

Q&A with Jay

The Thirty Most Stimulating and Universal Questions Ever Addressed

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Q and A with Jay

**by
Jay Abraham**

In my challenging work as an advisor to business owners, entrepreneurs and professional men and women, I follow the example set by the great teacher Socrates many centuries ago.

I ask a lot of questions.

I am also asked a lot of questions. The report you're looking at right now contains answers to the 30 questions that are most frequently raised by my consulting clients and readers and by participants in my frequent marketing seminars.

I urge you to read each response carefully, because in each one I know that you will find ideas that can help you increase your cash flow and put your business on a faster and more profitable growth track. Not next month, or next year, or at some other nebulous time in the future - but right away.

I don't say that conceitedly or boastfully - or disrespectfully. Not at all. I say it simply because I have seen my business-building techniques prove themselves repeatedly and dramatically - and with explosively profitable results - in more than 40 different industries and professions.

That's the exciting thing about the ideas I'm going to share with you in the pages of this report; they're ideas that are easy to understand, inexpensive to apply and easy to translate into action. They're also immediately applicable in all lines of business. They will work just as well for a dentist as they will for an auto dealer.

Why? Because each bit of advice that I offer is designed to improve and enhance the buyer/seller relationship that lies at the heart of all businesses and professional practices.

If you follow the advice that you're about to read, you will draw closer to your customers, clients or patients, serve them more fully and graciously - and sell them more. That's not an idle comment; it's a sincere promise!

Now, let's get started with those 30 questions...

Jay, what is your marketing philosophy?

I passionately believe in profit enhancement through marketing leverage.

And what is "marketing leverage?" Marketing leverage is getting much better results for the same amount of money and effort.

For example, one headline on an ad could outpull another by as much as five, ten or twenty-one times. The advertisement cost you exactly the same, but you're getting much better results with a different headline. That's leverage. You'll never know if you're maximizing your leverage until you test all the factors that matter. You should -

- test one price against another...
- test one space ad or mailing piece against another...
- one headline against another...
- one sales pitch against another...
- and one telemarketing script against another telemarketing script.

You don't have the right to tell your market what it wants. You have to ask the consumer what they want. Testing lets you determine, with pinpoint accuracy, what your market wants and what it doesn't want.

A banking consultant who purchased some of my books and tapes told me that, as a result of what he read and heard, he decided to "test, test, test" his sales price. Because he did that, the consultant was able to increase his price by almost 700%!

The facts of his case are truly stunning. He went from a sales price of \$49 to one that was \$345. And, in his test of six different prices, the \$345 price consistently outpulled all others by a margin of four to one!

My philosophy is a combination of the following facets of leverage: more sales on the front end; a higher average dollar per sale; more turns per customer; more utilization of that customer after you've sold them everything you can; and if you can afford to break even on the front end, you'll probably make a lot on the back end.

How can I make an ad perform more efficiently?

The headline is the most important factor in an ad. Without a grabbing, tightly-edited, well-written headline, your chances of motivating someone to buy are slim.

Your headline is the ad for the ad itself. Make sure that you give as much information as possible - quickly and accurately. But you must do this concisely. Put your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) in the headline itself and cause the reader to read the body copy detailing your USP.

Either way, don't confuse the reader with the headline. Make it immediately clear what you want the reader to do, or what unique service and benefit you can provide.

Once you've captured the reader with the headline, the ad's body copy should run smoothly - without mentioning anything negative that would turn someone away.

Hold the reader's hand and guide him through your proposition, piece by piece. People want to be hand-held through ads. They love for someone else to do the fact-finding, product analysis - even the decision-making. If your ad takes care of all these needs for your potential customer, client or patient, he or she will be more apt to seriously consider buying from you.

And, in your ads, use bullets (like this: o) to break up monotonous blocks of text.

If your price is higher than the competition's, turn that into a plus by saying something like, "Although Our Price is Higher..." Any reader will seek out the lowest price first.

In your headlines, make the reader a guarantee. Guarantees are extremely compelling. Make certain, however, that you can deliver on your guarantee.

And always include the reader in your headline. Remember, you're writing person-to-person. Only one person will be reading your ad at a specific time, so write to that person. Personalize your company/your product/your service. Try to get your reader involved in your ad. Induce the reader to participate in the experience. Use the words: you, your, and yourself. They will involve the readers and make him feel that your ad is directed at him; also, always appeal to the emotions of your readers.

The advertisement itself should be interesting to look at, but not so overwhelming that potential readers and customers get lost in the copy and fail to derive any message from it.

Sometimes a little bit of irregularity or discord in the design of an ad actually serves to attract attention to an ad. The advertisement should flow so that your reader's eye is moved from one focal point to another and on down the page.

Here is the experience-proven pattern for a good sales pitch:

- 1.) Say something that gets your reader's attention.
- 2.) Tell the reader why he/she should be interested.
- 3.) Tell the reader why he/she should believe that what you're saying is true,
- 4.) Prove it's true.
- 5.) Itemize and describe all the benefits of your product or service.
- 6.) Tell the reader how to order.
- 7.) Tell the reader to order now.

The above outline is an elaboration on the formula: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action - or, for short, "AIDA".

Why Mail Order Makes Sense

Every business should develop a mail-order unit. Why? Because it generates tons of money and requires relatively little investment.

Before getting into mail-order, first identify any products or services that you can sell by mail.

If the products or services can be sold without a salesperson - that is, if the customer can write in, send money or call in - a business can run ads or do direct-mail selling without launching an entire mail-order division.

You can send out 20,000 letters, bulk-rate, for only about \$6,000 or \$7,000. Compare that to the cost of having a salesperson make 20,000 calls in the field!

And when you send out 20,000 letters, you are deploying 20,000 tireless salespeople working for you every day for literally pennies on the dollar, as opposed to the \$40 or \$50 or more that it would cost you for a salesperson to call and meet in person with a prospect.

Any business can add a direct-mail and telemarketing operation. Direct-mail with a telemarketing follow-up will earn you three to ten times more sales than you'd get without the follow-up.

What is my biggest off-the-books asset, and how can I best profit from it?

Your customer relationships are the greatest asset you have. You can secure these relationships by:

- a. Keeping in touch - whether by telephone, mail or in person - all customers want to feel that they are special and that you take special interest in their needs.
- b. Providing post-purchase reassurance. Each time a customer places an order with you, call him or her a week after receiving your product or service to see how things are going. Customers appreciate that.
- c. Giving your clients the best deals and guarantees you possibly can.
- d. Preferential pricing - let your best and "old" customers in on the best deals first. Give them the opportunity to buy your special or sale items before the general buying public has that opportunity.
- e. Building rapport and trust. Be as honest as you can be with your customers. People want a seller they can trust.

Keep an accurate and timely customer list, too. Updating and reusing your customer list is crucial. If you have a solid customer list, you've got a solid customer base. I say work those customers that you already have - they've bought from you before, and if they had a good experience they will buy from you again.

Even if you have only a moderate number of customers, immediately begin a perpetual communication with those customers, to show them that you are a trusted friend and advisor.

The first thing to do is to send a letter within five days or a week after the time of your customer's first transaction. In the letter, do these things:

- * Thank them.
- * Resell the value of your company.
- * Reassure them on the wisdom of purchasing your product or service
- * It's always a good idea to first test your messages in advance of a major effort, because they'll differ in just about every situation.

Also, consider offering your customers an additional product or service they can purchase on a preferred basis. Or, if what they bought can be exchanged or returned, upsell them to a larger unit.

In the powerboat industry, Sea Ray has a 100% guaranteed trade-in allowance every time you trade up. They get lots of trade-ins for larger boats!

How can I add profit centers to my business?

First, go to other people who already have the kind of profit center you want.

For example, if you own an office furniture store, you may want to make additional profit by selling office supplies. So, look for a joint venture partner who has an office supply business. You could work a deal with the office supply person where he would fulfill your orders for a share of the profits.

Explain the benefits he would receive from this venture: He would get to access your customer base, and could get new customers he never would have had without you. (You would both be benefiting.)

Another approach is to hire a person who can build profit centers for you. That person would make deals and arrangements like the one I mentioned above. This could be very appealing, if you told them that they were really building their own business and would get 100% commission.

In the beginning, you'd split the profit 50/50. You take half because you've got the knowledge, and you're going to train this person. Your new partner would get 50% because he or she's doing all the work. Eventually, the sweat-equity partner would make 60% and you'd take 40%, until the sweat-equity person virtually owns the business. This would really give them incentive.

If someone took all your business building principles and let you keep only one, what would you keep?

Without a doubt, it would be: endorsed relationships.

I do these all the time, and they always come through.

Think of someone who could spread the word around about your company. Get the "connections" you need by getting help from other companies. Don't be satisfied with routine business methods. Put in more effort to adapt to the changes the marketplace brings on. Try something different - try endorsements!

Look at the dynamics they offer you:

When you do a mailing, you have to rent a list of 5,000 or 10,000 or 20,000 people trying to find the handful (relatively speaking) of qualified prospects. When you run an ad in your city's largest daily newspaper, you could be paying to reach one million readers for just 50 to 100 people who will become your customers.

But when you do an endorsement, 60% to 100% of the people you reach are usually already qualified. You eliminate all the steps of trust development that are necessary in the outside market by using endorsements.

Is there an immediate 10% to 15% increase in profit that I can harvest?

Almost everybody can add a bump - or upsell - to their business immediately. Almost everybody can work and segment their existing active and inactive customer lists. Almost everybody can do a joint venture and offer a product both to their customers and to the other company's customers. Almost every company can start testing different propositions with their salespeople. Almost every company can telemarket after they do a mailing. Almost every company can follow up after the sale with a more expansive proposition.

See the various possibilities?

How can I turn one-time customers into perpetual customers, and how can I recapture inactive customers?

The surest way to develop "repeater" customers is to use what I call "TFN" purchases. This stands for "til further notice," and it will work in just about any business that offers ongoing service

Here's how the TFN magic works:

Offer your new customers a free or discounted first-time installment, provided they agree to sign up for continued, regular patronage of your business. Then automatically bill to their credit card and keep billing them until they cancel.

On the second part of your question, it's amazing how responsive a former customer can be. Tapping this source can be the most lucrative profit-center of your entire business.

Most firms don't regard their former customers as primary prospects to be resold. In answer to the question, "When was the last time you mailed a sales letter to your past and current customers asking them to buy?" Most would answer "not recently."

In marketing terminology, the process I'm referring to is called "back-ending."

The principle is this: Once a customer has patronized a business - and has been satisfied - that customer is then poised to repatronize your products or service over and over and over again.

Simple as it sounds, the company usually has only to properly ask to receive that patronage. And normally, it doesn't matter what the business is - the dynamics of redeploying that customer are really the same.

As a specialist in "back-ending" (also known as "post purchase" selling), I'm frequently called into companies of every type when substantial revenue-generating activities are desired and the company retaining me has a very limited amount to spend. On many occasions I've produced big bundles of profits just by sending out a properly crafted letter requesting action by the prospective buyer.

Can it be this easy? Yes!

The specific action I request the buyer to take depends on the needs and desires of my client. From a sales perspective, nearly everything imaginable is possible using back-end marketing. If a

company is in a severe cash bind, I can usually produce tens of thousands of dollars - sometimes even more - in prepaid or equivalent orders for almost any client in just a matter of weeks.

Once we provided a little company with a delightful \$250,000 worth of business, of which \$175,000 was pure profit, in four weeks - just by writing a compelling letter to their old customers. The total cost to produce and mail the letter was only \$12,000.

The dynamics of post-purchase marketing are as easily applied to a retail store as they are to a high-tech manufacturing company's broader marketing program - and with equally desirable profit results.

A small, high-fashion clothing store once came to me with an assignment to increase their average sale per customer by doubling their current yield. But there was a catch: They only had a few thousand marketing dollars to work with. Nevertheless, by developing a continuous system that started with the first sale and followed up with the customer six more times per year, we actually tripled the number of transactions per customer per year and improved profit performance by nearly 12% - which on millions of dollars of sales amounted to a considerable sum.

On another occasion, a jewelry firm, which was technically insolvent, came to me for one last-ditch attempt to keep themselves out of bankruptcy court. They had misjudged the marketability of 10 items and spent all their cash trying to promote them, with no success. About \$80,000 of their cash was tied up in useless, nonmoving merchandise and only about \$1,000 in funds was available to market with.

I created a way for them to set up a leasing arrangement and convert all of their nonmoving inventory into \$80,000 worth of cash. In the process, we spawned a new marketing concept that, in a 12-month stretch, accounted for \$658,000 worth of new, profitable sales.

These kinds of sales and profit achievements are available to most businesses. I only do for clients what they should be doing for themselves: I teach them how much more responsive and profitable a customer or client can be when he or she becomes properly and continuously worked.

Doctors, dentists, and accountants often ask me:

How do I get over the professional ethic I have that says, "Thou shalt not advertise"?

Then don't advertise. Get endorsements and promotions.

Can you, in fact, render noble and beneficial service to the clients or the patients you serve? If the answer is "no," you shouldn't be in your business. If the answer is "yes," you have an obligation to go to other people who have customers who would benefit by availing themselves of your services. Because you are the most effective, competent and qualified professional they know, you're both doing a noble service to their customers.

You're not "advertising" by being endorsed. You're trying to find people who are in dire need of your products or services.

There are other ways to approach your market without direct advertising. For example, professional associations use newsletters to promote their profession. You could take that concept and develop a newsletter solely for your customer base. The articles should be both

informative and educational, and there should be a compelling reason in each issue for your customers to visit you or call your office.

Not only does this not violate any professional oaths you may have taken, but your customers will appreciate the additional information you have made available to them.

Or offer a seminar on a topic and set up appointments with interested attendees.

How do I get free television and radio exposure?

One of three ways:

a. Go with a per-inquiry or per-order advertising agreement. It's ideally suited for smaller businesses. This is where you make a deal with a publication, radio or TV station (or catalog house) to advertise your product without charging you an up-front fee for the space or airtime. Instead, you pay them only for each inquiry - or each order - that's generated, so your advertising costs come from the profits, not from your pocket.

I should caution you, though, that the media will do this proposition only if they think they'll make more money on this basis than they would if they sold the time or space to you outright - or if they are having difficulty selling the time or space, and will grab any money they can get.

Advertising on a Small Budget

To determine where you should advertise, and in which media, profile your ideal customers, first. Find out where they live, what other products they buy, what their level of affluence is and what their fears and frustrations are.

Then select the best media to reach that particular audience. Do many of your customer or clients commute to work? Then buy a drive-time radio ad. Do they read a lot of magazines? Do they read a community newspaper or one of the "shopper" papers?

With a small budget, you have to be creative and innovative. For example: Send out press releases with a hard news angle. Instead of paying for radio airtime, contact the station program director and ask to be a guest on a talk show!

Be on the lookout for media trying to get rid of any unused time or space at the last minute, and negotiate with them. You can get some very good deals that way.

Unsold time and space, if it's not used, cannot be "saved." If a radio station has 42 minutes of commercial time and they have only sold 35, they can't save that time. It's gone forever. The right proposition from you at the right time can make a big difference. And the right proposition is for a percentage of sales. Or you can get creative: If they want a minimum amount of commercials or ads every week or month, offer them a percentage of the gross sales.

b. Approach them with a barter proposal. You can do a direct trade of your product/service for their ad space, which can be very profitable.

c. Do a triangulation: If you can't convince the media to take you up on your bartering deal, triangulation becomes the device to save the day. Triangulation is the use of three separate transactions (or more) to achieve something; in this case, free radio or television advertising.

For example: I trade you commercial time on TV for a car, and you barter the car for a group hotel reservation.

Which advertising and sales media work best together?

Every situation is unique. I've seen lots of people use space to generate inquiries and then send those inquiry prospects a follow-up letter. If that fails, they follow up with another telephone call. And the combination works very beautifully.

I've also seen people use direct mail only. I've seen people use direct mail followed by a telephone call, followed by sending the prospect a video or audiotape.

There is no right or wrong. You've got to experiment with various approaches.

Most business people abandon the process far too early. Sometimes the introduction of one more follow-up, whether it's a call, a letter, a tape recording, a testimonial from another client - or a different form of the proposition - can make all the difference in closing the sale.

Cary Blumburg, a dentist I have worked with in the past, says he got a fivefold increase in new patients - per month - simply by taking my advice and changing the headline on some flyers he was mailing out. He also added a guarantee that I had suggested. The result of both of those simple steps was an extra \$212,000 in Cary's practice revenue "in the first year alone."

What can I do to get a larger profit margin in my line?

The easiest thing to do is up-sell your customer. Many business people don't up-sell. The people who do often persuade 30% to 40% of their customers to buy something else, or something more expensive. They do it at the point of purchase by offering the customer either a larger unit of sale or a combined package of other products or services that complement what they're buying. If 30% to 50% of the people buy it, that's the easiest, fastest way to increase your average margin.

Let's say that your normal unit of sale is \$50, but you are able to put it "on special" for \$30 because you got a great buy on it, you might make another \$15 on that sale. You could increase your profit on each sale by an additional \$3.75 or \$15 for every four customers that come through the door. That's an \$18 increase!

Offer larger units, higher grades, longer payment periods. Or add a larger package of products/services with a high perceived value at a substantial discount for those customers who buy right away. Or add a more prolonged, service agreement - anything to increase your profit per transaction.

What is the key to selling very high-ticket items?

Many of our subscribers have asked me this question.

It's three-stepping. You first make your initial sales pitch - preferably either by direct mail, in person or by telephone. Your initial pitch should be geared toward getting a number of people who are qualified to raise their hands for more information.

The second step is where you send the customer or client a very elaborate and a very encompassing follow-up letter, along with a generous sample, or any other appropriate materials. And the third step is to follow up by telemarketing.

Will discount prices make my customers not want to buy at regular prices?

Not if you give them a reason for the discount. One reason you can give is that you want to clear out existing inventory to raise cash. Clearly articulate the reason behind sales prices. For example:

"Basically, we're cutting our costs of this product to help you, because we know a lot of customers buy it, and we want to try to do our part to help you save some money."

If you execute this properly, your customers will understand that you are being generous, and they will benefit from working with you in the future. People try to take advantage of deals where they save money. So educate your customers, clients or patients, and let them know what a fantastic deal they are getting. They may compare prices, but you will have effectively given yourself an exclusive chance to sell them your product or service.

But always tell the story of why you're offering a discount, and tell it tactfully, so that your customer will see the advantage to them.

Be careful; if you do this too often, they will wait for sales. You should always test your prices and the profit or loss that a discount price or sale causes.

My ABCs of Advertising

There are five concepts you should keep in mind when writing advertising copy. With an ad, you want to:

1. Command attention.
2. Show people the advantage of using your product or service.
3. Prove that what you are advertising has that advantage.
4. Persuade people to grasp the advantage you've described in the ad.
5. Make a call to action (the order).

The most important role of an ad headline is to entice the reader to start reading the copy within the ad. The copy must get read if the ad is going to pull great results. Your headline must attract instantaneous and immediate attention.

There are two types of headlines that work best in most situations:

Headlines that convey how the reader can save, gain or accomplish something through the use of your product or service

Or headlines that acknowledge how the reader can avoid risks, worries, losses, mistakes or embarrassment.

Headlines that begin with a question are usually pretty good sales clinchers. But only if they ask a question that people want to know the answer to. You'll find, too, that the words, how, here's these, which, which of these, who else, where, when, what and why usually outpull their competitors'. Using the "which of these" selling technique is very effective because it says, "Which do you want?" not, "Do you want?"

How do I get the people I sell to now to spend more money with me?

Offer them package deals. Packaging is absolutely one of the most effective marketing maneuvers for winning people over.

I was once enticed by the package concept myself - for a Hawaiian vacation. It was a wonderful "package" called "Posh Hawaii" that a classy travel agent put together.

"Posh" - what image does that conjure up in your mind? In ship travel of 100 years ago, it meant Port out, Starboard home or the cabins with the best view. Today it means anything fancy, exclusive or premier. It's class and quality. Here's the neat package "Posh" offered me:

It started out with first-class airfare from Los Angeles to Hawaii, followed by beautiful hotel accommodations overlooking magnificent Maui Beach in large, suite-sized rooms at the luxurious Marriott. Add to that a top-of-the-line Chrysler New Yorker sedan and some high-end sightseeing tours, and you'll begin to see what a wonderful value this all represented for less than \$5,000.

Parenthetically, when I had arranged my own luxury trips in the past I, too, would travel first-class. I, too, would rent a top-of-the-line automobile and I, too, would reserve an ocean-view room at the same Marriott. The only difference lay in the increased cost and time I spent in trip planning. When I'd do it myself, it would cost nearly \$10,000, and I'd always have problems and difficulties. With "Posh Hawaii," everything was taken care of for me, and it cost less than half the earlier price.

Many businesses offer reduced prices to get market share. Should I consider doing that?

If, by lowering your prices, 10 times more people come in to your business, and the average unit of sale is actually higher, and in totality the net profit per transaction is greater, then you should do it.

If decreasing your prices brings no more people, and cuts your profit down to an almost nonexistent level, you should stop doing it.

The dynamics are going to be different for each company. It depends on what you're playing for...whether you're playing for back-end business or just a front-end sale.

Keep in mind, too, that if you engage in a price war with a competitor, you have to have deep pockets if the "war" goes on very long.

The dynamics of lowering your prices are really quite simple. To make a profit, and remain in business, you can't drop your price below your cost to produce and deliver your product.

The only exception to that would be a situation in which a business has a number of products and services - enough to give it the luxury of deeply discounting one or two to attract customers; in a case like that, profit on the items that aren't reduced in the price will cover losses on the products discounted.

Your customers will tell you the highest price you can charge. When they stop buying, you're probably charging too much.

Do you have any advice on classified advertising?

There are a couple of problems with classifieds. One is that many newspapers and magazines sort their classified sections alphabetically, by subject. If this is the case, then you're going to have to be sure that the first word in your ad fits within that subject. That limits you a little, because it means that if your ad is for a restaurant, you have to put "Restaurant" first in order to get it in the right category, instead of, say, "Authentic Indian Cuisine."

But if you put words in a classified that indicate super benefits, just for calling, that counts more than anything. Use "free" - "free information," "free literature," free something. I don't know what it is, but people will stop every time they see the word "free." And you'll get a lot more phone calls, whether they're as qualified as you'd want them to be or not but, at least, you'll get action.

You really can't exaggerate the appeal of something that is free. Let me digress a moment and prove that with a little story that is 100% true:

Several years ago, the operator of an association-owned indoor gun range in Pennsylvania was having a difficult time competing with outdoor ranges. So he decided to try out some of my business-building principles. He met with his board members and talked them into letting him give away three-month range memberships valued at \$100.

Within six weeks that range operator had 1,600 new members! In fact, he eventually got so many new members that he couldn't keep enough ammunition in stock to meet target-shooting demand. And his cash flow on back-end sales (the ammunition, mostly) took off like a rocket!

A little later, though, another indoor shooting range opened in the area and started taking business from him. So what did the operator do? He again met with his board of directors and said he wanted to send a letter to all of his members, offering them a free, one-month extension of their memberships, plus a 15% discount on anything in his range store.

To take advantage of that, all his members had to do was distribute four coupons that were redeemable for free, three-month memberships to their friends or relatives.

"I never expected the results of this mailing," the range operator wrote to me later. "Overnight we had 6,000 new memberships from the original 1,600." (He also had a new ammunition shortage - so he bought out the company that supplied his range with bullets! Honest, that's a true story.)

I personally don't like classified insertions because I think if you don't catch your reader right away and with something really strong, the opportunity is gone.

But I do believe in multiple insertions in multiple categories. I think that the more times you put a classified in a newspaper or magazine, the more hits you'll get.

You're better off with four little ads than one big one - provided the ads contain all the proper selling elements.

If you discover that you can afford to run a full-page display ad, get right-hand placement. Right-hand placement is everything. Left-hand placement inside a magazine is death. Nobody looks at it.

But the inside cover (which is the left side) is also a good spot, because the table of contents is there. The inside front cover is better than the inside back cover.

If you can get on the front cover, that, of course, is number one. The back cover is number two. Then the right side of the first page. Then left side of the first page. And then a split center spread.

Should I borrow money from banks for cash that I need for marketing expenses and expansion?

Not if you can get cash from your business. If you work your customer list, or if you do a joint venture with another business, you can generate tens or hundreds or thousands of dollars. You should do that before borrowing from banks.

Why go to a bank when you might have 10 times that amount lying dormant in your customer base? Utilize that first. Mine for every dime that exists in your own business.

It may not even be any faster to get a loan from a bank. It might take you one, two, three or even four weeks. In the same period of time, you can write a sales letter with a great offer, test it with a group of a thousand or so customers, and follow-up with telemarketing. Instead of trying to borrow \$25,000 from the bank, you could have \$100,000 in your treasury before the bank even says "yes" or "no." And that's all your money. You don't owe the bank anything.

You don't have to pledge your assets, your house, your mortgage or anything else.

I have a small business, and I want to advertise on TV. Do I have a chance with my smaller budget among the big companies?

Probably greater than you imagine, because you have the chance to make a more powerful case.

You see, your ad doesn't have to be created by a committee, so that it won't offend any group, industry, competitor and will conform to inner-office politics.

All you have to do, with the understanding of salesmanship, is write a good opening phrase of the commercial, promise a big customer benefit, establish why you can deliver it, prove your point, list the advantages, make a guarantee that's risk free, show people how to take advantage of your offer and tell them what to do.

It's as easy as that.

Your bigger competitor may be able to buy more 60-second commercials that you can, but that doesn't necessarily indicate defeat. If it's a bad and ineffectual ad, your one-time airing will go much further in the minds of your prospects.

With your smaller budget, the production quality might not be as good, but do you think people buy because of production quality or believability? It's believability. It doesn't have to look like Hollywood. It has to be believable. The objective is not to have people say the commercial is beautiful. You want them to say, "I didn't know that. I want that. That makes sense to me."

What do you mean by a two-step and three-step approach?

Let's look at two-step first. It's a sales process that can be used in a variety of ways.

The first thing you do is run an ad or send out a letter to people who have an interest in the product or service you sell, and get those people to present themselves to you, either physically, by phone, or in written reply so you can identify who they are. It's the process of going to a general audience and identifying the handful, dozens, hundreds or thousands of people who are uniquely "qualified" to buy from you.

Once you've identified them, the selling begins. These men and women are in essence raising their hands and saying, "Yes, I have an acknowledged interest. I can use it, I'm interested, I want to know more about your product or service."

Now you've got to convert that interest into a sale. You can do it in a number of ways. If it's a mail or telephone prospect, I urge you to do one of the following:

* If time permits, give them a full sales presentation over the phone, followed by a letter that reiterates your offer, answers all of their questions and attempts to close them either on the phone or by mail.

* If they come in person, give them the most extensive sales presentations you can. You should also capture their name, address and phone number so that you can follow up later by telephone and/or letter. Add that number to your customer list.

Many "two steps" are really multi-steps, because you generate and identify a qualified lead and then commence a process of continual nurturing that may entail a sequence of four, or five, or 10 different follow-up events - a call, a letter, another call, another letter - and so on.

The more expensive, abstract, complex and profound the purchasing decision, the more nurturing you have to do, the more questions you have to answer, the more powerful the case you've got to make.

A three-step process entails generating a lead, selling your lead something inexpensive to get them acclimated and then going back a week, a month, six months, or a year later and selling them a major purchase. You may have to test run four, five or six different steps until you graduate the lead to the final level of buying.

Businesses such as The Franklin Mint institute new customers with inexpensive, high-value starter offers. Then with three-step selling, the buyer gravitates into committing to thousands of dollars' worth of ongoing purchases. As to which is more effective, there is no pat answer. It depends on the nature of your product. You have to experiment.

How can I adapt my marketing plan to reflect the people's changing desires and needs?

Many of you have heard of Gary Halbert. He writes an extremely useful direct-marketing newsletter. Gary is brilliant. One issue of Gary's newsletter really impressed me. I'd like to share its essence and some comments of my own with you.

The newsletter dealt with how to market to people's comfort zones. Basically, Gary's premise is that before you can effectively sell to someone, you first have to drop down (or move up) to their comfort zone. Gary used some new and very graphic analogies to illustrate his point.

For instance, a tugboat that's attempting to pull a huge freighter out to sea doesn't hand over a huge heavy cable to the freighter to connect. Rather, they first shoot a thin, fine, light string-type rope over the bow of the boat for the crew to catch and start pulling up. Attached to that rope is a slightly heavier rope that's ultimately attached to a massive cable that's fastened to the ship for the tugboat to pull.

The point of Gary's analogy is that you can't always pole-vault your way to marketing objectives. It's often far more practical to stair-step your way to your sales or marketing goals, much like a canal uses a series of locks to float a ship through.

People fear being asked to commit to something they're not sure they want or believe they can afford. So, stair-step the sale. Call someone, follow up with a letter, send out informative materials and some educational offers.

Then, follow up again with another call. Or let them sample your wares in a very risk-free manner that costs them very little.

Ultimately you will win the prospect over to your viewpoint, and to a higher-ticket product or service.

How can I make direct mail work in my business?

The way to make direct mail work for you in a big way is to mail to people who are already your customers, or mail to new prospects who have a history of buying the type of service or product you sell.

To reach customers you don't already have, you'll need to rent or buy a list of names and addresses.

There are two types of mailing lists: compiled lists (such as directories, phone books, etc.) and direct-response lists (which include those people who have ordered through the mail before and have a proven history of being responsive.)

You can buy such lists through list brokers at so much per 1,000 names. (See "Mailing Lists" in the Yellow Pages.) The names are sorted according to nature of the purchase, cost, demographics, psychographics and so on - so you can target your mailing to the most responsive audience.

In most cases, compiled lists do not pull as well as direct-response lists. Always use direct-response lists before you try compiled lists unless you cannot find a direct-response list for your market.

Here are the individual components of a direct-mail package:

The carrier envelope: This is the outside packaging, which holds the messages inside. It needs to be enticing enough not to be considered just another piece of "junk mail."

There are many decisions you'll have to make about the carrier envelope, like size, color, postage, (meter versus live postage), paper stock and whether it should include a "teaser" (copy printed on the outside) that will entice the recipient to open and read it, and so forth.

Many people won't use teaser copy because they think it immediately makes their package look like "junk mail." However, teaser copy may also lure the reader into opening an otherwise nondescript envelope.

Weigh your decision in the matter of teaser copy carefully, and choose your copy carefully.

The letter: It's the actual sales pitch - the "beef." It tells a reader what the product is, how it can benefit the customer...in short, it does everything that a traditional oral sales pitch does.

A brochure: An advertising piece that should further your pitch - it's usually glossier and more colorful than the letter.

A lift note: A very brief, introductory, easy-to-read note that prompts the recipient to continue reading.

An order form: Keep it simple: standard size, with easy-to-understand directions for ordering.

A reply envelope: A business reply envelope (BRE) makes it convenient for the customer to return his order form.

Mail-order advertising must tell a complete story if the purpose is to make an immediate sale. There are no limitations on the amount of copy. My motto is, "The more you tell, the more you sell."

Can you give me a realistic expectation of the percentage response I should receive on my direct marketing?

That's very difficult. Everything is kaleidoscopically unique. Some offers will pull 1/10 of 1%, some will pull 10%. It doesn't matter about percentages, it matters about what's profitable on a return on investment. If, for every time you spend \$1, you bring back \$5, and the cost of the marketing and the fulfilling of the product or the service is 3X and you make 5X, it's a very lucrative proposition.

On the other hand, I've seen offers that pulled 10% lose money because of the cost of the product, postage, and the moderate price the product would bring didn't justify it.

144 Attention-Grabbing Headline Words:

(Use Them When Writing Your Ad Copy!)

A Gallery Of...; A Sampler Of; Acquisition-Minded; Affordable; Alert; Allure; Avoiding; Better Than Hotcakes; Big Wheel; Blockbusting; Bonanza; Boom; Booster Shot; Bottom Line; Brain Picking; Bravo!; Breakthrough; Buyer's Guide; Challenging; Competitive Edge; Comprehensive; Compromise; Concept; Contrary; Cost Shifting; Crucial; Daring; Destiny; Distinguished; Dividends; Doomsday Deferred; Dynamics; Economic Needs; Effective; Emerging Growth; Endurance; Energy; Enterprising; Envision; Epidemic; Excitement; Exercising; Exploit; Flex; Focus; Foothold; Forecast; Formula; Fueling; Fundamentals; Gaining On; Generic; Glimmers of Optimism; Growth; Gut Feelings; Heritage; High Tech; High Yield; Hot Property; Hybrid; Imagination; Inflation-Beating; Innovative; Insatiable; Investigative; Investment Pro; Investment Report Card; Investor's Roundtable; Just In Time; Keeping In Touch; Last Minute; Late-Breaking; Launching; Liberated; Lifeblood; Lifting the Veil; Lively Market; Lively New; Longevity; Luxury; Mainstream; Masterpiece; Measure Up; Merit; Monitor; Monumental; Nest Egg; News Wire; Next Frontier; Nostalgic; Novel; Obsession; Opportunities; Overrated; Panache; Perspective; Philosophy; Pioneering; Portfolio; Preppy; Profitable Decision; Promising; Recruiting; Remarkable; Reminiscent; Renaissance Spirit; Reviewing; Revisited; Revolution; Rewards; Savvy; Scorecard; Show Me; Shrewd; Simplistic; Skill; Slash; Soar; Specialized; Spiral; Spotlight; Starter Kit; Stepping Stone; Successful Switch; Sure-Fire; Surging; Survival; Talent & Tenacity; Tax-Resistant; Tech Revolution; Technology; Tepid; Test Drive; Timely; Top Dog; Traces; Ultimate; Underpriced; Unlock; Upscale; Value Line; Whose Time Has Come; Word-of-Mouth; Zingers

How do I get a handle on my target market?

Your target market is that segment of people in society who will buy, or have an interest in, your product or service.

It's important to differentiate the masses and your target market, and then aim your message at the smaller target group. The best, easiest, and most foolproof way to determine your target market.

When we talk about "target markets" (and when list brokers talk about target markets), we usually mean demographics.

Demographics is concerned with the statistical characteristics of your target market: age, income, gender, marital status, number of children, etc. To determine the demographic profile of your target market, analyze your current customers, either by observation or by asking them to fill out questionnaires.

What is their age range? What percentage is male/female? What is their range of income? What percentage is single? Married? What percentage has children? Where do they live? What need do they have for your product or service?

Once you have the answers to these questions, you'll be able to at least generalize about your target market.

For example, if you own a beauty salon, your target market may be women ages 25 to 64, with household incomes averaging \$60,000 a year, who live within a five-mile radius of your beauty salon.

It used to be that the only way we could define a target market was through demographic research. However, since the sciences of psychographics have materialized, it has helped to further differentiate and define a target market.

A Telemarketing Tip

Use a combination of call/letter/call/letter/call/letter/call - a sequence that is well-honed and well-quantified - to put the ball over the goal line. Some background:

Years ago I sold expensive, very intangible lead-generating services for companies that sold investments, life insurance and other financial products. Our typical minimum sale was \$25,000 or \$30,000. I found that the only way I could sell the products was to contact a prospect and embark on a series of seven different call/letter/call/letter/call sequences that normally required eight to twelve weeks.

If I didn't take all seven step components - an introductory letter, followed by an explanatory educational phone call, followed next by a substantially expanded follow-up letter, followed by another telephone call - I never closed a sale.

Whenever I worked the system of call/letter/call/letter/call, I never failed to close at least 7% of the people in process in a 60- to 90-day period. I never knew who they would be, and I didn't care, but anytime I tried to shortcut the system and consolidate it, it never worked.

If yours are big-ticket mail-order sales, don't be afraid to send somebody seven consecutive letters. See what happens. Make each one, however, a complete sales pitch in its own right and end with a request: "If you're ready to order right now, please do it; if you're not, I'm going to give you more reasons to avail yourself of our products or services."

By experimenting with call/letter/call, and by experimenting with a succession of sales letters to the final hit, you can do some nontraditional marketing that is very, every effective.

Psychographics measures attitudes and mindsets, plus activities, interests and opinions.

Typical questions concern reading and media viewing habits, interests, opinions, consumption patterns, attitudes and the like. Analyze your current customers to determine their psychographics.

When you truly know your audience through psychographic testing and analysis, your advertising copy will contain a convincing element of empathy that will engage your readers long enough to read - and, hopefully, act upon - your advertisement.

You'll also be able to wisely select media that will effectively reach the most receptive audience. This will prevent you from wasting advertising dollars on inefficient media exposure.

Identifying your target market during an economic downturn is more vital than at any other time. Yet, if you determine your own customer's problems during a recession, you'll tap into their mindset and be able to create continuing sales to them.

For example, if your prospective customer base is Small Business, be conscious of small-business people's needs to retain cash flow and have access to capital. Seek out alternative ways to sell them your service or product during tough economic times.

You might offer to sell them a product at cost, and then collect your profit - plus a fair interest rate - at a later date. Or, you might barter with them if they have a product or service you need. That will save them much-needed cash.

If you are flexible in your approaches, you can go a long way towards creating a loyal customer.

Even if you've done a fabulous job of selling, people may be reluctant to buy from you because of the competitive marketplace, or because of fear or simple inertia.

How do you overcome their reluctance and close the sale? The key is to transfer the risk from the customer to you.

After all, you already know that your product will meet your claims. The customer, on the other hand, has to go on faith. So you should be willing to back up your guarantee.

What is a good sale guarantee?

The standard guarantee is to offer customers their money back if they return the product within 30 days. A stronger guarantee is to let them try your product for free, billing them only after 30 days have expired.

Will customers take advantage of you when you offer a strong guarantee? A few will, but the refund money you lose on those customers is a tiny fraction of the increased sales you'll get by offering the guarantee in the first place.

The better-than-risk-free guarantee is one of my favorite forms of risk reversal. Here's how it works:

In addition to the usual money-back guarantee, you offer the customer free bonuses that they'll receive along with the product. (Ideally, these bonuses cost you very little, but have a high-perceived value.) The better-than-risk-free offer is this: "You can keep the bonuses even if you decide to return the product."

When you make your offer, explain it this way: "These bonuses are worth more than \$150, so even if you decide to ask for your money back, you'll be \$150 ahead just for trying my product." Stated that way, it's almost irresistible, isn't it?

Please explain the "marginal net worth" and the "lifetime value" of a customer.

These two concepts appear again and again in my writings. It's important that you master them.

The marginal net worth and consequent lifetime value of a customer is the total aggregate profit your business makes, over the life of an average customer - including all residual sales - less all advertising, marketing, and all product or service fulfillment expenses.

Let's say your average new customer brings you a profit of \$75 on the first sale. He repurchases three more times a year, and the average reorder is \$300. On each \$300 reorder you make \$150 gross profit, and the average patronage life is two years. Every new customer in your door is thus worth \$1,050 to you.

I got \$1,050 by adding up the \$74 initial profit, plus the three purchases per year at \$150 profit per purchase, multiplied by the two years he or she remains a customer.

If a customer will be worth \$1,050, and it costs you \$30 in marketing and advertising to bring him/her in, then every \$30 you spend is worth \$1,050. You would be foolish not to increase your advertising budget to produce more customers. In other words, spend everything you can justify to bring in a customer as long as he/she costs you less than he or she earns you.

To calculate the lifetime value of your customers, do the following:

- 1) Compute precisely what a customer costs you to obtain, by dividing your current marketing budget by the number of customers it is not producing.
- 2) Then compute the cost of a prospect the same way.
- 3) Then compute how many sales you get for so many prospects (the percentage of prospects who become your customers) and the cost of converting those prospects into customers.
- 4) Next, average the cost to generate an outright sale, and the cost to generate, then convert, a prospect. This is your average cost for producing a customer immediately.
- 5) Then subtract the amount determined above from your customer's average initial purchase. This will give you your profit on their first purchase.
- 6) Then compute your average repeat sale and your average profit on that sale.
- 7) Then compute how much additional profit a customer could be worth to you over their lifetime of patronage by determining how many times most customers come back, and multiply that by the average profit per repeat sale. Be conservative.

Repeat sales and ancillary sales are where the big money is or can be. That's the "back end." It's one of the keys to successful marketing. Once someone buys from you, it's much easier to get them to buy again and again. It's less expensive, too, because you don't have to spend as much money on advertising as you do on the front-end.

You can resell, up-sell, and cross-sell all of your customers.

Reselling is simply selling them the same thing they bought before. Up-selling is getting them to buy a better, more expensive or more sophisticated product. Cross-selling is getting them to buy something else that's related to the original product.

What are you selling on the back-end right now? What could you be selling? How does this impact the lifetime value of your average customer?

Tenacious Marketing - On the Beach in Acapulco

A trip I took to Mexico several years ago showed me what it takes to win over people who are reluctant to buy.

Let's focus on the beach in Acapulco, a place where all sorts of entrepreneurs come up to you with all sorts of marketing approaches.

First, they get to know you - and are they ever charismatic! Then, after they've developed rapport with you, they go for the "hit" - offering to sell you their jewelry or clothing or foodstuffs for a certain price which, of itself, seems dirt-cheap. You, of course, refuse. This begins one of the most incredible processes of sheer, brilliant selling and marketing you will ever behold.

These "natural" salespeople try everything from discounting the price to adding more to the purchase (bonusing) package they are offering, to guaranteeing the sale, then to discounting the price again.

Then, if you still don't bite, they know how to play the number. They are absolutely the most tenacious, persevering people I've ever observed.

Not only do they never give up, but because they change their pace, their tenacity rarely offends - rather it fascinates and overcomes your resistance. And because they work everybody just as hard, just as enthusiastically, and just as personably, they make a lot of sales.

Also, they employ a "turnabout" proposition and try to buy something from you - your watch, jewelry, shoes, glasses, sunglasses, portable radio, pen, you name it!

They do that hoping to either:

1) Actually get you to give the desired object to them, for free, so they can walk down the beach and resell it to someone else,

or

2) Lower your resistance towards their original offer which, of course, they go right back to when you're least expecting it.

The greatest attribute I observed in these fascinating young merchants is their tenacity. Their pitch, warmly and sincerely made to enough moderately qualified prospects, will always pay off. Stated differently, the numbers always pay off if you work them properly. If it works wonders in Acapulco, it could do even more for you right here in the USA.

Those are questions I urge you to answer, because the answers will help you grow your business!

How can I generate some good sales leads?

You can do it by offering prospects a free bonus, by selling certain items that qualify people, or by putting together some joint advertising deals with other businesses in a related line.

There are many ways to attract leads. Don't discount the possibility of buying "used" leads from other companies that approach the same prospects you want to approach.

For example, if you sell educational books, approach an encyclopedia salesperson and offer to buy the leads he or she might otherwise throw away.

An important question to ask yourself is whether the leads you generate or purchase convert to sales. Leads are not worth anything unless you can convert them to sales and profits. Don't be overly concerned about the quantity of lead you can generate. You may want to qualify your leads so that you have greater likelihood of converting them to sales. You'll also spend less time and money going after unqualified prospects when you seek out the most promising leads.

Use Words that Speed a Sale

When composing ads for publications, or writing a sales letter, make sure that you ask for an immediate order - and tell your customers or clients precisely how to order. And, for a prompt response, choose words that suggest urgency.

Here are some words and phrases that will give you an urgent tone:

Rush!
Only a limited quantity available
Priority
First come, first served
Last chance!
First 50 people to order will receive a free bonus.

Business is a contact sport. In order to succeed, you must go out of your way to generate leads.

Unfortunately, many companies spend a great deal of time and money generating leads - through ads, trade shows, free seminars and the like, but lose control of them. The leads often get distributed directly to the sales force and distributors, so the company managers have no way of knowing the extent or quality of the selling follow-up. Also, too often they make no attempt to keep track of the leads.

Some really ingenious things can be done to produce "leads" that turn into customers. You might laugh at this true-life example, but I know a bartender who made a deal with a dating service. He said, "Look, I've written two little guidebooks on how men and women can strike up an acquaintance at a bar. If you'll insert a flyer about my books in your mailings to prospects who call your 800 number, I'll give you a percentage of my sales."

Last I heard, the arrangement is working very well - for both the bartender/author and the dating service!

What do you mean exactly when you talk about the "concept of creative emulation"?

Creative emulation, as I define it, is the highly leveraged art of studying and observing all sorts of effective and successful marketing techniques and concepts that companies totally outside of your marketing sphere are using - and inventively adapting variations of these concepts to fresh applications in your own business or practice.

Let me give you an innovative example of what I mean:

A newsletter publisher friend of mine was sitting in bed reading his Wall Street Journal, and he read about a little restaurant in Pennsylvania that allowed customers to pay whatever price they felt their meal was worth. This restaurant was doing a landslide business. So my newsletter friend tried a "name your own price" approach to subscription renewals. He doubled the number of people renewing.

Another friend of mine in the precious metal business was reading his mail and he saw a solicitation from a national insurance company offering to compare their rates with his current insurance rates if he'd mail back to them a copy of his current policy. It set my precious metals dealer friend's mind to humming. He came up with a fascinating application.

He ran ads offering to compare commissions between his firm and others on certain negotiable commission trades if customers of other firms would mail him a copy of their confirmation receipt. Over 5,000 people who were ongoing metals traders did just that, and nearly 800 of them became my friend's customers!

By cultivating an inquisitive, curious, and investigative attitude and exploring all sorts of unrelated avenues in search of concept inspiration, you will increase your chances of coming across usable or emulatable ideas manifold.

Here are some of the approaches I use when looking for good ideas.

First, I read as many unrelated publications as possible, looking both at ads as well as articles. For example, I read all the ads in The Wall Street Journal, The National Enquirer, Forbes, TV Guide, USA Today and my local newspaper. I read all the rags-to-riches stories and the marketing columns in all sorts of business and trade publications. I read biographies of self-made successes, looking for the specific techniques these people cultivated - so I can apply them. I look backwards - two to twenty years or more - to concepts that were successful long ago and that could be revised and applied today.

I observe everybody and everything in stores, at theaters, at restaurants, on menus and on billboards. I listen to people talk in groups - at parties, around hotel lobbies and at poolside. I sit in airports and listen. I stay up late and watch the hokey-seeming late-night TV commercials for mail-order companies and car deals, always looking for valuable ideas. I interview people for jobs from all sorts of other fields I'm not familiar with, and I ask tons of questions.

I've learned to look at things in what I've come to refer to as a "CAT scan" perspective, whereby I see things cockeyed and sideways and orbitally and pivotally and vertically and diagonally, looking for fresh new fits or innovative ways to reconstruct and present a concept. You should learn to do this, too.

What are some of the more unorthodox approaches you've seen work?

One is sending unsolicited gifts to people - gifts that transcend the limitations for whatever the basis for that relationship was. If you try the free-gift approach, include a letter explaining how you thought the gift would really help the person in their life...and make them an offer on top of that.

Another approach is sending out postcards or letters to potential customers resummarizing a proposition you made them earlier, and telling the recipient why you made a big promotion. I've seen potential customers become much more receptive to an offer once they understood the logic behind it. It's human nature.

How can I reduce the number of times my telemarketers are cut short or hung up on?

We've all probably hung up on a telemarketer or two in our lifetimes as consumers. So what can you do to have your telemarketers more likely to be listened to?

You have less than 30 seconds to convince the customer to listen to you. So your callers need to develop a powerful opening statement that will get the listener's interest.

But while the statement needs to be interesting, unique and attention-getting, it also must convey three important facts: Who you are, what you want and why you're calling.

Have your caller follow these steps: First, state his or her name and company name clearly, then tell the person how their name was obtained. Then tell the potential customer an important benefit of the product or service - followed by an example.

Always have your callers ask at that point for the prospect's time. A caller can then begin to ask questions and qualify the prospect. For example, if you find they own their home, you're more likely to sell them aluminum siding or a backyard tool shed than you would if they rent.

In your view, what's the best way to select a mailing list?

Ask two or three different list brokers to recommend a list. If any of them recommend the same list, that's a good sign.

Ask them to show you the mechanism used to generate their lists, or the mailings they send out, or the catalogs they send out.

Then call the company whose list of names you're thinking of using and ask them questions about their customers.

Do as much checking as you can, because list rental is the cheapest investment for reaching prospects. The mailing, the cost of printing, postage, and the lost opportunity if it's incorrect or if your product or service is incorrectly presented, can be suicidal to you. So ask to talk to people who've mailed the list and made money with it. Ask for three, four or five different names. If the list broker won't give you those names, maybe you should walk away.

Tell the broker what your business is, tell him what you're trying to do, ask him to make recommendations, ask him to send you samples of the ads, the letters, or the vehicles used to generate the customers or the prospects on those lists. Then call the companies themselves, as if you were a prospect, and listen to their pitch and ask them to send you their latest mailing pieces.

That will help you pick the list. If you get the same message from two or three different list brokers, choose the one you feel most comfortable with. Tell them you want them to help you grow. If they're too busy for you, don't work with them.

If you want to get a list of a magazine's subscribers, go to the magazine first, because many of them don't use list brokers. (They might give you a discount, too.)

Some lists are completely unavailable, but you can also trade for them or give the owner of the list a profit share. There are several ways to finesse lists out of the hands of owners for rental purposes.

Jay how do I bring all these concepts to life?

I'd like to talk about the process of actualization - or how to bring it all home. I don't know about you, but I've observed many people who fail to successfully achieve goals, simply because they don't know or understand how to turn an abstract idea, concept, or objective into a tangible reality.

What inhibits or prohibits people from achieving their goals? A lot of things. All of which, I believe, are easily overcome if you truly wish to super-achieve and are willing to pay the necessary price in effort, perseverance and action.

First, let's explore the primary reasons people fail to accomplish a mission. I think they can be defined as: inertia, fear of failure, lack of ever experiencing self-induced success, and habitual negative thinking.

Most people have their mind set in one myopic way for so long, they simply cannot break out of the constraints of their mental miasma, even if they're filled with desire.

Inertia, like gravity, holds back their achievement capabilities.

How do you effectively break inertia's insidious hammerlock hold on your potential for accomplishment? First, by accomplishing a series of little, but meaningful, successes outside of the ordinary inertia-prone scope of your normal business operation.

"Psych-out" your subconscious - negate your negative or skeptical disposition, and replace it with a positive achievement experience. Then get your mind believing you can achieve things.

Try a special promotional mailing to a few of your customers or prospects, a special up-sell package, or an add-on approach at the point of sale or even after. Or go back to 50, or 100, or 500 old prospects or inactive customers and extend to them by telephone, letter or personal contact an irresistible sales offer.

Or go to another company and arrange a joint venture endorsement test. All these suggestions are designed to compel you to get into the habit of acting on my advice and then seeing your actions pay off. It teaches your mind that it can break out of the trap of not trying new concepts.

It is also designed to validate for you that my ideas really do work. They will pay off for you, if you put them into action by first attempting a few little concepts and tactics. By visibly observing their validation in your own business or practice, you will condition yourself to progress to more expansive and lucrative accomplishments.

Now, presuming my little exercises help break down your limiting mental governors, and my recommendations readily infuse you with the mental conviction to expand your horizons, here is a simple operating formula you might use to progressively implement my major concepts:

First, identify the seemingly most viable and adaptable concepts. Then take some time to realistically evaluate which one has the potential for producing the fastest or most profitable results - and concentrate on it until you either validate or invalidate its applicability to your business.

Try out only one solid promotional idea or marketing approach at a time. Think it through thoroughly. Meditate on it a bit before you act. This allows your subconscious to fine-tune your thinking. Then oversee and administer the implementation of the concept fastidiously, not allowing anyone to mismanage it.

Presuming the idea pays off, what do you do next? What you don't do is abandon the idea. Before you move on to testing or experimenting with another business-building idea, make sure you've taken steps to integrate the idea that you just validated into a perpetual part of your ongoing business operations.

Perpetuating a proven concept, and then adding a layer of additional perpetual concepts on top - that's the secret to enduring growth. The way to do this is to take every marketing concept, sit down and figure out how to continuously profit from that perfected concept, or from derivatives of it.

Don't just use a concept one time and forget about it and move on to something new. Once something proves it works, use it over and over again, and in every possible application, until your monitoring of its performance shows it's no longer working.

I hope you will never drop winning concepts - always expand them before pursuing something new. That's how you will build solid, enduring layers of marketing profit. That's how you'll make your business grow.

One of the most satisfying aspects of my own career has been the opportunity to watch literally hundreds and hundreds of "success stories" progress from the realm of mere possibility to actuality. I am immensely proud and privileged to have been able to help those success stories come true.

But I'll be honest with you. More often than not, the breakthrough wasn't really all that difficult to achieve.

In many cases, it resulted because someone who formerly resisted using "risk reversal" started using it; or someone who didn't believe in referrals gave them a try, and found out that they could make a tremendous difference; or someone who had doubted that inactive customers could be reactivated, put those doubts aside and began calling inactive customers - and saw their business soar.

A chiropractor I worked with in Illinois says his breakthrough came after he accepted my advice and started forcing himself to think of new ways to expand service to his patients. When the chiropractor did that, he found that he was not only serving his patients better, but growing his professional practice, as well.

That chiropractor did all kinds of interesting things. He started distributing exercise videotapes; he did a mailing to his inactive patients; he produced a series of educational audiotapes - and he even remodeled his office, creating a more attractive setting for his patients.

You can do the same or similar things to build and strengthen relations with your own customers, clients or patients.

And you and I, working together as informal "partners," are going to prove that it can be done.

Jay Abraham

P.S. As your business grows, please write and tell me of your successes - I'd like to share them with other readers!