

CHRIS CARDELL'S

BUSINESS BREAKTHROUGHS



CHRIS CARDELL'S

INNER CIRCLE

PRIVATE MEMBERS GROUP

Published exclusively for members of Chris Cardell's VIP Inner Circle

F*** The Coronavirus



NEVER GIVE IN.
NEVER GIVE IN.
NEVER, NEVER,
NEVER, NEVER
- IN NOTHING, GREAT
OR SMALL, LARGE
OR PETTY -
NEVER GIVE IN.
WINSTON CHURCHILL

It's always been my observation that choosing to run your own business is basically a choice to enter a massive endurance contest with the Universe. One by one, the Universe throws obstacles in your way. Most people are beaten by those obstacles and at some point give up. Only the strong and determined survive.

For membership questions and enquiries, email VIP@CardellMedia.com

Once we know that's the game, we cheerfully (or not) just deal with the obstacles one by one knowing that the reward at the end of the contest is worth all the hardship.

But this one is going a bit far!

So first, let me extend my personal good wishes to you, knowing that many reading this are going through major challenges. I don't have the magic wand instant answer but I do have solutions to many of the problems this creates, based primarily on our experiences during the last Recession, which it's worth remembering lasted two years and was the worst since the Great Depression.

Second, I want to congratulate you and all of our VIP Inner Circle members for your unbelievable attitude through all of this. Through your personal communications with me and our interactions in our Private Members group on Facebook, I have been stunned by everyone's strength and absolute refusal to be beaten by this. It's not just positivity. It's realism. But realism backed by a ferocious intent to come out of this the other side.

You've also been wonderful in supporting each other in the VIP group and I am sure that will continue in the weeks ahead.

So the Universe has thrown us a curve ball. Turns out it's a lifetime's obstacles in about two weeks.

So what do we do?

We do what all Entrepreneurs do. We deal with it. We get busy.

I'm reminded of the Alcoholics Anonymous

'Serenity Prayer' which says

"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

(Full disclosure: I've never been in AA but I might be the reason that Majestic Wine closed its doors a couple of weeks ago)

In other words, there's a whole bunch of stuff here that we have absolutely no control of. Can't go out. Kids are driving you nuts. Some or all of your customers can't buy right now etc. OK. The sooner we accept the elements we can't control, the quicker we can take a deep breath and focus on what we can.

So, f*** the Coronavirus. Let's get busy!

What Can You Control?

The first thing you can control is your health. I started saying 2 weeks before the UK government began closing things down that you can choose not to get this virus, at least for the next few weeks or months while we all figure things out and until there are more medical options for dealing with it. You don't need me to tell you how to not get it. But please, be smart.

Another thing you can influence, if not totally control, is your immune system. The strength or weakness of peoples' immune system seems to be the main factor in determining what happens if they do get the virus. There are numerous ways to do that and if the subject is new to you, now would

be a very good time to start researching it. One way to strengthen your immune system is to reduce stress. Stopping worrying over the stuff you can't control and taking more action on what you can, will reduce your stress.

In your business, the most important thing you can control is your relationship with customers. Some or all of them may or may not currently be giving you money. But that does not have to affect your relationship with your customers unless you let it.

In fact, there is an opportunity here among the chaos. If you really work on enhancing your relationship with your customers through these times, you will be rewarded many times over when this ends, primarily because your competitors won't bother. You need to communicate with them as much as possible. Those communications can be about business but they don't have to be. They can be personal. You can just check in on them. How many of the suppliers you give money to have contacted you in the last few weeks to check how you are? My guess. Zero.

You can also control how you're going to use the time that most now have on their hands. My very strong suggestion is that you use this time to 1) master the subject of Marketing once and for all so that once this is over, you know everything you can know about how to get customers and 2) Implement and take action to fix all the holes in the sales and marketing bucket that all businesses have.

Here in the VIP Inner Circle, I have massively ramped up our support to you because of the crisis. So here is how we are going to be supporting you in the weeks ahead.

1. We have launched a Recession Immunisation Programme. The steps you take in the next few weeks in your business are going to determine what happens over the next year. So each week (and this may vary as need determines) we are doing 2 events each week: a teleseminar or webinar on a specific vital element of Recession Immunisation and a second Q&A conference call where you can ask me any questions that you have.

2. Over the next few weeks we will be taking several of our big (expensive) trainings programmes and make them available to you, at no charge, as part of your VIP membership.

3. The VIP Private Members area on Facebook has emerged as a wonderful tool for us to all support each other. It really has been a beacon of light in the darkness. My team and I are in the group answering questions but the best part has been the support that you have been giving to each other. Please carry on that support. If you haven't joined the group yet, just go to

www.facebook.com/groups/CardellVIP

4. The material here in Business Breakthroughs will be focused on the urgency of the current situation. Some of the material in this issue was written before the current crisis.

5. VIP members who want to become Cardell Media clients will be given priority. As I write this, our team, who manage the websites and online marketing directly for our clients, is working 24/7. We are being inundated with requests for direct help with websites etc. We are bluntly not going to be able to help everyone who wants it, but when we can, we will and VIP members will be given priority. If you want direct help with either your website or online marketing, email Hollie@CardellMedia.com and we will support you when we can.

So I am here for you. My team is here for you. Together we will get through this and come out stronger than ever.

Stay safe!



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CARDELL MEDIA

HOW CARDELL MEDIA CAN DO ALL OF YOUR MARKETING FOR YOU

AT CARDELL MEDIA WE HAVE A 50 STRONG TEAM TO HELP YOU WITH ALL OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUR ONLINE MARKETING. HERE'S WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU:

THE PRIVATE CLIENT PARTNERSHIP

This is for business owners with a sincere ambition to at least double their sales and profits over the next 12 months by implementing the world's most sophisticated and advanced Marketing and working personally with Chris Cardell and his team to manage their marketing operation. You'll get:

- direct access to Chris Cardell as your personal Marketing Strategist — he'll effectively be your new Marketing Director
- direct access to the Cardell Media Marketing team who will do all the key Marketing work for you, including website design, Google Ads, Facebook advertising, email campaigns, conversion rate optimisation and Direct Mail campaigns.

Acceptance as a Private Client is not guaranteed and is by application only. Each Private Client relationship is bespoke, based on the specific needs of your business.

WEBSITE SOLUTION CLIENTS

Your one-stop solution to sort out your website and social media once and for all. A New Website, A Complete Online Marketing Presence. We'll take care of every detail. We will:

- build you a complete, mobile-optimised website including a home page video within 30–60 days
- provide state-of-the-art video hosting
- provide 2 years of website management
- create up to 5 additional web pages each month for 2 years
- produce up to 2 additional videos for you each year
- install the Cardell Media Email Autoresponder on your website
- provide 2 years of 24/7 hosting on our high security, dedicated servers including: SSL Certificate to encrypt client data and protect you; Google Infrastructure hosting for speed and compliance, which boosts your SEO rankings; daily back-up, so your data is always safe; managed patching & updated; dedicated Cardell hosting environment; real-time security threat detection
- create or re-design your Facebook business, LinkedIn business, Twitter and Instagram pages
- write and post weekly posts for 2 years on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram
- live chat
- implement natural SEO, including Google XML site submission, H1, H2 and meta tags
- fast, efficient support provided by your dedicated Account Manager.

If you are an ecommerce business we'll build your site using our Shopify Partner Platform, which will give you:

- a fully optimised checkout process
- an ultra-fast server and hosting speed
- capacity to take up to 8000 orders per minute
- abandoned cart recovery
- one-click upsell opportunities, pre-, during and post-checkout
- powerful discounting functionality
- insightful analytics.

GOOGLE ADS PARTNERSHIP

Take your business to the next level with the very best in Google Ads management and remarketing, as well as Bing/Yahoo, YouTube, Facebook, In-Market and Custom Intent ads. Here's just a taste of what that includes:

1. Full Google Ads Management

- a full audit of your Google Ads account or new account set up
- keyword research, ongoing ad creation, testing, conversion tracking and management, including top position management
- campaign budget management, bid strategies and mobile Google ads strategies
- Google shopping

2. Google Remarketing

- campaign set up
- audience selection and tracking
- banner ad creation
- responsive ad creation and management
- remarketing campaign bidding, management and reporting

3. Facebook Remarketing

- campaign set up
- ad creation
- audience selection
- bidding, management and reporting
- conversion goal selection, tracking and management

4. YouTube Remarketing

- campaign set up
- audience selection
- ad creation
- bidding, management and reporting

5. In-Market Ads

- target customers who are currently looking for what you sell

6. Custom Intent Keyword Ads

- target people who've searched on Google for your keywords but not clicked on your ads

7. Bing/Yahoo PPC Management

- duplicate your Google PPC campaign on Bing/Yahoo
- campaign set up and management including ad creation, ad split testing, ad extensions, conversion tracking, bidding strategies, match type management, geographic bidding, conversion tracking and management, Bing Shopping, impression share management, top position management.

All this comes with a dedicated Account Manager and monthly reporting.

For more information contact Hollie@CardellMedia.com

PANDEMIC PLANNING

Seven Steps To Protect Your Business During The Covid-19 Pandemic

If you are a Business owner, in the weeks ahead there are 7 vital steps you can take to protect your business and do whatever we can to minimise loss of sales and most importantly, prepare your business to emerge from this chaos as strong as humanly possible.

To be clear, I don't have a magic wand. And I'm well aware of the enormous difficulties that many business owners are facing. But you should also be aware that many successful Entrepreneurs are viewing this as a time of enormous opportunity. Your competitors will stop everything. You shouldn't.

So here are the big lessons we learnt from those who didn't just survive the last recession but thrived through it. These are not my ideas. I'm not claiming they're right or wrong. They're just what the people who survived last time actually did.

1. Don't stop Marketing. This is the single biggest mistake that businesses that fail make in a recession. If you had a profitable business before this virus outbreak, low or zero sales for a few weeks won't destroy you. What will destroy you is, when we emerge from this, if you have stopped all customer communication, you'll have no backlog of pent-up demand and customer goodwill to fall back on. It will take you another 2-3 months to catch up when you turn the Marketing back on and by then it may be too late.

Obviously, it doesn't make sense for some businesses to continue with paid advertising: restaurants, hotels etc. But for others, if you can possibly continue, you should. Even if you can't get the sales right now. For example, I have a relative with a sofa store who spends 30k per month on Google. His store is now closed. We've reduced the budget but his Google ads will continue. When someone stuck at home 3 weeks from now starts dreaming of the new sofa they're going to get when this is all over, he must be there when they search on Google. They won't be able to buy that day, but he'll be their first choice when they are finally able to go out and buy.

Meanwhile, his competitors will all stop marketing and advertising and clicks will be cheaper. This is a major opportunity for most business owners.

2. Ring Fence Your Customers. Do you care about your customers? If you do, why would you stop communicating to them just because they can't give you money right now? The business owner who ignores their customers during this time is telling them they view their relationship as purely transactional: when the money stops, the relationship stops.

People aren't stupid. They'll remember this and they'll treat those business owners accordingly when the time comes. Meanwhile, if you take the time and trouble to keep communicating with your

customers, you will be rewarded. It's also just the right thing to do.

So if you're still selling, step up the marketing and customer communication: emails, Facebook, even direct mail if it's feasible.

If you're not currently selling, just get in touch with your customers and see how they're doing. Nobody is bothering doing that and it will blow their minds. So email them, call them, text them. I have several clients with teams working from home with not much to do. They've given the team contact details of all the customers and asked them to just give them a call to check in on them. People are going to crave connection in the weeks ahead. Do the right thing and you will be rewarded.

3. Don't Cut Prices, Add More Value. We are obviously in a Recession and that Recession is going to continue when things get back to 'normal.' In the months ahead I urge you, implore you, do NOT cut your prices.

The natural inclination when selling gets hard is to reduce prices. It doesn't work. It destroys your profit margins and you end up in a negative, destructive circle.

Also, this is going to be a weird Recession. There will still be millions of people with plenty of money. It's just that the money is coming to a standstill for a while. When it starts moving again, those with money will not need a price reduction.

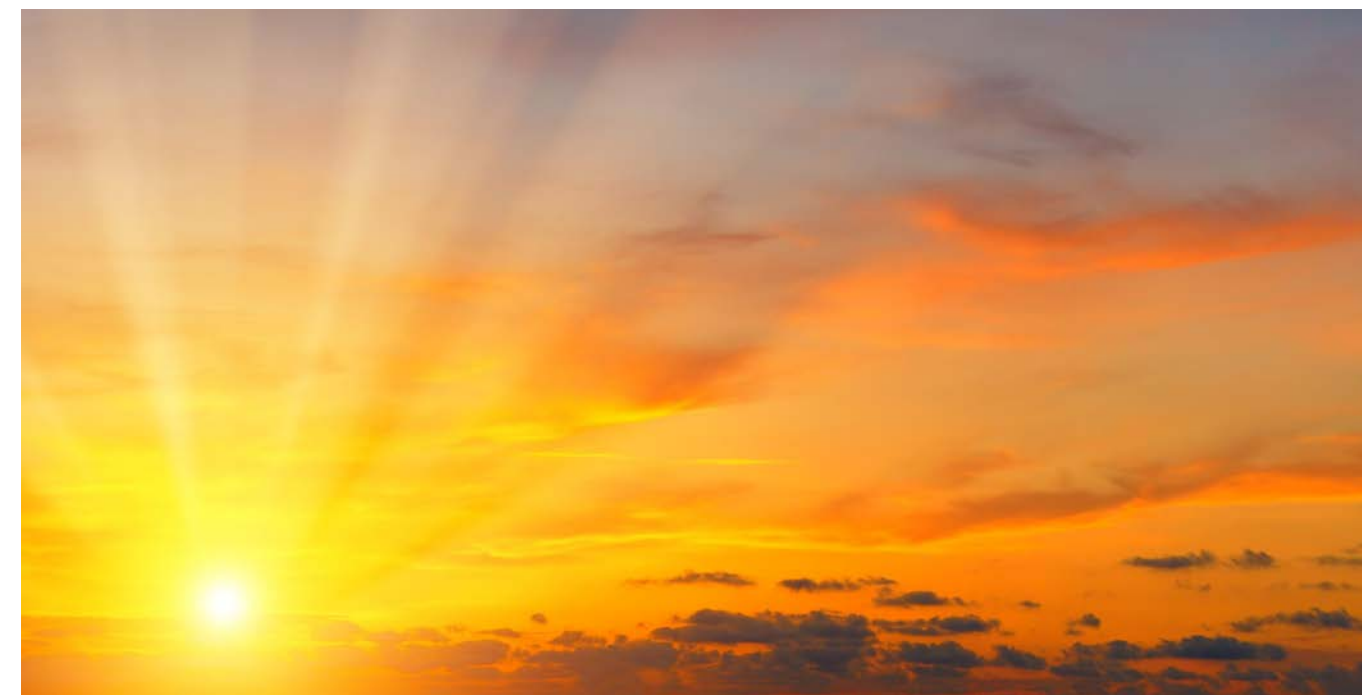
If your customers are having a hard time and you want to help, the solution isn't cutting prices. It's adding value. Add more value. Look at everything you do and ask how you can enhance what you offer them. Sky TV is launching new channels and adding more movies for everyone stuck at home. It's adding more value. But it's not cutting prices. In my business, we have clients where we manage their websites. But they're having problems in other areas of their business. My team is jumping in to help wherever we can, whether or not we're technically being paid for it. We're adding more value.

So step into your customers' shoes and ask yourself how you can add more value in the weeks ahead.

4. Take The Money. Across the world, governments are putting billions into funding small businesses. You may or may not agree with how they're doing it, but if there's cash available, take it. Even if you don't need it right now. Take it. Cash is King.

In the UK, the government is guaranteeing business interruption loans from the banks. The next VAT quarter's payments have been postponed and as far as we can tell, they are agreeing to postpone most current tax, VAT payments if you ask. In the USA, the April 15 tax payment deadline has been extended by 3 months.

In most countries, you can take a 3-month mortgage break. Take it for yourself and bear it in mind for your staff if you're feeling guilty about



PANDEMIC PLANNING CONT

paying them less. Make sure they're educated on everything they can claim too.

All of these schemes are somewhat chaotic because they're being run by politicians, not Entrepreneurs. But be patient, beaver away with the paperwork and Take The Money.

5. Fix The Holes in The Bucket. All businesses have 'holes in the bucket' through which money falls, even in the best of times. The most obvious are wasteful costs. But the biggest holes are actually with ineffective Marketing.

Am obvious example is websites. Every visitor who arrives at your website who does not convert to a prospect or buyer is lost money. Fixing your website is fixing one of the big holes in your bucket.

Other examples are: not emailing customers at least twice per week, not following up with leads and prospects, not selling more to existing customers, not testing premium priced offerings, a Google Ads campaign that's not being run properly, not having video, not having a 'Mobile First' strategy, not doing Remarketing on Facebook, Google and YouTube. I could go on. It's a very long list.

All of the smart Entrepreneurs I know are using this time to fix the holes in their Marketing bucket. Let's face it, you never get around to the Marketing because you never had enough time. You've probably now got some time. So please use it to obsess about making your Marketing brilliant.

Here's some good news in all this chaos. The fact is, the money your business might lose in the next few weeks is nothing compared to the money you've probably lost over the last few years and would have lost over the next few years by not having great Marketing.

While none of us want the current situation, it's no exaggeration to say that for some businesses, being forced to finally sort out their Marketing over the next few weeks will be one of the best things that ever happened to them.

6. Consider Scaling Up Your Marketing. Now, the opportunity, not for everyone, but certainly for around 60% of the business owners we're

working with.

If your customers can still buy, or if you can get leads and prospects who could buy in a few weeks and you have access to cash, you should seriously consider scaling up your Marketing.

Cost per click on Facebook and Google is plummeting. Your competitors are disappearing. Sadly, many of those competitors will go out of business. We can hate coronavirus while simultaneously acknowledging that this is a major opportunity.

Anyone who knows about the world of investing knows that the time to buy is in a downturn. If you understand that Marketing is the process of investing to buy leads and customers, now is the time to buy, if you can.

So we have Ecommerce companies increasing their budgets over the last week by 50% or more. We have physical stores converting to Ecommerce sites in a few days. We have B2B companies changing their websites to lead generation pages.

Just because everyone around you is panicking, doesn't mean that you have to. If you see even an ounce of opportunity in the weeks ahead, seize it.

7. Prepare for The Morgan Freeman Moment. I'm sure you've seen those films, where the world comes close to ending, either from aliens, earthquakes or similar disasters.

At the end of those movies, there's always a scene that shows the rubble, the sun rising on a new dawn, and in the middle of the rubble the President, who for some reason always seems to be Morgan Freeman, giving a stirring speech about the dawning of a new world. Everything is finally going to be OK.

You should be preparing for our Morgan Freeman moment. We are all understandably fixated on the now. But some time travel into the future would not be a bad idea. When Morgan speaks, make sure that your business is in the finest possible position to rise with him.

ENTREPRENEUR Q&A

Send your toughest marketing questions, problems and challenges to questions@CardellMedia.com and I'll answer them here.

QUESTION

I've heard video is a really powerful marketing tool. I've just set up a YouTube account for my business but how can I make the most of it without spending too much money on creating flashy videos?

ANSWER

You don't need to be a social media guru to create interesting videos that will generate leads. Nor do you need to spend a lot of money on your YouTube content. You just need to be creative and publish videos regularly. Here are some tips for creating creative and engaging videos without breaking the bank:

Be Consistent

Did you know that the most popular YouTube channels are those that update their content consistently? If you want to use video as a marketing tool, you need to upload videos often so that you stay in touch with your subscribers. These videos don't have to be high-end production or rely on expensive props. You can try out some more affordable options. Consider turning webcasts and webinars into a series of videos or doing a behind-the-scenes walkabout at your business. You can repurpose web content or infographics into engaging video slideshows or interview your employees, your customers or even yourself.

Think About Engagement Before You Post

Just like the rest of your marketing strategy, it's really important to think about how you want your viewers to respond before they see your video. Calls to action such as links should be included in the description box or on-screen pop-ups. Remember to include some information highlighting the key features of your products or services too. Having a clear idea of what type of engagement you want

your video to produce will help you gain more leads. Do you want them to click to call, subscribe or buy? There are lots of options to consider.

Be As Interactive As Possible

A successful YouTube channel is an interactive channel. People who will view your videos are likely to leave comments and rate your content and so engaging with them is crucial. Make sure to answer as many comments as possible and, if possible, personalise your responses: using a 'one size fits all' reply can be even worse than not replying at all.

Customise Your Channel

Customising your channel is an easy and inexpensive way to attract more viewers. You don't want your YouTube channel to look like every other YouTube page out there. Play with colours, links, web content and other relevant information that will point to your brand identity and make people associate the videos with your business.

Don't Underestimate The Power Of A Great Description

You don't have to create expensive or flashy videos to engage your audience but you do have to put some thought into the copy that appears in your video description. Excessively long descriptions will immediately put people off. Avoid lengthy paragraphs and opt for a few punchy sentences. Keep them short but informative and include links to your website or blog for people who want to know more.

RAPID PROFIT BOOSTER

A Bird In The Hand Is Worth 2 In The Bush

Regular readers will know just how much we advocate nurturing repeat business.

It costs a lot less to get an existing customer to return than it does to recruit a new one. And because there's already trust established, they'll typically convert more frequently and spend more. Adobe has estimated that a customer who has bought from you twice before is 9 times more likely to convert than a newbie.

Lower costs plus more conversions plus higher spend equals a supercharged profit boost. It really does pay to have in place a strategy to encourage customers to return to you.

So, do everything in your power to make sure that your customers are happy with their experience with you and that they're encouraged to come back.

Here are our top tips to help you do just that.

Provide A Flawless Shopping Experience

People are far more likely to remember one bad experience than 10 good ones, so make sure that the e-commerce systems you have in place operate flawlessly. If a customer is able to process an order, then you must ensure that the item is in stock. If you run a drop-shipping service, then a stock issue might not be your fault but your customer won't see it that way.

Similarly, make sure your customer journey is as slick on mobile as it is on desktop. More and more people make purchases on mobiles and tablets and

if the experience isn't optimised then they will be less likely to return.

When buying online, people like to be kept updated. Without the comfort of a one to one interaction, businesses have to work harder to establish trust and confidence. A simple automated email to confirm the order, dispatch date and expected arrival date, coupled with a responsive customer service provision, will do the job.

Set Up A Referral Scheme

A referral scheme rewards your customers for shopping with you and encourages them to recommend new customers in one swoop. It wins both repeat business and a new customer. Word-of-mouth recommendations come to you with trust already established, so they're also more likely to convert and spend more with you.

Referral schemes are very easy to set up. It can be as simple as emailing customers with a discount code that both they and an acquaintance can use.

Personalise Communication

We can be simple beings; something as straightforward as being referred to by name helps build a rapport and will encourage customer loyalty.

Email and CRM software make it easy to include a customer's first name in any communication to them, so there's no reason not to do it. But personalisation can and should go beyond addressing customers by their first name. Send customers special offers that relate to their previous orders with you, or items



they've previously had in an abandoned shopping cart, and they'll feel like you're talking just to them.

Use Gamification

Us humans love to play games. Playing releases hormones that make us feel good and means we'll remember the experience positively. So, if you want a customer to return, why not add an element of gamification to their shopping experience.

It doesn't need to be complicated. A simple rewards scheme, where customers have to build up points or stamps and receive a reward when they reach a certain number, is a perfect example of gamification.

Create Loyalty By Producing Marketing Content That's Genuinely Valuable

As a rule, people aren't interested in advertising. Copywriters and designers have to work their socks off to get people to pay attention to adverts, let alone convert once they've seen them.

Marketing material that's genuinely useful, on the other hand, is much easier to get right, and it will leave a lasting positive impression of your business in the minds of your customers.

Michelin, the tyre company, knew this when they launched their Michelin guides in the 1900s. Here was a piece of 'content' that was immensely useful to their target audience (early motor car users) but didn't directly sell their products. Instead, it positioned the company as helpful, useful and generous. It did wonders for their brand and meant customers quickly became loyal.

Take some time to research what information would be valuable to your target customers and is not easily available elsewhere. The subject doesn't have to directly relate to your products but it should be relevant (Michelin knew its customers used their motor cars to travel to different parts of France to eat in restaurants and stay in hotels).

Deploy A Bounceback Strategy

With a bounceback strategy, you send an offer to customers immediately after their purchase, with the aim of bouncing them back to your store in the not-too-distant future.

Recency is a great predictor of whether a customer is likely to buy from you. If they have purchased from you in the recent past, the chances are higher that they'll do so again.

You can make your bounceback offer a discount, such as 25% off your next purchase. Add an expiry date and it will create a sense of urgency in your customer's mind. Alternatively, you could send out a special offer on a particular product or service.

If you choose the latter, make it a typical impulse purchase that's high margin and low price. The goal of this strategy is to create a returning customer and make a profit. A high-priced item is unlikely to convert and a low margin item won't make you much extra profit.

That's our 6 great methods for banishing one-time customers and creating an army of returning customers. Roll them out in your business and your bottom line will thank you for it.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

12 Twitter Tips To Up Your Twitter Game

Twitter can be a powerful tool for any company or professional but it is important to use the platform in such a way that you utilise the full potential of tweets. These 12 tips will help you understand what works and what doesn't, bringing you the Twitter success you need.

1. Tweet Early and Often

Even if you aren't a beginner Twitter user, this is a good reminder. Your followers don't all get on Twitter at the same time. So for the widest reach possible, make sure you are tweeting throughout the day, instead of just during business hours.

Not only will you get a wide reach tweeting throughout the day but, you'll be able to compare your tweets to find out what time of day is the most optimal for you to be posting your most important tweets.

2. Don't Forget To Engage

Social networks aren't just for broadcasting your own content. They are to build conversations and communities so don't forget to engage with others on the platform. It's a great way to build your audience. You don't have to limit yourself to commenting on others' posts. Try doing a Twitter poll as well.

3. Be Relevant

Join in on trending topics. You can check out what is trending by looking at the trending tab on Twitter. Some relevant topic ideas include tweeting about history months or holidays but don't be afraid to think outside of the box when participating in trending topics. And the topic doesn't have to be directly related to your product and services. It can just be something relevant to what your brand stands for, or something funny, like a popular meme graphic you customise.

4. Be An Industry Resource

Chances are you are already trying to do this but you should be more strategic in what content you choose to curate. Don't just automatically tweet every new blog post from an RSS feed. Instead, take the time to hand-curate what you share on Twitter.

5. Tell A Story With A Twitter Moment

Moments are sort of like a slideshow collection of tweets that allow you to tell a more compelling story. Not only can you add your own tweets, but you can also add tweets or comments from others. To access Moments on Twitter, you'll need to be using the desktop version of the social platform. Make sure all of your elements are eye-catching,

but keep it succinct. Then just start adding various tweets to tell a story. Once you have created the Moment, share it through a tweet of your own.

6. Graphically Speaking

When tweeting out graphics that you are creating, you want to ensure that you are using "branded" content. In other words, create a template and stick to it. It's easy to do this with online design tools like Canva. This way, each time you tweet out a quote, meme or whatever you want, you have a seamless look. When people see it, they will recognize it as being from your brand.

7. To Automate Or Not To Automate

If you are automating everything, you won't be able to have personal conversations on Twitter, which is what the platform was designed for. So only automate what makes sense. Some good ways of automating on the social platform include:

- Scheduling tweets in advance (especially helpful for tweeting throughout the day)
- Using a social media management tool to automatically tag incoming tweets with a certain hashtag
- Utilising Twitter chatbots to streamline your customer service workflow

What you don't want to automate is sending auto DMs to new followers, spamming them with links or relying solely on automated tweets to handle customer service complaints.

8. Retweet With Comment

Add on another layer of engagement by using the "retweet with comment" feature. This enables you to add your own personal commentary to the retweet. It's important to take this extra step because it adds value and personalisation to retweets you are sharing.

9. Sharing Your Blog Posts

Don't just use the title of a blog as your Twitter copy when sharing a link to your blog. Chances are, a lot of other users will do the same when sharing your blog; not to mention the fact that if you share a preview of the link, you'll just be repeating what is shown in the preview. Instead, personalise the copy to make it stand out.

10. Using DMs For Customer Service

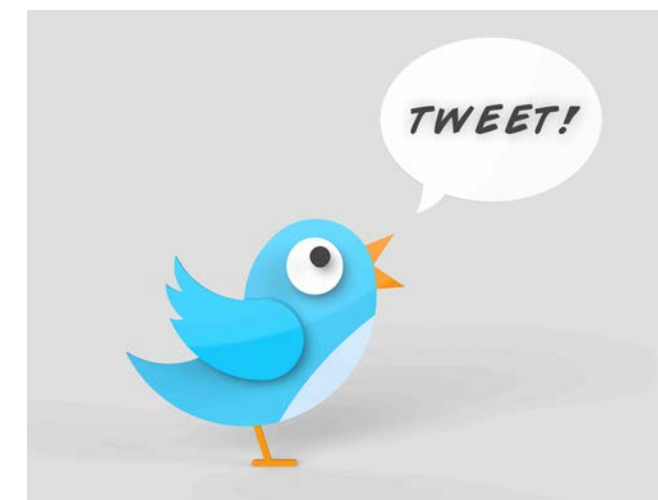
For many brands on Twitter, one of the most popular uses is customer service. It's a great place for initial contact since Twitter users aren't afraid to share their opinions on the platform. So make sure you are monitoring what people are saying about your brand (whether they @mention you or not). If someone is upset, be sure to respond to their tweet. But also know when to take the conversation private by asking them to message you their concerns so that you can get more details and discuss it more fully. You want to avoid having a public conversation with an irate customer on your Twitter feed.

11. Do Not Ignore When Users @Mention You

One of the biggest pet peeves of users on social media is when brands ignore them. In fact, some consumers will unfollow a brand if they don't receive a reply. If you receive hundreds of tweets a day, you won't be able to get to all of them, but you should prioritise your mentions. And the quicker you can respond, the better. Consider creating a Twitter handle specifically for customer service and @mention it in your main Twitter account's bio.

12. Branded Hashtags

Create community and engage with users by having a branded hashtag that you encourage people to use in their own tweets. This also helps build user-generated content, which is easily searchable thanks to the hashtag. Take it to the next level by combining branded hashtags with your analytics tool to gather sentiment analysis.



ENTREPRENEUR OF THE MONTH



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London Contemporary School of Piano
www.contemporaryschoolofpiano.com

out there fun. The marketing feels integrated with our work. For me, having these 2 aspects of the business feed into each other is a buzz.

BB: Is there a lot of fierce competition in your industry? If so, how do you overcome it and ensure you stay competitive?

There is a lot of competition and I think that's increasingly true in all industries. Some people who run businesses let this affect them too much. One of the best ways to stay ahead is to get the basics right and deliver on them. After that, you can use your imagination to find new avenues and offer premium versions of what you do.

A successful business is built on community. We run a lot of events, not just because it makes good business sense but because it's fun. Our clients and staff go to concerts together and have a monthly jam session at an amazing restaurant. It gives people a chance to get to know one another as well as offer each other encouragement. It's not good enough anymore to be a sterile corporation, there are so many outlets for everything that you have to have something that makes you special.

BB: What motivates you each morning?

At the moment, I'm looking at personal diversification. I'm a composer and I've written for 7 films in a niche musical field. I want to grow my skill set. One area that I'm looking into at the moment is music licensing. Quality music is needed for various media, both online and offline. Building relationships with music libraries gets my work out there and creates a passive income stream.

I start my day playing the piano. It centres me and has been there my whole life. The older I get, the less

worried I am about perfection and instead the more concerned I am with continuity. These days, I can just play without restrictions or judgement. I'm very lucky to partner with Blüthner Pianos, which is one of the oldest piano brands in the world. They've been handmaking pianos for 150 years for the greats such as Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Debussy, and bands like The Beatles. We get access to their incredible instruments and, in return, we build their brand awareness. Having one of their instruments inspires me to get up and practice.

BB: What is working well with your marketing strategy right now?

One word: offline. We still do a lot of online marketing, but we recently started doing things like open days. I can't believe we didn't do them before. We were seduced by the idea that the internet is the answer to everything.

We invite prospective people along for the day to jam and try out the pianos. It's a customer appreciation event that's about discovery and offering information. This has increased sales enormously. When people are off their phones, they're more engaged and able to focus.

We have more offline work to do, direct mail and so on. We haven't even scratched the surface.

BB: What do you see as your main challenges for the next 6 months?

Juggling everything is the hardest challenge as an entrepreneur and as a musician. I am a hopeless multitasker and prefer to focus on one thing, but I can't do that.

I do around 6 concerts a year and I want to do more. I'm also composing. I started a charity project with a passionate human rights activist called Becky Dell. It's called Citizens of the World Choir (www.citizensoftheworldchoir.org) and it's for people who are refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and friends. We provide a safe space for refugees to express themselves through music. These are just a few of the personal and professional projects vying for my attention.

BB: Is there one specific behaviour, action or character trait you could pinpoint as the reason for your success?

Not being too dogmatic or taking it all too seriously. You need to be pragmatic. For instance, you have to ask yourself, is your website marketing to you or to your market? I have a lot of colleagues that will make artsy comments about the website. I block my ears to their input because if they influence me, we could lose a lot of money.

Immunity to criticism is essential. If we run a campaign that does well, there will always be haters. And if you are disrupting your industry, it's guaranteed to produce a mixed reaction at first. You just have to be patient, wait a year or 2 and things will right themselves. It's a natural pattern.

BB: Is there any advice you would offer to our readers and other small business owners about how to take their business to the next level?

For someone who is starting out, understand marketing and understand direct response marketing. Understand the power of words in your copy and your message. Emulate other successful businesses. Follow the templates of those who have succeeded even if it feels weird at first.

When we set up our website, we used a high conversion template and it felt odd at first. However, like a musical skill, it eventually became ingrained in my muscle memory. Once that happens, you can add your own touch to it because you have a deeper notion of the concepts.

BB: What piece of advice would you give to your younger self?

If I rewound the clock to 10–15 years, perhaps I would have hired staff sooner. It's a double-edged sword though because I did enjoy that time working on my own, directly with clients but it slowed me down.

BB: Finally, what's the best thing you've bought for under £100 in the last 6 months (business or personal)?

Recently, I had a really long day at the studio and I was ready to just go home but my wife was in town, so we went to eat at this local Japanese restaurant. Relaxing, having the phone off and forgetting where you are for a moment is something money can't buy. I wasn't in the mood, but it turned out to be restorative.

FROM THE TRENCHES

The Long And The Short Of It

How Long-Term Brand Building Can Be The Key To Success

It's human nature to focus on the short term. In terms of a survival strategy, meeting our immediate needs trumps long-term planning, especially for early humans living a hunter-gatherer life.

But that doesn't mean short-term thinking is always the best option. In fact, when it comes to business growth and marketing, it's entrepreneurs who are able to focus on the long term who create the most success.

Playing the long game takes confidence. By moving resources from short-term activity such as sales and lead generation, you may see an initial dip in revenue sales.

But by investing in long-term growth you're creating building blocks that will reap rewards in the future. It's like laying the foundations of a house before building the walls; it's the right thing to do, even if it takes a bit longer to get the walls and roof up.

And so Virgin Media, the telecoms and media arm of Sir Richard Branson's business empire, has recently undergone a transformation in its marketing, shifting its strategy from a short-term sales focus to longer-term brand building.

Virgin Media's new strategy is driven by an ambition to become the most recommended brand

among customers and staff. Brand and Marketing Director Cilesta Van Doorn told Marketing Week:

"We have been a little bit out of balance over the last 2 years; it was way more DR-TV, sales, trade-focused work. Now we would love to let the brand trade harder. That means, if you have the brand trade harder, you will talk about different things and [find] different ways to go about it."

Building Your Brand

Virgin Media's move is a smart one and something that many business owners could learn from.

If you decide that you want to refocus your marketing strategy onto longer-term brand building, what are the different ways to go about it and which approaches will work best for your business?

What Is A Brand?

Let's start from the beginning because the concept of a brand is often misunderstood.

Your brand is more than your logo and colour palette. It's the collective identity of your business and the products and services it sells. David Ogilvy defined it as "the intangible sum of a product's attributes."

That means that everything you do contributes to your brand, from the tone of the emails you send through to your customer service standards.

Your brand should influence every aspect of your business and define how people view you. Take the difference between Amazon (efficient, quick, good value) and John Lewis (high quality, traditional, great customer service), for example.

Nail Your Strategy

Before you begin any brand-building activity, you need to work out your strategy. What are you planning to achieve with your business? What are your long-term revenue goals? How many customers do you plan to serve annually? Work back from this and plan how you can get there.

Nailing a strategy can take time, resources and research, but it's an important step. If you don't draw up plans for the house, then you won't know what to build.

Know Your Customer

You can't build a brand until you are confident you understand who your customers are. If they turn out to be highly price-sensitive and you've put work into crafting an exclusive, high-end brand, then you'll fall flat on your face.

You can get this insight by carrying out customer research and creating customer personas. If you find that your current audience doesn't fit with the ambitions you have for your brand, then you might need to figure out how you can target a different group.

There are many approaches to customer research, but that's for another article. The most common methods include desk research, online surveys, interviews and focus groups.

This stage will enable you to define what you want your brand to look like. Are you exclusive and high-end, or accessible and affordable? Are you light-hearted and fun or serious and reliable?

Competitor Research

Take the time to look at what your competitors are doing. Analyse what is working for them, and decide where you can emulate and where you can differentiate.

It's important to avoid wholesale copying; you need to find your own USP, otherwise, customers won't have a reason to choose you over your rivals. A good test of whether you're sufficiently different

is to copy and paste the text on your website into a blank Word document. Take out all of the references to your company name, and read it through. Could it describe your competitors? If so, you're not different enough.

Get Your Brand Logo Right

Although the brand is more than the logo, the logo is incredibly important. It's a quick and powerful way of creating an emotional connection with your audience.

A logo is also extremely portable. It can and should be used across every marketing channel, including social media, print, email and website. It will be one of the most hardworking elements of your brand, so it pays to get it right.

Work Out Your Message

Be clear on what your values are and what you bring to your customers, and distil that message into clear and impactful words that create an emotional connection with your audience.

People respond to emotions more than facts, so your message needs to evoke a feeling. Are you dynamic and exciting, or safe and secure? Both are great emotions to evoke, but they're at opposite ends of the brand spectrum. Be clear on where you sit and communicate it.

Tell Your Story

If your brand is the identity of your business, then you should make sure people know your story. Virgin Media's brand is wrapped up in the personality of its owner and Sir Richard Branson has always been proactive in telling his personal story as a dynamic, disruptive innovator.

You can focus your story on yourself if you like, or you can focus it on your business; how it's evolved and the values it embodies.

In the evolution of marketing and advertising, brand has become more and more important. Customers buy into a brand and they want to feel that the businesses they shop with are aligned to their values. Make sure you don't neglect yours by spending too much time chasing short-term sales.

MARKETING MAKEOVER

Blow-By-Blow Critiques Of YOUR Marketing

DO YOU WANT YOUR MARKETING PIECES PERSONALLY REVIEWED BY CHRIS CARDELL? SEND TO: REVIEWS@CARDELLMEDIA.COM

Today we're going to be looking at sunnydays.co.uk, a group of childcare facilities in Dorset, UK.

This is an interesting site in that it's quite different to many we have looked at previously. The main reason for this is that it's been designed using 'mobile-first' methodology. If this doesn't make sense right away, hopefully you will see what we mean as we dive a little deeper.

First impressions of the site are that it's very appealing from a visual perspective. The colours are bright, the branding is happy and the pictures of the children are really engaging.

However, my first impression of the site was on a desktop device. Though the branding and pictures still grabbed my attention, there were quite a few practical concerns.

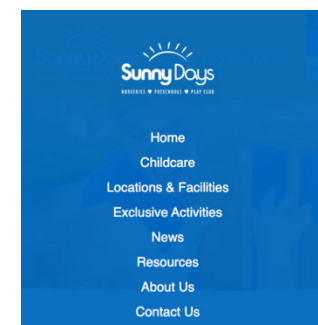


When loading up a site for the first time, it's really important that anyone visiting it knows

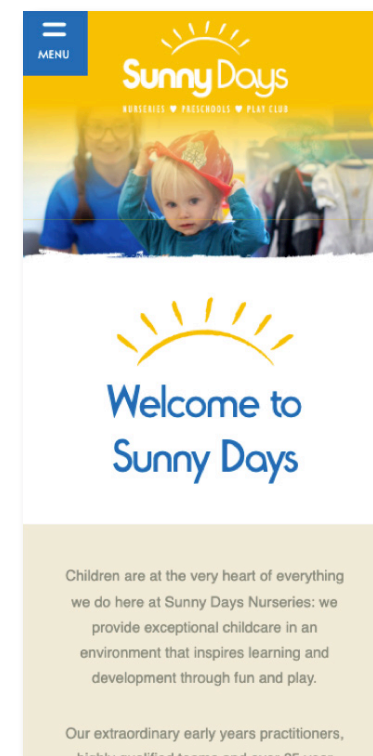
instantly what the website is about. Though it is instantly clear that the website is about something to do with children, it isn't instantly obvious that it's promoting actual childcare services. Below the logo it does state: 'Nurseries. Preschools. Play Club', but the text is very small and the font is lightweight in comparison to the other text on the page. This makes it not obvious and easy to miss.



In addition to this, once we understand that the website is promoting childcare services, we then need to know where these facilities are. As this wasn't made instantly obvious, my natural assumption was that this must be a national chain with childcare facilities across the UK. However, this isn't the case. Once we access the 'Locations and Facilities' page, it's clear that their facilities are in Dorchester and Bridport. I would consider this to be very important information for anyone landing on the homepage (or any other page) and should, therefore, be made as clear as possible. This could be rectified with a more direct tagline such as 'Forward-thinking Childcare in Dorset', for example.



Viewing the homepage on a desktop computer also highlights a number of key points that make it clear that the website has been designed with only mobile devices in mind. The menu is of a popup, list-type style, such as you would expect on a mobile device, even on a desktop. We can also see by the elongated 'Book a Visit' button and the way all the text and content is pushed below the fold on a desktop display that the page layout was designed with a mobile visitor in mind. Though this is a good, forward-thinking approach to web design, some small changes that allow changes to be made to the page layout when it is viewed on a desktop display would greatly increase the conversion rate of desktop visitors.



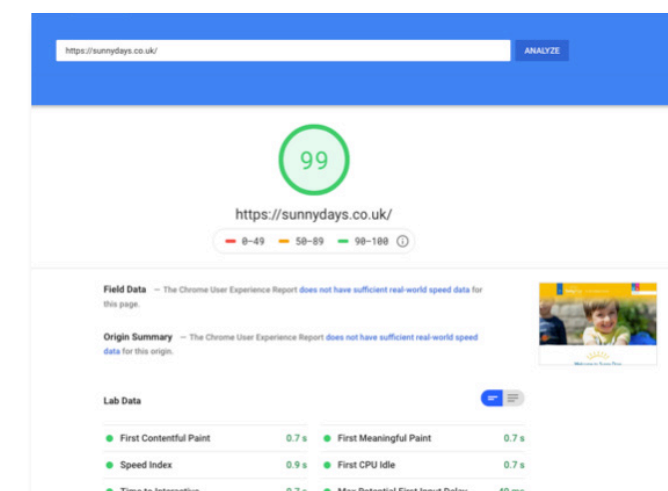
As you might expect, the site looks great on a mobile device. The majority of the issues mentioned previously are non-existent on a smaller screen. This is interesting, as for most websites it's the mobile version of a website that highlights the problems.

Like the desktop site, I would like to see more

clarity on where their facilities are, right on the homepage (and ideally above the fold). I'm also a little disappointed that the 'Book a Visit' button disappears when the website is viewed on a mobile device. This is likely to be the primary lead-generating action on the site, so it should be front and centre on all devices.

Another element that I would like to see and which would make this mobile design more functional is a highly visible phone number with 'click to call' functionality. When searching for local, 'bricks and mortar' businesses on a mobile device, the most likely conversion action people will take is to make a phone call. By simply adding the phone number either to the very top of every page or as an item in the mobile menu, this is likely to increase the number of calls made by visitors to the site and therefore the conversion rate from website visitors to paying customers.

When performing a page speed test, the website performs extremely well on mobile (93/100) and desktop (99/100).



Page speed scores like this put the website above 99.9% of business websites and show that, even with high-quality, large images, a website can still load up in just a few seconds if it is designed well. This is extremely good for conversion rates.

Overall, this is a website that's clearly been designed with the knowledge that the majority of the people visiting it will be doing so on a mobile device. However, there are a few optimisations that could be made that would help increase the usability and conversion rate on both a desktop and mobile.

INTERNET PROFIT STRATEGIES

Long Live Email

Email Is Not Dead. It's Alive And Kicking

Email marketing, contrary to what some would have you believe, is not dead. Done well, it's still very much an effective and inexpensive way to generate new business and keep customers engaged.

Here's our take on why.

It's Easy To Get Started

All you need to get started is a list of people to email. And building that list can be done in 2 steps.

First, make sure you gather emails from people who buy from you and insert the necessary data statement that will allow you to contact them with marketing material.

Second, create a lead magnet and promote it using paid digital advertising. Invite people to download the lead magnet in exchange for their contact details and permission to contact them.

It's Profit-Boosting

Email marketing is not likely to directly lead to sales but that doesn't mean it won't boost profits.

High-quality email content, such as newsletters, still get opened, read, clicked and shared. And because it's going to a list of people who've already shown an interest in you, it gets a good level of engagement.

To maintain the quality, always you make sure you focus on what will be of value to your target audience when planning your email content. While a report on your Christmas party might be

interesting to you, it won't be enough to make your email stand out in an overflowing inbox.

Think instead of what you could write that would help your reader solve a problem or fulfil a need, such as product reviews or how-to guides.

It Builds Brand Recognition

Well-designed emails that include your logo, colours and tagline will get the visual aspects of your brand in front of your prospects more frequently. This means when they are in the market for something you sell, your brand will feel familiar to them and they'll be more likely to choose you over a competitor.

With the plethora of online email marketing platforms (many of which are free), it's easy to design an email that looks good and includes your company's visual assets.

Its Keeps Them Thinking Of You

Regular email communication with your customers and prospects means they won't forget you. Even if they don't open your emails, your name will still pop up in their inbox.

This constant reminder of your existence will mean that you'll at least be on their shortlist when it comes to making a purchase.

It Builds Credibility

Provided you focus on high-quality, useful content, your email campaigns will build your credibility. It can be the one chance you have to

connect with prospects and show off how useful you can be. And if your competitors aren't doing it, you'll really stand out.

It Can Generate Interaction

You can use your email communication to start a conversation with your prospects. You could ask them to complete survey questions, take part in a poll or a competition or ask them for suggestions. It will create a connection between you and your prospects at the same time as cribbing some useful customer insight.

It Can Be Highly Personalised

Unlike many other forms of advertising, email can be easily personalised. It's easy to insert somebody's first name anywhere in the email, including the subject line. If you sell to other businesses, you can include the company name in the email too.

If you're emailing past customers, you can also reference previous purchases they've made with you.

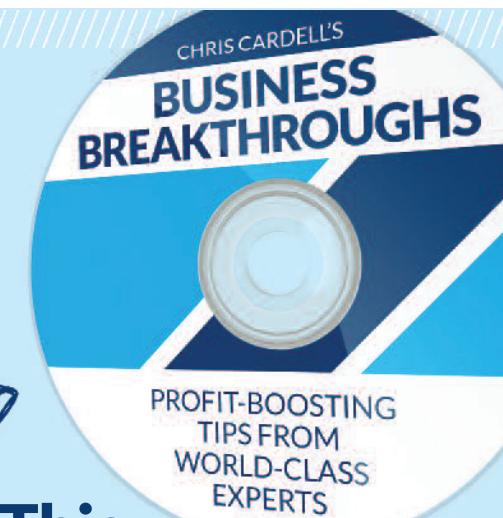
It Gets You Creating Content That Can Be Repurposed

Committing to a monthly newsletter is a great discipline and will force you to keep up a regular flow of good quality content. The analytics in your email marketing platform will also show you which articles are of most interest to your customers.

This content can be repurposed in other marketing channels, such as your website and digital advertising campaigns. Ultimately, you might even be able to collate them and publish them as a book.

If you aren't doing email marketing, then you should be. As part of a multichannel strategy, it won't use up much extra resource but it will work hard for you.

EMAIL MARKETING IS NOT LIKELY TO DIRECTLY LEAD TO SALES BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT WON'T BOOST PROFITS.



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Pricing – It's More Flexible Than You Think



By **DAN KENNEDY**

Most small business owners operate in the dark when it comes to price.

They guess at and ballpark what they should be charging. When it comes to research that usually means taking a look at what the competition is asking and trying to slightly undercut them. Cost analysis? That's usually a panic move that results in reduced prices, leading to smaller profit margins.

It's time to shed some light on the elusive topic of pricing. Here are a few things you should know.

Competing on price can be hazardous to the future of your business. If you aren't the cheapest, it makes no sense to be "one of the cheapest". Because those who shop by price only are all going to go to the cheapest. Which leaves you out in the cold.

If you are in a commodity business, you must reinvent yourself. Find something besides price to be competitive on that you can use to leverage your business. Maybe your service is second to none. Or your delivery or follow-up time can't be matched by the competition.

Once a client asked me to create an ad. The client is a consultant in the restaurant industry. The ad was for one of his students. The student owns a gourmet pizza delivery shop. It's located in a small city where they compete with over 100 other pizzerias and they are the highest priced of them all. They offer no special deals, yet they doubled their price the following year. Here's the keyword that differentiates them from all the other pizzerias in town: gourmet.

Don't worry about so-called "industry norms". Most business owners take a look at what their competitors are charging. They make note of the high and low price and end up setting their prices somewhere in the middle. As unscientific as it may sound, this is the way most businesses establish their prices.

Most selling occurs in a vacuum. If your selling

process doesn't, you need to change your marketing approach so that it does occur in a vacuum before an actual sale happens.

There is "price", and then there's "presentation of price". This means structuring what you sell so that it's different from the competition. Small, subtle differences allow you to set a higher price because a direct comparison to lower prices can't be made. Why? Because you've built-in value-added benefits and features to your product and service.

Avoid running your business on fear. Most business owners needlessly underprice their products or services. They then try to overcompensate by raising prices, often too late. They also make the mistake of ignoring opportunities to sell premium-priced versions mostly out of fear.

The price your customers pay is a result of the target market selected, perceived value, the value proposition presented, salesmanship, credibility, celebrity status, brand and buying experience. These are just a few of the factors that play into the buying decision.

The buying decision has very little to do with objectively measured intrinsic value. If that were the case, diamonds would not cost any more than glass or coal. You can control and manipulate all the non-intrinsic factors. So you should approach price courageously and creatively.

A great way to build up your pricing courage is to do a little research and find out what else, and how much, your clientele spends money on. Also, take a look at what the really affluent spend on a variety of goods and services. Items like a home entertainment system that costs thousands are common among those who can afford it.

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