

Welcome to this marketing planning tool and sample plan

Most small companies are short of 2 things

Time

Money



So there are limits to what promotional adventures we can try. What we do has to be easy, deliver results and not overwhelm the day to day running of the business. So we want to do things that are inexpensive, proven and deliver a continual flow of warm leads at a rate that the business can absorb.

So what we have to do to promote a small business is

- identify a unique story about serving identifiable groups of customers
- tell it so that it makes customers want to contact us
- use the cheapest, most cost-effective routes of telling the story
- talk to our existing customers to keep them working with us.
- find out what they want so we can develop new products for them – its much cheaper to sell new things to old customers
- know enough about selling to close the leads that we generate

So our plan

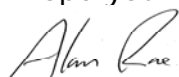
1. looks at who you and your customers are and what you sell to them
2. helps you define your story
3. Helps you work out where to tell it
4. Advises you on HOW to tell it
5. Helps you close the enquiries you generate
6. Helps you monitor the results

It's the workbook from our **1Man Brand** programme - a complete Sales and Marketing learning package for small businesses - 6 hours of distance learning plus nearly 200 pages of support materials. You can buy the whole package from www.1ManBrand.co.uk for £77 inc. VAT and delivery.

You may also like our Punch above your Weight e-book. Get it here for £17.65 inc. VAT. <https://howtobusiness.com/secure/cdorderform.aspx?prd=bk9>

It's the workbook from our workshop on how to make yourself look bigger on-line.

I hope you find it useful



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People make a big mystique about Marketing – but really it's about 3 things

- 1) What's Your Story?
- 2) Telling it often enough in the right places.
- 3) Getting your delivery right.

It's about building a reputation that means people come to you. Your reputation depends on

Knowing Your Stuff
Delivering what you say when you say
Being Likeable / Easy to deal with
And
How many people have heard of you.

So there's a content aspect and a volume aspect. Your task is to manage both. So you have to have a good range of products or services and a reliable business system to deliver them. You also need people to tell it on your behalf.

You need a window on the world – which for most of us is our web-site. It needs to efficiently deliver what we want it to – direct sales if we are a retailer, downloads if we are an expert trying to demonstrate our competence or enquiries. Each web page is a step in a sales process.

But it's no good having a great site and a good range of products if no-one's heard of you.

You need to be able to drive enough traffic to your site to provide the qualified enquiries that you need to close the business at the right rate to meet the profit targets that you've set for yourself.

So you need to understand the sales pyramid and you need to be clear about the tools that you need to drive traffic to your site.

The Sales and Marketing Pyramid

Obtaining orders is a numbers game. You need a clear business model that delivers so many orders per week with a sufficient gross margin to pay for costs of sale, overheads and leaving something over for re-investment and profit.

This will represent so many sales per month. To achieve those sales, a face to face business will typically need about 3 times as many live close-able prospects to achieve the sales needed for the profit target. This number needs to be topped up week by week.

To achieve we will need to qualify 6 times that number of leads and the marketing activity will need to generate this number.

So whether you rely on advertising, telesales or internet based technologies, it's important to have a clear idea of what your model requires and how much it's going to take to build the sausage machine you need.

The structure is shown in the diagram.

It's important to measure what the conversion ratios are at each stage of the pyramid. The numbers will differ with each business but it's crucial to know what these are. That way you can monitor your own sales performance and that of anyone you later employ and need to manage.

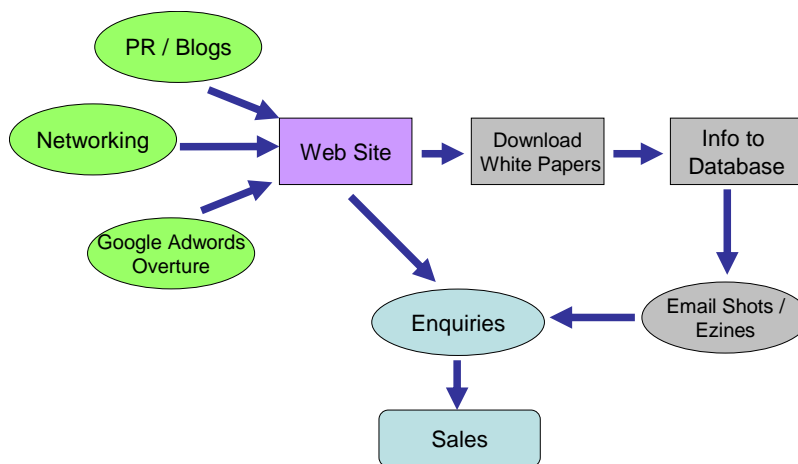


If you are running an internet based business it becomes critical to know what the ratio of impressions to clickthroughs, and clicks to sale are. If we know what the pattern should be – then we can measure it. Our aim is to use the least effort, least cost means of delivering the enquiries we need and developing a system to self qualify them to minimise prospecting time and maximise time spent with good prospects and customers.

The tools at our disposal

So what kind of strategy might suit? A typical one for a small business might look like this.

As you can see it uses the web site as the hub of the wheel and most of the marketing activities are filtered through it. It's conceived from the point of view of a business services business where there is a large degree of intellectual property content. However the same principles apply in a retail business.



The principle is that we are combining a combination of written activity, face to face activity and online activity to drive traffic to the site. The site may deliver sales and enquiries directly or it may download information such as white papers in exchange for permission to use the

email address. You can then send out emails or Ezines containing offers which can generate further enquiries to be turned into sales. We want to produce a steady stream of enquiries. What a small business often wants to do is to use the site as its shop window, drive traffic to it by a variety of methods and produce a trickle of emails saying “I’m interested - contact me”.

In order to manage this some kind of database management system will be needed. Choose a system that’s comprehensive enough to deliver the control that you need but simple enough to be manageable as part of the business – and not take it over.

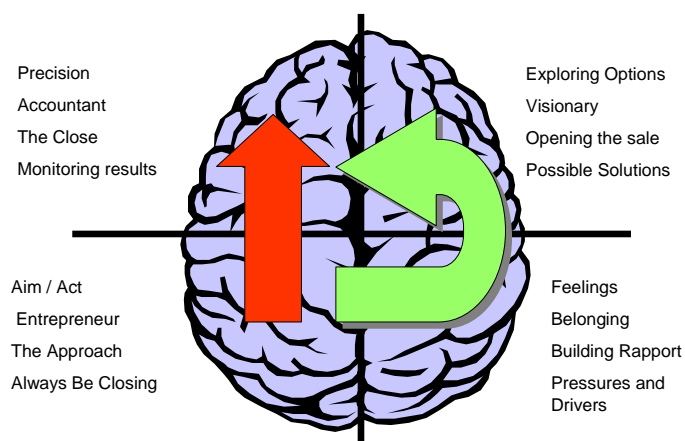
Tell the story about how you help your customers where it will boost your sales.

Our business is an expression of how we help other people. But it needs to be profitable. This means that you have to identify areas where what you do is valuable. And you need to build an organisation able to resonate with your customers and their needs and deliver what they want rapidly and efficiently.

You need a business story that links who you are to the world. Telling it inside is leadership, outside is marketing. It is based on your integrity and values. From time to time you update it. Developing organisations continually re-focus and re-invent in our world of constant change. Otherwise we lose touch with our customers.

So let’s start with you. You are probably familiar with the idea that different people think in different ways. There is a right side to the brain which deals in patterns and a left side which deals in numbers and logic. There is a front portion of the brain which likes to think and an instinctive, old brain at the rear which operates on immediate perception and impulse. If you map these into quadrants, you get 4 styles of thinking and behaviour which have different characteristics. And we see different patterns being dominant at different stages of the business cycle.

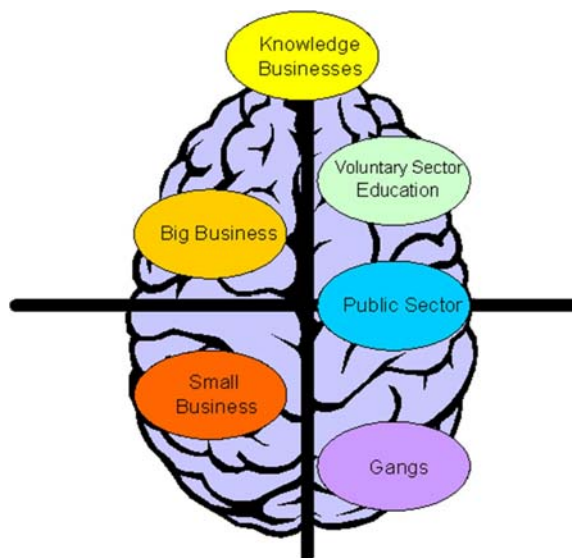
So as the diagram shows, top right thinkers are visionaries, who like to explore new things top left thinkers can be labelled as “accountants” who like control, bottom left are “entrepreneurs” who are impatient to achieve their goals and bottom right are team players who focus on people issues. We can easily measure where we are and gain and understanding of how others tick using the [Brain Technologies BrainMap](#).



The MindMaker6 tool uses the Graves Spiral to identify 6 major world views that people adopt. These are either group/relationships orientated or individual/results orientated.

We believe that understanding these views and their dynamics is important to telling our story. We need to be clear about what our views and values are and those of our customers since if you talk in language that the customer feels comfortable with, you are more likely to motivate them than if you don't.

We can map different types of organisation to represent the positions of the Graves Spiral onto the BrainMap. It looks like this.



What this means is that the organisations on the left are results and self orientated while those on the right are group / relationship orientated. The individuals and organisations have a characteristic balance between instinctive and thinking behaviour.

Knowledge businesses strike a balance between technology and people issues and represent a new tendency that can make a conscious use of the other views. This is the position from which the progressive use of new media originates – it values potential random connections and is not held back by the command and control mentality that you find in both corporate and public sector organisations. Once you understand how these dynamics operate and the value systems they represent, you can start to express your ideas in ways that will relate better to you potential customers and get better results.

For instance the systems on the left are self orientated while those on the right are group orientated. Inside an organisation, if you use “me” language with “we” people they will tend to work to hold you back or keep you in your place. If you use “we” language with “me” people, they will tend to see you as weak and try to marginalise you.

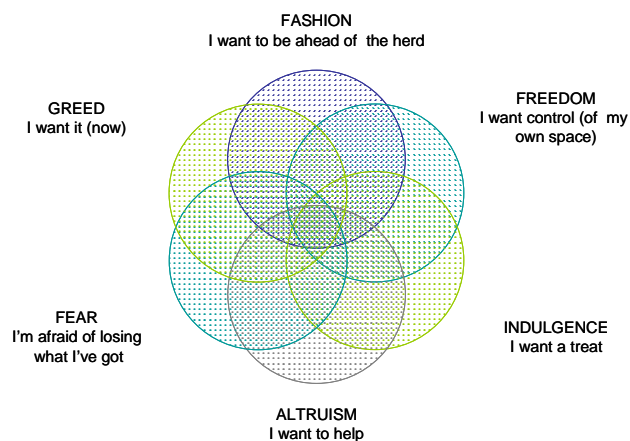
System	Language	Morality
Kinsperson	Basic Earthy Alive Here – I'll show you	What will be will be
Loner	Power / Action the man I'm looking for	It's a hard cruel world
Loyalist	Crisp formal conservative We want stability	There is duty and orders – always
Achiever	Fast business / military 2 nd place is 1 st loser	There will always be losers
Involver	Loose ambiguous stories Address human features	We have to try
Choice-seeker	Systems language & Ideas Strong learning opportunities	The rules are ambiguous

So it goes in selling or writing marketing copy. The values and appropriate language that you might use is set out in the second diagram.

There are many approaches to understanding customer motivation but for our purposes we have identified 6 main drivers – these are set out in the next picture.

In the business world motivators are traditionally fear, greed or fashion, or if we use brain orientated language, accountants, entrepreneurs and visionaries.

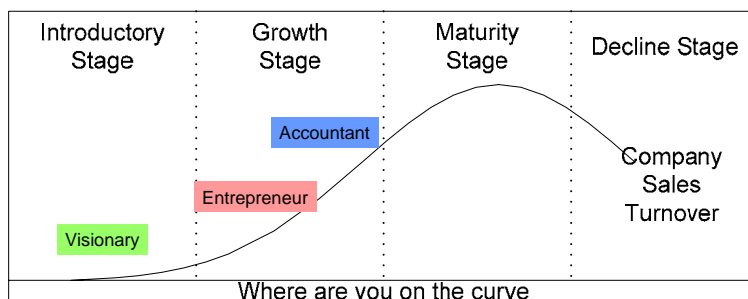
Consumer motivation also includes these but others come into play. Faith Popcorn identifies 17 current drivers for consumers with strange American names – but they all boil down to 2 things:



I'm fed up of this and I want to control my own space or I'm fed up with this and I want a treat. Interestingly we now know that the major driver for individuals setting up businesses is their desire to control their own lives rather than to make money. Research shows the ratio is 4 to 1. Finally people ARE motivated by altruism – as charity fundraising demonstrates.

What does this mean in terms of market dynamics?

The diagram shows where the different mindsets from the BrainMap analysis fit into the overall business life cycle.



As you can see you need a visionary to have the idea to fill the gap in the market. However if the business is to succeed you need someone able to be an entrepreneur - results driven, time and task focused to get the project off the ground. Once it's rolling you need someone with a more "accountant" mentality to fine-tune the business model and get it to become profitable.

It's important to understand the mindsets of the organisation you are dealing with – so you can tell your story correctly. In large organisations there will be multiple individuals engaged in the buying decision – so your story may have to be tailored in different ways. You will also need to demonstrate familiarity with KPIs and process if you want to trade with larger organisations – as it turns out this lack of understanding is often the crucial barrier for small companies.

So down to business – let's start the planning process

Who are you? How do you like to think, What are your values?

Who is your customer – how do they think, what are their values

Are you selling to visionaries, entrepreneurs or more conservatively minded people?

What do you emphasize in your story – the product, your operational excellence, your care for your customers – does this fit with your customer's attitudes and their place in the market? Is associating with your Image going to benefit their image?

What are you selling to whom? What is your unfair advantage? What makes you different?

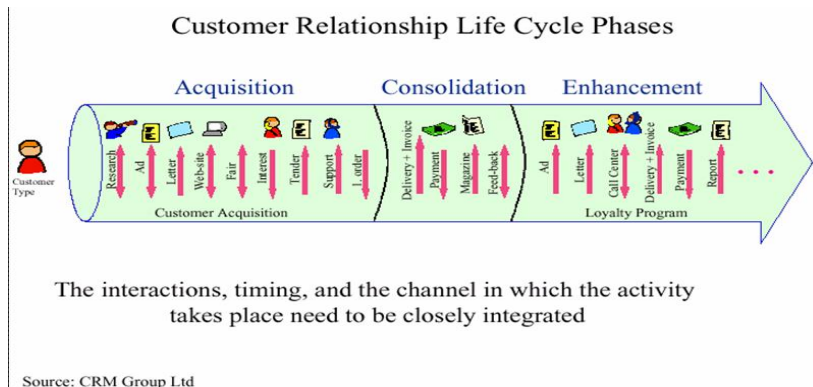
Where do you see new business coming from? Who are you targeting?

		Customers	
		Existing	New
Products	Existing	What % increase Here	What % increase Here
	New	What % increase Here	What % increase Here

So what is your story – bearing in mind the thinking styles and values of you, your team and the people you want to sell to?

Where to tell it?

Now we've worked out our story, where are we going to tell it. It's important to select a series of easy to use, inexpensive and powerful techniques which will work together to deliver the results that you need. We are building a communication strategy to allow us to identify who are best customers are and to plan, manage and monitor a series of communications with them. Over the long run this will bind them to us.



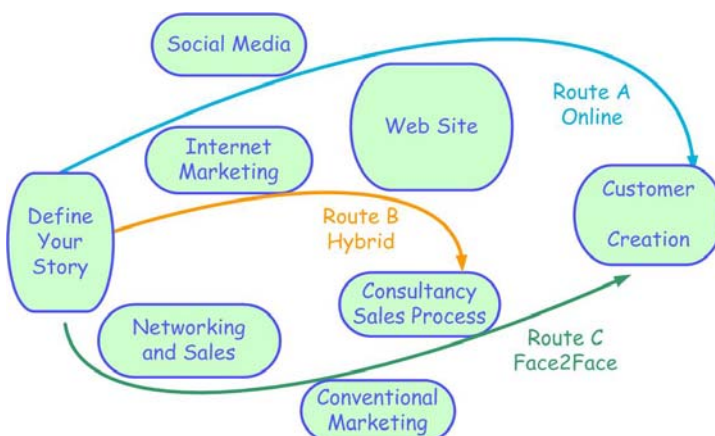
We believe you should use a mix of techniques. Research shows that it generally takes 7 interactions of various kinds before an individual buys something. Most companies give up after 3 contacts – so it's not surprising that many companies don't get the results they should.

Face to face includes networking, traditional selling, exhibitions and workshops – both of which can be very powerful for building your company's credibility with suppliers as well as customers.

Written includes direct mail, PR – a very under-rated part of the small company arsenal, blogging – the electronic version of PR, literature, email and ezines and course the web-site itself .

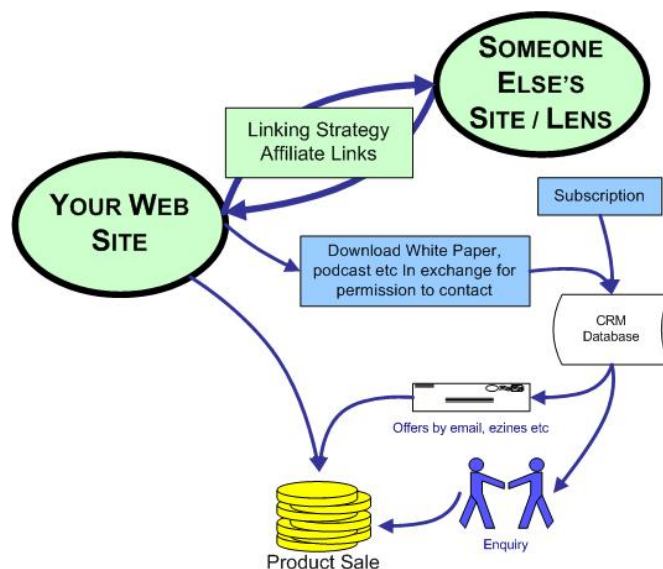
On-line activity combines Google ad-words, use of social media, and linking strategies.

The right combination for you is going to depend on how you see business coming to you. Some businesses (such as our Plants4Presents business) depend almost entirely on online activity. Traffic is driven by Google ad-words, by co-operative marketing with partners and by acquiring links. All backed up by emails to existing customers. Our Organic veg business by contrast is almost entirely driven by face to face networking and a bit of conventional marketing – the web site is just there because people expect us to have one



For most business services operations we recommend a hybrid approach where use of internet marketing and social media attract attention, prospective customers are encouraged to download a white paper or self-diagnostic and they can then be engaged by a series of follow up emails which offer additional value in a structured way.

At some point you are likely to have to engage with them personally and you will get into a more traditional consultancy sales process – the journey is shown as Route B in the customer creation diagram.



Which media are you going to use to tell your story and how do they hang together – what does the tactical plan look like

Written

- Direct Mail
- PR
- Web Site
- Delivery of Materials via the site
- Email
- Ezines
- Blog

Online

- Google ad-words
- Networking sites like Ecademy and Linked In
- Rich Media like YouTube, Flickr etc
- Clubs and communities
- Aggregators like Squidoo
- Twitter

Face to Face

- Direct Selling
- Networking
- Exhibitions
- Workshops and Seminars
- Telesales

Written

Writing decent copy is a key skill of the small business owner.

It's important when writing copy to think of who you're addressing – and write directly to them taking into account the ideas about how they are likely to think and feel.

How you express yourself will depend on the medium. So when writing press releases they need to be kept short and factual with the key messages up front. If you are writing an email it needs to be short and punchy. If you are writing a direct mail piece it can be much longer – still use powerful headlines and benefits with the key messages at the beginning and end but salted throughout with triggers. Cialdini in his book on influence identifies some key determinants of behaviour. Authority, Social Proof (hence the value of testimonials) Contrast, Consistency, Reciprocation (hence the power

Good copywriting makes use of all of these while being punchy, colourful and easy to read. So in general keep Headlines interesting, words, sentences and paragraphs short-ish and take the time to find your own voice. Writing a Blog is very good for this as it gives you the practice in putting your thoughts down in a concise and interesting way. Think of it as the electronic version of PR. Why not start in Wordpress as it's easy to set up and use and you can treat it as a mini-site.

In fact PR is the most under-rated tool in the Small Business armoury. If you have a good story to tell, the local or trade press are often happy to use it. It builds brand like nothing else and can bring in orders from across the globe.

As we've discussed, on-line activities parallel off-line. So the on line equivalent of PR is blogging. If you write something regular in a place where it is picked up by the search engines with your name and key words attached it is astonishing how quickly it gets picked up.

Writing copy for the web is a bit more tricky as your customers don't read - they scan. So use lots of bullet points, factual language and try and keep your key ideas in the F zone at the top, across the middle and down the left hand side. All the research shows that's where people look.

Just remember with all of these activities that you are aiming to produce a continuing flow of warm leads – probably through your site. So a good way of attracting visits and collecting email addresses is to offer free downloads through your site – giving information that's of value away in exchange for permission to contact with further offers of what you wish to sell.

Online

Why do we need to bother with telling our story on-line?

Marketing a small business is mainly about lead generation and backing up your face to face activity with effective supporting material to demonstrate that you're good at what you say you do.

A web page is just a stage in a sales process and it needs to be designed to end up with a call to action and a tangible result. This might be

- engagement by commenting on a Blog
- a request for download like a white paper
- a direct contact by phone or email
- an actual sale.

It needs to be easy to read, bulleted to allow people to scan it and the copy arranged so that the bits you really want them to read are arranged in the F shaped pattern that research tells us that the eyes trace out on the screen.

Web pages (and emails!) have to be written for 2 audiences, the human one that likes what it sees and engages and the robot one which allows the page to be found - or which prevents access to it in the form of a spam filter. Needless to say the preferences of these two audiences conflict.

Put simply you'll need to deconstruct your story into a set of keywords that people actually use to find whatever it is that you're offering. Then put them in the right places on the page - in the page title, in the headline tags and at the beginnings of paragraphs. Done in such a way as to appeal to the human audience.

You can simply brainstorm the keywords and put them into position - or you can use the keyword tool in Google Adwords - or - as I would recommend, run a test campaign to find out which words and phrases actually work best. We cover this in detail in our Punch above your weight workshop - but if you cap it at £3 a day and run it for a month you'll get massive return on your investment of £100 in terms of attracting site traffic.

SEO is just one way of driving traffic to your site. Negotiating links in from other places is important - and whenever possible you should have your best keywords on the anchor text of the links in.

Here's a secret - you may not be able to get your best words on a link on your favourite site - but you CAN put it in areas you control in the social media - profiles on Ecademy and linked-in, blogs, and you can tag pictures and you-tube videos so you can build up a large array of links pointing back to your site which will associate your page with that phrase in Google's mind. This is just like branding really - what's the phrase you want to own in Google's mind?

So use these media to tell your story in a way that entertains, that adds value and isn't sales puff. People are so fed up of having other people's products broadcast at them. Markets are Conversations as those fine folk from the Clue Train used to say. So by all means talk about your subject of expertise. You can be as serious as you like as long as it's genuinely informative.

Clubs on Ecademy, Groups in linked-in are all useful places to have conversations about what you do. Follow the principles of givers gain and give a bit of free advice - but have links in it that take people back to your site - and give them the opportunity to download a planner, to sign up for a newsletter - or even - God forbid - BUY something.

So here's your homework

What are the 3 or 4 keywords that best describe what you do?

Does it make sense for you to use a free download as part of your marketing? What would it be? How will you follow it up?

You'll really only have time to do 2 or 3 social media tools properly - so which ones will they be?

Turn your story into a Google Ad. You have 1 25 character Headline and 2 35 character lines. You may have seen this one before.

[Writing a marketing plan?](#)

Do you need help? Free Downloads
& Sample Plan to get you started
www.howtodobusiness.com

This costs me 20p a time and has a click through rate of 1.1%. On the basis that I am getting upwards of 10 downloads a day through the site, the cost per qualified email name captured is well under £1. This compares favourably with other means of making contact.

Finally write it as a 140 Character Tweet

Face to face

For most of us who are offering business to business services, our face to face activity is like the action of a play. All of the written and online marketing activity we've been talking about is no more than the scenery. The play goes better in a good theatre with a good backdrop but you can still do it in the street. However if people check you out online - as they will- and there's a good story to be found and some real evidence of substance - then your job will be so much easier.

Face to face is where most of the action happens. But there are two very different modes that we need to be fluent in. Networking and Sales - and they're not the same thing at all.

Networking is where you find a "home team" who will support you, where you can learn from each other and who will refer and advocate your services to others. Those who see networking events as sales fodder to hand out business cards to and broadcast what they do miss the point. It's about getting known, getting liked and getting trusted. It's a 2-3 year process and can't be hurried.

The evidence shows that most people prefer a group of 20-40 for their home team and that trust is built by

- absolute clarity about what you do
- getting back to people quickly
- contributing and listening rather than talking and selling
- having a positive can-do attitude

Networking is about reputation and lead generation - so it's really part of marketing. It's true that some people want to network on a very much larger scale. We'll explore why happens and it's rationale in week 6

Selling

Sales is where you stand or fall. People who've not worked in a professional sales structure often have odd ideas about it. The truth is you don't need to bust a gut selling somebody something they don't want.

The key to selling is qualification. You're actually scanning for people who you can sell to - using criteria like

- Can we convince them we're stable enough to trust us
- Have they got the money
- Am I talking to the right people - can they say yes - if he can who does he listen to
- Is the Pain they are suffering great enough to warrant the disruption of putting our solution in
- Can they see us as part of their future
- Can I give them permission to say yes?

It's important to be confident, and to speak in their language. But if you have fully qualified them that you can help them and they have the money then try the following approach

1. Tell them up front that you're here to sell to them if you can find agreement. And get them to agree to that.
2. Keep the conversation focused on how what you will do will solve their problem in a lasting way
3. Offer them 2 good choices, one of which is obviously better
4. Ask for permission to get on with making the arrangements.

Then shut up.

The difference between the amateur and the professional is system. You need to know what your conversion rate is for people who you get into the final stage, negotiation stage. This tells you how many encounters you need per month (or year!). Then you need to know how many of the people that you are engaged with through newsletters and other marketing activity like workshops, exhibitions, or telemarketing will have a problem go critical on them so that they contact you each month. If they don't appear you have to contact them

You need a system that engages enough interest so that when people meet you they're already warm and you can have a sensible conversation. I've used the word "engaged" for someone who has enough interest in what you offer to agree to receive stuff from you. How the stages happen on the way to the "endgame" and whether you can respond to demand will tell you whether the business is scalable - or not.

So here are your questions.

1) Where am I going to network face to face to find my core group(s)?

2) How many hours a week do I need to do to build the numbers of people I'm "engaged" with

3) How many closing encounters do I need this month?

4) How many people do I think I need to have "engaged" to make sure that the 2 or 3 (or whatever) I need this month are pretty certain to pop out.

5) How will I know that someone is ready for me to engage in the final stage sales process?

What are you actually going to do?

Think about what budget you have

Now select the Media you want to use

Written	On-Line	Face to Face

You may be interested to know what your fellow small businesses do. Here's the results from a survey we carried out last year which tells you what tools our predominantly business service respondents actually use. (They were recruited via BNI – a networking organisation and Ecademy and Linked-in)

Technique	Use regularly	Depend on it	Total
One to One selling	43.4	30.8	74.2
Social Networks	50.1	21.6	71.7
Workshops	23.6	6.6	30.2
PR	21.8	7.5	29.3
Online advertising	22.6	4.9	27.5
Email Shots	23.5	3.2	26.7
Newsletters	22.2	2.2	24.4
Direct Mail	18.6	3	21.6
Blogs	14.1	3.7	17.8
Print advertising	13.4	1.4	14.8
Telesales	12	2.7	14.7
Exhibitions	8.9	0.9	9.8
E-zines	5	1.4	6.4
Leaflet Drops	4.4	1.5	5.9

So you can see that face to face activities are very important to them. Workshops are important as are PR, online advertising and Email. However the early adopter we interviewed use the online media to good effect – they boost their lead generation by an estimated 40% by using social media. We also found that those who get 80% of their business within a 50 mile radius are much less likely to use online media. In the group who operate on a more widespread basis, a full 40% reported depending on or using Linked-In regularly.

Draw a picture of how you see your marketing activities working together

What 3 things are you going to do differently?

	Written	Online	Face to Face
What do you want to achieve in this area?			
What tangible results do you expect?			
How much will it cost you?			
How will you know you've been successful?			
What 3 things are you going to do differently?			
First			
Second			
Third			

Finally I want you to identify the things you are going to do. Our research shows that most businesses spend about 12-15 hours a week on their sales and marketing and that professional businesses spend 1.5% - 4% of their turnover.

There are many things we've not covered in this brief plan – all the techniques to establish whether there's a market in the gap as well as a gap in the market: and all the issues of market segmentation and branding. However – if you carry out the work in this workbook you should have a clearer idea of what your story is and how you're going to tell it.

	Hours per week	Money per year
Personal Activity		
Face to Face networking		
Direct Selling		
Exhibitions		
Workshops and Seminars		
Telesales		
Written Materials		
Direct Mail		
PR		
Web Site		
Delivery of Materials via the site		
Email		
Ezines		
Blog		
Postcards		
Leaflets		
Online		
Google ad-words		
Other online advertising		
Linked-in		
Ecademy		
Twitter		
Facebook		
Ning		

The work you've done now needs to be put into a strategic context. I can't do that for you in this short booklet but to give you an idea of the kind of answers a professional marketer would expect – here's an example from my own business as it was a couple of years ago.

It will provide a template to develop a marketing plan for your own business. In order to make it real we have written it from the point of view of a company like ours. You should disregard the words that do not apply to you and substitute your own text. It does not matter how different your business is from ours, the same principles apply—define your markets, understand your customers, quantify your targets, strategize your prospecting, and know how you're going to close them.

Purpose

The purpose of this company is to carry out research into how small organisations use IT and e-business, turn the findings into e-books and other material that will be useful to other small companies and market the information via the internet. We want to provide a tool-kit for self-sufficiency to people who have left the corporate life and want to set up on their own.

Markets

We have two types of customers—the small businesses that will make use of the knowledge we provide, and the organisations who will support small businesses or supply small businesses. The needs and motivations of these two market segments are quite different. For that reason we have divided the second part of the plan into 1) Projects and 2) Publications for SMEs. SME stands for small-or-medium-sized enterprises.

Values

We value practicality and reality. This means that we are thorough and knowledgeable in our research and that we add value to our SME customers by presenting the information in easy to digest, practical units. People are always short of time and are generally motivated by wanting to control their own space -

We respond to our customers in a professional way and make use of the full range of modern technologies to deliver a swift and accurate service.

Unique Selling Points

Many business support agencies offer general advice from people who have never worked at the coal face. We have a vast wealth of practical knowledge years and can provide both inspiration and information. We have a track record in running IT businesses on the one hand and developing training programmes for organisations such as the DTI and PCWorld on the other. We have been asked to carry out research projects on how small businesses behave and how to reach them by organisations like Universities, IT majors and Government and other not –for profit organisations. Finally we distribute tools for psychological self-assessment which can be incorporated into the marketing and leadership products we plan to develop as a unique differentiator.

Market Size

Research and content development— our target market includes significant IT and Telecoms companies on the one hand and various government, membership and voluntary bodies on the other. We believe that there is a Universe of 500-1000 organisations who commission the type of work we are able to offer. We are only seeking a working relationship with 35 of these and indeed are seeking only moderate amounts of Business from each one.

SME support materials

There are approximately 3.5 million SMEs in the UK of which 275,000 employ between 10 and 250 while some 2 million employ only 1 individual. Our experience shows that 10% of these will invest in some form of business education—even amongst 1 man bands due to the changing nature of business demographics. We have 2 distinct offerings aimed particularly at the 1-4 and at the 10-50 size bands but still usable by companies in the intermediate size banding.

Collaborative organisations

We have identified certain business support and networking organisations who we wish to collaborate with—our strategy will be to offer them both research and content development capability to help them deal with mismatches between their current offerings and the needs and wants of the target market. In addition there are a number of smaller organisations that we have collaborated with on past projects. It's a key part of our strategy to forge close alliances with these organisations to allow us to bid collaboratively to large, particularly, public sector organisations.

Finally we have identified that the various on-line and offline networking associations can provide a viable route to market. Ecademy looks particularly promising in this respect.

PART ONE—PROJECTS FOR LARGER ORGANISATIONS

Customers

A typical customer from the business support/supply sector will be currently in the process of launching a new project or rethinking their approach to an existing project. Their task is to influence/educate small businesses and they need our help because they lack experience, understanding or relevant content. In particular they may need help in understanding the psychology of the Small Business Owner and how this affects buying decisions.

Customer Acquisition

Our target organisations fall into two main segments—private and public. Within the private sector the prime candidates are IT and

Telecom suppliers. Within the public sector there are the agencies funded by central government and regional government. We already have relationships with some of these but we need to build our profile and extend our reach.

Mechanisms

We have identified three ways in which we can extend our contacts...person-to-person selling via networking and public speaking and distance selling via the internet. The new web-site will provide P.R. It will advertise our track record through a series of downloadable case studies and white papers. All of the materials will position us as competent experts in our field whose experience will provide advice, answers, solutions, knowledge and encouragement for our clients. We will drive traffic to the site by a combination of pay per click, link development and on line networking.

Target Sales—projects

We aim to generate ten 10 day projects during the course of the year priced at £800 per day to give a total income of £80,000 less expenses. This will require acquiring seven customers allowing for approx 50% repeat business. (These estimates are put forward on the basis of experience of similar turnover at a previous company)

To gain seven customers we will need to maintain ongoing discussions and negotiations with 30 organisations allowing a conversion ratio of roughly 1 in 4. This would require us to have some kind of contact with between 200 and 300 organisations through various marketing activities if starting from a cold start.

Prospecting.

We will use a system of e-newsletters to draw attention to our capabilities by building a database of 300 by December 2004 and 1000 names by December 2005 by continuing to attend whatever conferences we can in order to obtain email addresses plus the permission to make use of the data. We believe that these activities will deliver us the core group of 30 potential customers that are engaged in ongoing discussions that we need.

In addition we will use pay per click techniques to drive people to specific deep linked pages which will allow free downloads of useful white-papers while presenting our track record in an easy to digest way.

PART TWO—PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER MATERIALS FOR SMES

Customers

A typical SME customer will be in the process of setting up or re-equipping their businesses to take advantage of new technologies as they become available. The new entrepreneur is constantly looking for information and ideas but SMEs in general don't like spending significant amounts of money on knowledge. The best way of reaching them is to turn the material into e-books, pod casts and Articulate Presentations and sell them electronically.

Target Sales—SME

Initial Desk Research indicates there a number of companies selling e-books from £25 per download based on a "how to do it" or "this is how I did it" formula approach. In addition we believe there are opportunities for a complete course in how to do it based on a higher price point.

Potential titles in the frame include 1Man Brand a complete sales and marketing primer for the small business. This will sell at around £75 inc. VAT. The general messages will be—we know you need to do this—you haven't time to research it in detail—here is the formula you can apply for results that won't break the bank and will let you get on with your main business.

Target: 1000 packages sold worldwide in a full year, leading to a gross income of around £60k after allowing for VAT, delivery and materials costs. Using the usual direct marketing formulation the marginal costs of promotion will be around £20.

Customer Acquisition—SME

The unit profit implies that face-to-face selling is too expensive, so we will be relying on search engines and e-zones to drive traffic to our business support. This will need to be supplemented by P.R. in the form of business workshops and speaking events, and some networking. Networking events will help to boost our profile, but will also be a method of collecting email addresses for e-zines. We already have 500 email names so we believe that it will take us 18 months to achieve a further 1500. Ideally we need 10,000 email addresses if e-zines are going to be a significant contribution to sales and a 3% conversion rate is targeted. We believe that an effective pay-per click campaign will generate the necessary opt-in names over an 18 month period.

Finally in addition to attending exhibitions where we can deliver talks, we will run 1 public workshop a month.

Mechanisms

The SMEs will be contacted with a quarterly e-zine on a topic of general interest based on the findings coming out of the research programme plus briefings on our specific findings. The information will need to be specific and useful to gain traction. We believe that the best mechanism for selling electronic products is to set up a specific, one page site for each product in order to describe the materials in considerable detail with a patch through at the end to an e-commerce engine such as www.actinic.co.uk

We have the skills in house to produce the sites we need. We believe it essential to separate the corporate face which carries out projects from the distribution face. We propose to use AiConsultants for the corporate brand and howtodobusiness.com for the distribution brand. Specific products such as 1Man Brand will have their own web-site but will be seen as product brands under howtodobusiness.com.

E-zines and white papers can be written in the same medium and then translated into PDF format using adobe acrobat. The e-book itself can be generated in the same way. Voice-overs can be produced using Articulate which allows us to lay down a sound track over the power point slides used for workshops or public presentations.

Again the management of the database and the sending out of e-zines uses time, and so will be given a notional cost in our marketing plan.

Driving Site Traffic

We believe that the best way to achieve the site traffic that we need is to go down the pay per click route in the first instance. This will involve systematically brainstorming the keywords that can be bought and analysing what level of activity can be obtained in this way.

Assuming a conversion rate of 1%, to generate 1000 sales will take 100,000 clicks. Experience suggests that this traffic can be generated for around £5000.

Once the campaign has been running for some time it will be possible to analyse what keyword phrases are working best and so an iterative process of refinement will allow an update of the text, headlines and MetaTag entries on the various pages. This will result in an improvement in the organic search position and so reduce the overall cost per click. This process will be accelerated by building an effective link strategy.

PART THREE - COSTINGS

From experience, running such a model will require 1 day a week networking and selling, 1 day a week on marketing and 1 day a week writing to support 2 days actual delivery per week at £800 per day.

Annual Marketing Budget	
Direct Costs	
Hosting & IT	£500
Site set up costs	£1000
Graphic Designer	£500
Networking Subscriptions & other memberships	£1000
Pay per click	£5000
Exhibition attendance – 2 per year	£1600
Printed Postcards and Business Cards	£1000
Total	£10,600
Internal Promotional Costs – assume you do it and you pay yourself £50k / year	£30,000
You start getting other people to do it when you can afford to pay them £200 per day to secure you another day of delivery	

Marketing Budget in the context of the Business Plan

This plan envisages a turnover of £140,000 and a marketing spend of £10,600. Upper quartile figure for marketing spend by SMEs according to Cranfield is about 1.5%. However, when I was running a CAD dealership I regularly spent about 4% - £20k on an £800k turnover. This did not include our own internal marketing activities or the cost my sales team.

In this example the pay per click costs are really part of the cost of sale so that “overhead” marketing if you will is £5600, which on the turnover figures is about 4% in round figures.

It obviously varies a lot with the type of business but I don’t think that if you’re serious you are going to get away with much less.

There’s an expanded version of this plan which goes into much more detail and which covers the explosion in the social media world – particularly Twitter. It’s called 12 hours a week because that’s what our research tells us that most small business owners spend on their sale and marketing.. [Its available here and costs £20+VAT](#)

You can also get it in the form of a 3 hour workshop (which also includes a BrainMap). This costs £115 + VAT. [You can book here.](#)

About Alan Rae

Probably the most important things you need to know about me are that I originally did a DPhil in Plant Biochemistry and that I've been a marketing practitioner since 1977.

In that time I've worked in Heavy Engineering as a Marketing Manager, set up and run 4 companies and had 4 years off for good behaviour setting up an e-commerce training and demonstration centre in West London.

I still carry out the kind of research and training development work that the plan describes as well as creating the materials you see here. The rest of the business sells plants and biological controls on line (and grows organic veg!). In total we turn over more than half a million. So we do know something about how to promote ourselves – online and offline.

As it happens I'm a chartered Fellow of the CIM and have been an accredited Technology means Business and WorkWise adviser. However it's doing it that really interests me.

Some other things that might interest you are

1Man Brand package for £77 including VAT <http://www.1manbrand.co.uk> It includes over 3 hours of PowerPoint + voice over material in 4 lessons covering what's your story, telling it in writing, telling it online and telling it in person. Includes 200 pages of supporting material - e-book on subconscious selling to help with copywriting plus my own Fast track to e-commerce success.

Punch above your Weight workshop shows how to build a powerful online presence using Google ad-words, blogs and social networks. Priced at £177 inc VAT we run it monthly. <http://www.punchaboveyourweight.com>

Get you started programmes to set up Google ad-words campaigns, blogs or social media profiles. <http://www.howtodobusiness.com/Internet-Marketing.htm>

1 to 1 consultancy. £800 + VAT per day. If you need a short sharp consultation by videoconferencing it's a pound a minute to buy help in units of £20+Vat for 20 minutes or £60 + Vat for 60 minutes.

<http://www.howtodobusiness.com/howtodobusiness-videosupport.htm>

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