

8 SECONDS...

BITE SIZE INSIGHTS TO HELP YOU HIRE
THE RIGHT DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCY



SUZANNE WIEBE

8 SECONDS...

Suzanne Wiebe has explored every aspect of the marketing world from freelance analyst to strategizing and outsourcing for large companies and marketing agencies. Her background in analytics opens doors and provides insights that have enabled her to make many innovations, and help dozens of large businesses over the last 30 years.

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These are my memories, from my perspectives. I have tried to represent events as faithfully as possible.

Sample scenarios and case studies in this book are fictitious and for reference, example purposes only. Any similarity to actual persons, businesses, or strategies, living or dead, is coincidental.

You have 8 seconds to turn a click into a lead

About the Author

Suzanne Wiebe CEG

Marketer - Systems Analysis, Project Management, SEO Forensic Analysis

30 years heading SEO teams for marketing companies and marketing firms. Owner and SEO of Axiom9 Marketing since 2000.

SEO starts in the code and ends 6 levels off your website. In 2010 Suzanne was asked, 'how much money the proposal would make.' That changed her focus as a marketer. Axiom9 evolved into a company that strategized growth and targeting the highest conversion to buyer ratios on the internet.

Axiom9's niche as a joint ventures and partnership marketing agency evolved again in 2015. Suzanne worked hard to teach her company to work with management and sales teams to reduce conflict. This improved scaling and growth for clients.

A pragmatic analyst, Suzanne skips all the marketing clichés and hits each project 'boots to the ground.'

In 2022 Axiom9 is growing again moving out of the white label support for other marketing companies and launching Axiom9 Marketing for SMB businesses.

What does Axiom9 bring to the internet marketing world? 20 years of experience and top performers from around the globe means that the client isn't paying us to learn our craft.

getstarted@axiom9.com

"A Marketer's job is not to give business owners more tasks to learn, more software to buy, and cause discord with sales departments. A good marketing campaign can contribute to increased profits both directly through leads, and indirectly through freeing the company's resources."

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Task ONE

Run our analytics report on your website.

Visit www.axiom9marketing.com for an in-depth online analysis review of your website. It will help you go through this book. Or, contact us at getstarted@axiom9.com and ask for the reports that accompany this book.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE TABLE

I want to begin this book by talking about you. I've sat in marketing meetings with all sorts of people.

Some came from money and had great educations. Some had great ideas but never knew how to run a business beyond 'paying the bills.' Some knew how to become wealthy and 'played the game'. Others pretended to be more wealthy and powerful than they really were.

I've also read books on success and, for the most part, as a trained coach, I can tell you that they are hogwash, to use one of my uneducated mother's terms. This book is my summary of 30 years in the marketing world.

Question. Are you a manager or a leader?

This is an important question to ask yourself before moving forward. If you are a leader you need to make this clear when you start a relationship with a marketing agency. Everyone leans more towards one or another.

A manager organizes and deals with tasks. They are data oriented and can make the most of reports and use that information to create a better online digital footprint. Managers often compartmentalize, and delegate, but not create a team-based environment in the workplace.

A leader is people oriented. A leader is more likely to be customer-centric, find it sales less stressful than a manager, and prefers to work in a team.

When your marketing firm knows which team you are on then they can customize the marketing strategy to make the most of your budget.

For example, when Axiom9 works with a manager they tend to offer premade, complete sales tools that take the customer through the entire sales process and then passes them off to an outsourced salesperson.

When we work with a leader, we will analyze the month end data for the business owner in a way that their sales team can use the information more.

The manager may follow Google's updates on their own. The leader will spend more time teaching their team about customer service and sales techniques.

One other thing that a leader invests in is bringing up the team under them. They invest in training. It is easy to identify an experienced leader. They skip all the guru courses and educate their team on communication: grammar, language, listening skills, learning methods, personality types, etc. I didn't learn the importance of language until I was in my 40s.

Successful people have a language based around causality. Some people identify it as supportive and motivating. I beg to differ. I see it as driven and leading everyone on the team to be as driven. The words we use define us. Our vocabulary defines us. It is the #1 most important aspect of a good team.

Say what you mean, mean what you say. Say it as succinctly as possible.

When I babble, there is a purpose. I am usually testing a person's tolerance and/or ability to maintain control. Language is a powerful tool that can accomplish many different tasks when in the hands of someone who has studied communication.

Start listening to conversations. Start looking at emails. Most people don't/can't talk in complete sentences. Many cannot even write an email in complete sentences. On a subliminal level this communicates what you think of yourself, and how much things matter to you. We don't really understand how this effects people's perceptions of us. We do know that a person who speaks in complete sentences, uses an effective vernacular, and includes punctuation in the proper place is most often perceived as a leader.

What is Wealth

Many of the wealthiest people I have ever met were family people. About 50% of them learned to be wealthy. I've tried to share some of their wisdom in this book, like, 'poor people buy products, rich people buy assets.'

Another one I haven't mentioned yet is, 'Never touch the estate.' If you don't have an estate you might translate this to, 'never touch the principal. OR, never touch your operating budget.' I see this mistake all the time. If your business needs \$500 or \$500 000 to run and you have a great year, then bank 'years' of budget ahead.

Chase cash not freedom, fun, or wealth. If you are not happy now, then these things will not solve your problem. I've seen many lonely people drinking away their lives in estates. I've heard many people crying in a resort.

Be yourself. Do this for yourself. Live the life you were meant to live. Don't be an appendix to someone else. This is important. I've seen many brilliant people slaving for companies they should be running. I remember working for one marketing company. My husband said, 'Well, that confirms it. BS baffles Brains.' That was a turnaround moment for me.

So instead of saying chase your goals, work to become rich, be passionate. I'm going to say, 'Enjoy the journey today.'

That way, you won't be one of those people who back down, quit, or burn out without realizing that they are within reach of success. It's amazing how many people quit within months of success. At first, I thought this was self-sabotaging.

Now I realize that they didn't know what success looked like. When they were faced with success, they couldn't see it. I am a firm believer in journaling. You may be struggling today, and you will struggle in 5 years. But, if you journal you will see how far you have come.

Building wealth is a journey, not a destination. Wealth doesn't necessarily mean money. One day you will realize that the little things you missed were the things that mattered.

1. No Man Is an Island

I hope I just deflated your over hyper drive to succeed. If anyone wants, you to be hyper driven or hyper emotional then their product is overpriced. Way overpriced.

Books like 7 habits, and other CEO type books never tell you to be over hyped because you will just burn out. Instead, you want to build a team. Outsource and hire out projects to people who are skilled, experienced, and good at their jobs.

If I can leave you with one sage word of advice, 'you can do a job, or you can run a business. You can't do both.'

I've heard so many wealthy people say, if you want a job then go to Harvard. This is because they do not have a formal education. A good CEO doesn't need it. Why should you invest 4 years of your life, and go into debt, when you can just hire someone who has that knowledge?

To Get There

Let's look at what you need to become rich.

1. Learn to Manage Risk

Risk management comes in many forms. For some it is trying to grow a business faster than they can financially afford. Others, it is trying to take the quick way to wealth. Still, for others it might be saving up for the next big business push instead of investing safely.

Invest your time into learning how to manage risk. That way, if you go bankrupt then you can do it in a way that protects your assets, and lets you start over.

This is hard to understand so let's take a look at an example. Business owner A puts \$1m extra cash into investments that lower his income tax. Business owner B puts \$1m into a farm, which isn't taxed. B lives in the house, and leases out the land. Both go bankrupt. A will lose everything. Under some bankruptcy laws the creditors cannot take your house. So, now, after a few years of recouping and rebuilding assets, B has equity in the farm to use as a loan or, if he is smart, he has a \$1m farm he can sell.

It's all in how you manage risk. I have personally gone bankrupt twice. I have started the same business 3x and grew them to where I needed them at that time of my life. I've had offices, and I've worked out of my home. I've had employees, and I've worked on projects for 1 – 2 years, alone in my livingroom, until they were ready to launch.

The one thing I learned was how to measure risk. We all have risk. If you are an employee with a safe job you are gambling your future on someone else's ability to manage a company. If you are a professional then you are risking your future on a) the marketing ability of your location, or b) your marketing, branding, and networking. Either way, you have risk.

The one thing I have learned with risk is, the more you try to Do-It-Yourself the harder it will be to succeed. You are not an expert at everything. You may need to give up a nice office to hire a more skilled employee or outsource tasks. But, what that brings to the table is years of experience and learning that you don't have. Knowledge is power. It's the one thing that successful businesses value above all else.

2. It's Better to Be Rich and Pretend You Are Poor, Than To Be Poor And Pretend You Are Rich.

I love this saying because it means two different things. When you are at the beginning of your journey you think about wasting money on watches, cars and houses that will trap you in middle class for the rest of your life.

When you have made it, it translates to mean that you don't need all the 'tolerances.' The 'rich' lifestyle can be so damaging that many of the wealthiest people in the world will not bequeath their money to their kids.

In the business world it means that it's better to work from a small office, or out of your home, and minimize your risk, and maximize your chances of becoming wealthy.

Why? Because, when we try to be someone, we are not then it is easy to take advantage of us. It becomes easy to use us. There are two types of people in the world of success. Those who are used, and those who take advantage of opportunities. Be the latter.

There is more to this statement about pretending who you are that is often missed by coaches and gurus. When we were in school we were programmed to conform. There was only one right answer. We failed for getting the wrong answer. We took tests alone, and were not rewarded for cooperation. There was no reward for brainstorming and creating. In short, everything we needed to build a successful business was squashed out of us. We eventually believed this. These are crippling tolerances for many people.

The Dalai Lama said it best, 'you cannot have a negative mind and a positive life.'

3. Opportunities and Excuses

Jim Rohn once said, "If you really want to do something you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse. As a trained business coach, I can also say, if you don't then you'll self-sabotage yourself. This brings us back to point #1. If you really don't want it then don't invest your life trying to get it. Live your best life.

You can make excuses or do something about it. You don't need another case study. The internet is full of second chance stories, and rags to riches stories. We don't need to go into that again. What we do need is to look at life day, by day.

I don't agree with this statement. As a coach I learned about tolerances. These are little things we tolerate each day that cause us stress, drain our energy, and leave us feeling unfulfilled. These tolerances can be as small as having too many keys on a key chain and spending several minutes a day trying to find the right key. Or, they can be big, like a major project that has too much of an inherent risk factor. Trying to be someone you are not because the gurus say that is how to reach your goals is a major tolerance.

What do you want to create today? What do you need to do? Make a short list. Do one thing at a time. If there is something in your life that gets in the way, then put it aside. The top list of things that get in most people's lives are: television, eating, socializing, texting, puttering, etc. These are okay to do after you finish that one task.

Don't let someone who gave up on their dreams talk you out of going after yours.

4. Following up the last point. Success is a habit.

It isn't a talent or a skill you develop. I spent too many years working for other people when I had the talent and skill to run a better agency. I was successful at my business, but I hadn't been introduced to Build, Grow, Repeat at the time.

I think the first step to the next level was reading the book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The next thing I learned was, 'if you want to drive a _____ never ask advice from a person driving a Toyota.'

I have always been a reader, but I started investing more time in reading history, self-help, and business books. In this time, I also took a full course and certified as a life coach. The amount of control this gave me over my life was life changing.

To find success you only need to list one thing, the 'why.' Why do you do what you do? Why do you want a bigger company? Why do you want to outsource to a marketing company? Why are you worried about risks? Now, take a look at the whys? Are they superficial? Do they excite you? Do they motivate you? Are you proud of them? And, are they the end of the journey, or just a part of the endgame.

5. Create.

This point is an extension of #6. Business is about creating. Everyone can create. They can build. If there is no creation process in your life then you will become stuck in a box. Creation is the path to solving problems. It gives birth to innovation.

No one is going to flock to your business for doing for reinventing the wheel. They are looking for a better wheel, or something that does away with the wheel.

Creativity prevents us from becoming so fixed on the journey that we don't reach the destination. Don't get stuck in the journey. I once had a friend who had several books published. She had a favorite saying about writers. "Most people are not published because they are in love with the writer's life, but don't want the writer's job."

This is so true of many people who chase their dreams. They are so focused on chasing their dreams. It is their dream. That they don't want to listen, learn, or be mentored by anyone who tries to point them in the direction of their destination.

Creativity helps us remain fluid. It helps us remember that we are not working for a paycheck, or to keep the company fluid. We are working to build something strong, tangible, that will fulfill our needs.

One big change in my mindset that happened when I started to explore my creativity was learning the difference between 'how' and 'what'. Most books only tell you what you need to do.

6. Cooperation and Relationships

If you feel you are buying a product from a marketing company, then you are missing the big picture. If you feel you are starting a symbiotic relationship with a marketing company, then you will reap the biggest benefits.

If you poll the most successful people in the country you will find out they have one thing in common, they work together for mutual gain. This type of mentality is abundant among good marketers.

One reason why this is important is summed up in what Will Smith said, "Don't chase people. Be yourself, do your own thing and work hard. The right people will come to you. And stay."

Don't hire a marketing agency, or partner with any company, or investor because you feel pressured, are unsure, or they don't make you feel good. You know what I mean. You've had sales meetings where the meeting ended, you've read the material, and you still don't have any idea what they are selling, who they are, or how they make you feel.

You've had sales calls where the person made you feel insecure, pressured, or talked down to you. They may have done this on purpose, or maybe they just had a bad day, or maybe you didn't share their vernacular. That is okay. They were just not a right fit for the environment you were creating.

The people you surround yourself with are a reflection of who you are, or are working hard to become. Do they talk about what needs to be done, or talk about how it is done? Are their words positive and motivational, or corrective and condescending? Are they doers, or delegators/procrastinators?

7. Do What You Love

I have a lot to say about this. I have often asked people 'what is your passion.' I rarely hear what the person's passion is. I hear what they want. I rarely find out what they need. Most people have strong emotional feelings about different things, but that doesn't mean they love that, or that it is their passion.

A passion is something you take action to make happen. For example, if you are passionate about the local business organization then you will be involved, help organize, volunteer, etc.

Before you can tell me what you love you need to know if you like yourself. If you don't like yourself then set out today to become the person you will like.

If you love something, you will make progress. You will become better. You will learn. You will work. Whether there are any gains, or not.

It is easy to identify what you love. What do you do every day? What do you actually 'do.' How do you fill your day? What is the first thing you do in the morning?

8. What Problem Are You Solving.

My dream client will sit down across the table, look me dead in the eye, and list 3 problems that are holding their company back. I will probably sit in shock for a moment, take a deep breath, a sip of coffee, and smile. Give me a problem and I literally come alive. I can actually feel the adrenalin rush.

Section I: Business Foundations

“If You Fail to Plan, You Are Planning to Fail” — **Benjamin Franklin**

SECRETS TO SUCCESS FOR SMB (SMALL MEDIUM BUSINESSES)

Building a business is hard. Over 40 years I have watched the most unlikely people succeed, and the best prospects fail. I am going to give you my secret to failure. It is all in the mindset 'my good enough is good enough'.

Many of my colleagues and peers started with big dreams and the financial backing to succeed only to fail because they let their emotions drive their marketing ventures. The problem with letting your emotions control your decision making process is that it is too obvious, and makes it too easy for the competition to squash your business like a bug.

How do I know? Because for the last 18 years it was my job. Before you judge me, if you ordered this book then it is because you want me to put you at the top of google and bring you leads, clients, and revenue. How will I do that? By hijacking those leads and sales from other companies.

The second problem is that business owners think too small. Almost every business owner I know takes their financial investment, or their bank loan, and rent a prestigious office, hire staff, and buy the best equipment. Yes, you guessed it, the business owner is feeding their own emotions.

Skilled help is hard to find. Assuming that you can find it in your location limits your success rates to the local talent market. I have had offices in Kitchener/Waterloo part of the intellectual golden triangle and still had a hard time finding good talent.

The second problem is that prospects are jaded. The educated ones are no longer sign on the dotted line and then hope you will proceed. There is still a marketing niche for uneducated business owners, this is evident in the number of digital marketers whose own websites score low on Google's Page Speed Insights, GTmetrix, or one of the tools made for marketers.

The third trend I have seen is that business owners want to start small, doing the work themselves, and then hire out the work when they are big. Unfortunately, the CEO's job is to earn money. You cannot breach the 7 figure, or even 6 figure revenue benchmarks if you are busy optimizing your own website.

You've heard the saying, 'If you want to drive a Rolls Royce, don't take advice from someone driving a Toyota.' But most of the post 2019 digital marketing companies run out of someone's bedroom. They are one man shows that hire from freelance sites, or outsource jobs, or worse, try to do the work themselves.

Any company who can take you to the top should be able to do it themselves. I am not advocating for heading to Toronto and hiring the biggest firm. Their experience might all be in corporate marketing. Of course, they will take your account (read – take your money), but they cannot deliver.

You want to find a mid-size company who has worked with clients like yours. Axiom9 has a reputation working for marketing agencies. We deliver. That is our 'corporate' niche. We also excel working for professional businesses that sell B2 (small) B or B2C. This is a broad niche, but we have been in business since 2000, actually, learning our trade since 1995. But we would

never use the same strategy on a professional who 'is' the brand, as we would on a small business (income under 2 million), who wants to start the 7 steps of scaling.

The harsh reality is that many armature business people focus on the gimmicks. They want to 'look' like business people, solopreneurs, professional, but they don't want to 'live the lifestyle' of a successful business person.

They spend so much time chasing gimmicks and 'feelings' that they have no energy left for the essential tasks – making solid business decisions.

“Change your perspective – change your future.”

Now you are 90% ahead of the Toyota drivers.

Make choices over insecurities.

Focus on the top 20% of things needed to make your business work.

Do what you do best and delegate the rest

If you don't have the money, the 'outside' of your day job, work to make the money. While you work, learn. While you are learning you will understand the importance of making strong business partnerships with accounting firms, digital marketing agencies, local marketing professionals, and get involved in the business 'lifestyle.' Once you make these joint ventures then you will be in the first business growth stage.

The next piece of advice is to take risks. Save up enough money to 'try something'. If it doesn't produce the results, you want then learn from it, and start saving your money again. Try again. The 'net' is full of stories of failures who now own the world.

The only way to fail in the B2B world, or any world, is to quit. For the rest of us DOERS, we stick to our plan, day in and day out. I work on my own agency, like you work on your business. It's a symbiotic relationship – not a sale of services.

I'm not a teacher. I am a DOER. That is why this book is valuable to Toyota, or Lexus drivers who are working to work up to their dream car.

Instead of telling you WHAT you need to do, I am going to show you HOW I do it. How I have been taught to successfully scale a business.

I'm not going to help you learn how to do SEO or Social Networking. Those are a digital marketer's job. I'm going to help you learn how to make decisions using a pattern I learned when I became a business coach.

I am going to help you get the highest results with the least amount of work, and risk.

'You will get all you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want.' Zig Zigler.

What I'm not going to promise you is a better lifestyle, or freedom. These are emotional things. The Bentley drivers don't work for freedom, parties, and holidays. They don't buy vacation homes, they buy investments.

Your time is your most valuable commodity. Whenever you 'vibe' or relax, you are wasting that commodity. Yes, take time to regenerate and get ready for the next surge, but don't waste time living like everyone else in the suburbs.

10 things we learned working for big marketing agencies

1. SMB businesses need a hands-free marketing company that can problem solve while staying within their client's marketing and business management strategy.
2. SEO reports are useless. Board members need numbers: conversion ratios, leads, return on investment. General managers need a viable report to present to the board.
3. SEO Marketing is fluid, often changing multiple times in a single year. An SEO team needs a Google Analyst to stay one step ahead so they can take advantage of google analytics changes and redesign marketing strategies constantly.
4. If you spread yourself too thin, work too many hours, then you will be forced to sell products at a discount, and will eventually fail.
5. Don't waste your energy fearing the competition.
6. The successful business modeling plan requires spending 30% of revenues on marketing and advertising. If you want to grow your business Take the 7% of total you want to earn. If you want to earn 1 million dollars, That would be 70 000. But remember that you don't need that 7%. It is going to come out of your growth revenue.
7. Don't go to BNI meetings to sell. Go to learn.
8. Don't work with a marketing agency that is learning their trade, and building their skills 'on your dime' and at your expense.
9. The best clients don't want you to feed their emotions and baby them. But they do want to see the numbers. Create measurable reports that explain to the board how much money you saved/made them. They don't care about ranking positions if there is no increase in Return On Investment (ROI).
10. Stay 2 steps ahead of the competition and start optimizing client's website when Google DogFood's (starts pitching a project), so you have full implementation in when the rest of the world catches up. (Actually, 2 years behind.

10 Common SMB Mistakes

1. Business Owners don't understand digital marketing. No part of digital marketing is a 'stand alone' or ala carte offering. PPC brings consumers to the sales funnel which books your appointments and sells your products. PPC needs Social Networking to give people an

opportunity to learn who you are. SEO and Organic build Domain Value which increases the likelihood of getting good links. But without good links you do not have high DA (Domain Authority), which in turn, means you do not rank. Websites educate, but they don't open dialogue. To open dialogue with clients you need review sites, social networking, and tools like webinars. Digital marketing only works 'well' when each component is crafted to work with the next, in a manner that attracts your clients.

2. Any company can get me to page #1. If a company offers to put you on page #1, guaranteed, then they are lying. It takes time and money to hook that spot. If it was easy then everyone would be on page #1 for your keywords. What usually happens is that the business owner asks for a keyword say 'Digital Marketing' and ends up with 'Digital Marketing in XXX town'. I have even seen SEO specialists try to sell clients on being #1 for 'Digital Marketing on XXX street.'
3. You are not your client. You are not an SEO specialist. I've seen successful campaigns absolutely crippled when the owner doesn't want the website design most likely to attract their client, or they want to limit the types of links that come to their website. You are not your consumer.
4. Talk to us! It is amazing how many people act like they are buying a brand-new service from scratch. But it is never that way, even if you are new to cyberspace. There is networking, promotions, and local advertising that you've done. We need to know what you like doing, what you are good at doing, what you are hiding because you messed up, and most importantly, how does your company communicate. We also need to know which months are your peak sales times, and slow times. It can take 2-3 months to create a surge. Telling a marketing company, you are going to have a big promotion this month, or even next month, limits almost every marketing strategy except PPC and Social Networking.
5. Not having a sales strategy in place to handle the leads and appointments sent from the marketing campaigns. There is the way your salespeople talk, sell, and communicate with clients. Marketing and Sales are hard to hire. They both need people who are willing to listen and willing to put their own agenda on the side. When there is a disconnect between marketing and sales then both departments are working against each other.
6. Data needs to go both ways. We send monthly reports to clients, but it is almost impossible to get clients to send back their own data on ROI, conversion ratios, in store traffic, sales increases, decrease in the cost of sales. I think a lot of businesses are worried that if they tell the marketing company the campaign is working that they may slack-off or try to upsell. The market needs the data to know if their strategy is working. Most people think a marketing campaign is very simple to lay out. They can become very complex.
7. Share your audience information. You know your target demographic better than we do. When they ask for your service are they dominant, or passive. Are your clients articulate? Are they impulse buyers? Do they buy on the first, third, or fifth purchase? How do you incite an emotional response from your target demographic? Who are the 'easy sells? What can you tell us about the easy sells to make it easier to market to them? How do you get your audience's attention? Do you entertain? How do you make them smile? When are your peak sales times?
8. Tell us what your KPI's are (Key Performance Indicators). If you don't know, then say so. If you do, then admit it. I had one client who worked with me for seven months before telling me what they really wanted to be was an influencer. Seven months of work on the wrong strategy. Of course, five months later she left, frustrated because we hadn't achieved what she wanted. The first few months of a marketing campaign is very labor intensive.

The more information you can provide that will help the marketing company, the more they can help you meet your goals. If you don't do your own research then the marketing company must, through trial and error. They also need to know what your KPIs are so that they understand how to communicate the campaign's success.

9. Outsourced marketing is an intangible and often frustrating part of running a business. The problem is a marketing campaign that costs \$50 000 can generate \$75 000. But most people don't see it. They see their business is doing better but have a hard time attributing the gains to marketing. That is why it is important to have a good contact and that you understand everything you are paying for.

Ask for a detailed service agreement or in-depth proposal from the marketing company. Ask them to break down all the services they will provide with line-item costs. Most reputable marketing companies will do this for you. If they do not, ask for a clear explanation as to why they can't.

Of course, there is a fluid aspect of a marketing strategy but it is important that you don't hire a company that is all sales talk, and no understanding of the product they are actually providing. The only thing you won't receive is a guarantee of ranking results and SERPS, revenue or ROI, but you should be able to receive proof of work, not just vague reports.

10. Run your own tests. What is their website's DA? What is their web speed (gtmetrix.com), what is their Google Page Insight's Score? Is there any emotional, educational, or entertainment to their website? How do they communicate? Does their message resonate with you? A marketing company's platform should be their best, and brightest, marketing campaign.

Business Building Blocks

Business Audit

About 10 years ago we started adding a business audit to the onboarding process. This helps us identify problems that can sabotage the marketing campaign. This is when we started adding sales partnerships to our marketing campaigns. What good are leads when a company cannot close the sale.

This audit can be as complex or as simple as the business owner wants. It also gives us an idea whether the potential client is anxious to form a partnership, or if they feel they are buying a product.

Marketing is not a product. Marketing is not a department. Marketing is fluid and touches every aspect of the company's growth strategy. The more a company is willing to work with us and share information the more powerful we can build the campaign.

An audit may start with the company's summary revenue form. It can look into the company's HR assets, and tap into the company's strengths and weaknesses.

Last, we look at the competition. We have become experts at competition research. This is one of Axiom9's strengths.

Branding & Demographics

When we are doing the business audit we want to identify how the owner wants to appear in public, how the competition views the client, and what makes your consumer buy. Not just 'a consumer'. We target the repeat customers, easy sales, and people who buy high ticket items/services. This is your prime target demographic.

Once we understand this then everyone can visualize what we need to attract customers, the right customers, the customers who will help your business scale.

Growth & ROI

It's all about business growth. When you look at a firm like ours, whether you are a startup, or an SMB then you are reading this book because you want your business to grow, not just pay the bills.

No matter how well your current company is doing you can improve your ROI by narrowing your focus. CEOs panic when you start talking about targeting 10% of the market. Writing content for only 2% of all people. The 2% who sign large contracts, make large purchases, are easy to sell to, and become return customers.

Marketing to 2% of people doesn't cost more than marketing to 50%. They all see your add. The difference is easy to calculate. One SEO and PPC firm might bring 100 000 visits to your website in one month and generate \$20 000 in sales. Another one agency will target the 2%, bring 10 000 to your website, and generate \$20 000. The difference? Your booking ap may not be full with the second agency, but the clients will be qualified, freeing human resources and other business assets.

A smart business owner will not limit their ROI calculation to simply, how many people book appointments. Freeing human resources, reducing labor needs and costs, freeing up time on the weekend to do what you want, lowering marketing costs, lowering printing and print advertising costs, etc.

You cannot grow unless you have a head for numbers and you have a 'wide angle' view of your business. A business knows the exact ROI on the sale of a product/service. A business understands the cost of labor, training, hiring, and replacing anyone in the office, or on the floor. Business management costs are easy to calculate.

For some reason, people hedge when calculating ROI of marketing. Are they under the mistaken belief that a marketing agency won't work hard if they know they are reaching their goals? I don't know. I have never discovered this answer in the last two decades.

This is a real problem. I coached one small town business about 10 years ago. They tripled their size and started a second location in the first year. At the end of the year I wanted to renegotiate their coaching and business growth strategy. The business owner said, 'I did it all myself.' She didn't track the numbers. She didn't measure her time, her expansion, or her revenue growth. The result. We parted ways and the synergy faded.

BUSINESS IDENTITY

Problem & Solution Marketing

Our first onboarding step is to find your problems. What ‘tolerances’ are causing conflict in your business environment. Then it all depends on what you need. Do you want a business consultant to come in and identify financial leaks in your marketing, advertising, and sales? Do you need one of our partners to teach your company how to improve sales?

Maybe your problem is more analytical? Why is your closing ratio low, or why are your PPC advertisements, or email campaigns, not resulting in bookings?

Your company may not know it has problems. For example, maybe your local SEO is missing geotargeting, or SMS marketing. Maybe you can increase sales by adding a chat box to your website. We know dozens of ‘not on the top 10 SEO tricks’ lists to help our clients. We have even stepped up and done some old-fashioned brick and mortar marketing sales strategies to help clients scale their business.

What is Solution Based Marketing? Before booking an appointment with us, write down the problems your business is facing. Whether directly or indirectly related to marketing. Let’s work together to find solutions.

Why do we feel that Solution Based Marketing is the best method for our style of digital marketing? When working for other marketing companies we watched campaigns that were sold from the top down. Most of those campaigns focused on what the marketing company thoughts were tangibles like keyword ranking, or getting an unoptimizable website build without considering that it wouldn’t be able to rank for mobile.

A business client will close a deal if promised a fancy website, and the experience of being catered to for a few months. Another one will sign feeling they are winners because their website ranks #1 on google for low ROI keywords.

These strategies may book appointments and sell from online stores, but to use them in a business scaling strategy is expensive, wasteful, and time consuming.

When a business solves the problems first, and then run the campaign they win twice. First, they know they receive value in the first months of the campaign. Even if they are not a perfect fit for the marketing company, the ‘buyer’s remorse’ is less likely because there are long-term tangibles in your business.

This sounds like a lot of work, or maybe even losing control, but the process can be fun and energizing. It doesn’t even need to take a long time. When done, the business has a blueprint for success.

Target Demographic

“Not everyone is your client”

“You don’t need traffic, you need sales”

These may sound cliché and trite but in 30 years of marketing I have a hard time convincing business owner that these statements are true. Not everyone will buy from your company. Not everyone shops at big box stores. Many people buy their groceries from a local vegetable stand. Many people won’t touch hydroponics. Selling to the ‘lowest common denominator’ may sound like a way to make money. Selling to the masses is a good way to sell if you would rather have ‘a nimble penny over a slow dime.’ This mindset sounds safe. It sounds solid. It has closed the door of a lot of businesses.

When analyzing a business, it is easy to skim over the target demographic, usually because I’ve only worked with two companies in 30 years who could identify their target demographic. That is okay. It’s a marketer’s job. It is our expertise , to help you identify who your online target demographic is.

What we need to identify?

Buyer Types

Economic: Usually controls the budget

User: The end-user of your solution

Technical: Evaluates implementation details

Coach: Wants to see your company win the deal

Defining Target Demographic – the Target Demographic is unique for each client. The criteria that define a profitable lead for one company, is not the same as it is for another company. We love clients who host on cpanel. We can go into their logs and generate quite a bit of data. Better, is a client who has an onsite heatmap, and or analytics data for each visit. This makes our job easier.

“If you aim at nothing you will hit it every time,” Zig Ziglar

Zig Ziggler is right. If you don’t aim at a specific niche, then you will miss it. There is another old saying, ‘aim small – miss small’. Don’t worry if your business has two or three target demographics, that is what sales funnels and sub domains are for.

We find out who your target demographic is by asking questions?

- What are terms that your clients use when asking about the products and services?
- What data do you have on them? Attach your information to this report.
- What keywords do you hear your customers/clients use?
- What are the company’s top 5/10/15 most profitable products/services?
- What are your yearly sales trends?
 - Quarter 1

- Quarter 2
- Quarter 3
- Quarter 4

This is a big one that companies overlook. I've seen people start \$1000 a week PPC campaigns one and two weeks before Superbowl Sunday. I've seen construction companies start advertising in November. On the other hand, I've seen retail wait until too late before advertising. If you have a retail business you want to start building links and generating traffic in September if you want to see results in December. These are insider things that effect how we build your campaign.

How do we find this information? Some of these answers need to come from the business owner.

- Analyze the company/marketing strategy/ website
- Are there lulls and booms in your yearly revenue streams?
- Are there seasonal purchases for different products and sales?
- Analyze your social platforms
- Analyze the competition

Business owners don't see this work. We might put 20 or we might put 100 hours into identifying a target demographic. All the business owner does is confirm that our data is correct, and approve the consumer profile.

This consumer profile is the cornerstone of a marketing campaign. Everything from keyword research to picking the photos for the website are based on the consumer profile.

The Value Proposition

This is a critical element of a marketing campaign. It ensures the marketing and advertising will produce the desired results. The shocking thing is that most digital marketing agencies do not use a Value Proposition report. I never knew they existed for the first few years when I was working for other marketing companies. It is impossible to write a good advertising campaign if you don't understand why people buy.

A value proposition summarizes why a customer buys a product or service. It identifies the benefit that customers receive by making the purchase. Every value proposition should answer to a customer's challenge/problem. It will give the company a jumping off point to solve the problem.

Why do people buy? To answer this just search 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.'

People buy to either meet one of these needs, or feel they have met one of these needs:

- Socially Accepted/Build Relationships
- Safe/wellness/health
- The adventure/experience
- To appear important/Success/sense of purpose
- Growth/Education

INFLUENCER STATUS: BUYING, INFLUENCE, AND YOUR CAMPAIGN

The 4 Types of Buying Behaviour

- Extended Decision-Making.
- Limited Decision-Making.
- Habitual Buying Behavior.
- Variety-Seeking Buying Behavior.

What questions do we ask to identify these things.

- Value is communicated through a value proposition.
- What do Customers/clients care about?
- What do they need?
- What is their emotional journey to purchase?
- What is the client willing to spend
- What is the impact of your product/service on their lives?
- Can the company achieve this impact
- How long does the purchase hold it's value?
- Is there an upsale/resale value to the product?

How do you sell if you don't understand why a person buys? If you want to know why people. As a business owner you are probably reading this with an expression of shock. I've talked to a few business owners who have worked with multiple marketing companies, and they have never done a consumer profile or identified why the person buys.

My question is, how do you write an effective sales journey without knowing what makes people buy?

Scale Your Influence

I like to shake things up and radically shift the business owner's mindset when it comes to making money online. I haven't found a single business that cannot create multiple streams of revenue online.

Branding is solid, foundation work. But, Branding is often flat and lacks engagement. Influence incites emotions in people.

The difference between branding a company and scaling influence is how you look at the content creation process.

Content Creation Process A

- Who am I?
- What can I do for you?
- How can I solve your problems?
- Why buy from us?

Content Creation Process B

- What do you think about me?
- What/who do we have in common?
- I solved this problem. Let me tell you how I did?
- Who are you?

A focus on the business and what it can do for you? It focuses on what the company must sell.

Content Creation Process B is consumer-centric, so instead of selling your product it might sell hope, or security, or a sense of companionship (even if it is only virtual).

Task oriented jobs are fulfillment oriented. I'm sorry, but you can't be fulfillment oriented and tactics oriented. One marketer looks at the present, what we are doing now. The other marketer looks at what we will become.

Tactics are easy. You can outsource them to the lowest bid. You can fragment tasks. That is easy. That is what most agencies do. The problem with this business model is the simple fact that, 'you don't know what you don't know until you learn what you don't know.'

When fragment your marketing, instead of streamlining the process, you increase the risk of fragmenting your marketing strategy.

I'm currently building a hashtag campaign. Creating these campaigns are like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. No two pieces are hard to link, but if your missing a piece the whole puzzle will never be solved. You can work harder. You can work smarter, but nothing will come together.

That is why our tagline is 'fragmented marketing doesn't work'

One little missing piece, one overlooked detail, and the link is broken, and the customer journey is broken.

There are no research papers, book, or blueprints on becoming a personal influencer. All you have are gurus who push their version of 'how to succeed.' Today almost 4 of 10 agencies invest between 10-20% of their marketing budget to influencer marketing, with 75% making plans to increase their investment over the next three years.

Great. The knee jerk reaction is to jump on the influencer marketing bandwagon and head out to put ads on influencers pages. Sounds great – but very 'old school'.

Why? Because once they see your ad then where are they going? To your website? Let me give you free piece of advice, no one leaves Instagram to read your website. This is a missing piece of the puzzle – all that money is wasted.

So where are you sending your audience? If you can answer this question then you are one your way to putting your puzzle together.

Influencer scaling is the challenge of getting more out of a channel. It enables you to establish more touchpoints with your audience and communicate and set up an engagement pathway.

You can't just put an add on a top channel and hope that you can generate traffic. You can't just go to an influencer marketplace and hope those visitors will buy your product or service. It might start by visiting a few dozen channels and adding your hashtag, say #axiom9marketing, and engaging. Or having an engager do it for you, the right way.

An engager is someone who understands communication and is good at inciting an emotional response from people. The marketing strategists will create your persona. The engagers will give it life.

Why don't more people use this type of marketing? It is a gradual process. You won't see instant results. You can't go 0 to 60 in one second.

Media Consumption

There has been a similar 'big bang' to that which created the universe in cyberspace. Consumer behavior and media consumption has evolved in the last five years. There is no playbook because influencer marketing changes before the editors can start on the grammar.

People are spending so much time on their phones and computers it spawned a new idiom, 'tech neck'. It describes the pain in both the neck and shoulders from spending time cramped over a screen.

The changing shopping habits has created the biggest impact. Gen Z shops on Tic Toc, and Instagram.

Here is where traditional marketing fails. You cannot run a few seasonal campaigns or run a Black Friday campaign. This audience doesn't respond. The audience will see this as intrusive. You interrupted their scrolling and video time with your sponsored message.

When you start with a marketing company you want to spend the first month or two creating your online persona, vernacular, likes/dislikes, learning and communication style. You want to create an avatar of you. We are not going to catfish. We are going to create something that is real, but we are going to create the you that you want to be, that you want your customers to see.

The Why

Depending on the size of your campaign we assign a different account tech for each of your channels. By giving each tech your portfolio, you decrease the disconnect between each channel.

Then, expect at least 2 – 3 months of posts, for each channel. Never sign with a company that is not going to be 3 months ahead and automate posting. They are never going to be able to keep up with your campaign.

What happens is almost magical. Over a matter of weeks, you will transform from an intrusion to a part of the community, and eventually, an influencer.

Why don't more marketing companies do this type of campaign? This is a big risk for the agency. Months of work is done up front. Your posts are ready to roll. They are scheduled to appear in the client's social media accounts for the next two or three months. What if you quit tomorrow?

With an always running strategy you can add campaigns on top of campaigns to boost the marketing part of this strategy. So now you are piling your advertising on top of your foundational channels. You still haven't paid for anything time sensitive.

Everything you've built to now is evergreen. It will never go away and will continue to contribute to your revenue generation strategy.

So don't let them talk you out of this or talk you down to a smaller campaign when you are negotiating your marketing campaign. Make it clear to the marketer that you understand there is no way to measure results. The problem is that you won't be able to measure your results on the channel. You need to watch the numbers, increased revenue, leads, calls, lead generation downloads, etc.

The influencer scaling should take up at least 20% of your marketing budget.

After a few months you have enough data to start searching for the influencers your buyers (not shoppers) are listening too. This is a challenge for a researcher. They need to compile, analyze, and translate a lot of data, research who is following different influencers, and who is buying from you. Then, they need to find someone powerful but still within your budget.

These campaigns are the type of things that can create brainstorming meetings on Friday afternoon over good coffee in a brightly lit board room, with ideas scrawled across the glass walls.

SALES AND CUSTOMER RETENTION

I will mention this several times throughout this book. There is no use hiring a marketing company if you don't take sales seriously. This is hard for some Small Businesses to commit to. One in four businesses are a service business. Approximately three in four people work in the service industry. However, selling the intangible is difficult. And unless the marketing team and the sales team create a synergy then both teams will be crippled.

Not only do you not have 'a pen to sell' (ref: movie – Wolf of Wallstreet) that you can use to suggest demand, but you don't have any proof (something tangible) so you can ask them 'how does the pen feel? Do you like this pen?'

Over the decades I've seen the service industry evolve. It has become easier to sell services, but that has also made it easier for people to promise service who cannot deliver. This Catch 22 has built a strong service industry, while at the same time making customer and clients jaded and suspicious.

Leads and Relationships

If there is one thing harder, more intangible, and exudes the allure of magic more than marketing, it is lead generation.

Lead generation firms can be a biggest asset or a major waste of money. A marketing company can help by building relationships with companies that have proven track records. There are also lead generation streams a marketing company can build which can be honed, duplicated, tested, and perfected. These are permanent assets that your company will benefit from for years.

These may include email marketing campaigns, sales funnels, booking funnels, chat boxes on websites, and even social networking sales funnels. No matter how a campaign runs, or what short term goals they provide, the long-term benefits of the sales funnels will more than cover the cost of the first few months of marketing.

Closing Leads

Marketing can bring you leads but they do not close the deal. This brings the second problem, marketing companies become frustrated when they bring 25 leads which should have a 5% close rate, for a \$10 000 service, and the company doesn't close the sales.

There is an inalienable partnership relationship between a business and its' marketing team. An unspoken agreement that the marketing company will bring the leads, you will close the deals.

I cannot show you another company's marketing plan, or their reports. Those reports are their intellectual property. You cannot hold and compare the feel, texture or weight of two marketing campaigns.

You struggle through the same problems you are booking clients, attracting customers, and selling your service. The struggle is real. And not addressing it is costing your company hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

I've coached service industry owners who feel sick to their stomach when entering a sales calls. I've coached business owners who become tongue tied and self-sabotage sales calls. This must be addressed early on in your business if you want growth to be seamless and not blow up in your face.

With a product failure we can accept returns. When selling a service there are no returns, and clients often pay in advance. There is nothing the company can take back to recoup losses, and bad debts are not bad debts if the client was never billed.

There are several reasons why many SMB do not want to hire salespeople. The #1 is that when a sales person defects to another company, they take clients with them. Our solution is to have account managers and analysts who work directly with the clients. This way the customer/client relationship with your business isn't built on a single person.

Software sellers have the same problem. They are selling a product that will be tangible in the future, but right now there is no 100% guarantee that they will be able to successfully create a glitch free product.

Luxury car dealers face a similar problem. They can show the customer a car, but it isn't the one the customer will own. There will be upgrades, changes, etc. There is no 100% guarantee that the customer will love the car that is delivered 2-6 months down the road.

A common method of selling a service is to build relationships, great. That sounds easy. If there are any coaches reading this book then I'm sure you have a wry grin on your face. Relationships are hard.

Business relationships are built on the Seller's and Buyer's:

- Needs. What problems do they need solved?
- Wants. What (often unspoken) thing do they want this campaign to do for them, eg. Outsourcing marketing may give them weekends free.
- Perceptions based on past experiences. Did something happen in a previous business relationship, did the client read a book, or did the client have a personal experience that taints what they heard when you made the pitch, or when they read your proposal.
- The unseen benefits that sales cannot make the buyer is unaware of and that don't lend well to the sales process. Ie, Axiom9 has several different servers across the USA, and we host websites on wp-engine, and our servers are turbo lightspeed. We do not have Apache on the servers. And, we make sure our servers are never over loaded, slowing down the response time. Our managed servers and website speeds are tested daily. Yes, that is all a major benefit, especially to WordPress users, but, if you started rattling off all this in a sales call then people will tune out and disengage.
- Perceptions is the biggest problem when selling the intangible. Perceptions are built on what people hear, not what you said.
- What the client hears is not what the salesperson says. When a business owner hears 'I will get you to page #1 in Google' they 'hear' You will be top of Google for the keyword 'Best Marketing Company.' What the marketing firm often means is 'The Best marketing company in XXX town.' Or if the company is low cost, I've seen them try to sell the client on 'Best Marketing Company on XXX street.' I've even seen SEO firms try to sell, 'Best XXX Marketing Company on XXX street.'

- To have a good relationship you need to focus on reality and building a more productive/profitable/problem free reality. This is solution based selling. Sales people can become so caught up on the features and benefits they forget to 'listen', and 'hear' what the client really needs, wants, and feelings. If you miss this big three hearing what the client says (or doesn't say) is their needs, wants, and feelings.
- How does your client make a decision? This is where adding a good marketing company to your

What do people think of when they hear the word Marketing they think of selling and advertising. They think of the task of pushing goods to where the customers are. They have the perception of pushing it down someone's throats – like you see in many of the marketing 'we will make you rich' promotions.

I asked one client what it meant to them and they said, 'you will take all the hassle of bringing clients to me and doing the sales. I will do the rest.' I admit, I sat stunned for several deep breaths.

What misconceptions are in your industry? What do people want from your product or service that it doesn't really offer.

The most famous example is alcohol. Alcohol will take the edge off, intoxicate you, and cut into your wealth. The marketing campaigns promise alcohol will make you popular, eliminate all social inhibitions you have and make you confident, make you one of the beautiful people, make you smile. The reality and the perception are two different things.

Here is the mind boggling neurological aspect of marketing. No matter how many times people prove to themselves that the marketing behind alcohol pushes lies, it is still one of the top selling products in the world.

Why? Because even though alcohol doesn't meet the marketing promises, it does meet a social and physical needs and wants of the average consumer.

You Don't Need a Better Product/Service

The truth about business is that there are many amazing products and services that will never succeed. Why do you think people sell their discoveries and creations to big corporations? They sell them because they know that the best product or service is worthless without a good marketing company behind it.

You don't need a better product/service. You to create a better reality.

The average person has so little trusts in services that many companies have dropped the price, and offered discounts, and dropped the quality so they could drop the price further and in the end, the average consumer doesn't expect much from services.

Here is where you need to change your mindset. When you sit down to rewrite your sales journey you need to think about what people need, want, and their emotions. How will you solve their problems? How will you give them a better reality?

Now – restructure your service, fix your product. Make a customer-centric product/service. Don't make what you think people want. Don't make what was approved in the last meeting. Don't do what the competition is doing. Talk to your current customers and find out if they want you.

Let your clients set your standards. How? The easiest way to let your clients set your standard is to 'listen' in sales calls. When you hear that word, that cue, that need, want, feeling, or anything else you think is a 'win' statement/keyword.

You will use these to improve your product/service.

Axiom9 will use those statements/keywords to market your business.

You'll learn some amazing things. There is an amazing disconnect between organizational behavior (business) and social behavior (customers/clients). Look at the fashion industry. Take a look at the fashion runways of New York, London, and Milan. Now, look at what people buy. What do people wear to work? What do they wear on the weekend?

If that is too big of a concept to grasp, then look at your office. Was it built to make life easier for you, or was it built to save space, impress you, or make it easier to spend up to 2/3 of your day within the environment? We would all like an office building where we could set up like an environment, to make it easier to live, to remove stress.

To Err Is Human

Look back at that sales meeting that you blew. Think back to the sales presentation that was perfect, but the clients went with the competition. What did you do wrong? What did you do write? Did you need the sale, or did you want to work with the client?

Every mistake is an opportunity to learn. There are no errors, just learning experiences. When you learn these you need to share them with the marketing company.

One thing that business owners forget is that they are not, their marketing agency is not, their salespeople are not the customer. You can't do the customer's thinking for them. You cannot tell them what they feel. The only way you can learn how to sell to people is to listen.

Active Listening vs Passive Listening

When you are on a sales call the potential customer will listen to your pitch. They raise an objection. Here is where most sales calls are lost. The first thing out of the average sales person's mouth is what the potential client will lose if they don't buy.

The fact is, the client won't lose anything. It's the premise behind Black Friday sales. A 50" television is not a sale if you don't need a 50" television. The only thing that happens is you feel good about your self because you have a new television. It might be fun to watch. But, if you don't watch the television then what bad things will happen – nothing.

So instead of selling the salesperson is becoming argumentative. What is the average person's reaction to conflict? It is to close off, back away, and disengage. There is a stressful, intrusive, element to sales. The customer's brain reacts the same way as they would if trapped by a predator. The average person doesn't believe you want to help them. The only thing you want is their money.

Many people will do without before they will solve their problem. They are not happy living with their problems. But they are afraid of having to talk to a salesperson.

It is not the customer's job to accept the service as is. It is not the marketer's job to educate a client and tell them what you need. It's not your job to tell a customer that the only reason they don't want your service is because they are not smart enough, not wealthy enough, or not important enough.

What you don't know about sales is costing you your wealth. Instead of selling like the example above why not follow the levi jeans project. High end levi's jeans switched from readymade jeans to taking a person's measurements and then having the jeans custom made. The jeans were mailed to the customer's home.

Letting people customize their product or service is a good marketing tool. The automotive industry has turned this into an art form. People customize their luxury car. They are doing the selling. They buy what they chose. They designed it.

Another good aspect is to give people choices. You know they are shopping. They know you know they are shopping. So, why not ask who they have been shopping for – the cheap businesses or the expensive ones. Ask what you didn't like and how can we improve.

Another problem is that most salespeople don't like their price or service. They feel that the price is setting them up to fail. To solve this problem, try to spend the first part of the sales meeting asking questions. You can't sell if you don't know what people need.

Maybe the story telling model will work in your business. This works for B2B and B2C. Analogies, metaphors, experiences, and examples are excellent ways to engage with clients.

Remember, people will not tell you what you did wrong. They will not tell you how to do better. Salespeople must listen carefully and 'read between the lines.'

I'm not going to pretend I'm a top sales guru. I just want to give you an idea of the problems that cost you sales.

Sales is not a good place to have the mindset 'my good enough is good enough.'

Customer Retention

How do you handle this problem?

Do you wing it?

Do you have a strategy?

Is it one way B2C or is there dialogue and two way communication?

Remember talking about what problems you can solve for the client? What value you give them? This becomes important in the retention phase. But to keep clients you also need to listen.

To retain clients, you need to go back to your sales process. What benchmarks did you promise? How will you deliver?

Think of this like building another business. What goals do you want to set for your marketing agency? Don't make them guess. Tell them clearly what you hope to achieve and don't be surprised if they scramble up the campaign to meet your needs.

This is where your CRM comes into play. What data do you collect from your client? Do you catalogue meetings? Track what their complaints are? In short – do you write it down? If you don't write it down then it won't become part of your management process.

You will forget the customer wanted that and 2 -3 months later you will have moved on and your client will be left behind feeling frustrated.

Building Block #1 – Business Audit

This is a snapshot of your company today.

If you would like to contact us at getstarted@axiom9.com, or fill in the form on www.axiom9marketing.com, we will send you the reports that will help you complete this analysis.

- A. What is your current monthly recurring revenue? _____
B. Where do you want to be in 12 months? _____
B – A = THE GAP _____

In a lot of start up books they focus on the gap, but that is a mistake. Because you now need to determine the expenses needed to generate 'the gap'.

Case Study #1 – Axiom9 as an outsourcing business for agencies

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Office | 1000 |
| Phone and answering service | 400 |
| CRM | 500 |
| Office Supplies | 200 |
| Digital Marketing Agency | 1500 |
| Networking groups | 300 |
| Office Help/Accounting | 2000 |
| Total | 5900 |

Case Study 2 – Axiom9 eliminating the middle company.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Office | 200 |
| Phone and answering service | 75 |
| CRM | 800 |
| Office Supplies | 50 |
| Marketing and advertising | 3000 |
| Networking groups | |
| Office Help/Accounting | 600 |
| Total | 4725 |

Do you see the #1 thing I learned in phase 2 of my development as a professional business person?

In phase #1 only \$1500 of my money was working for me. My expenses were about \$6000 a month. In my business scaling phase #2, 3000 was earning money, and monthly expenses were 2275 lower.

I know these numbers look low, but remember that I am going back 20 years.

Now, let's look at my time investment each week:

Case Study 1:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Office including travel | 220 |
|-------------------------|-----|

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|------|
| Phone and meetings | 200 |
| Sales meetings, calls, etc | 150 |
| Answering emails (non sale) | 80 |
| Marketing – 4 on our team doing everything | 500 |
| Working on Client Projects | 3500 |
| Wasted time in office | 50 |
| Total time invested in the business | 4700 |
| Time invested in my business | 500 |
| Time invested in 10 clients | 3500 |

Case Study 2 – Phoneless, Meeting-less, Sales Free Marketing Agency Model

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| Office including travel | 20 |
| Phone and meetings | 40 |
| Sales meetings, calls, etc | 40 |
| Answering emails (non sale) | 10 |
| Marketing with 8 contracted professionals | 750 |
| Working on Client Projects | 4000 |
| Wasted time in office | 0 |
| Total time invested in the business | 5610 |
| Increased time invested in Axiom9 | 250 hours |
| Increased time invested in 10 clients | 1000 hours |

By streamlining our decision making process, and by creating partnerships with clients instead of trying to sell them, Axiom9 doubled their workforce and increased the hours they could invest into client’s work by 10 hours a month. That is an added bonus for each client of \$500 - \$1000 work.

What you need to do is determine what you are making:

Year #1

Now: _____

What you want (goal): _____

Expenses to reach Goal _____

Include marketing share of + 7% of revenue for growth: _____

Gap: _____

You need to do the same thing for year #3 because, the two business scaling levels in the ‘struggle’ phase of business will seem endless, but they will pass before you know it. If you don’t think ahead, you will be stuck in year 2 and year one, still working on your first year goals.

Year #3

Now: _____

What you want (goal): _____

Expenses to reach Goal _____

Include marketing share of + 7% of revenue for growth: _____

Gap: _____

Now you need to develop a strategy.

Here is a common one for marketing agencies B2B

| | Emotional Impact | Social Impact |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Identify a Target Market/Niche | Wants/Needs | Vocabulary/priorities/ |
| Lead Generation | What Problems Can You Solve | Where are they? Go Get Them |
| Conversion to Buyer | Education | Trust |
| Strategy – Organizing the work | Benchmarks & Reports | Goal Setting/Reaching |
| Analytics – Measuring | Analyzing the benchmark/goals | Restrategizing |
| | | |
| | | |

The simpler you can keep your business model, the better it will function in the real world. I filled the Rule of 1 chart out below for Axiom9 as it is today. Notice that I kept my answers simple, less than 1 paragraph.

| The Rule of 1 | Define in 20 words |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Niche | You want to target one business. Axiom9 does not target corporations, large businesses, or bedroom businesses. Our target demographic is in/past the struggle stage and looking to upscale. Our niche is 100% online. |
| Problems we can solve | The #1 problem we solve is working for Businesses that do not have time to learn, read ebooks, watch webinars, or take courses on marketing. They don't want to read more than a 10 page, bullet point report. Most importantly, they need to know how much each lead cost, how many people called, or emailed. They don't care if they rank for 1 word, or 10000. All they want is to track ROI |
| Impact our work makes on the business | We free up time for business owners by doing the mundane tasks and taking care of the year end data collection so they can measure their growth and use our data to find financing, add to investor reports, or measure their progress through their business plan. |
| Lead Generation Strategy | We use education as our lead generation strategy. All our efforts go into improving our methods. |
| Conversion to Buyer Method | We do not focus on 1:1 selling, cold calling. We want clients who are searching for a partner who can help cut years off their growth cycle, and help them scale from the first goal to their 10 th . |
| Perfect 1 Strategy/Product | Our program is developed from 18 years of working with Marketing agencies. Some of their programs were good, others has some great tools in |

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | them. We took the best and spent 5 years creating a strategy that worked even when Google threw an algorithm change into the mix. |
| Analytics | What analytics tools do you need to measure whether your business model is succeeding, or not. |
| | |

Let's take a break and jump back into the evergreen business development strategy and write down what you want out of life. How much money do you want? Do you want freedom? Write down your goals and outline whether they are wants or needs.

Once you know how to find clients then you need to accomplish 4 things

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Land Clients | Whether you are working with 1x sales, or repeated sales. I consider the first 3 months as the landing phase. I start by creating a funnel that solves a problem. |
| 2. Do The Work | Axiom9 offers proof of work, something many marketing agencies do not offer. |
| 3. Deliver The Results | Analytics and reports make it clear whether the strategy is working |
| 4. Repeat | After the landing phase you will repeat this 'measurement' stage every 3 - 6 months depending on the client. If the client/consumer is a 1x sale then you will repeat monthly |
| 5. Measure | Don't forget to do this for your business. It's easy to put your business on the back burner and put 99% of your efforts into clients. |
| 6 Engage | <p>You need to engage with your clients in a way they value. Our clients want a hands-free marketing partner. This means they don't want weekly webinars to learn how to do the work. They just want to see results at the end of the month, and they want to be doing better every quarter.</p> <p>We purposely don't work with people who are not 'mid level' of their business CEO career development. These people want to control and create. In 99.9% of the cases this slows down results and prevents them from reaching their goals. These people also want a lot of personal 1:1 affirmation. This returns us to the first Case Study. Today we would rather put our efforts into helping businesses reach their goal – even if it is a difficult goal to reach – than making people feel like we are their friend.</p> |

One overlooked aspect of this pattern is that many people don't realize that they need to complete #4 with each client. Every 3 – 6 months we ask clients how we are doing. Are they meeting their goals? Are the people coming.

What might do the work look like?

1. What is the customer's purchasing experience?
2. How can you change the client/customer's life?
3. What problems can you solve?
4. What value (tangible/intangible) can you offer your clients/customers?

Here is a quick look at one of our customers

Here is a full service 'shortened' template for Axiom9.com working with a 20k a month client.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intake | Phase #1 – Strong Pro-Active BUILD Phase |
| Niche | We take all their information and formulate it for them to help them identify their niche. Then we compare their data to the competition's data, and analytic reports. Is there a sustainable Target Demographic that can help them build their goals? Then we start to build keyword lists and group lists. |
| Online Presence | What is their current online presence? What do they need tweaked, rebuilt, or added? Almost all our clients need sales funnels and sales tracking added. Most need their social networking platforms cleaned up and shaped to tell their story. |
| Branding | We look at the information they give us, the client's idea of who they are and how they want the world to view them, and create a marketable brand. |
| Sales Funnel | Now it's time to build a sales funnel. Whether we are working with a local accounting firm, or an international recruiting franchise, the sales funnels start 1/2/3 levels off their 'buy now' page and educate, build authority, and then ask for sales. |
| Optimize for Google | SEO starts in the code. If the website is not designed correctly for both desktop and mobile then no amount of keyword optimization, tags, or schema data is going to help. Our goal is to help national/global clients build a DA (Domain Authority) of DA20 in the first 3 months. To have an Alexa rank of less than 1 million in the first 6 months To build a website with a google score of 75+ mobile and 85+ Desktop |
| Influencer | Many of our clients become influencers. Many of them will use influencers. Currently influencer marketing is earning \$2- \$5 for every \$1 in advertising dollars. This is a new trend that we shouldn't overlook. |
| Local – Maps, Citations, Reviews | Local and Maps is an entity unto its own. It is not an 'add on' to SEO but a complete funnel and needs to be treated as such. |
| Strategy Building | Phase #2 - Evolution of GROWTH |
| Communication | Engineer a communication rhythm. Engineer a report strategy that gives the client the information they need. We work with our clients, we need to seed the process so that they can see where we are going. We need to help educate our clients so they can see what is coming next. The client needs to understand whether they are doing an inbound or an outbound marketing strategy. Are they branding a product, or themselves? |
| Competition Defense | This starts by watching which keywords fall off page #1 to disavowing links. It's a complete strategy that needs to run under the other strategies to feed information 'down the stream' so that each strategy can be augmented to prevent another SEO or Marketing agency from stealing clients. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traffic and Advertising | Not all campaigns require or would benefit from advertising. In this phase we are always looking for ‘the next best thing’. Clients don’t come to you – you need to find them. Our niche’ doesn’t need traffic – they need leads/clients/customers. They don’t need shoppers, impulse buyers, or tire kickers. They need people who are at the top of the ‘conversion to buyer ratio’ scale – or to put it simply, they need people who finished shopping, have 1 or 2 options, and are ready to buy. |
| Start The System Once their online presence is started. | To repeat successful results you need a strategy, a system. Our CRM now formulizes our system. I also have a project manager that lets me follow each client’s progress. But again, we don’t use a lot of expensive, time consuming software. An excel sheet lets us share the progress with clients (we put all proprietary info in 2 columns and can remove those before sharing with the client. |
| Develop their Team | I like to make sure that our team member’s names become familiar to our clients. I don’t ever want to be so big that I use phrases like ‘I will ask the link building team.’ Instead I like to say, “I will ask John where they are on this project.’ |
| Growth | Phase #3 – Analyze – Improve - Repeat |
| Mobile Marketing | Do you need to add mobile marketing to your sales funnel? Can your business benefit from a mobile app? |
| Internet Marketing Strategy | Expand the business’s footprint on the web. We have reports that show how your website grows from an online brochure to a ‘web’ across the internet. |
| Revisit Sales | Are we reaching the right people? Are the keywords and Target Demographic making your job easier? Can the sales team close in less cost/time? Is the closing ratio improving? |
| Website Evolution | This is where the website should increase. Some of our clients have us make them an online course, or set help them become influencers. We have had clients ask us to make their name appear as a google keyword. This is where creativity steps in and we dream bigger, try harder, and |
| Lead Generation Strategy | Now it is time to pick a sales strategy as listed below. First choose inbound or outbound marketing. |
| Lead Magnets | Create and improve lead magnets, incentives, and other tools to incite an emotional response from buyers. Lead Magnets should produce results. It is easy to get customers interested but converting an interested buyer into an ‘active’ buyer can take a little tweaking. |
| Sales | Leads, clicks, and contacts are only as valuable as your follow-up. Most businesses take over at this stage but if it isn’t working, then ask for help. Depending on the product, whether it is tangible or intangible, and how you are dealing with sales, you may need professionals to develop your sales strategy. What tasks will you place the customer/client’s path to elicit a response? |
| Competition Campaign | Now it is time to make you stand out from the competition and become the obvious choice. |
| Business Builder Stage | Phase #4 - Repeat |

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop Strategies | <p>Content marketing strategy goes beyond writing blogs. It is about creating a theme across the internet. It includes starting off site with content that people will follow to your website.</p> <p>Don't just focus on consumption, but engagement times, where people came from, what time they visited the page, and where they went after visiting the page.</p> |
| Keyword Research | <p>It is now time to stop focusing on keyword groups that generate no leads, and put more money and energy into those campaigns that generate leads.</p> <p>This needs to involve the sales department. A keyword phrase may attract 100 hits, and 10 calls. But if sales cannot close those calls than they are a wasted budget drain on a smaller marketing campaign.</p> |
| Trends | <p>It is time to follow the trends. For example, in 2022 – marketing videos will get shorter. Google has made Google Business more important. Facebook will become Meta. Meta puts big bets on the Metaverse, which is a term for virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) experience.</p> <p>Automated and IA digital marketing is closer to reality. Customers expect B2B to be open 24/7 – Automated tools like conversational intelligence will make this easier.</p> |
| Team Management | <p>Do we need to hire more skilled professionals? This is the time we discuss giving over tasks the business owner has handled and start building him a team.</p> |
| Growth | <p>It is time to negotiating taking the marketing campaign to the next level. If the original budget was \$20k a month, and the original revenue was \$90k a month revenue has grown by 20%, then it is time to increase the marketing budget by 7% of your 1 year, or 3 year, goals.</p> |

Section II: Marketing

MANAGING THE MARKETING END OF BUSINESS

I live in cyberspace. It's hard to imagine. I can navigate my way around a server with more grace and confidence than I can make my way around a crowd at a party. Trying to piece together an SEO campaign when you are not math savvy, a natural code breaker, or can see patterns in numbers, is a very binary – linear – process. There is no fun in it. There is nothing in that job that makes me want to get out of bed and fire up one of my workstations.

The best programmers, web designers, and coders are online between 11pm and 3am, my time. The world is quiet, there is a sense of sensory deprivation and you can experience living in a digital world in a more fluid way than any metaverse will let you.

Most people experience the internet from a visual point of view. They don't see what is happening, how marketers make it happen because, when it comes right down to it, Marketers are the 'heir apparent' of cyberspace, and the SEO mathematicians are the 'landed gentry.' There is a flow to how we work. There is a language. There are emotions and frustrations and challenges and entire days that are wasted. But, when the world is so quiet that you can hear your own heart beat then, your mind clears. Those are the times when neurons fire, connect, and you can make something wonderful happen.

If you can hold a stream of numbers in your head then your probably a marketer, work in a field where you help people find information. When I was young I tried programming, but it felt like paint by numbers when the spaces were already outlined in the correct color. Coding is $A + B = C$, it always will be, in whatever language you use.

Marketing is more like $A + B + ? = C$. That question mark could be the competition's SEO firm trying to hijack back the keywords we just won for you.

Your sales people might be energized. Your account managers might be socially intuitive. But if your computer team are only 'filling in the blanks' then you are working with secretaries, not marketers.

And they are competitive. I've seen more motivation by telling the marketing team by telling them we lost 10 page #1 keywords than if I offered a raise.

The Purpose of Digital Marketing

What is the Purpose of Digital Marketing?

The easiest way to answer this is to send you over to Amazon to read my book. Most people have a basic, linear idea of what they think digital marketing it. They think keywords and SERPs, blogs and Instagram.

If we look at digital marketing as a house, then everything you think you know about digital marketing is the paint and shingles on that house. I can assign a team to work 100 hours on a simple SEO campaign and never scratch the service.

The purpose is not to get you to the top of Google. That is why most people cry that they pay thousands of dollars a month and see no results. They are using the wrong benchmarks. You don't need to be on

page #1 of Google to double your ROI (Return on Investment). You don't need 1000 hits a day to your website to reach the next business scaling plateau.

The reason why these are used in selling is that they are tangibles that make it easier for salespeople to close the deal. Digital marketing encompasses about 15 different activities that are needed to give you the 'right' location online. Even in the digital world, it is all about 'location, location, location.'

As we all know in the real world, the best location for most businesses is in the mall. A good place for restaurants is near the business section of town. The best location for coaches and counsellors is by the hospital.

In cyberspace page #1 of google is good, and considered necessary. However, ranking for the hardest keyword, or ranking for the keyword with the most traffic may not be where your buyers are.

The Objectives of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the task of putting your online presence in front of people who are ready to buy your product. It isn't the task of chasing traffic, or SERPs, or even chasing down shoppers.

There is only one purpose of marketing – to make the company money. That should be the #1 benchmark. It is the only way to understand if the marketing campaign is working. You can be at the top of Google, have thousands of visitors to your website a day, be an influencer on Instagram, and still not be able to take your business to the next level.

Comprehensive Glossary of Digital Marketing Terms

I added this blog because the problem with most digital marketing proposals is that they don't clearly tell the client what they will receive. Or, the client states one thing, and then expects another. I have had clients who wanted to become popular influencers. Then, lost them because another firm told them that 'for that money' you should be ranking #1 on Google.

When you sign up with a digital marketing firm it is imperative that you understand exactly what channels will be used, what strategies are in play, and what the benchmarks are. Focus on the benchmarks, not the goals. Goals are too vague.

If your goal is to increase your company's revenue 2% in XXX months then don't be distracted by other factors.

What are digital marketing channels?

The place to start is by listing the common digital marketing channels.

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
2. Pay Per Click advertising (PPC)
3. Social Media Marketing
4. Content Marketing (podcasts, video, courses, infographics, etc)
5. Video Marketing

6. Mobile Marketing
7. Affiliate Marketing
8. Email Marketing
9. Local and Maps Marketing
10. Link and citation building
11. Live Content (interactive content)
12. User Generated Content (UGC) including reviews, selfies and photos that promote a product, service, or event. This includes hashtag marketing

What is a digital marketing strategy?

1. Brand awareness
2. Audience growth
3. Generate more leads
4. Generate conversions
5. Increase engagement
6. Generate interactions
7. Increase sales and ROI
8. Scaling Your Online Influence

How To Pick A Good Marketing Agency?

1. Invest in strategies with strong ROI. Ask the marketing agency to talk numbers.
2. Create More Engagement. No matter what the marketing company does, or does not accomplish, that engagement, SEO work, Link building, etc is there to stay.
3. Turn the users into the promoters. Ask the company how they will do this. Don't look for strategies or vague outlines like 'social media marketing creates a platform etc.' Don't accept WHAT they will do. Ask them HOW they will do it.
4. Before you sign, can you articulate what they will do for you and what you are buying? Can you create a checklist? Or did they use vague terms and idioms.

What Should You Pay For Marketing?

According to the Business Development Bank of Canada, the overall marketing budget varies depending on whether you're marketing to consumers or to other businesses:

- B2B companies should allocate 2-5% of revenue to marketing.
- B2C companies should allocate 5-10% of their revenue to marketing.

Here's the average amount each size of business spends on marketing per year, based on the same research:

- Small businesses (<20 employees): \$30,000
- Mid-sized businesses (20-49 employees): \$60,000
- Large businesses (50 employees or more): more than \$100,000

That is an average. The real question is how fast you want to reach your goals. In business school the magic number is 30% of revenue. Statistically, if you want business growth at a safe, risk free, level then add 7% of your total revenue to this campaign.

Compare this to real numbers, not projections.

According to the February 2021 CMO Survey, the percentage of marketing budget businesses will spend on social media in the next 12 months breaks down as follows:

- B2B Product: 14.7%
- B2B Services: 18.3%
- B2C Product: 21.8%
- B2C Services: 18.7%

The marketing budget allocated to social media this year varies by sector:

- Consumer services: 28.5%
- Communications and media: 25.6%
- Banking and finance: 11.7%

In five years, the overall portion of social media in the marketing budget is estimated to be 24.5%. Most of the average 30% marketing budget.

The problem is that many Businesses do not understand the fast growing trend of shopping or buying services online. Business's watch companies like Amazon take leaps and bounds but don't believe that it can happen to them.

Look at it another way. If you outsource marketing then you are freeing up Human Resources, Software subscriptions, etc. Just start adding up what the company saves by outsourcing.

When I am asked this question I usually reply with this answer.

If you do not outsource to Axiom9, and hire someone instead, you are paying \$40 000 - \$60 000 for a qualified SEO specialist or Social Media Expert. On top of the wages you have floor space, statutory holidays, wage deductions/taxes, the cost of hiring and training, etc. For a small company with less than 20 employees this can save you about \$60 000 to \$75 000.

Let's go very conservative, \$50 000. What assets do you have? You have one perspective. The HR resources have one skill set. This person will have one or two favorite tasks. What is their communication style? How do they analyze data?

Compare this to outsourcing the entire marketing department to Axiom9. For \$50 000 you have up to 25 people working with you. Each one specializes in one or two tasks. You have a project manager, analysts, and other professionals that would cost you over \$100 000 to hire.

While \$4000 - \$6000 may seem like a large sum, it is not high when you add value to the assets your business is buying.

The next thing to consider is the ROI. Like in any business, running a small campaign takes longer, and each month you run out of budget.

What we normally recommend is to set up a phase #1 where we build the platform and then in phase #2 increase the marketing 7-10% of the new revenue. Remember that your company still keeps 90-93% of that new revenue.

Estimate Your Marketing Budget and Asset/Company Resources Gains

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of Contacts Made: Email, sales, PPC, etc. | This is the total number of contacts between customers and the business regardless of where they happened |
| Total Cost of the Campaign | |
| Response Rate: % of responses | Expected or based on past performance |
| Conversion to Buyer Ratio % | Expected or based on past performance |
| Profit Per Sale % | What item are you selling? What is the profit margin. |
| | |
| Cost Per Responder | $\text{Cost} / (\text{Response Rate} \times \text{Contacts})$ |
| Cost Per Buyer | $\text{Cost} / (\text{Conversion Rate} \times \text{Response Rate} \times \text{Contacts})$ |
| Number of Buyers | $\text{Cost} / \text{Profit}$ |
| ROI | $(\text{Campaign Profit} - \text{Cost of Campaign}) / \text{Cost of Campaign}$ |
| Intangible – Human Resources Resources | Training/Coaching. Assets Developed. Strategies Developed. Online Platforms and Creative Assets. |
| Intangible – Freed Company Resources | What does the marketing company bring to the campaign that you do not need including: project management software, analytics subscriptions, training strategies already in place, connections/peer relationships, and skills developed. Also, free'd resources. |
| Money from Current Campaign Allocated for Business Growth | |

“Not all marketing benefits are Monetary”

GOAL AND BUDGET ANALYSIS

Risk Analysis

Length of time to reach objective + Risk willing to take + Time invested in marketing/sales = Budget

Growth Analysis

Desired Yearly Revenue x .07 = Optimum starting budget.

This is on top of the 30% successful businesses invest in marketing and advertising in a fiscal year.

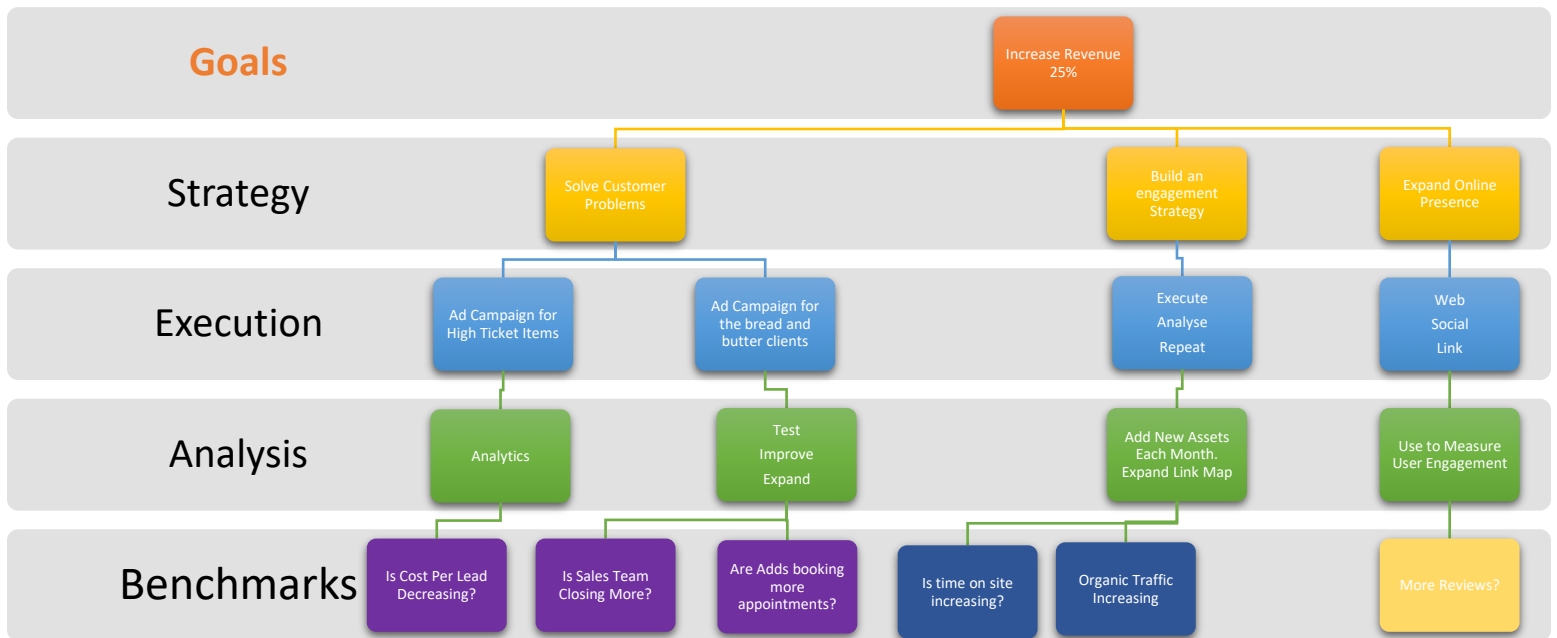
How is your current marketing working?

| Where do clients come from (list the %) | % of Leads | Revenue | Not Started | Needs Work | Other Notes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Word of mouth referrals | | | | | |
| Affiliate marketing | | | | | |
| Point of purchase advertising | | | | | |
| Trade shows/personal networking Promotional materials (flyers, business cards) | | | | | |
| Yellow pages | | | | | |
| Direct marketing (personal sales, handouts) | | | | | |
| Telemarketing Television (ads, product placement) | | | | | |
| Radio (ads, product placement, sponsorships) | | | | | |
| Direct Mail Magazine/Trade publications/Newspaper | | | | | |
| Ads Billboards/Other signage | | | | | |
| Event participation & sponsorships | | | | | |
| Content promotion (videos, articles, etc.) | | | | | |
| Public relations campaign | | | | | |
| Blogs | | | | | |
| Paid online | | | | | |
| Organic search engine marketing SEM | | | | | |
| Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, twitter, etc) | | | | | |
| Online marketplaces (eBay, Amazon, etc.) | | | | | |
| Email Website (search engine optimization) | | | | | |
| Mobile (apps, mobile ads, etc.) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| Networking | | | | | |
| Online Directories/Citations | | | | | |
| Google My Business | | | | | |
| Linkedin | | | | | |
| Sales Funnels | | | | | |
| Reviews/branding websites | | | | | |

Where is the customer looking for products/services?

Here is short way to keep your marketing Campaign on Focus.



Goals

Keep your goals realistic.

Can you manage the extra clients? Do you have enough time/resources/manpower/skill sets?

Will you need new tools? For example, a CRM, calendar, project management?

Will you do this inhouse or outsource?

Will your goal of 25% increased revenue be able to handle the extra Human Resources, project management, and advertising costs?

Can you/your business handle the risk?

Are you banking/folding over enough cash to reach the next level.

Strategy

What are you going to outsource?

Can you realistically do the job inhouse? Are you organized/motivated to complete the tasks?

Will you be able to handle the extra workload/stress?

Do you have the outsourcing cash on hand, or does it need to come from the campaign?

Execution

Read the month end reports. Do you see anything that the marketing company can optimize on?

Are the leads: Qualified, Ready to Buy, Easy to Close, and/or easy to work with?

What was the percentage of abandoned shopping carts and/or no shows at appointments?

Take notes at each meeting/call/appointment?

- Where customer questions addressed in the sales journey?
- Do customers have realistic expectations?
- Did customers feel relaxed and trust your authority, or did you feel the need to compromise to finish the onboarding process?
- Do your customers feel comfortable enough to share personal data? If so, do you customize the offer for them(rewards/discounts/promotions)? Does this feel like a compromise or a win-win.
 - (This increases opt-ins, and acceptance but may not fit your business model)

Analytics

Is the marketing campaign performing like you think it should? Are benchmarks being met?

- Do you have any suggestions that might help?
- Is there one aspect of the daily routines that you thought you could do but it is overwhelming and/or something you are not good at?
- Is there one aspect of the campaign you would like to try yourself?
- Are you having trouble creating content, taking pictures, etc that are needed for the campaign?
- How is the buyer's journey performing?
- What data are you collecting from the sales team?
- Is the marketing campaign performing 'as expected' in the yearly buying?

Packaging Services

This seems rather easy, but experience shows us that people don't write out their package, cost factors, and end up missing their mark. Look at the following Example. What would the price point need to be?

This is the part that is hardest for small business owners to determine, a) because they think in binary terms, and b) because they don't include every aspect in their pricing plan.

Here is an example from our archives:

| Package 1 | Expense | HR Resource |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Month one | | |
| Web Design | | |
| design | 500 | 60 |
| graphics | 500 | 25 |
| server optimization | 100 | 10 |
| content | 500 | 30 |
| speed/google opt. | 500 | 20 |
| onboarding/meetings | 300 | 10 |
| SEO optimization | 250 | 3 |
| Forms/Email | 150 | 2 |
| Client Coaching | 200 | 4 |
| Set up analytics | 100 | 1 |
| managed hosting monthly | 50 | 1 |
| Set up CRM | 75 | 1 |
| | 3225 | 167 |
| Cost of this lead | 400 | 5 |
| Cost of Sales | 500 | 7 |
| Follow Up | 250 | 4 |
| Meetings | 100 | 3 |
| Onboarding | 300 | 10 |
| | 1550 | 29 |
| HR income tax/wsib etc 20% | 400 | 1 |
| Sales bonus on the sale | 400 | |
| Office expense | 75 | 25 |
| | 875 | 26 |
| Total | 5650 | 222 |

Month 2

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 sales funnel | | |
| Graphics | 100 | 10 |
| layout | 300 | 10 |
| email followup | 750 | 25 |
| analytics | 200 | 5 |
| lead magnet 1 | 1000 | 50 |
| Lead magnet 2 | 500 | 50 |
| landing page 1 | 300 | 20 |
| landing page 2 | 300 | 20 |
| content | 500 | 50 |
| Build out social networking | 1000 | 50 |
| analytics | 250 | 10 |
| | 5500 | 310 |
| management meetings | 300 | 10 |
| HR income tax/wsib etc | | |
| 20% | 400 | 1 |
| Sales bonus on the sale | 400 | |
| Office expense | 75 | 25 |
| | 875 | 26 |
| Total | 6375 | 336 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Month 3 | | |
| Advertising | 1000 | 25 |
| PPC management | 400 | 20 |
| link building | 500 | 50 |
| working on domain | | |
| authority | 1000 | 100 |
| working on alexa rank | 500 | 50 |
| social network managing | 1000 | 40 |
| analytics | 250 | 10 |
| | 4000 | 295 |
| management meetings | 300 | 10 |
| HR income tax/wsib etc | | |
| 20% | 400 | 1 |
| Sales bonus on the sale | 400 | |
| Office expense | 75 | 25 |
| | 875 | 26 |
| Total | 5175 | 321 |

Taking a look at the top projection it takes 3 months to take a digital marketing campaign from inception to a stage where the foundation is built and the real marketing can start.

The numbers in this projection are rounded to the highest average we would invest in a single month, but notice that the cost

| Total Cost | Expenses | Resources Expense |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| | | Hours |
| Month 1 | 5650 | 220 |
| Month 2 | 6375 | 336 |
| Month 3 | 5175 | 321 |
| | | |
| Total Cost | 17200 | 877 |
| Profits at Cost | Zero | 22 weeks |

Project Management

Looking at this campaign it brings a few project management issues to the forefront.

First, the investment into this project doesn't include profits. If you were working on a minimum budget then there is no room for adding to the project when/as problems arise. This increases the risk percentage. It also decreases the amount time spent on retention.

Another thing that is overlooked is the time investment. I would budget 1000 hours into this project. Do notice that the time investment and cost of sales is not included. Except for the 3 month bonus.

If you were trying to sell this package for a low profit margin in an attempt to increase sales then you run the risk of losing money on this package on every client who does not stay longer than three months.

If the client doesn't understand that the first three months is about building the marketing platform then the marketer could run into a frustrated client who pays a minimum of \$6000 a month and doesn't see their business any closer to their 25% increase in sales (the arbitrary goal used for this ebook).

There is another problem. What if the client planned to quit as soon as the platform is finished and then take over marketing themselves? They may – or may not – tell the marketing agency. So, if you price this campaign under \$8000 a month, you run the risk of losing money on this project.

Let's take a look at the time investment. The first thing you need to address is the job of the business owner. If you spend all your time doing the work, then you are limited by how much time you work in a week. This makes business scaling impossible. And, it isn't the business owner's job to do the work.

The business owner's job is to make money. More important, it is to make sure that things go wrong and the company loses money. This mistake is made by a lot of professionals in the business world.

Take a look at the above model. This campaign needs 22 x 40 hour weeks of work completed in 12 weeks. While many business owners feel they can do the whole job, it is this oversight that causes things to come crashing down.

Even if the business owner worked 60 hours a week to 'almost' fit the time frame, they can only manage one client. When you put this into a Risk calculator you see why trying to save money is riskier than hiring skilled talent to help.

I would like to step in here a bit and offer some personal thoughts. My parents gave me one piece of advice that has stuck with me forever. "You never fail until you quit." At the time I thought they were brilliant until I hit high school and realized that this quote is attributed to Albert Einstein. That's not the point. The point is that the word failure shouldn't be in a business owner's vocabulary.

I could write a whole book on avoiding failure. I've seen it done often enough. Most often by poor management. I live in Ontario Canada, a province that is a virtual graveyard of expansive mansions, some were almost self-sustaining complexes, abandoned before they were even built. These were all built by multi-billionaires who made some logistical or oversight mistake.

It's not your money. It's risk management buffer. There is a place for that money, even if you can't remember what that is at the moment. I have worked with several business owners who self-sabotaged their own success by spending the business's money.

One example is where we worked together to create a good price point and implemented a good strategy. The goals were being met. But the owner did much of the work at first and assumed the money in the price point as his. He spent it, and then when it came time to scale up, the funds were gone.

Another example is the 30% rule of marketing. Successful businesses invest 30% of their revenue into marketing and advertising. To grow a business needs to invest 7% of their current revenue on top of the 30%. Many business owners balk at this number. In some cases, it cuts into their own revenue severely.

That is okay. Save 10% of your business revenue for one year there will be enough money to run a four month campaign. That campaign will generate increased revenue, plus the 10% savings, which should be turned back into the marketing campaign until the business reaches 30%.

In that year, learn the skill set you need to succeed at your new goal. It is true that successful people read – a lot. Kindle makes it easier for me. When I find I become fatigued I will open kindle and read. This usually regenerates me. Success is a mindset that you need to learn. If you don't have it then you need to learn from people who are willing to share.

What if?

This is good but there are many business owners who are limited by something. It might be time, skills, or financial. If it is a social obligation then I suggest finding a life coach and/or business coach who can help you deal with life 'tolerances' that are sapping your time and energy.

"Paying a great coach for six months to help me deal with tolerances and self-sabotaging was a waste of money," Said no one ever.

Now, go back to your SWOT and list everything that is holding your business back. Now, make a plan for overcoming those problems. Financial is often the easiest. I have worked with a wonderful coach who said that if you cannot do what you want to do then sell some of the baggage holding you back. This is hard for people, especially if you see vehicles, houses, vacations and toys as part of your identity. Again, that is a topic to share with a coach.

Sell what you have today and invest in tomorrow. Then, buy better or buy assets. I'm not counselling you to do this, I'm just highlighting that there is always a way to reach your goals.

Hold Your Marketing Company Accountable

We believe that a marketer's website should be their calling card. Too many marketers have websites that don't reflect their sales pitch. They talk about fast websites, and good google scores, but their own website has low Domain Authority (DA), and low speeds. We put our strategy to the test on our own website.

After this workbook is completed, it will blueprint an entire marketing plan including scaling and growth! It will highlight what to sell, how to position it and the best marketing channels to publish your company's message online.

This workbook is made to help managers develop a viable strategy and make educated choices needed to launch the next level of their marketing campaign.

Axiom9 works on the Build, Grow, Repeat. Our objective is growing and scaling businesses. I wrote this book because I have seen many SMB who have lost confidence in both marketing and sales.

Unfortunately, there is too many vague promises and very little proof of work in both marketing and sales. This makes it easy for people to be 'sold' on services that satisfy the contract but don't meet the business's needs. The 'fake it till you make it' motto is alive and well in both marketing and sales.

The goal of this book is to help businesses learn to choose better marketing agencies, work smarter with them, and achieve the results they want. This will increase confidence in the industry. When this happens there will be a win-win for everyone.

This is not a how to book. We used our own business as a case study to provide visuals to the theory. This book is a launching point. It's objective is to create a mindset in you, and your management and/or marketing team that will help them work with digital marketing agencies.

Marketing starts with Creating.

It grows strong on the back of Innovation.

Success Births Experience.

Building Block #2 – BRANDING and TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION

#1 Task Analysis

| Task | Person Assigned | Decision Maker | Problems/Challenges |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Collecting Data and Analytics | | | |
| Defining Target Demographic | | | |
| Determining Budget | | | |
| | | | |
| Reports Needed | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Meetings Scheduled | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Benchmarks/Milestones | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Outsource/Partner Agencies | | | |
| Freelancers/Contractors | | | |
| What Collaboration is Needed | | | |

Step #1 Complete a SWOT Analysis

Competitive Advantage - Why will your target customers buy from you and not your competitor? What value do you bring to the client?

What value do you bring to them that no one else can bring? How are you special?

Attach any data or reports that support your SWOT

Define The Brand

What words describe your company?

What do people say about your company?

What is your company vision.

What design/colors/feel/impression do you that no one else can bring? How are you special?

Step #2 List 2 problems the business faces online

Step #3 list 2 things the business needs to grow

Step #4 Objectives

Without focusing on limitations, what are the company's 1 year, 2 year, and 5 year goals

"Reports are useless unless they include measurable tangible and intangible benefits to the company"

Aristotle: "We are what we repeatedly do. **Success**, is not an act, but a habit."

CURRENT Marketing Platform ANALYSIS

- What does the business have in place
- Who is the competition?
 - What do they have in place
 - What makes them the competition
- Do we have what users want?
- Do we have a sales funnel?
- What do we need to add?
- Where is the current digital marketing practices wasting time?
- Where is the current digital marketing project wasting company resources?
- Are there any duplicate tasks?
- Identify untapped Creative Resources/People?
- What task can be outsourced cheaper (include time/HR as well as monetary criteria)
- Do we have the HR resources needed to compete and increase the market share?
- Can the company rebrand itself and increase Price Points and Profit margins?

Which lead generation do you prefer. Each has its own success rate.

1. Organic - Traffic 1%
 - a. Traffic generation from Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Traffic clicks on your organic link.
2. Cold Outreach – 10%
 - a. Flood the business world and see who pays attention
 - b. Position yourself as an expert/influencer.
 - c. If we are going to do cold calls or anything that is intrusive we want to set up multiple domains for the cold calls.
 - d. Are you running a local 'near me' campaign? A business niche campaign? Or a national campaign?
3. Lead Generation - Advertising
 - a. Go to places where the client is and present your message to them.
 - b. The client has the opportunity to approach you if they are interested.
4. Inbound Marketing
 - a. Educating, putting content online and then waiting for leads to approach you.
5. Networking/Speaking
 - a. join associations and networking groups. Market to their members via inviting people to talk on your webinars or at events.
6. Joint Ventures
 - a. Working with a business that sells to your target market.

Section III: Growth & Scaling

INCREASE ROI

There are a lot of factors that go into increasing ROI and unfortunately we've learned that no two businesses, no two websites, can be measured the same. We can answer a lot of questions from sales funnels and website analytics.

- What time of day do most people visit your website?
- What gender visits your website?
- Where do they live?

Effective Communication

Clients need to convert leads. For the life of me I don't understand why more marketing companies don't combine marketing and sales. What good is bringing a company leads, or booking appointments, if the sales do not close. What happens in this situation is that the business owner always blames the marketing company for not meeting their goals.

The marketing company might have exceeded expectations. They may bring double the expected leads. That means nothing if the business owner cannot close the deal. This is a major part of ROI. Because all the reports I send proving I have done what I was paid for mean nothing if the business owner doesn't receive an acceptable ROI.

The couple paragraphs on communication are not enough for the scope of this book. The problem is, when you are dealing with a marketer you are either dealing with a sales professional or probably an analyst. The analyst is not a people person. They are probably highly intelligent. And, they are the ones who can weave your marketing strategy into something amazing.

As a business coach I find that business owners fit into two categories, cater to me, support you. You've met both, the egocentric, and Coaching/leadership models. The problem with working with highly intelligent people is that they often have a high IQ and a low EQ. This means they really don't understand the egocentric personality types. The analytic marketer is all about analytics, mathematics, and metrics.

If you want to work with these people then you need to clearly explain to them what you want. You need to be succinct. 30 years has proven one thing, when you treat one of these people like you value their work they will give you 150%.

That sounds easy, but learning how to communicate with them is very difficult. They do speak in complete sentences. They don't rely heavily on body language, innuendos, or sarcasm. Seriously, they don't get it. I have outlined this to a couple of business owners and literally saw the 'light go on' as they looked back on soured relationships with their previous marketing teams.

Ranking is a mathematical discipline. There is no magic to it. It is not an art. It is all about algorithms, connections, and keyword weighting. Not only that, the calculations change, sometimes monthly. This can make it difficult to build solid communication between the people on the front lines, and the people behind the computers.

I will make you one promise. If you can learn to communicate with them, your campaign will skyrocket.

Communication & Style Struggles

Here are a few struggles I've seen between analytic teams and management:

1. You may ask for something they know is a bad move. They will send you a report that means nothing to you, but it is their hypothesis of the effects the change will have on the campaign. You, have no idea why they sent it and don't even read the email. They assume that you read the email and do not see any validity in their points. The result. They follow your instructions, the campaign fails, and everyone is frustrated.
2. I've worked with many analysts that can think and type at 90 words per minute. However, if they have to talk to someone they stumble over their words and sound unsure of what they are doing. Just slow the conversation down. It's hard to spend all day working behind a computer and then pop into the real world.
3. If you want to be catered to then work with a salesperson and account manager. Don't go for the smaller agency where the computer whiz is also the salespeople.
4. Don't expect eye contact. Don't be surprised if they don't even turn their camera on in the meeting.
5. Don't expect an answer today. They will never BS to make you feel better. Also, don't be shocked when your simple question results in a 10 page answer.
6. Ask them for the Coles Notes, or elevator speech version. You may need to wait a few minutes for them to give you the information you want. Asking for the summary is the best way to avoid a lecture on the complexities between Google Artificial Intelligence and Ranking Keywords.
7. Give them an agenda 2 days before the meeting. They will probably send you back a report with a summary. Now the meeting will be 30 minutes long, not 1.5 hours long.
8. WHY? Because the more you learn to communicate with the people who are most comfortable working in code, the harder they will work on your campaign. You won't be just another account in the project management software. You will be someone who sees them as people.

What Do You Need to Succeed?

You either need time or money for success. Axiom9 has the training and partnerships with companies that will help you succeed. However, you need to meet us ½ way. Letting us help sell is a win-win because we have access to the professionals, to a team. Most businesses are locked into one single salesperson who either has it, or doesn't.

Also, in house sales agents (including you) make the same mistakes:

- You hire someone who feels right for you, not someone who can sell to your clients
- You don't invest in training.
- Your sales package/bonuses are limited which limits the talent who wants to work with you.

- After a while you fade the training.
- You are too aggressive qualifying leads based on your emotions.
- You don't have a scaling process in place to grow the business creating a roller coaster effect in your revenue stream.
- You focus too much on lead flow, or on sales training.
- You don't invest in the buying cycle
- You see your salespeople as an employee. They are not. Sales people are an asset.
- You don't give your sales people the tools they need. This is especially important if you are the entire sales force.
- Once the campaign starts working you start tying the company's hands and telling them how you want things to happen.
- You don't communicate enough with the marketing company telling them what is working and what isn't. A perfect client sends the marketing company as much data and analytics (monthly) as the marketing agency sends you in their monthly analytics reports.
- My good enough is good enough mindset.

One thing that we try to highlight for our clients, starting at the onboarding level, is that marketing's job is to cast the net. But marketing is only ½ of the equation. This is why Axiom9 has the edge over the competition. We set you up with the training and the methodology, or we link you with the best salespeople.

I've watched business owners become more frustrated with the marketing industry for more than two decades because it doesn't work. But it does work.

If you pay \$10 000 a month for a marketing company. If they bring in 10 qualified leads a month, and you close two. Then do the math. If your service profits \$2000 a month from a client then your business hits the break even point around 10 weeks.

On week 11 you can either think small and take that cash, or fold it back into Marketing and Sales to grow your business.

Understanding how to grow ROI means understanding what money is yours, and what money belongs to the business. That money isn't yours, it isn't profit, until your business hit's it's next goal.

Think of it another way. If my marketing agency can increase your profits by \$10 000 then you either have \$10000 to invest in assets (things like marketing and sales that generate more revenue). OR, you can take that money and stick it in the bank, and lose 50% off the top in income tax.

Let's look at scenario #1. After 10 weeks the money is put back into marketing. Within 4 – 6 months the marketing budget is doubled. Now there is money for testing and experimenting. You are now looking for that niche other businesses are ignoring. This taps you into unsatisfied consumers who are easier to close, and often, willing to pay more.

SEO On-Page

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Link Building

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

Content Creation skills/time

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Social Networking

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

Creative skills/time

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Advertising/Lead Generation

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

Creative skills/time

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Branding/Marketing

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

Creative skills/time

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Analytics/Report Generation

Time to learn how to understand the task? Yes/No

Time to invest in completing SEO tasks?

The manpower to execute the exercises

Creative skills/time

The skills/software/knowledge needed to create useful reports

Who is your customer and how do they choose you?

| Buyer's Journey | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awareness | Should I solve this problem? |
| Education | What choices do I have? |
| Comparison | What is the best solution? |
| Purchase | I have chosen the solution I feel is best |
| Confirm | Did I make the right decision – Buyer's Remorse (from 1 to 10) |

Keywords – Worth Their Weight in Gold

Purchase intent

Purchase intent is a transactional value.

It doesn't matter what you market, or what you sell. It really doesn't matter once the main focus is on making money instead of promoting your product or service.

Instead of promoting your product or service we need to identify your niche. The next step is not to do keyword research. That is the #1 way to bog your campaign down with trite and useless keywords. Axiom9 has clients with over 1000 keywords in the ranking positions and more than 200 on page one. There are small businesses, in remote towns, generating 500 hits a day. It isn't hard to rank, or generate traffic. All your campaign needs is a niche.

Purchase intent is the amount of money you can make from a single keyword. Here is the shocker. The keyword with the most traffic is often the one with the least sales. I can put you on the top of Google with a keyword that has 1000 hits, and a PPC value of \$20. You might make \$500 a month off that keyword. I might give you a niche keyword with 50 hits a month and no PPC value and you can generate \$5000 a month.

The biggest mistake most SEO firms and Marketing agencies make is to miss the purpose of keywords. Their job is to bring organic traffic from the search engines. This is the beginning and the end of their purpose.

They have no use getting people to click from articles and advertisements to your website. Their job is not to encourage people to click from one page to another.

Once you realize this you are free to explore the intent behind consumer's use of the keyword. Then the keywords start making sense.

For optimization purposes The keywords on a page have very little value. There must be a continuous thread using the same keywords, onsite and offsite, before Google sees a keyword as a keyword. I have seen hundreds of pages where Google's bot didn't weigh the keyword and give it value, even though the page was 'optimized' for the keyword.

SCALING YOUR BUSINESS – Mapping Growth Strategy

Standard Operating Procedures

Failure to Plan is a Plan to Fail

No business can scale without a functional SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) that is followed. I like to write programming flow charts on the wall. This gives me a visual. I can then write a client's name on the flow chart, or a day of the month, letting us keep on top of the work.

This gives me two opportunities. I like to work with the top talent. We are a conglomerate of geniuses. This brings a few sensory and social issues that need to be addressed. One thing about having a solid SOP is that we don't need a manager. Each person can follow the SOP and work on their own time. For example, I work best 2pm to 2am. I don't need to be in the office for the person who likes to work 6am to noon. And, they don't need to work longer. We are project based.

This business model doesn't work for everyone, but it allows me to put my client's first. The team works best, giving clients their best. They are motivated to meet goals.

You will need to fill in the worksheet at the end before you can build a solid SOP.

I am not going to spend a lot of time on SOP. If you went to business school, then you are familiar with them. If you didn't go to business school, then you need to learn what they are. And, you need to learn to use them.

Marketing tasks require no skill to set up. This is easy to see by all the freelance job sites offering 'one off' hires at less than \$5 an hour. However, they do take a lot of skill to execute, which is why trying to save money is going to cost you money.

Marketing campaigns are written out clearly. They follow strict flow charts. You might not see the company's strategy for your campaign but the more you know about SOPs the easier it will be to work with your marketer. It will also be easier for them to answer your questions.

One of the easiest jobs I had was with a company that had very strict SOP standards. They broke every task into weeks. So we could give them a quick outline of their project. If you ask a marketing company what they will do for you, and you don't understand or use SOPs then you will probably only receive a bullet list, or the 'form' strategy given to the sales team.

Growth Stages

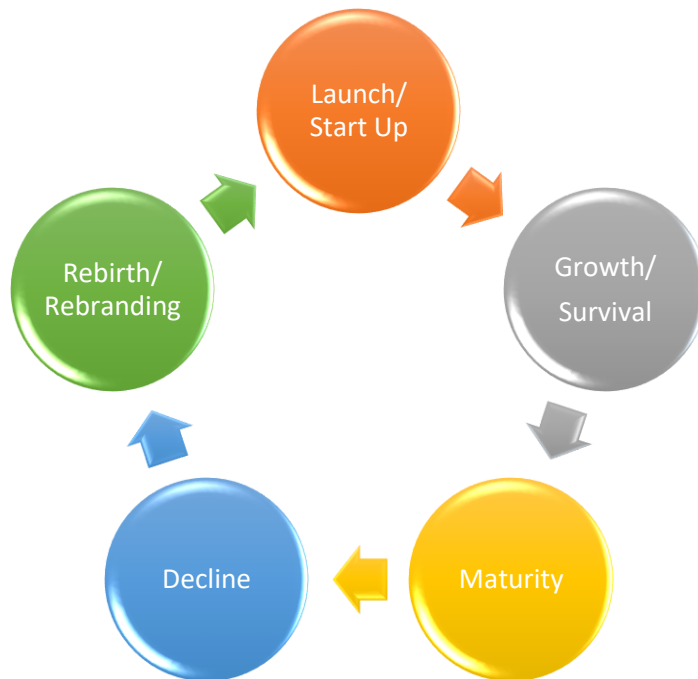
What growth stage is the company in?

Is the company a) just paying the bills, b) earning a good living, c) building wealth, d) generating enough expendable income to expand.

Take a look at pricing. Are you pricing a 1 time purchase, or a relationship.

There are several pricing models a business can choose from. In most B2B businesses, a value-based pricing model is the best choice. This model determines a price based on the value a

customer places on the product: it requires a company to quantify the return generated by the product's use from the customer's point of view



To accurately answer this question you need to take a good hard look at your company, your company's talent base, time restraints and money restraints. The following is a worksheet to help you get started.

Step #1 Complete this form on a Monday morning. Then as you work through the week, tweak it, but include your tweaks in a different color.

Step #2 – Give the worksheet to your talent base to fill in.

Step #3 – Ask clients questions that might give you a different view of the business performance.

Step #4 – put all the data together.

Step #5 – have a professional SEO, speed analysis, keyword analysis, and reputation management report done for your business and see how it lines up with your perspectives.

Time Line: 2 weeks

Solidifying Your Brand

Combine the business fundamentals of value proposition, brand, and analytics in your SOP.

Building Block #3 GROWTH PLAN

As you work through this report identify places where the business lacks time, or skills.

About 20 years ago I started to see a trend in the businesses where cyberspace met brick and mortar. This trend involved removing walls from the office. It wasn't until I had a 100% open concept (although very small) office a couple years later that I learned of the advantages.

Management might like the idea of being able to monitor everyone with a single glance.

Productivity might go up in a more open, social, environment.

What really happens when the walls come down, is the walls come down. In fact, I don't think any marketing company needs offices for anyone but management. When the walls came down the team collaborated more. They talked. Yes, there was an increase in chatter/wasted time, but there was an increase in creativity and problem solving.

In a cubicle people are isolated. We teach them to be isolated in school. We teach them to seek out the right answer, and that there is only one right answer. If they don't find it on their own, they fail.

In an open space I saw writers turn to programmers and say, 'Why does it have to be that hard. Can't you just XXXX.' This might offer some comic relieve to the programmers. Then something happened. People started brainstorming ideas. Excuses and frustration faded from the daily grind.

The wasted time for meetings slowed down.

Another thing we could do was project management slides onto the walls for everyone in the team to see. They became committed.

There is a saying that everyone has heard, 'A chicken is always involved in a bacon-and-egg breakfast, but the pig is committed. When everyone could see where they fit into the flowchart, then they could see their value in the overall project.

I also found that different teams could collaborate more. Web designers still made visually stimulating websites, but they let the 'back end' guys know what they were doing, and they both worked together to make a better website.

When we moved into an open concept office I learned how to eliminated the biggest mistake most marketing companies make. They design the website and then bring SEO in. Part of the SEO team (at our marketing agency) is page speed. When you give an SEO professional a finished website there are W3C errors, JavaScript problems, left over CSS and a lot of plugins that could be replaced by a few lines of code.

There are also things that are 'called in' from third party services that could have been eliminated by adding a bit of code. By the time the website is handed over to SEO the back end of the website looks like a Frankenstein copy of what it could have been, and optimizing will never be what it could have been.

In my opinion, this is why many SEO firms and Marketing agencies cannot do with their websites what they promise to do for yours.

What happens? Everyone from the programmers to the salespeople are frustrated because they cannot understand what is wrong. There is nothing wrong with their strategy. They just need to have SEO in on the design end of the website build. Or, they need to put the website build in the hands of someone who thinks optimization first, then the animations, forms, etc..

Now, in our team, everyone attends the design meetings, even if their attendance is only virtual. Anyone can offer suggestions and advice. We've even had votes over issues that didn't seem to have answers. It was the first time I was in an environment where everyone had a stake in the final outcome.

And everyone was better for it. The website designers learned little things, like naming images based on keywords before uploading them to a website made a big difference in the ongoing SEO. The writers learned to stop worrying so much about formatting a blog for SEO and started running their articles through keyword weight software, then fixing the mistakes. This second change made articles more entertaining and readable. Management learned to sit back and take their hands off the wheel.

It takes a willingness to think out of the box to step into the future. I like to start by brainstorming. If the business is solid as it is, and the work has already been done, then we can skip this part and move forward with the profiles and growth strategy presented to the marketing team.

There is an underlying passion within true marketers. There is a community feel. You really know, you actually hear the click as things fall into place.

Working With Marketers

Most of marketers were either the popular class clowns, and the rest were in the computer labs. Now they are creating entire personalities online. Once the project begins then what happens is amazing. It's hard to explain. Imagine if you will, 2 to 5 people at 2am. One tags another, 'what if we try this'. Then within 40 minutes all 5 are revamping, reinventing, rebuilding. This can go on for hours, but it doesn't feel like that.

Next thing you know you are pulling off your glasses because the dawn's light is reflecting, blurring the screen. It doesn't matter what you were working on. Most often we are tearing apart websites and making them as light as possible. Of course, it's easy to make a website that loads in under 1 second. We've done it all the time.

But, building a website that is user friendly, expandable without 100 plugins, and still loads fast – that is worth losing a night's sleep.

On the other hand, analytics is a mathematician's world. And it's almost impossible to describe. I've spent hours staring at multiple computer screens, sorting a single desktop across 4 monitors, and organizing, over my third coffee.

Then I see it. The pattern becomes visible. I find the trail back to the company who is trying to lower SEO values.

There is no other industry that (legally) lets me have the freedom to create and innovate, but still be part of the day to day world.

If you would like more information please book a consultation, business and website review, and a free analysis of your current marketing campaign.

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