

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

By James Symcox

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How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

Welcome

This book is going to help you win customers back and grab sales from your competitors!



This is a workbook I encourage you to keep it close at hand and make notes in it. Invest your time and put these pointers to work for you on (and in) your business.

You're going to learn step by step how action makes profits.

Stay forward looking and open-minded to benefit from what you're reading.

Picture your current business. Are you struggling to beat your competitors? Do you feel that you've got a "me too" product or service? Are you constantly being pressured to lower your prices? Can't recruit the best people, including sales wonders?

Do you get no time to follow-up your old customers and precious little to find new customers? Do you work hard and constantly scramble to make sure your pipeline keeps getting you more projects?

Perhaps you're ahead of your competition but they're creeping up on you. Or maybe you don't feel your services and products are innovative enough.

You must make reasonable profits, to invest in yourself and your business and in serving your customers so well they tell everyone about you.

The late great quality guru Dr W. Edwards Deming said:

"Profit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them"

That's exactly what you're aiming for!

We'll come back to W. Edwards Deming a little later.

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Overview

The first part of this book helps you examine and review exactly what your company is doing in your current market place.

The second part builds on these foundations and goes into some of the business growth and marketing tactics you can use to increase your profits quickly.

Imagine using this book as your own business growth consultant. Asking the tough questions and then helping you see the opportunities you have all around you.

As you use this book you need to look at your company from an outsiders view. Yes, it's difficult to do, but essential for you to move forward.

Now let's really get down to the nitty gritty of your business. The next section is key. You need to consider the questions carefully and then answer them honestly.

Where Are You And Where Are You Going?

Is Passion Your Reason To Be In Business?

At the back of the book I've included a set of questions which is similar to the ones I ask businesses who invest in my business growth coaching (see Appendix A).

One that should be self-evident, you need passion to make it as an entrepreneur.

Are you engaged in selling your passion in your service or your product? To succeed you need to. Whilst the heart needs passion, the brain needs an objective to direct it.

What's Your Purpose?

Is your objective written down clearly? Will your employees, suppliers or customers understand it?

By the way, I'm not talking about a mission statement or vision statement. In my opinion they're a waste of time for any but the larger companies.

If you are a large company my only comment is that you need to live your mission and vision to be believable by your staff. The reason? Your staff's daily life touches suppliers and customers. If they don't believe you nobody will.

Your objective is simply the aim or aims you have for your business. Why did you get into business in the first place? Why are you still there? Maybe it was to become independent, perhaps to make more money than as an employee.

The point is committing it to paper. Whatever you do don't hide it. You need it somewhere you can see it and amend it as you change your business.

There are people writing mission statements as we speak. They would be reeling with horror now. Surely I can't mean that the owner sets a business objective? What's worse is why change something so strategically important?

As always the answer is incredibly simple. Only you know what you want your business to do. Only you are putting your cash, life, home and credibility on the line. Owners have a business they must invest in and nurture and grow or it withers and dies along with their life-style.

Employees Aren't The Same As You

Employees can go and be employees elsewhere tomorrow. They just don't have the same interest or ... objective as you do in your business. Yes that even includes people who have shares or share options.

Now the reason to keep this objective close at hand is to ensure that your work and decisions are linked to the objective. Also as your business changes to adapt to

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fulfilling different customers wants you'll review and occasionally change your objective.

What I'm trying to say is plan your objective upfront. Then be flexible and roll with life's punches and adapt, adopt your objective as you see fit.

Examples of objectives are:

- To provide a full range of marketing services to the top 100 companies in the world that are fun to do business with.
- To build and grow the company using third party products and then to sell it for a minimum of 25 times its annual turnover by December 2010.
- To provide luxurious and sensuous carpets from the Middle East to satisfy the needs of everyone who owns a home worth more than two million pounds

Got More Than One Objective?

Businesses usually run with more than one objective. In reality a business usually has multiple objectives. Often there are also sub-objectives. But at the moment I'm talking about the strategic, driving force behind the business.

It's ok to have more than one objective. Certainly if you're into more than one niche market or in different countries or run a group of companies you're going to have more than one objective.

Make sure these other objectives are written down too. They must be looked at regularly and treated in the same way as we discussed for one objective.

Does your staff share your objective?

As soon as you start to employ staff you have to give them a reason to come to work, other than just money. Find out their motivations for coming to work.

Why do they want to work for you?

You need to share your business objective with them. Explain why you reached that objective. Tell them where you are in the plan to reach that objective.

Ask them for their feedback about it. Do they want to help your business achieve that objective?

Look at the company objective from their viewpoint. Tune into everyone's favourite radio station - WIIFM (What's In It For Me). Understand their motivations. See whether they can be tied to your company objective.

Some employees are completely motivated by money. How will helping you fulfil your company objective improve their prospects of becoming wealthier?

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Some like to feel that they work in a leading edge company. Does fulfilling your company objective give them the opportunity to be at the leading edge?

Others just like to belong to a company that's going places. Will helping your company reach its objective take them to where they want to go?

Be brutally honest. If you take on staff whose motivations can't be tied to your company objective they will become unhappy and working for you will just be a job.

In the real world you will have staff whose motivations don't seem to tie into your company objectives but they still do excellent work.

That's great.

But you need to discover their motivation and a way to tie it to yours. Otherwise they may leave to join a company whose objective is line with theirs.

You also **must** be aware that motivations change according to personal circumstances.

Think of a one person's changing motivations as they go through their life.

For example:

- Start in a company
 - Need to learn the job
 - Need to advance in career
 - Need to socialise
 - Need money to clear debt
 - Need accommodation, car
 - Need holidays
- May move companies
 - Need to advance in career
 - Need to become proficient in job
- May change career
 - Need to follow passion
 - Need to enjoy job
- Gets a partner
 - Need a house
 - Need holidays
 - Need to support partner
- May have children
 - Need to clothe and feed them
 - Need flexible hours
 - Need school holidays
 - Need to provide activities and holidays
- Children go to school/college/university
 - Need to accommodate friends

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- Need stability
 - Need activities and holidays
 - Need to support them in college/university
 - Continuing Employment
 - Continue to show value to company
-
-

Does A Steel Rod Unite Your Business?

The steel rod I'm talking about is your Unique Selling Point, Unique Selling Proposition or Unique Strategic Position (USP).

This one element is critical to your whole business. In a moment I'll explain exactly why. For now let me tell you what a USP is:

Rosser Reeves created the USP concept in the 1960's. In his book, "Reality in Advertising" he concluded that to attract customers you needed an advertising message with the following elements:

- Any advert or other marketing communication must spell out the benefits the target market gets from your product or service. With no hype, no filler and no exaggerations.
- The benefits must be ones that your competitors don't offer. It must be unique in branding or a claim not made elsewhere within that target market.
- It must be a strong benefit to grab new customers for your product or service.

Why Is Your USP Crucial?

The simple answer is that if there's no unique difference between you and your competitors **you are a commodity**.

Commodities are bought on price. The lowest price wins. You may be able to go lower than your current competitors but look at the cost. Your company has to work on a very narrow profit margin and attempt to make it up on volume. Any change in your circumstances can throw your meagre profit straight down the toilet and start giving you a loss.

If you want to avoid the crushing, killing effect of a price war, which you're very unlikely to win, you must develop a USP.

Sometimes companies make a loss to buy market share. This can work – look at Amazon.com - but it builds up an immediate loss so you have to make even more money to reduce that loss.

There are so many books that aim to help you create your USP. This book can only scratch the surface. But there are a number of questions to ask yourself to help you discover your own.

- 1) Why do people do business with you or your company?
- 2) If companies are not doing business with you why should they?
- 3) Can you offer a differentiated product or service your competitors can't or don't?

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- 4) Can you find a niche market you can dominate?
- 5) Can you offer the lowest possible price? (as discussed not recommended)

Can you do something your competitors can't, such as offer better packaging, provide more bonuses, have better trained staff, give a superior customer service or have a unique way for customers to buy.

Your USP is the thing in your business that makes you stand-out from your competitors.

You **must** develop your own USP. Then put it in everything you have in your business.

Some of the best-known USPs are not just great because marketing types always use for good examples. They're great because their whole business revolves around their promise to their customer.

Let's look at two of these well know examples:

Domino's Pizzas: "Hot, fresh pizza delivered in 30 minutes or less, guaranteed."

When Domino's came into the market there were already large numbers of pizza franchises in existence. Their target market was busy mums and others who wanted something to eat now! They realised that if their delivery area was planned correctly they could normally deliver pizza to any customer within 30 minutes. It might not be the best pizza in the world but it would be hot.

So they made their whole organisation slick to deliver to that promise. As a result they grabbed market share.

Now notice that every other pizza company could have made the same promise – but they didn't so that Domino's were seen as unique for delivering so quickly.

FedEx: When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight

Before FedEx began nobody needed overnight delivery. Everybody worked to the normal postal delivery system. FedEx created the overnight guaranteed delivery service. This was aimed at everyone who was worried that their package, proposal, contract or mail would be delivered in time to meet a deadline, or at all!

Again this promise could have been made by the US mail by creating a special route for high priority items. But the mail didn't see the need. Their customers were using them and they didn't know their customers would eventually get other options.

Now the promise is the most important point about a USP. You must be able to deliver on it. But more than that you must go the extra mile for a customer if you have to for that promise. Your whole organisation must be geared to it.

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Do USP's remain static?

Yes and No.

Generally your competitors see what you're doing and if they believe it's worth their while they will copy you. In the beginning you are the leader and your clients will stick with you.

However, others in your market may start using your competitors. So you need to continually review your USP. Find ways you can modify it to make it better for your clients.

All marketing requires testing to make sure it still attracts customers. Your USP is no different – test slightly different ways of delivering your promise. Flexing your USP over the months and years ahead is important for business survival.

Grab Them and Keep Them Close!

I mean your customers. Although taking a leaf from Jay Abraham's¹ book always refer to them as clients.

I mean you call them clients both internally and externally.

Behave as trusted consultant for your clients. Believe me it makes the difference.

As a trusted consultant look out for and assist your client. Go that extra mile. Be more proactive with the relationship. You help your client do better because of what you advise them to do.

A customer-supplier relationship has a more 'us' and 'them' attitude. Typically the customer buys the service or product but there is not the same degree of trust in the relationship. The customer feels that they were sold to and they're on their own.

Usually there's pretty much little or no advice.

The bottom line is that using education and a consultant-like approach to your client pays back in greater profits. But, it also has major benefits for the client too.

Client Life Time Value

Client profitability isn't measured by the profitability of each thing you sell them. Instead you work out the average client Life-Time Value or LTV for short.

The LTV is calculated by looking at your sales records for a number of vital numbers. These are:

- On average how long does a client stay with you after their first purchase?
- On average how much is the initial purchase and how much profit after taking out direct marketing costs?
- On average how many times do they buy during their time with you?
- On average how much is each subsequent purchase and how much profit after direct marketing costs?

When working these figures out you should be conservative. That means if you have 1 client who's stayed with you 10 years but everyone else stays 2 years your average length of time with your client is 2 years.

Assuming a 2-year relationship. If your client makes an initial purchase of £1,000 with a 10% profit and then pays £200 maintenance each quarter with a 80% profit their life time value to you is as follows:

¹ At £\$5,000 per hour Jay Abraham is probably the world's highest paid marketing consultant. Exclude the Bible and one of his marketing ideas sold more books than any other book in history. It's better known as the "*Chicken Soup for the Soul*" series. In the USA *Success Magazine* Said Jay is, "possibly the greatest marketing expert alive today!"

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LTV = £100 (initial profit) + 8*£160 (8 quarters profit) = £100+£1,280 = £1,380

The LTV means that even if you paid £1,000 to get each customer you would still make £380 profit per customer. Obviously you're unlikely to pay such extreme amounts. But you get the picture I'm sure.

So, using these figures you can see that retaining customers for longer is a good thing. If they stayed with you another year you would get a further £640 with little or no marketing costs.

Note: If you do have clients who stay well beyond the average client life time look very closely at them and see how you can use what you do with them with your other clients.

Who To Grab - Who Is Your Client?

Now, you're really asking a great question. Even if I do say so myself.

If you're just starting out take some time to write down the characteristics of your ideal customer. But even if you've been in business a while it's useful to write down your ideal customer.

Are they men, women or children?

Are they American, European, African, Asian, Australian?

If they're American are they Texans, New Yorkers, Northern State Americans, or Southern State Americans. If they're Europeans are they British, German, Italian, Spanish or Northern Europeans or Southern Europeans or members of the EU?

How old are they? Are they educated to school leaving age, college age or university first degree or beyond? Are they working, non-working, or no need to work?

What are their hobbies and interests? What things do they believe in? What do they think is value for money in a product or service?

What books, newspapers, and magazines do they read? What television or radio programmes do they watch? What films or shows do they go to?

I know you hear what I'm saying. So I won't labour the point.

You can see that we're building a picture of the person who is buying, or going to buy your offering.

Building an image of the ideal client helps you decide what channels to use to market to your clients.

Channels are essentially the ways you communicate with your client. One channel could be yellow page advertising, another might be a radio ad and one of many others could be your sales brochure.

Looking at the types of channel your prospects and clients use in everyday life helps you to decide which channel might be best to contact them.

Note: I said might be best because although you may think you know the best channels they can change. Change may be as your industry or legal framework change, or as your business matures or as your client's lifetime as your purchaser lengthens. Only by continually testing different communication options will you find the most effective ways of providing value to your clients in return for their continuing patronage.

Do You Think You Know Your Products And Services?

Do you have sales people? Do they know all your products and services?

Are you sure?

There is a sure-fire way to find out. Get your sales people into a room together. Sit them down, tell them not to confer then ask them to do the following:

“Please write down a complete list of all the products and services that we sell”

Give people some time to compile their own list. No conferring or wondering aloud!

When you’ve finished you’ll each have a list of your products and services. Again ask each person not to confer and simply ask each person in turn to tell you the number of products and services they’ve listed.

Note: This is usually better done with an outside coach otherwise personalities can start to get in the way.

Usually something interesting happens. You get several different answers.

Now go round each person ask them for their list of products and services and write up each unique product or service on a flipchart.

Example:

Salesmen ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ have listed 5 services. Salesman ‘D’ has listed 6 services and you and salesman ‘E’ have listed 10 services.

Now notice that salesman ‘E’ has 10 services listed. But only 8 of the services are common with your list. Also Salesman A has a service that no one else has, as does salesman B, C and D.

The consequence is that you actually have 16 services. Six of which even you weren’t aware of.

From the example you’ve more services to offer your clients. That means that you can get more sales from clients who’ve already bought from you.

But how to go about it?

You need to make sure your clients understand your full range of services or products.

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Windows Of Opportunity

Peter Thompson of [Achiever's Edge](#) first introduced me to a very helpful tool that helps identify which clients have bought what product. At the same time it helps identify which clients have been told about the other services/products. He's called the tool "The Windows Of Opportunity".

Windows of Opportunity is a matrix that shows all the clients you have and all the services/products you've got.

Steps To Generate Your Own Windows Of Opportunity

- 1) If you've discovered you have 5 services and you've 4 clients the initial matrix would look like the following:

	Client 'A'	Client 'B'	Client 'C'	Client 'D'
Service 1				
Service 2				
Service 3				
Service 4				
Service 5				

- 2) Then you fill in the services that clients have bought, as shown in the example below:

	Client 'A'	Client 'B'	Client 'C'	Client 'D'
Service 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Service 2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Service 3				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service 4			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service 5				

The above table shows:

- Service 1 has been bought by Clients 'A' and 'B'.
- Service 2 by Client 'B'
- Service 3 by Client 'D'
- Service 4 by clients 'C' and 'D'

- 3) Now you take the tool to your clients and show it to them and ask them to help colour it in.

Colour the first box in when you've told the client about the service. Colour the second box when the client buys the service. The example below shows when the client has been told about the service:

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	Client 'A'		Client 'B'		Client 'C'		Client 'D'	
Service 1	■	■	■	■				
Service 2	■		■	■				
Service 3	■		■		■		■	■
Service 4	■				■	■		
Service 5	■				■	■		

The above table shows:

- Client 'A' has been told about all the services
- Clients 'B' and 'C' has been told about service 3
- Client 'D' has been told about no further services

4) Finally the example below shows how the table looks when the clients buy the services:

	Client 'A'		Client 'B'		Client 'C'		Client 'D'	
Service 1	■	■	■	■				
Service 2	■	■	■	■				
Service 3	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
Service 4	■				■	■		
Service 5	■	■			■	■		

The above table shows:

- Client 'A' has bought Service 2 and Service 5
- Clients 'B' and 'C' has bought Service 3
- Client 'D' has bought no further services

5) You can then analyse your matrix as follows:

- What is your best selling service – in this example Service 3
- Which is your best client (assuming services cost the same) – in the example Client 'A' and 'B'
- Which client needs to be told about which products

Finally do you regularly ask your clients and prospects what they want? Because in the end clients will only buy consistently what they want, not what you think they need.



Don't Sell Diamonds For Peanuts

Have you sat down and examined your product or service range thoroughly? When you do opportunities for more, or different, or better, or more valuable products hit you like a bolt of lightning.

Ask your clients questions about your products. Then you put yourself in your clients place and ask questions such as:

Is this product giving value for money?

If you can't answer **YES** don't let your client make the mistake of buying it. Instead see ways of providing value for money, either by improving the product or bundling it with other products and services so that it becomes valuable.

Never leave a client feeling ripped off by what you provide them, it creates bad feeling and ultimately gets back to your marketplace. Equally great value comes back to you in many ways.

Does your client want the product?

Does the client really want this product or service? Or is something you just know they need.

If a client doesn't want the products they won't buy them. Sometimes they may be persuaded against their better judgement. But it doesn't make for a lasting relationship.

There needs to be an emotional reason why the customer wants the product. Help them to want it with a great offer, by solving a major headache, or by listening to what they say they want and selling it to them.

Is Your Price Just a Starter For Negotiation?

How did you work your product and service prices out? Was it one of these?

- You put a finger in the air and just said the first figure that came to you
- You work out what you can 'get away' with and charge that
- Work out product cost, add some overhead then add on a standard percentage profit
- Look at your competitors and charge that, or less
- Ask your staff what they think
- Employ high priced consultants
- Maybe asked your bank manager, accountant or lawyer

Remember what one of the richest men in the world, Warren Buffett says about price.

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“Price is what you pay. Value is what you get”.

So a better alternative to those listed above is to ask your market by doing a survey. This is where the web really comes into play for a lot of businesses. You can ask the questions through your web site. The product or service you’re offering shouldn’t have a vast cost, such as £100,000,000 like a jet fighter, or a very limited marketplace. Otherwise a survey is a hammer to crack a nut.

The questions you ask don’t need to be complicated but they do need to be well thought out before hand and tried out on some trusted friends and neighbours to check that they sound right and read well out loud.

Then analyse the data you get. Use median values for the results. That means that unusually large or small numbers don’t skew the ‘average’ value.

As a result of the survey you’ll have a good idea of the best price to charge that offers value to people but still makes you a profit.

Ken Evoy the producer of the huge selling ebook “Make Your Site Sell” got together with Carol Ann Dorn to produce an ebook that addresses the issue of price it’s called “Make Your Price Sell”. In its 120 pages they go into the why and wherefores of pricing in much greater detail than I cover here. Go get a FREE copy of the ebook at the following URL: <http://tinyurl.com/b3wu4>.

Remember too, what William Blake says

“What is the price of experience? Do men buy it for a song? Or wisdom for a dance in the street? No, it is bought with the price of all the man hath, his house, his wife, his children”.

Which to my mind says that price depends on the value put into it by the seller and perceived by the buyer.

Think about your value to your client then discover the price they put to it.

In the end the client needs to remember that your price allows you to give them the product or service they want and for you to remain in business to be there if they need support or to buy more from you.

Benefits, Benefits, Benefits

Usually the benefits of a product or service are linked with its price in the minds of the buyer.

Any one who's heard anything about marketing at all has heard the mantra "benefits over features" time and again.

Usually that's true. You do need to help people see, hear, smell and feel the benefits they get from buying from you.

The exception to this is where the audience is a very technical one.

For example, high-end computer geeks.

They've already sold themselves on the benefits of owning a high-end computer. What they want now are the specific technical features that differentiates yours from anyone else selling computers.

It doesn't mean you don't describe the benefits but they are of less importance than the real technical features.

With that caveat in mind list all the benefits of your products and services. One very good way of doing that is to say describe a feature (for example the stop button is red) then to use the words "...which means that ..." and then finish the sentence with the advantage to the customer.

So using the example we'd say "The Stop button is red 'which means that' it is easily visible and anyone immediately knows which button to press to prevent a machine fire".

Ted Nicholas, one of the worlds multi-millionaire copywriters, lists each benefit of any product or service he is about to write copy about on separate index cards. The benefit in doing that is that you can shuffle the cards round and compare one against another until you get a ranking order of benefits.

Any copy you write that's read, seen or heard by a prospect needs to use these benefits. Some people say use your least powerful benefits first and build up an impressive climax with your hardest hitting benefits to close the sale.

Don't bother. If you can't grab your prospects attention in the first 30 seconds of reading you've lost them forever. That is particularly true on the Internet.

So **always, always** lead with your most powerful benefits and finish with your least powerful.

A good salesman should know the benefits of anything they sell. So work with them to discover all the benefits.

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When you recruit salespeople you need an induction process where they list the benefits they see in each product or service and you compare that with the list you've got. This is not to catch them out but to see if there are benefits they notice with an outside eye that you've not seen before. In which case note them down too.

Finally, as you sell your product or service keep a note of the different ways that clients use it. If they don't use them in ways you expect that indicates another benefit.

Shoot From The Hip

Some of the entrepreneurs I've coached find difficulty in taking decisive action. Others take action without checking what happened.

Sometimes you just need to get set, shoot, and aim. In other words assess the risk, take action (which may be imperfect) but also then review and improve it.

Remember I promised we'd come back to W. Edwards Deming later in this book? Now is the time.

Deming introduced some great strategies to the Japanese nation, the US Navy and Ford, to name just three.

After World War 2 Deming helped the Japanese power their way to the top for product quality in the world. His whole aim was to ensure that businesses continually improved their products and services.

He created the Deming process improvement cycle. Broadly the cycle is "Plan" followed by "Do", followed by "Study" then "Act". Then it starts all over again with the "Plan".

For example a company has an engineering process that takes 30 minutes to create a piston.

Using the Deming cycle approach the team would 'Plan' what changes would be most likely to reduce the time to create the piston whilst maintaining or improving the process. They would also plan what measurements needed to be made to check whether the piston process time process has improved and the quality is maintained.

Then they implement the improvement(s), the 'Do'. Afterwards they "Study" the results to check the time has reduced whilst the quality is the same.

Finally, they Act to fully implement the changes.

Maybe you're asking how this manufacturing quality guru can help you?

Simply, using a process ensures that you use the optimum way of doing things. The Deming approach allows you to reach that optimum way. That includes services. In fact copywriting has been using this approach for many years.

How To Make Your Company Great

To digress slightly for a moment. Marketers talk about “the 4P’s” a lot. They represent words like price, product, promotion and place. They are the way to get your product into your market. Mind you Harvard Business School have come up with a lot more ‘P’s than that!

By the way, whatever ‘P’ we’re talking about we should always add ‘P’ for profit. Without profit your business dies. It’s that clear isn’t it?

Carl Galletti says, “There are three things that I think integral to any business: the product, the promotion, and the people”. So maybe it should be at least 6P’s!

Wise businessmen the world over say, **“Turnover is vanity, Profit is sanity”**

Jay Abraham sums it up very nicely when he says “The key ingredient to your greatness is in these three words (and you cannot build a great company without them): Planning, Policies and Procedures”.

So getting back on track, in this case we’re talking about Planning, Policies and Procedures and not simply as it applies to marketing to make your company great.

You need to ensure that you have thought out how your business operates now and into the future. Get the organisational structure on paper. You don’t have to share it with anyone to begin with.

Look at the way your business works. Jot down the policies and procedures you have now.

Look at your organisational structure. Will the policies and procedures you have now be flexible enough to cope?

If not brainstorm better ways of doing your business.

Now write down your policies and procedures. You can bet that if they’re not written down when you start growing your company gets stuck with whatever grew up as a procedure. Because new employees will invent processes and procedures that help them get their work done. Whether it’s helpful for the company development or not!

Word of warning: Don’t produce a procedure manual that is based on another company’s manual. It results in a manual that your staff will ignore or do somersaults to try and apply. Believe me I’ve made that mistake and seen others do it too.

The better way is to document what you want to happen overall in the company.

Go into each process and document exactly how it works now. Review what you’ve found and then in collaboration with the person, or people, who carry out the procedure, improve it and amend the procedure then issue it for use.

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

Also remember what you measure is what you concentrate on so make sure any measurements your procedures use are relevant and useful.

Note: Ted Nicholas says that recruitment is a function of marketing. Marketing know the message they want to put out into the world. That message is directly from the business owners and shareholders.

Accelerate Your Sales Now!

Marketing is all about improving your communications with your target market. Improving them in a way that increases sales.

Remember it can take seven or more contacts with a prospect before they will buy from you. The majority (over 97%) of salesmen make no further attempt to sell after the third contact. Think back to your own experiences with salespeople.

Also when a prospect says no it means no **at this stage** in their business life. It doesn't mean no in the future. The reason this is true is that life moves on. They may say no to begin with for any reason, totally unconnected to you or your product. Perhaps they couldn't manage another project or they lacked a key person. Maybe they or an employee had personal problems.

So don't neglect prospects you've already talked to that haven't bought.

TESTIMONIALS

What about your current or past customers? They know you. Of course you've delivered a great service or product for them. Use that experience.

Ask them to give you testimonials. That gives you massive credibility with other prospects. Systematise your testimonial requests.

Use a similar process for getting testimonials every time. Vary one part of it and check your sales results when you do.

Getting an unexpected testimonial is great. Check that it helps your credibility. The best ones give specific results from using you. Examples include:

“Using your services lifted our sales by 25% and increased our profit by 35%.”

“The kitchen was completed without a snag within the original timescale of 5 weeks”.

“The training we received from you has meant we can now process 50 enquiries an hour compared to our previous record of 12 an hour.”

Where possible get permission to use their name and nearest city. It's more believable than “TH of Wales”.

Use testimonials in letters, your Internet site, brochures and proposals.

Keep every one on file so that you can also truthfully say, “anyone can come and look at the testimonial held on file in our offices”.

Note 1: Never invent a testimonial. It's unlikely to be believable.

Note 2: Written testimonials are not as believable on the Internet. It's better to use an audio testimonial, or even better a video testimonial.

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REFERRALS

Another great way your current or past customers can help you is by referrals.

But again the only way to do this so it works for you is to systematise it. That means everyone who is your customer needs to be approached in a standard way. Again work out the best way and continually test it to see if you can improve it.

The best time to bring up the subject of referrals is to say right at the beginning of a contract “Part of our deal is that I expect you to provide two referrals for contacts with companies that are at least the same quality as you”.

Then at the right point ask the client questions that lead to some great referrals, The points you need to ask are similar to the ones below:

1. Mr Client I’m glad you’ve really benefited from our product/service. Because you probably remember that I asked you to give me 2 referrals before we started the project.
2. I’m sure you mix with other clients during networking or working with other businesses.
3. And I’m sure you meet other “target contacts” during these meetings. Don’t you?
4. Of those people which ones do you feel would benefit from our services and could you give me their contact details?
5. Thanks. Could I use your name when I contact them?

RECRUIT GREAT SALES STAFF

Ultimately your business reaches a point where you and your current staff are working all the hours there are to simply stand still.

Growing the organisation is just another item that stays on the “to do” list.

Before you reach that point you need to recruit sales staff

Good sales staff gets in more business than they cost you and make your company more money than that. A bad sales person is a drain on your company.

It can be almost impossible to sort the good from the bad.

Almost, but not impossible.

When you recruit sales staff you need to aim for the very best. Don’t be put off because you think can’t afford them. You may not get the best, but you’re more likely to get the good.

Star sales people are formed in their early childhood and you may catch one before they realise they’re great. Or you may find one who was burnt out and is ready to join the fray again. Either one doesn’t require vast amounts of money. Remember even if

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you paid them 5 times what you pay yourself and they brought in 20 times more in profit would their salary even matter?

According to psychological research a star sales person is driven by ego and empathy.

Too much ego and they get the sales but at a huge cost to you in terms of customer and internal relationships bruised or destroyed by the ego-driven salesman.

Too much empathy and they end up discounting so deeply and being so completely on their customer's side that you'll lose money on deals that would normally be profitable.

To recruit star sales performers you need to delve into their past and search for ego and empathy indicators. That's best done by looking into their childhood memories and gaining deep rapport with them so they find it more difficult to lie about later job experience.

Because star sales staff are key to closing marketing leads I've created a complete Super Star Sales Recruitment package which is a 7 step process to superior sales performers (email star@acornservice.com for the details of the package).

When you advertise don't ask for salesmen in your industry it cuts down the total pool of sales super stars you can reach. That said you must make sure that when you recruit them your superstar has all the necessary materials to deliver the sales for you.

Briefly the steps you need to take are as follows:

1. Your job advert should scare off people who are not right for you
2. You should do a phone interview to burn through the chancers
3. Do an Ego/Empathy Interview
4. Ensure a sales skills checklist is completed by each interviewee
5. Check their CV
6. Phone their references
7. Try them on probation (fire or hire depending on outcome)

You may find your super star salesperson doesn't bring in the business for you. Find out early and fire early. It helps neither of you to make money if they don't fit. If the salesperson truly is a sales star they'll have no difficulty finding another job.

The Three Ways To Grow Your Business

There are three ways that your company can use to grow and increase your profits. They're extremely simple but at the same time very powerful.

- Increase the number of clients
- Increase the number of transactions for each client
- Increase the amount purchased for each client

An increase in any of these ways is immediately reflected in your bottom line.

Example: Say you've 10 clients. They buy from you 10 times a year for an average value of £1,000 per order.

If you increase your number of clients by 10% = 1 more client you'll get an extra £10,000 per year

If you increase your clients number of transactions by 10% = 1 more transaction you'll get another £10,000 increase.

If you increase the clients amount purchased by 10% = £100 per order you'll get another £10,000.

However, if you increase all three at once by 10% you don't simply get 30% increase.

You now have 11 clients ordering 11 times per year with an average order of £1,100. That gives a total revenue of £133,100 compared to the original £100,000. Which is an increase of 33.1%.

The bigger the changes in each element the larger the final increase.

Use Every Way You Can To Get To Your Prospects and Clients

If you use the same way to reach your prospects and clients as your competitors you'll get the same results they do. Which means you'll all be looking at a smaller piece of the pie. If there's an industry down turn everyone feels its effects.

If you only use one method of getting clients there is a danger that your clients may stop buying through that route. Or buy less, or buy less often – the opposite to the three ways to grow your business!

It's as bad as relying on just one client for the majority of your business. If they go down the tubes you're going to go down with them.

Reduce your exposure of a single way of getting to clients. Aim to communicate through several mechanisms. Borrow different approaches from other industries – try them out, keep what works discard the rest.

Jay Abraham says having only a single way to get your client is like a diving board supported by one pillar. Any activity on the board causes it to flex and bounce up and down. Say a sales force represented that single pillar. If the sales force were lost it's the same as removing the single pillar. The whole diving board, or your company, drops to the ground.

As Ted Nicholas says:

“Marketing mistakes are by far the primary reason businesses do not survive. This includes companies which consider themselves direct marketers as well as those who do not”

Only having one communication route to your customer is exactly such a mistake.

Instead having multiple ways to approaching your clients is like having a board supported by many pillars.

Removing one doesn't cause it to crash to the ground.

Database Marketing

The easiest way to start marketing is to begin a dialogue with the people who've bought from you. You have kept a record of their details haven't you?

Once you have a client database there are two main ways you can use it. The first is to contact them yourself on a regular basis with news, interesting information and sales offers.

The second is to get together with another company, or professional, and write to your database on behalf of the other company – this is known as Joint Venture marketing.

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

So what ways are there to reach your prospects? The following list is not complete but gives you a good starter:

- Joint ventures (using their /or your client database)
- Publicity
- Sales staff
- Direct mail letters
 - To an external list
 - To your house list
 - To a joint-venture's list
- Direct mail postcards
- Brochures
- Business cards
- Leaflets
- Promotions
- Advertising
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Ezines
 - Search engines (Google, Overture)
 - Billboards
 - Buses, Underground, stations, taxis, cars, hotels
 - Cinema
 - Theatre programmes
 - Posters
- Web site(s)
- Blogs
- Social media, including Twitter
- Podcasting
- Email
- Newsletters
- Telephone
- Affiliates
- Books
- Books
- DVDs
- CDs
- Software
- Sponsorship
- Events (trade shows, workshops, seminars, launches, other events)
- Personal networking

Each of these different ways has their own guru on the Internet, or off-line.

What is the best way for your business to approach your market?

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

Look at your objective.

For example: it may be that you run seminars to sell information products such as books because your objective is to become known as the true expert in your industry.

There is so much that can be said about each of these elements that this book would turn into a very big book! If you have a question about any one of the elements listed send it to me at Jim.Symcox@acornservice.com and I'll either answer your question or give you a web link or phone number where you can get an answer.

Use each of these marketing tools in a creative way. That way you don't follow everyone else's path.

Since I first produced this book blogging and podcasting have taken off and these are now included in the list of marketing tools.

Reach Your Objectives

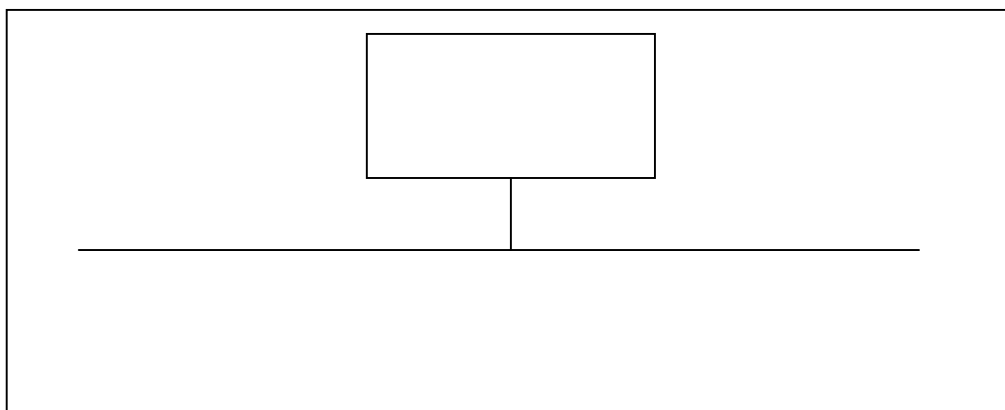
John D. Rockefeller was quite clear about reaching success, he said:

“Singleness of purpose is one of the chief essentials for success in life, no matter what may be one's aim”

Look at where your objective says you'll be in the future. Make sure you get there by drawing up a Capture Objective Plan.

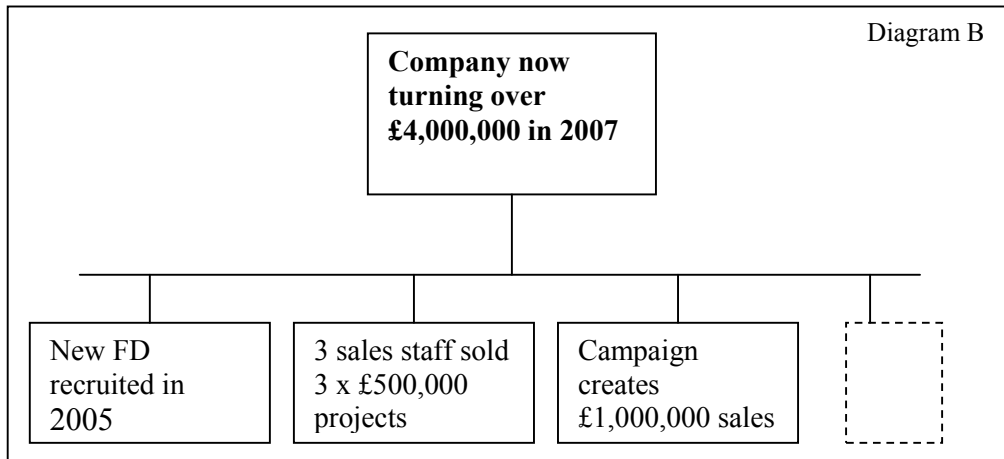
Steps To Create A Capture Objective Plan (COP)

1. Using an A3 piece of paper draw a single rectangular box near the top in the middle and write in the objective as if it had already been achieved.
2. Then draw a short vertical line down from the middle of the box
3. Then draw a horizontal line across the paper touching the end of the line, see diagram A.



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4. Brainstorm all the major activities that need to be completed to achieve the objective.
5. Write a box for each major activity as shown in diagram B. Again as though it had already been achieved.



6. Then take one of the boxes from diagram B and create its own sub-boxes
7. Keep creating lower levels boxes (activities) below the activity until you get to the base level. The base level is where you can undertake a task now. Either by you doing it or delegating it.

What Do You Do With The Base Activities

Look at the base activities you've come up with from the COP (Capture Objective Plan).

When these activities are completed you are well on the way to completing your objective.

You decide which marketing tactics you need to apply to ensure that marketing activities are completed. Then either do it or employ someone to do it.

Planning and Execution

This is the stage where the best intentions of the whole company goes wrong. This is the place where you must split your marketing into discrete projects and monitor their progress at all times. Why spend money on marketing if you don't get the best result you possibly can with it?

“Reduce your plan to writing... The moment you complete this, you will have definitely given concrete form to the intangible desire”. - Napoleon Hill

Have you created a list of all the marketing things you want to do in your business?
For example:

Project 1: Create a USP

Project 2: Brand the company using the USP

Project 3: Create a referrals system

Project 4: Create a testimonials system

Project 5: Create a complaints handling process that amazes

Action Time Management

Do you have an action or project plan for each marketing project?

Don't forget the COP process should have created your list of tasks.

Each task on your action plan should have a planned completion date. That way you know whether your marketing objective is going to be possible.

Then your action plan should be used to assign tasks to people and to go on their to-do lists.

Time management is the key to execution because business owners are by nature busy people. Yet time management can bring tasks under your control without you feeling pressured.

Using to-do lists is an important process to know. It helps you focus on the important and not just the urgent.

Don't let “just a minute” interruptions get to you. Have you set aside one or two hours per day that are purely focused on making money for your company? It helps your focus.

If you'd like my top 10 tips on time management send an email to jim.Symcox@acornservice.com) with the subject “Time Tips”.

Risk Management

If you've created a plan did you establish the risks? Risks need to be brainstormed by all involved so that you can come up with a comprehensive list.

Use that list to decide how likely the risk is to happen.

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Prioritise each risk by looking at the impact of it happening to the project. For example a high priority risk would be if it caused the project to fail completely.

So look at each risk and see how high a priority the risk has and how likely it is to happen.

For example Risks that are:

- High Priority and are Likely to happen need to be resolved before the project starts.
- High Priority and May happen need to be resolved early on in the project
- Low Priority and are Unlikely to happen can be looked at and a low cost strategy used to resolve it. Possibly do nothing unless it happens.

For each risk you decide what needs to be done and assign them as actions to yourself or to others. But do make sure those risk reduction tasks are completed as planned otherwise the risks remain. Only it's worse because everyone thinks the risk has been completely removed.

If you'd like my Excel risk tracking template send an email to jim.Symcox@acornservice.com) with the subject "Risk Template".

Finally, when you execute your project plans continually test and monitor the completion and obstacles you encounter.

Remember nothing is impossible. It may just need a different way of looking at it, fresh eyes, different approach or different people.

Complaints

Your client has bought from you and then rings you up, emails you or sends you a letter to complain.

What to do about it?

Firstly, recognise that in doing business it's inevitable that you'll get complaints.

It's how you deal with them that differentiate what happens to that client and your future in business.

Because if you deal badly with a client they used to say that a bad experience is told to 10 other people. But the Internet now makes it much easier to email to your own list of friends, acquaintances or business contacts that it must be more than that now. If you add in the ability to Blog on the Internet it is a recipe for disaster.

Look upon a complaint as an opportunity to fine-tune what you're doing. Because if one person complains there could be several that haven't. Then you've lost them as clients too. Maybe not yet, but you can bet they're looking around.

In a mail order company the person who dealt with all complaints was the managing director. Because it gave him a great grasp of what was going on with his clients and his company. Plus people were staggered and impressed that the managing director dealt with their problem.

Other companies give their employees' small budgets and responsibility to sort out clients' problems and complaints. That helps the client but also helps the staff feel they're contributing.

But whatever you do over-deliver to resolve the complaint. Then you'll find that client sticks with you and will tell everyone about you. Again amazing complaint service is going to get picked up by your market community.

The Internet

No book on marketing is complete without a section on the Internet. There are so many marketing tactics you can use with the Internet.

Blogging

Firstly it's vital that you are on the web, either with a web site or a blog. I recommend a blog as if you follow the correct strategy its fresh content will help lift you above competitors in the search rankings.

Twitter

Many business people are completely unable to understand the relevance of Twitter to their organisation. I have written a short book on [Twitter](#) that explains its relevance and usefulness to business and provides tips and tools to make it easier to use.

In summary business benefits from Twitter by being able to:

- Maintain relationships with experts in their industry that they might not normally get access to
- Use it for market research on products, services and other businesses
- Respond quickly to customer comments and complaints
- Announce new products and services
- Encourage ongoing relations with clients and prospects

That's exactly what marketing is all about and therefore Twitter needs to be used in the right way to achieve these objectives.

Range of Internet Marketing

Using the Internet to market your business is a vast subject. And although there are many tools it's often the case that you need certain ones to help your business reach and deal with your prospects and clients.

The best approach with Internet marketing is to produce a marketing strategy that integrates key components or tools from Internet marketing.

For example it may be that your business sells a simple set of products. In which case the following set of Internet tools could be required:

- Wordpress Blog with appropriate theme and plugins, including ecommerce
- Twitter account for customer service and other business accounts
- Squidoo to help capture interest
- YouTube with video of products in action
- Ezinearticles with added articles (ghostwritten or prepared by the company)

For more information on marketing using the Internet email me at MI@acornservice.com

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

A Final Word

I'm sure you've noticed I like to use quotes. It's simply because people have thought seriously enough to make a great point. So let's use them at the right moment. I recommend you do the same in your marketing too. It adds interest and educates and informs us about great people and their attitudes.

I probably should also say a word about attitude. Without the right attitude no marketing will ever get you results. The right attitude is one of open-mindedness, a willingness to experiment an understanding that marketing is an investment in your business and not simply a cost.

Peter Drucker said that

“business has only two functions – marketing and innovation”.

So improve your marketing to steal a march over your competitors. Be creative in your approach to your current products and services.

Can they be improved or further ones created from them? Experiment and test results as Ralph Waldo Emerson said,

“All life is an experiment”

Leaping ahead of your competition is vital if you don't want to be held back. Because in the end as A J Kitt says,

“You have no control over what the other guy does. You only have control over what you do”

So please use this book to make your marketing even better. But don't forget your marketing needs to innovate and respond to your clients and prospects wants.

You can get further information from more than 200 postings on my [“Marketing For Power Packed Business Growth” blog](#).

Now Go Do Some Great Business

Best wishes Jim Symcox

Working With Jim Symcox

Jim currently offers the following services:

- Business growth consultancy
- Superstar sales recruitment
- Twitter and Social media integration in your business
- On and Offline PR
- Developing The 12 Skills Of Superior Businesses
- Executive Coaching service packages (Gold, Platinum or Blackbelt!)



Jim works with forward-looking companies that typically:

- Understand that what they don't know can cut money from their income without them even realising
- Know that only business growth stops a company stagnating and ultimately curling up and dying
- Have a CEO or MD who is willing to listen to new ways of doing things, test them and roll out the successes
- Have a good product or service that is perceived as value for money

If you fit these criteria please ring me on 0161 278 1919 to schedule an initial paid phone consultation.

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors

Resources

If you're a great businessmen you never stop learning. You may go to seminars, read ebooks and blogs, listen to audio and subscribe to ezines and newsletters to keep current. Here are some of the resources that you will find helpful. See what you think:

Resource/URL	Description
Achiever's Edge	A monthly CD and PDF newsletter containing interviews with top business people like Ted Nicholas, Richard Bandler, Sir John Harvey-Jones and many others. The CDs also give life, sales, marketing and presentation tips and also a monthly extract from an interesting Nightingale-Conant programme
Marketing For Power Packed Business Growth	Jim's own blog that provides tips and strategies for more effective marketing and business growth.
Internet Press Releases	An effective outlet for press releases worldwide. There are other free press release sites too.
Internet Article Site	One of the better sites for reading articles. And publishing your own articles.
Blogger	A free site (owned by Google) where you can set-up and start running your own blog in minutes.
Magic Words That Bring You Riches	Ted Nicholas' exceptional book (over 300 pages) available as a download for free from Ted.

Your Notes

Use This Page For Those Ah-ha moments you have when you read and re-read this book.

One final tip as you continue through your business life re-read great business books. Because points you glossed over months and years previously as not necessary will jump out as being obviously needed for what you're doing now.

How To Leap Ahead Of Your Competitors
