may be times when you hired someone with the right attitude, but may not be fit for the role that they are currently in. Be open to assign them to another task that may fit them better.

97

## Coach your employees.

Coaching your employees is not a one-way street. By sharing the tools of the trade that you have learned, you can help your employees realise their potential and be confident with their abilities. At the same time, your business will benefit from the increased productivity and performance of your employees.

Give your employees frequent feedback on their performance through one on one meetings.

If you think that an employee is having a hard time accomplishing their work, provide guidance, but do not assume their responsibilities so that they will develop their confidence.

Challenge your employees by providing them with new tasks and be there to provide guidance when necessary.

98

## Embrace failure.

Embracing failure is easier said than done. Nobody wants to be a loser. However, failure is a part of everyone's life, more so for entrepreneurs.

It is important to develop a proper mindset for failure. I am not saying that you can't feel bad. It is human nature to feel frustrated when things don't go your way. However, don't get bogged down for a long time. You have to accept failure and try to learn from your experience.

Also, if you are so afraid to fail, there is a tendency that you become too complacent. You might not take the risk, and not "fail", but you passed up on an opportunity to grow.

Remember that every successful entrepreneur out there has failed at some point.

99

## Take a break.

Operating a business can be stressful. There are always projects to do, issues that need troubleshooting, and challenges to overcome. The everyday grind can take its toll on your physical and mental health. Now that's not good for you and your business. That is why it is vital that you take a break.

Strive for work-life balance every day. Stick to your work hours as much as possible. Don't skip that lunch break. Take a vacation once in a while to recharge. You deserve it.

100

## Success favours the adaptable.

There is one similarity between the business world and the animal kingdom, and that is one's adaptability mostly determines one's ability to survive and thrive.

Being big and strong can indeed give you an edge, but being adaptable is better. Take a look at some corporations – Nokia, Kodak, and General Motors to name a few, were once formidable, considered pioneers in their fields, and lorded over the market at one point. But they all fell into the pitfall of not being able to adapt fast enough.

You must always stay attuned with your market. Be observant with the trends in the market and technology and think about how the changes may affect your business. Will a new trend threaten your company's bottom line? Then think of ways you can innovate to turn that threat into an opportunity.

# 101

## Commit to excellence.

Committing yourself to excellence in business means that you'll always do the best job you can. This doesn't necessarily mean you'll be the richest business owner, but it does mean that you'll take satisfaction in performing each task at a very high level.

There are so many opportunities to apply this idea to your business:

- Do your very best every time you answer a customer email.
- Make sure your products go above and beyond what people expect.
- Give away your best information for free.
- Take pride in knowing that you truly care about your customers.

As you can see, committing yourself to excellence can really benefit your customers. In turn, you'll reap the rewards of an extremely loyal following who will spread the word to others!

# CONCLUSION

This could have been 1001 ways to improve your business as there are so many things both big and small that will make a real difference to your business.

But here's the thing...

If you pick one thing from this book. Act on it. Complete it. It could be the difference between a business that's a chore and a business you love that rewards you everyday.

Good luck and if you have any questions, join Adam and I at Business Lifers and ask away!

Cheers,



101

# WAYS TO A KILLER SMALL BUSINESS

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THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN BY  
**RAELS ROBERTSON FROM METTRO AND**  
**IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY BUSINESS LIFERS**



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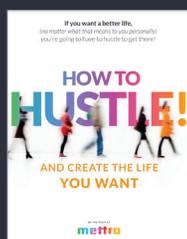
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## How to Hustle



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What do you dream of? What are your goals? How would you like your life to play out? The answers to these questions vary from person to person. In the end, the nature of the goal is irrelevant. What matters, the only thing that matters, is the sustained effort necessary to get where you want to be in life. You need to hustle. This eBook is all about real ways to hustle right now and get the life you want.

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