

A SOUL PROPRIETOR GUIDEBOOK

*How to
Get the
Word Out
About Who
You Are and
What You Do*

**Essential
Marketing Tools
for Soul
Proprietors**

by Marty Marsh
SOUL PROPRIETOR



Hello and Welcome!

My name is Martin Marsh – but my friends and clients all call me Marty, and I hope you will too. I put together this guidebook, *How to Get the Word Out About Who You Are and What You Do: Essential Marketing Tools for Soul Proprietors*, and I conduct all my workshops and tele-classes for just one reason only: to help you become more effective at marketing your business or practice so that you enjoy the kind of success you want.

If you're serious about marketing your practice or business, and if you read this *and* do the suggested action steps, I guarantee that you will transform not only the way you do business, but the way you think about yourself and your business, too. Customers, clients, and referrals will naturally follow.

Unfortunately, the average business person has no idea how to get new clients – nor how to keep the ones they already have. The average business person usually considers marketing only when the clients have dried up and the bank balance is getting low. The time to do marketing is *now*. Marketing is a continuous process that becomes the lifeblood of any venture. Even so, the very thought of marketing their business simply terrifies most professional service providers, especially those of us who call ourselves “soul” proprietors.

Most of my clients and students have come to me with one thing on their mind: they know they need to be doing *something* to market their business (or they know they won't have a business to market for very much longer), and they want to do so with a high level of integrity. Often, they have no idea where to start. They believe there are marketing mysteries known only to a few.

There really is no mystery to marketing. There really are no secrets. “Marketing is, quite simply,” as one of my own mentors, C.J. Hayden, puts it, “choosing a set of simple, effective things to do and then doing them consistently. Marketing is telling people what you can do for them – over and over and over.”

In this guidebook I've given you a blueprint of the essential marketing tools you'll need to put into practice to be successful in your business. Of course, there are many more ways of getting your message out to the people who want to hear it, but these tools are a great place to start.

However, without a plan and some thought on how to use these essential tools, you'll simply waste a lot of your time and a lot of your money. If you really want to improve your chances for success in your business, stop whatever you're doing in the way of marketing, read this guidebook, choose the things you'll enjoy doing that will give you the biggest return, and make an action plan. This guidebook will show you how. Your reward will be more perfect clients and more money in the bank.



“Your business lives or dies by how well you make consistent targeted efforts at selling more and more stuff, to more and more persons, more often.”

— Alex Simpson,
Creator of Explosive
List Building

*Before putting on your
running shoes..*

**Please take just a moment
to get ready for the most
fun, enlightening, challenging,
and productive few hours
and days of your
business life.**

Take a few minutes right now and visualize just how great you're going to feel in a few days' time when you have a complete marketing program all planned out and already working to bring you more business. In fact, I'm never satisfied unless my clients have all the business they can stand.

You are on the brink of a brand new era in the life of your business. Your success is absolutely guaranteed... *if* you are willing to do the work. Not just the work in this guidebook, but the real work of putting your ideas and plans into *action*, so that you start a steady flow and then keep an unending stream of customers coming to your door. Someone once said "Action means satisfaction."

First, get yourself a nice 3-ring binder/notebook. Pick something you'll enjoy picking up and using, because once you've put your plan into place, you're going to be referring to it every day. While you're at the office supply store, pick up some tabbed dividers and some *reinforced* notebook paper. I personally prefer to use a pencil when working on my goals and plans because often there is a lot of erasing going on!

Next, set aside an hour or two of uninterrupted time every day. You can work as little or as much as it takes to pull your plan together. From this day forward, though, you are a marketer. It never stops.

Plan to work on marketing first thing in the morning. If you can, always work on your marketing in the morning. I say "morning" because if you don't get to this important and necessary work before you get into your day (just like going to the gym), then you aren't likely to get back to it if your work day gets a little crazy.



*"Action may not
always bring
happiness;
but there is
no happiness
without
action."*

*– Benjamin
Disraeli*

Making the *Time for Marketing*

The biggest lament I hear from Soul Proprietors is that they just don't have the time to market their business. Business people are busy people. There's no doubt about it, but that doesn't change the fact that – if you aren't consistently marketing your business – you eventually won't have a business to market.

How we manage time is largely a function of our personality. Ever notice how some of us just seem to be totally organized in everything we do? How nothing ever falls through the cracks? For some folks, managing themselves as it relates to time seems to come very easy.

Unfortunately, I'm not one of those people. I have to work at it and stay on top of things every step of the way or I simply forget too many things. I'm the kind of person that if I'm supposed to be somewhere at 6:00 p.m., I'll finally look at the clock at 5:50 and realize I have somewhere I'm supposed to be in 10 minutes.

It seems that we Soul Proprietors have more difficulty in managing our time than most other entrepreneurs, and I think that's because most of us think with the right sides of our brains – the creative side. Our minds are going ninety-miles an hour dreaming up new, fun projects to do, and all those details of things we're supposed to do just go right out the window.

There IS hope for us though, even if it might not be easy. It just means that we have to make the *conscious* decision that we're going to be disciplined in how we manage our time and then work at it.

The following are a few time management strategies that I've found helpful, and you might find some to be helpful, too. Some of these you may never have thought of as time management strategies.

Keep an idea list. As you have ideas for marketing, for articles, for new services to offer your clients, write them down. This keeps your brain free of clutter so there is more room to dream up new ideas.

Capture your ideas no matter where you are. All over my house – including the bathroom and in my car – you'll find 3x3 sticky notes and a pen nearby. Wherever I might "perch" they're handy so that if I have an idea or a thought that I want to remember I can readily write it down.

Make a marketing plan. Every week I know that I have to write an ezine, but if I don't check my marketing plan, I'm most likely to forget that I'm supposed to do it until it's almost too late. That's why I constantly refer to my written marketing plan so that I always get marketing projects done when they need to be done. (We'll discuss how you can create an effective and useful marketing plan later in this guidebook.)



“It’s how we spend our time here and now that really matters. If you are fed up with the way you have come to interact with time, change it.”
– Marcia Weider

Know your strengths and weaknesses. Let's face it, there are some things we just aren't good at and we never will be. I firmly believe that the best thing we can do for ourselves is to hire someone else to do those tasks.

This frees us up to do what we do best. And if we're doing what we do best, we'll naturally make more money and be more successful.

Know your niche and your target audience. As soon as you get very clear about exactly the niche you want to serve and have decided on all the traits and qualities you want in your perfect client, you'll start saving both time and money because you'll have a smaller group to market to, and you'll know exactly how to reach them without scattering your efforts all over the place.

Get out of your element. You may find that trying to think about your marketing in your office environment may be a deterrent to getting anything productive done. If that's the case for you, try getting out of your element and doing your thinking and planning somewhere else. Maybe a coffee shop, maybe the library, or maybe a park.

Get yourself a planner. I'm a paper planner kind of guy but you may be more into electronic devices like palm pilots or your computer. I like paper because its easy, it's not likely to disappear if the battery dies and I can carry it with me; but to each his own.

Just use a planner of some kind, even if its just a steno pad or use the Daily Planner form found in the appendix on page 68 of this guidebook. The important thing is that you are writing things down so you don't have to remember them.

Plan tomorrow before you go home today. Whenever I take the time to plan tomorrow *today* before I quit for the day, not only do I get more done tomorrow, but I'll sleep better tonight. Mainly because I don't have to worry about forgetting something.

Use a project sheet. As you think of projects that you want to do, write them down on a project sheet, being sure to think about how much time each project will take and what all the steps are.

Make time for learning. Just as you're spending time reading and working through this guide, you'll need to set aside time for learning. That may mean watching online videos or doing internet research, reading, listening to audios or attending teleclasses. Just keep learning all the time!

You've heard the old cliché, "Work smarter, not harder" dozens of times I'm sure. (It's a cliché for a reason: it's true!) The more you learn, the more efficient you'll become at doing all of your tasks – not just your marketing.

Manage email. The biggest time-killer I know of is email. Julie Morgenstern says in her book by the same name, "never check email in the morning." Good advice. Schedule times during the day to check email and use David Allen's two minute rule: If its something you can deal with or respond to in two minutes or less, go ahead and do it now. Otherwise, move each item to a follow-up folder so that you can attend to it later at a time that you schedule for that purpose.

Take advantage of when "the spirit moves you." When are you

"Until you value yourself, you will not value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it."

– M. Scott Peck

at your creative best? That's the best time to schedule your marketing work. If you're at your best in the morning, plan to do it then. I seem to be at my creative best starting at about 3 in the afternoon, so that is typically when I do my best work. But you and everybody else are different. Pay attention to your "muse," and when it calls, enjoy the creative flow.

Not enough hours in the day? If you hear yourself lamenting "there just aren't enough hours in the day" or saying things like "I'm always behind" or "there never seems to be enough time" then STOP IT! Right now.

Knowing that the Law of Attraction is working in our lives all the time, when we say those phrases or feel those thoughts, we just get more of the same: not enough time! So watch your language and your thinking in regard to time. You might try saying to yourself instead, "I have all the time I need to complete this project."

Volunteer some of your time. Ever notice how when you give something away, like money, you get more of it? It works the same for time. Volunteer to help out your favorite group. You'll be amazed at how much extra time starts to show up for your other important work – like marketing.

Set aside one day a week to work on marketing. You might try setting aside at least one day a week where marketing is all you work on. Maybe that's the day you do some planning, or write your ezines or articles. Maybe that's the day you staple, fold, and mail your newsletter.

The reality is that, if you are in business for yourself, you are a marketer. In fact, marketing is really your main job. No, its not working with clients. Your main function as the business owner is to do marketing – marketing that works!

So prioritize it. Make time for it! Discipline yourself, and just do it!

Some time planning resources you may find useful:

David Allen, author of *Getting Things Done*
www.davidco.com

Daytimer: Day planners and organizers
www.daytimer.com

Franklin-Covey: Day planners and organizers
www.franklincovey.com

Julie Morgenstern, author of *Never Check eMail in the Morning*,
Time Management from the Inside Out and numerous other time
management and organization related books and programs
www.juliemorgenstern.com

Instant Productivity Toolkit: 21 Simple Ways to Get More Out of
Your Job, Yourself and Your Life, Immediately! by Len Merson. Visit
www.chaosover.com to learn more.

Eat That Frog! 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More
Done in Less Time by Brian Tracy, www.briantracy.com

*"Today, be
aware of how
you are spending
your 1,440
beautiful
moments, and
spend them
wisely."
– Unknown
Author*

How to Get the Word Out About Who You Are and What You Do: Essential Marketing Tools for Soul Proprietors

Let's get started!

Recently, I was listening to a talk show on the radio, and a woman called in seeking some relationship advice. She spent quite a bit of time describing the unsavory actions of her boyfriend. At some point she said, “I should have known he was a manipulator because, after all, he is a very successful business man.”

I was horrified to hear that people think that manipulation and being in business go hand-in-hand. But it also helped me realize that those of us in business have a lot of work to do to dispel the notion that business and marketing means manipulation or dishonesty of any kind.

Unfortunately, a lot of business people themselves have this notion. They go into business and think that in order to win sales they have to somehow manipulate another person or otherwise convince them to do business with them by pressuring them or even telling outright lies.

It does not have to be that way. In fact, it SHOULDN'T be that way. And if you're one of those who – up 'til now – have believed that's the only way to market a business and make sales, get ready to change your thinking.

You've probably heard the phrase that Jeffrey Gitomer says, “people love to buy, but they hate to be sold.” Think about yourself. When was the last time you bought something because someone pressured you? Chances are you got away as fast as you could. But remember the last time you enjoyed buying something? You made that purchase because (a) it was something you wanted or needed, (b) you felt good about buying it, and (c) you trusted (and liked) the person you were buying from.

Sometimes we seem to forget that we are selling our services to people. Real people. People just like ourselves.

When you approach marketing and selling your services from the standpoint that you are helping to guide people to a solution to their problems – even if you are unable yourself to solve those problems – you're creating a relationship that will benefit you both.

When I first went into business for myself, I used to love to tell people that I was “boss-less. I don't have to answer to anybody.” When in reality, I had many bosses. Every single one of my clients was my boss – of sorts – because everything I did was to satisfy them. What I wanted didn't seem to



“To win the devotion of customers, [you] must build [a company] worthy of that devotion. You cannot win the hearts of customers unless you have a heart yourself.”

*– Charlotte Beers
in LEADER TO
LEADER*

be part of the equation, and besides, we go into business to serve our clients, right? RIGHT? Well....

Just whom do you want to work for?

When I first ask my fellow Soul Proprietors how they are currently getting clients for their business, most of them will tell me that they are getting good word-of-mouth referrals.

While this sounds great on the surface – you’re good enough that your satisfied clients are willing to give you a referral – you may be severely limiting yourself on, not just the quantity of the clients you are getting, but the quality as well.

For years after I went out on my own in 1995, I was probably the only graphic designer out there who didn’t have a brochure or a portfolio to show off my work. I was getting a steady stream of referrals from my existing clients, and I was making pretty good money.

But because they were all coming to me as a referral, I always felt like I HAD to take them on as a client.

Quite frankly, I couldn’t stand some of these people. Or to put it a nicer way, they just were not a good fit for me. But I felt an obligation to the person that referred them to me and, hey, business is business, right? I’ve gotta eat! So I took them on.

Some of these clients had outright questionable business ethics. They often were very slow to pay me, they complained constantly about my rates, they were uncooperative, and they missed deadlines. I could go on and on, but I’m sure you get my point.

The best favor you can do for yourself is to take the time to figure out exactly who your most perfect client is. I don’t mean that they’ll be perfect people. What I do mean is that they will be a perfect fit for you and the unique problems you can help them solve.

When someone comes along that is not a perfect fit for you, you can pass that person along to someone else who *is* a better fit for them. It becomes a win-win-win situation. (We’ll talk more about referrals later in this guide.)

But before we get into figuring out what makes a client perfect for you, we need to start with the basics – both good business, and marketing, basics.

Too often, Soul Proprietors tend to skip over the basics and want to jump right in and start doing something creative and outrageous. “Creative” and “outrageous” have their place and can be fun and lead to profits, but you wouldn’t build a house without a foundation, and you can’t operate a business for very long without a firm foundation, either.

So, let’s get to it.

And, have some fun in the process.

Tips for better understanding of your clients

- Talk to them — by phone, email, and surveys to find out what’s on their minds.
- Study what your competitors are doing (or not doing).
- Identify the traits and characteristics of people who buy items similar to what you’re offering.
- Observe your client using your product or service.
- Continually ask them “Why?”
- Continually ask them “What can we do better?”
- Continually ask them “What do you want?”
- Continually ask them “What do you need?”

Setting a firm foundation under your business

Your business Purpose

Those of us who are Soul Proprietors often went into business for ourselves – or are contemplating starting a business soon – because we’re looking for an experience that we couldn’t find in our corporate jobs or in a more traditional small business.

The experience I’m talking about is one that provides adventure, joy, freedom, and the opportunity to make a difference – in our own communities and the world at large. We’re looking for a connection with our true nature and spirit, which comes from serving other people in a business of our choosing, and in one that is operated in a way that makes us feel good about what we’re doing.

Whether you are just starting out on a new business adventure or you’ve been at it awhile, the first area to take a look at when developing a marketing attraction plan is to look at why you’re actually in business.

Think back to when you first started your business, (or if you’re just starting out now,) and list all the reasons why you wanted to go into business.

First and foremost, whether you like to admit it or not, you went into business to earn a living. Even mystics have bills to pay, and so do Soul Proprietors. So at least part of the reason for being in business is to create a way to pay your bills and, hopefully, have plenty of extra money to do all the things that bring light to your soul.

Here are some idea starters for you from other Soul Proprietors as to why they went into business for themselves:

“To help people solve... (fill in any problem you can think of here).”

“To have more time to spend with my family.”

“To create a ‘post-retirement income’ for my husband and me.”

“To create extra income for my family.”

“To be home to raise my children and still have an income.”

“To have the freedom to do what I want when I want.”

“To bring my own ideas to life.”

“To make the world a better place.”

“So I can afford to send my kids to college.”



“Doing what we were meant to do creates fun, excitement, and contentment in our lives, and invariably, in the lives of the people around us. When you’re excited about something, it’s contagious.”

— Mark Victor Hansen
author and speaker
(Chicken Soup for the Soul series and more)

“To enjoy going to work everyday.”

“So I can work only with the clients I like.”

“So I can do things MY way!”

“So I can travel all the time.”

“So I can feel less stressed.”

Whatever list you come up with is YOUR purpose for being in business for yourself. No one else ever has to see this list, but keep it handy. It will serve as a reminder to you if the going ever gets tough, or if you find yourself dreading going to work everyday, or if you’re finding it too hard to follow up with prospective clients.

Look to your list for a reminder as to why you are in business, and add to it from time to time if you’re moved to do so.

So, what does that get me?

You can do a similar exercise when planning specific goals for your business.

You may have been thinking already of some of the goals you’d like to meet this year. Perhaps you’d like to attract 6 new clients this month or perhaps you’re looking to increase your income over the next 3 months to \$6000 per month.

It doesn’t matter what the goal actually is, what really matters is answering this question:

“So, what does that get me?”

If you could reach that goal of \$6000 per month, say, what would that get you?

Could you pay off a credit card?

Take a much desired (and needed) vacation?

Put your kids into a private school?

Buy your spouse a fabulous birthday present?

Allow you to send out that printed newsletter you’ve been working on?

Get ahead on your mortgage payments?

All of this should be kept to yourself; you may even notice that you’re feeling some pangs of guilt when you answer these questions honestly. Instead of feeling guilt, I’d suggest you turn that into a feeling of elation, because when you’re honest with yourself about your real motivations for doing something in your business, it makes it so much easier to accomplish whatever it is you set out to do, and you’re most likely to actually reach your goals.

*“I’m a busy guy,
but I set aside
quiet time every
morning and
every evening
to keep my
equilibrium
centered on my
own path. I
don’t like being
swayed by
anything that
might be
negative or
damaging.”*

– Donald Trump

Defining your Perfect Client

Is there really such a thing as a perfect client? Even the best client in the world will, at some point, most likely drive you a bit crazy. But that's not what I'm talking about. A perfect client is actually one that is a perfect "fit" for you. The perfect client will meet all or most of your criteria for what you are looking for in a client that you will enjoy working with and will be able to help.

The mistake most of us make is that we are willing to accept every client that comes along, whether they are a perfect fit for us or not. For those who are not, besides driving us crazy, it is not fair to that client if you aren't able to help them move toward a solution to their problem without lots of upset, and it isn't fair to you to put yourself through that kind of pain. Eventually, you'll not want to go to your office ever again.

It is vitally important that you get very clear about EXACTLY the qualities and attributes that you want in your perfect client. Once you do, you'll be amazed at how those clients start to show up for you. You'll recognize them right away. And if someone shows up that is not a perfect fit for you, then you have the opportunity to make a conscious decision as to whether you want to work with them (knowing the risks that might be involved) or whether you'd rather pass them along to someone else who is a better fit – a better match – for them.

To help you gain clarity and discover who your perfect client is, take out a sheet of paper (or use the form in the appendix on page 69) and draw a line right down the middle, and another line across the top so that it forms a "T". At the very top, write "My perfect client." Over the left column write, "I don't want..." or "I don't like..." then over the right column write, "I want..." or "I like..."

Ignoring the right column for now, in the left column start listing all those traits, qualities and attributes that you really DISLIKE in a client. What makes you crazy when working with clients?

Many years ago – long before I realized I had a choice in the clients I worked with – I had a client show up that eventually drove me crazy, and I had to fire him. Interestingly enough, he enjoyed working with me, admired my talents and was very hard to get rid of.

He was going to publish a tourist guide in a magazine format and at first, it seemed like an ideal project for me. In truth, it was an ideal project for me, but the client was all wrong, and there is a difference. (Think about that in your own business situation.)

I like to create designs on my own and then give the client a choice of what I've created. This guy liked to come to my office, sit next to me and direct me to "change this, try that, do this, move that," and so on to the point that I was ready to scream. What could have been a 2-hour job would always turn into a marathon lasting 4, 6 or 8 hours. Then he wasn't willing to pay me for all that extra time. He was a time-consuming and frustrating client, and it eventually became clear to me that no matter what he paid me he wasn't worth that kind of aggravation. So, he had to leave.

I could have avoided all of that if I had been more clear, up front, with

To help you find out who your perfect client is, ask them these questions (then ask yourself the same questions)

- Why do you get out of bed in the morning?
- Who is the most important person to you in the world?
- What is most important to you in the world?
- What do you want to achieve before you leave this world?
- What do you really love about your life?

In answering these questions, you're likely to find that your perfect clients are very much like you with the same likes, desires, dislikes, and ambitions.

How might knowing this help you in developing your business or practice?

FROM ATTRACTING PERFECT CUSTOMERS
by Jan Brogniez and Stacey Hall

MYSELF as to the kind of client I wanted to work with.

So, if I were making a list like this, I might write on the left side of my sheet:

“I don’t want a client that doesn’t trust me to create good designs.”

“I don’t want a client that has no money to pay me.”

“I don’t want a client who will argue about my fees.”

“I don’t want a client who misses deadlines.”

“I don’t want a client that is not flexible.”

And so on.

You can write as many “don’t wants” as you can think of for your own situation.

Then, on the right side of the sheet, turn those “don’t wants” into “wants” by asking yourself, “So, what *do* I want?”

So now, my right hand list might look like this:

“I want a client that trusts me to create good designs.”

“I want a client that has money and a budget for paying me.”

“I want a client that understands my fee structure and happily pays me on time.” (Be very specific about what you want.)

“I want a client who honors deadlines and gets material to me at the agreed upon time.”

“I want a client who is flexible with schedules.”

And so on.

Now, it’s your turn. Write down as many “don’t wants” as you can think of on the left side.

Then, turn your attention to the kind of client that you **DO** want. If you’re already in business and already have some clients, do you have a favorite? Do you have at least one client that you just love to work with, that brings you joy, that exhibits most, if not all, of the qualities that you’d like in all your clients?

If so, completing the right side of this form will be lots easier if you just think about that client and write down all the qualities and attributes that they have that you appreciate and want more of. You can also simply “turn around” your “don’t wants” to better reflect what you do want.

Here’s a bonus tip: This technique also works well whenever you are writing articles, or web copy, or an ezine. Write as if you were writing only to your favorite client. It’ll make the job a lot easier and you’ll be lots more authentic.

Remember, when we are working with clients that are a perfect fit for

*“If you have
built castles in
the air, your
work need not
be lost; that is
where they
should be.
Now put the
foundations
under them.”
– Henry David
Thoreau*

us, we are also serving those clients at the highest level because we are certain they are right for us; we know we can help them find a solution to their problems, and that, of course, is what it is ultimately all about.

Niche to be rich

You've heard it before: if you want to enjoy untold success, you must niche.

Simply hearing that phrase puts fear in the hearts of many Soul Proprietors because, to many, working within the narrow confines of a niche means limiting your options. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is that the more you specialize, the higher the fees you can charge.

Your perfect clients – and by now you know exactly what those people look like – are going to demand that you be an expert. And let's face it, it's impossible, much as we'd like to think differently, to be an expert at everything.

You wouldn't ask your general medical practitioner to perform brain surgery on you, would you? No, you'd likely seek out an expert in the field of brain surgery, and you'd also likely seek out the very best brain surgeon you could find. Your business is no different, and your clients are no different.

When it comes to solving their own problems – and paying someone to help them do so – they want to be sure that they've got the right person, and they want an expert. *You* can be that expert if you choose a niche and specialize in one thing.

Even though I know that marketing a small business is pretty much the same no matter what the profession, I've chosen to “niche” myself by primarily serving coaches and therapists. And to further refine my niche, I help mostly women who have chosen to use the principles of the Law of Attraction in their practices.

If a coach, who is a 30 year old man, shows up who has no idea what the Law of Attraction is all about and wants to work with me, I wouldn't necessarily turn him away. But at least, knowing what my niche is (and who my perfect client that fits that niche is,) I can make an informed, intelligent, conscious decision about whether or not I would choose to take him on as a client.

And because I'm specializing with Law of Attraction coaches and therapists, everything I learn, everything I write, everything I do to further my business is done with these people in mind. My clients know they are getting an expert in their own field, and they feel comfortable in working with me.

When choosing your niche, first think about what it is that you are best at. In what area of your particular field are you considered an expert? Where do you have the most experience?

How to “niche to be rich”

- Carefully define the services you are offering. You must be very specific in describing what you offer.
- Be very clear about the kind of people you want to work with. This is helped by defining your perfect client.
- Are there enough people in your niche to support you?
- Where do the people in your niche hang out? What do they read? What do they watch and listen to? What websites do they visit?
- Do you have the resources and capabilities to reach the people in your niche where they hang out?
- Continually refine your niche to match your strengths (and to overcome any weaknesses) and to make the best use of the resources you have at your disposal.
- Is your niche local — is there a specific geographic area you want to serve — or do you prefer to attract clients from all over the world? (How will you do that?)

Sometimes our niche is staring us in the face, and we might not recognize it right away.

Several years ago an accountant friend of mine took on a few hairdressers as clients who then referred him to other hairdressers, and before he knew it, he was an expert in keeping the books and doing the taxes for the hairdressing profession. Now his client base is made up of almost all hairdressers, and he has more work than he can currently handle. (In fact, after April 15th, he takes off two months every year and goes on a very long cruise.)

When I started my graphic design business many years ago, my two biggest projects were a chiropractic magazine and a bar association newspaper. Since publication design and layout was really my specialty, I thought I'd just work with anyone that needed a magazine or a newspaper layout. What I discovered was that, as I learned more about chiropractic and also about the needs of lawyers, most of my clients came from those two professions.

Essentially, I had two niches, and you can have as many niches as you want, really. The key is that your marketing should be done toward only one niche at a time. When I was seeking more chiropractic clients, I wouldn't try to do marketing that would appeal to both chiropractors and lawyers. All of my marketing decisions – when trying to attract chiropractors – were based on what was right for the chiropractic field only. In turn, if I wanted to market my services to lawyers, I created marketing programs designed just for the law profession.

Here's how some other folks came to discover their niche:

Nancy was a nurse and a very good one. But she was getting burned out on the routine, and she had no control over her schedule. Some weeks she worked during the day, and other weeks she worked at night. She thought about looking for another nursing job but soon realized that she would never be in control of her schedule. So, instead, she started her own nursing staffing agency.

Knowing that there is a nationwide shortage of nurses, she was able to build a business by providing nurses to hospitals all over the country on an "as needed" basis. The nurses she hired for placement got to work the shifts they wanted, they worked as much as they wanted, and Nancy got to run her business by day so she could enjoy her husband and children at night.

Ken is a very successful chiropractor. He noticed that he was seeing more patients per week and making more money every month than all of his chiropractic colleagues, and they started coming to him for advice as to how they could duplicate his success. He decided to present a weekend seminar where he could teach a group of chiropractors about how he runs his clinic. It was met with much success, and he enjoyed being in front of a group so much that now he makes most of his money from doing these practice-building seminars. He has become the *go-to* expert for practice building, and he is known nationwide for his expertise.

How to Identify Hot Niche Markets

By visiting your local book store you can identify hot niche markets in just an afternoon.

First take a look at the non-fiction section to find out what's selling the most, and identify the topics these hot sellers fall into. Also look at the Amazon.com and New York Times best-selling non-fiction books list that they provide online.

Then look at the magazine section. There seems to be a magazine for every topic and interest you can imagine, so there are niche opportunities awaiting to be discovered there.

Watch local news as well as the nightly national news broadcasts. Each will provide valuable ideas that you could use as your next niche.

Local broadcasts are especially good if you're looking to build a business locally.

National broadcasts will reveal a much more diverse community and there may be ideas to be gleaned about a niche that you can tap into, worldwide, using the Internet.

The point is that there are many outlets and resources to capture ideas and find new or underserved niche markets.

Also, check out the book, "Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes" by Mark Penn and E. Kinney Zalesne (Published in 2007). This book is being seen as a source for ideas for markets that will be emerging from unlikely places over the next few months and years. You may find your special niche in its pages.

Sue worked for a major airline and loved the perks she got, which included lots of free travel to anywhere she wanted to go, but the hours and the headaches that came with managing other people were starting to get to her, and she dreaded going to work. She knew the ins and outs of travel and how the airlines worked, so she set up her own travel agency. She started holding mini travel seminars in her office on Saturdays and was able to connect people with their perfect vacation. She still enjoyed all the perks that came with being a travel agent and is seen in her community as the best travel expert in the city.

Carla was a successful marriage and family therapist but discovered that she really preferred working with single women who were frustrated with dating and relationship building. She built her entire therapy practice around women who were looking for relationship building skills that would lead to successful relationships later on.

Bill was a successful therapist who was an expert in the Myers/Briggs Personality Type Indicator and took those skills into a private coaching practice where he helps work teams function better together. Once the teams understand their own type as well as that of their co-workers and what that means in terms of getting work done, they are able to divvy up job duties best suited to each personality type, and their productivity soars.

It may be that you, too, are leaving a corporate job, even though you are immensely qualified in that field, because you are completely burned out. You may be thinking that you want to go into business doing something else entirely, and that's okay. Just take a look at the training and study that you might need in order to become an expert. You can always grow into your expertise.

But also look around and see what needs might be filled within your field that aren't being adequately met, and build your business around those needs.

When choosing a niche, take a hard look at the numbers and see if the niche you are considering is growing or stagnating. The mistake many Soul Proprietors make when choosing a niche is that it is too narrow. There must be a sufficient number of prospective clients within your niche to make it worthwhile; otherwise you'll be starved for clients.

Choose a niche that you love and are passionate about. Passion goes a long way toward ensuring success. If you love your niche, love what you are doing, and love your clients, then they'll love you and gladly pay you to help them solve their problems. Your passion will naturally shine, and potential clients in your niche will naturally be attracted to you.

When choosing your niche, you are also going to want to factor geography into the equation. Are you going to work only with local clients, clients within a certain radius of where you are, or are you going to go for a global outreach using the Internet to attract them?

No matter what niche you choose for specialization, your marketing efforts will be both easier and less expensive because your efforts will be

*“We live in a niche world.”
– Leigh Steinberg*

focused on attracting only the perfect clients for your niche. You won't be wasting time or money on trying to market to "everyone," and these focused efforts will yield more clients, the right clients and thus, more income.

So, what do you do?

Now that you know your purpose, the problems you can solve for your clients, who those clients really are, and the niche that you feel most comfortable in serving, it's time to take a look at how you answer the question, "So, what do you do?"

If you've ever been introduced to someone new, you already know that the most common ice breaker among strangers is to ask about what we each do for a living. There's no escaping it, and it's going to come up sooner than later, especially in professional settings.

I've seen more than one Soul Proprietor mutter out the job title they've given themselves – loan officer, insurance agent, coach, travel agent, accountant, therapist, lawyer, or any other job title you can imagine. Or, very often when asked "What do you do?" Soul Proprietors will launch into a list of all the things they do, or talk about their credentials, or go into detail about *how* they do something, or even worse, say that they can "do it all."

And you can watch the questioner's eyes glaze over as they start looking for an escape route.

For starters, if you just rattle off your job title, you've immediately played into the questioner's preconceived notions and prejudices they may have about your profession. Face it, if they hear that you're a lawyer, they're likely to turn away even if you're just the lawyer they might one day need. Why? Because many people have preconceived ideas about what it means to be a lawyer, regardless of what the truth about *you* may be.

It doesn't matter what title you have. People always have preconceived ideas about different professions – both good and bad perceptions – depending on their own experiences.

Another hazard of simply stating your professional title is that if the questioner just hears "lawyer" they may immediately think, "oh, I don't need a lawyer" based entirely on what they think lawyers do. But if they heard, "I help people who are buying commercial property make sure they don't get taken advantage of," that might perk up their ears if they or someone they know is involved in commercial real estate. They'd probably want to know more, and it wouldn't matter at that point that you are a lawyer.

Some folks call this a "perfect introduction," an "audio business card," an "audio logo," or a "unique selling proposition." I like to call it your "powerful attraction statement." The idea being that whatever you say in answer to the question, "so, what do you do?" is so compelling that the questioner will want to know more.

"The entrepreneur is our visionary, the creator in each of us. We're born with that quality, and it defines our lives as we respond to what we see, hear, feel, and experience. It is developed, nurtured, and given space to flourish or is squelched, thwarted, without air or stimulaton, and dies."

– Michael Gerber

Here are some examples of some attraction statements:

An entrepreneur who owns a fitness center that caters to women says: “I help women lose 25 pounds in about 6 weeks and then keep it off for life.” That would certainly get my attention if I were a woman (or if I knew one) and I wanted to take off some weight (or if I knew someone who did), so naturally I’d want to know more.

An accountant I know says “Oh, I help my small business clients stay out of jail.” That’s such a startling statement that you couldn’t help but ask, “How do you do that?” Or you might be asking her what kind of clients she has that she needs to keep out of jail?

She goes on to explain that by filing income tax forms at the right times and managing the payments of taxes, her clients don’t ever have to worry about going to jail over tax problems.

She could just as easily say: “Oh, I help my small business clients keep the IRS off their backs.”

Now, personally, I say different things depending on the situation or the service I’m selling, and I suggest that you do the same. This means that you will always have ready more than one powerful attraction statement.

If I’m talking about my life coaching business, I sometimes say, “I help really smart, successful people live such a great life that when they get to the end of it, they don’t have any regrets.”

The idea is that you want people to be so interested that they ask for more information. You know, “how do you do that?” Or, “tell me more.” Or “that sounds interesting, what does that mean exactly?”

So your job is to define what makes you unique and what sets you apart from all the other folks out there in a similar business. And you want to create the kind of definition – the kind of powerful attraction statement – that will make folks naturally want to know more.

Your powerful attraction statement will become the center of your marketing efforts and set the stage for everything else you create relating to marketing your business. You may even discover your perfect “tag line” while doing this exercise.

The answer to the inevitable question “what do you do?” is your powerful attraction statement that can either spell success or failure for your business. (Or at least for this particular networking event.)

How to create your powerful attraction statement:

You are in the business of solving problems. The purpose of your powerful attraction statement is to distill down very concisely what it is that you can do for your customers, clients, and prospects. You want to get across that you are a problem solver for a special group of people. We are talking about that one big benefit that you offer to your clients.

In a nutshell, in order to create your powerful attraction statement,

“I’ve always said that the better off you are, the more responsibility you have for helping others. Just as I think it’s important to run companies well, with a close eye to the bottom line, I think you have to use your entrepreneurial experience to make corporate philanthropy effective.”

– Carlos Slim Helu

you'll need to think in terms of WHO you help, WHAT you help them with, and what SOLUTION you are offering.

Ask yourself the following questions, and based on the work you've done so far, answer each one:

- 1. Who is my perfect client?**
- 2. What are the problems that my client faces?**
- 3. What are the goals that my client would most like to achieve?**
- 4. What beneficial outcome does my client get from the service I provide?**

Now, write out a statement answering the 4 questions above. Then refine the statement until you can get the whole idea into a single sentence or two of no more than about 30 words. This becomes your powerful attraction statement.

What if you meet someone at a networking event and you ask what they do, and you heard this:

"I'm a financial planner and I represent more than thirty quality investment vehicles. My specialties are optimized annuities with automatic annual rollover and short and long term debentures."

You'd be shaking your head and thinking, "What did he just say?" You'd nod politely and get away as fast as you could, wouldn't you?

But, if you heard something like this, you might want to know more:

"I help families become more financially secure on the salaries that they're already earning."

Sounds so much better, doesn't it? And it just begs for the next question, "Wow! How do you do that?" or "Wow! Tell me more." Avoid jargon and big words at all costs.

Remember to choose every word in your statement for its *impact and clarity*.

Other examples of powerful attraction statements:

A business/marketing coach: "I help burned-out small business owners market their businesses so they can stop struggling, love their work, and effortlessly create success."

A life coach: "I help people over 40 who are ready to have it all to achieve success for themselves."

A divorce coach: "I help men and women who have decided to divorce to part in a way that allows them to remain friends."

An organizer: "I help lovable messy folks find fun, effective ways to get organized and stay organized once and for all."

Ask yourself these questions to test the completeness of your powerful attraction statement:

"Nobody talks of entrepreneurship as survival, but that's exactly what it is and what nurtures creative thinking."

– Anita Roddick

1. Does this powerful attraction statement describe in concrete terms – not fluffy, poetic language – what you do so that anyone can understand it and also refer clients to you? (I hear the buzz words “empower” and “empowerment” way too much from coaches. These terms mean many different things to different people; avoid fluffy words like these that have a variety of meanings.)

2. Does this powerful attraction statement distinguish you from other people in the same profession? (If you’re too general, your statement will sound just the same as everyone else.)

3. Does this powerful attraction statement clearly state the solution you are offering to the specific problem you mention?

If you answer “no” to any of those questions, go back and hone your statement further. Remember to think in specific terms of WHO you help, WHAT are the problems you help them with, and what SOLUTION you are offering.

Write lots of attraction statements. Say them out loud. Hear how they sound. Try them out on family members or unbiased people who will give you an honest critique about what you are saying. Once you’re satisfied with what you’ve written, practice saying it – out loud – until it sounds natural to you. You’ll be surprised that, when you are in an actual situation, how easy it is to say your attraction statement as if you were just thinking of it at that moment.

Never throw anything away that you write! Sentences that you write which may not be appropriate for your attraction statement may prove perfect later for the headline of an article, or the title of a brochure, or your tag line, or they might fit into some other form of marketing you might produce.

Your powerful attraction statement very often also becomes the first sentence you put on your brochure, on your website, on your business card, or in your email signature. So it will have many uses.

With a clear, concise and concrete powerful attraction statement, you’ll attract your perfect clients more easily, and you’ll spend less money when all of your marketing centers around that statement. It’s pretty powerful!

Create your Brand Identity

Now that you’ve got all the philosophical parts of your foundation built, it’s time to move on to the more practical, visible side of building your foundation.

One of the first – and sometimes the only – piece of marketing material that Soul Proprietors create when they set up shop is their business card. And, usually, they are so eager to let the world know they’ve set up a business or practice that they figure just any old business card will do.

Along with other types of marketing materials that you might want for your business, the business card can be really important. This little card will

*“My son is
now an
‘entrepreneur.’
That’s what
you’re called
when you don’t
have a job.”*

*– Ted Turner
(quoting his mom)*

Learn more about how to create your own personal brand from the book **The Brand Called You** by Peter Montoya.

likely be the face of your business when you aren't around. Unfortunately, too often this little dynamo is created without any thought to the image it will portray and how this might affect the success of your business.

But I'm not really talking about just a business card here; what I'm really talking about is the brand identity that you want to project to your niche. Your brand will show up, not just on your business card, but on every physical marketing piece you produce, as well as in the psyches of your chosen niche and the mind of your perfect client. So your brand goes pretty deep.

In his book, *How to Be That Guy*, Scott Ginsberg, reminds us that we need to figure out who and/or what we want to be known for and then build our entire brand around that answer.

Scott is known as “that nametag guy.” You see, Scott has worn a name tag everyday for the last 5-plus years, and he even went so far as getting a nametag tattooed on his chest. Don't laugh. His brand has garnered appearances on CNN, a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records (with more than a million copies in circulation), and a front-page story in the Wall Street Journal, and thus he has become a sought after speaker to multi-national Fortune 100 companies in his niche of “approachability.” He's also written four books.

Other folks are known as, “That Microsoft Blogger Guy” (Robert Scoble), “That Sales Guy” (Jeffrey Gitomer), “That Branding Diva” (Karen Post), “The eZine Queen” (Alexandria Brown), “The Knock Your Socks Off Lady” (Sandy Guderyon), and me – I want to be known as “That Soul Proprietor Guy” (Marty Marsh).

So ask yourself, what do you want to be known as? Whether you're a guy or a woman, doesn't matter. This will form the basis for creating an unforgettable brand for you and your business.

Naming your business or practice

Many professionals name their business using a variation of their own name: Jason Jones Accounting; Sue Mills, Life Coach; Bill Harrison, Marriage and Family Therapist; Linda's Interior Design. The list could go on and on; just look in the yellow pages.

Usually, however, our own names are not very memorable. In my case, however, I use my name, Marty Marsh, to my advantage. I started noticing that my name always got a reaction from people who were hearing it for the first time.

Some folks would laugh and ask, “is that your real name?” or “did your parents really name you that?” or “gee, that's a great radio DJ name.” Then there's the receptionist in my doctor's office who says she just loves saying my name. She likes the way it flows and she never forgets me, even when I run into her on the street.

So even though I have two businesses going, The Successful Soul Proprietor and Great Living Today, it is my *name* that people seem to remember the most, and I do everything I can to further the brand of

Things to do to a Business Card to increase its Longevity

- Apply a magnet to the back
- Laminate it
- Make it a toy, like a hologram, on pressure- or heat-sensitive stock
- Use peel-away adhesive, so it can be stuck in a visible place
- Attach it to something that is likely to be kept, such as a souvenir or premium item
- Turn it into a luggage tag

Additional ways to use your card

- Affix it to your company literature
- Use as a name tag; tape it over event name tags; customize a name tag you take with you and use as a promotional piece at all events
- Use your card as a gift tag when presenting a small gift or flowers

“Marty Marsh” no matter what I’m doing. (I even had custom M&M’s printed with my name that I pass out at workshops and use as a “calling card” of sorts. Folks remember the “Marty Marsh” M&M’s and the guy with the funny name who they got them from.)

So, pay careful attention to the name you give your business or practice. It is generally best if you choose a name that readily identifies what you do, even when using your own name. For example, “Joe’s Carpet and Tile.” You know right away you can get carpet and tile from Joe. You don’t really have to know who Joe is.

My virtual assistant, Donna Marie Castaner, calls her business Light Force Virtual Assistance (www.lightforceva.com). She approaches her business in a more holistic fashion than most virtual assistants might, and she specializes in helping her clients reach their highest potential, as well as keeping their lives on track and organized. She helps their “inner light shine with force.” So her name is very appropriate for what she does, and with the words Virtual Assistance as part of the name, there is no doubt what business she is in.

Your logo

Just as important as naming your business is the visual representation of it. That would be your logo. Your logo does not have to be a picture or an emblem – in fact, those types of logos are the hardest to create to really capture the essence of your brand – but creative use of type works just as well and sometimes is a better choice. Think Coca Cola.

I heard once that your logo is your “handshake to the world.”

This is one area where you really must turn to the services of a professional graphic designer. Most Soul Proprietors are great at what they do but lack considerable skills when it comes to creating logos and other marketing materials. And yes, it really does matter how it looks.

Choose a graphic designer that specializes in designing logos or who at least offers that as an integral part of their service. I’m a graphic designer that specializes in publications, so you wouldn’t want me to design your logo. It is just not my area of expertise. However, I can instantly recognize a logo that either works or doesn’t. So if you want a critique, call me.

There are many sources on the Internet these days for getting a logo designed. In fact, if you’ve done all the work I’ve outlined up to this point, you’ll know your business so well that you’ll find it quite easy to communicate the essence of your business to a designer so that you’ll be sure to get a great logo.

Whether your logo includes a symbol or emblem or is created solely using a distinctive type font, you’ll want to have the finished logo in a variety of formats so that you can use it on or in every marketing item you produce – your business card, your brochure, the postcards you mail, your envelopes and stationery, and on your website. Your logo will appear everywhere. Done well, your logo will be as memorable to your niche as the Coke or Nike logo is memorable to the general public.

Your logo and the color scheme you choose, the overall “look” that you

Tips for Designing a Logo that says it’s “you”

Create a logo for your business or practice by keeping in mind these tips from Melissa Crowe at Vista Print (www.vistaprint.com):

- Your logo should express your personality and that of your business or practice. Your potential client should learn something about you just by looking at your logo.
- Make your logo “jump off the page.” While it must make sense for your business, your logo should be bold and memorable. Check in with others for their feedback on how well your logo “pops.”
- Keep it simple. You’ll only confuse people if you try to do too much with your logo. This also means keeping typeface styles to a minimum. Remember, less can be more.
- Try your logo in every situation possible where you might use it, from your business card to a billboard, and make sure that it looks equally good in black and white as well as in color.
- Include your tagline as part of your logo.
- Use it everywhere! Your logo should show up on everything you print or create and become synonymous with your business or practice.

want your business to have, will then go on to become a part of everything you produce in the way of marketing your business, from your business card to your shop sign, from your brochure to your website, even to the van that delivers the goods. Everything that your prospects might see should have your logo and your brand identity on it.

Essential Tools

Now that we've gotten all that philosophical stuff out of the way and laid a firm foundation under your business, we can move on to more of the marketing essentials you'll want to put into place or have available to further your marketing goals.

It really is helpful to have a written marketing plan. Believe me, I've tried to just keep it all in my head, but the truth of the matter is I can never remember most of those great marketing projects that I dream up if I don't write them down.

That's why I keep something handy all the time to capture ideas in writing. I leave a sticky-note pad and a pen everywhere I might "perch" around my home and in my car. Even in the bathroom, as some of my best ideas come when I'm in there. You've probably experienced the same thing, even in the shower. When you think of it, write it down. Don't wait, or it will be gone forever.

Beyond just writing ideas down, however, you must write out a marketing plan – a plan for how you will use marketing strategies to increase your income. It doesn't have to be a difficult process unless you make it so. You can write it out on paper (as I do), or you can create it in your computer. Whichever way that suits you best, just write it all down.

But I'm getting ahead of myself here. We're going to save the marketing plan for last in this guidebook, because there are a number of other things you're going to need to decide on first. So continue to read on in this eBook, do any exercises that come along the way, and we'll get to the marketing plan at the right time.

Your website

In the 21st Century, the single most important marketing tool you can have is a comprehensive website.

It used to be that prospects you meet would ask if you had a brochure. Today they ask if you have a website, and if you can't answer "yes" to that question, you'll likely lose any chance of winning that person's business.

It is just understood and expected that, in today's marketplace, a competent, legitimate business will have a website. And this is one area where it does not pay to scrimp. Hiring the services of a graphic designer who specializes in website design and a competent webmaster to build it for you will pay for itself many times over.

But, as the business owner, you must write your website copy yourself

Which colors convey your company ideals the best?

Colors evoke all kinds of emotions in people. However subtle, color will play an important part of your marketing, from your logo and branding to your website and everything you print.

Here's what various colors generally mean:

- Yellow: Happiness, joy, energy
- White: Goodness, purity, cleanliness
- Red: Vigor, excitement, courage, leadership
- Purple: Luxury, nobility, magic
- Green: Healing, restful, growth, newness
- Brown: Masculine, viral, stability, steadfastness
- Light Blue: Tranquility, softness, gentleness
- Dark Blue: Integrity, honesty, power, knowledge
- Black: Power, mystery, elegance, formal

because you and you alone understand your business better than anyone else. It's a great idea to learn more about writing effective copy, and you can do that through any number of books and resources that you will find on the web. And, if you hire someone to write for you, make sure you work closely with them so that it is *your* voice that is heard on your website.

Remember, graphic designers and webmasters do not usually have a marketing mindset. It is their job to make your site look as nice as possible, to accurately reflect your business, and to function from a technological standpoint. But rarely do they have the skills to write effective marketing copy. Be prepared to stand your ground, when necessary, with overzealous designers who may want to steer you in a direction that will take you away from your marketing message.

So, before you do anything else – assuming you can already answer the question “So, what do you do?” and have laid a firm foundation for your business and know your purpose – you're going to write the copy for your website. Once you've done that, you'll have the basis for writing and creating everything else you might want to do to market your business.

Out of your website copy will come your special article, a brochure if you want one, newsletters and eZines, ads, postcards, selling scripts, and anything else you might want to create.

You say you've already got a website? Please read this section anyway. You may find a whole new way of looking at your website that will make it much more effective in capturing potential clients so they'll want to hang around with you for awhile at your site.

So let's get started.

Every website needs the following six basic pages at the outset:

Is this you?

How it all works (how you/we work)

About us page

Sign up page

Contact us

Home

Of course, as time goes on, you'll be adding lots more pages to these basic six on your site – perhaps hundreds of pages eventually. But for now, these few basic pages will be enough to get you started, so that if someone asks if you have a website, you'll be able to say “Yes, of course!”

Did you notice that I put the home page *last* in that list? The reason for that is that the home page will be the last page you write. Why the last? Because all of the other pages you write will tell you exactly what you need to convey on the home page.

First, you need to ask yourself what is your MWR (Most Wanted Response) when someone comes to your website. What is the single most-

How to Promote your Website Offline

Most people spend far more time “offline” than online so reaching your potential clients by more conventional means will help build traffic to your website.

- Your web address (URL) must be on everything you print including your business card, stationery, postcards, newsletters, contracts, order forms, invoices and purchase orders.
- Include your web address (URL) when running classified ads, display ads, directories, telephone directory ads, and commercials.
- Always mention your website when giving a speech or presentation.
- Mention your website on your voicemail message.
- Mention your website in the bio portion of articles and special reports you write.
- Include your website address in the signature of your emails.
- Print stickers to put on the backs of envelopes and other places that people are likely to see it.
- Put it on a sign or a shop or office window if you have one.

desired action you would like visitors to your site to take?

Chances are you're not going to try to sell them something right off the bat. Most folks arrive at your website seeking more information about you and what you can offer them, so you're going to want to establish rapport with your site visitors right away. Then you may invite them to join your mailing list or to read more at the site.

Your number one MWR, among other possibilities, is to have your site visitors sign up for your mailing list so that you can continue to market to them on an ongoing basis. But you may have some other MWR that is more important to you, so read on.

The "Is This You?" Page

Whenever someone visits your website, the first question they'll want answered is "Am I in the right place?" So you're going to want to "speak" to your perfect client by identifying them right on your home page and then giving them more information on the "Is this you?" page.

If you look at the home page on my Successful Soul Proprietor site, you'll see right at the top of the page that I identify who will benefit most from what I offer at the site by asking the question, "Are you a great coach, therapist, healing professional, or spiritually-minded small business owner... but no one knows it?"

If someone shows up who is not any of those things mentioned, they are not likely to want to hang around my site very long. But if they do recognize themselves in that list, they're likely to at least stick around long enough to learn more about what's in it for them.

To further clarify that they're in the right place, they can click to my "Is this you page?" that I call "Who we help."

On your "Is this you page" you'll want to repeat the descriptive words that identify who your perfect client is and then write 5 to 8 scenarios (more than 8 and folks typically won't read much further) describing different problems that you solve for your clients.

Here are a couple of examples from my own site:

Congratulations! You've just hung out your shingle, and now you're self-employed. But you never gave much thought to how you are going to attract clients. You figured that somehow they'd just find you because you offer such a great service. So you sit and wait for the phone to ring, and it doesn't.

Or...

You've been around a while, and you've had some luck getting some great word-of-mouth referrals, so you've been able to keep pretty busy. But you still have some lean times, and you know you could be doing a whole lot more business. You've read about marketing in some books, surfed the 'net for marketing ideas, maybe took a free teleclass here and there. And now you're feeling overwhelmed and frustrated, and you're afraid that you'll waste a lot of money on marketing that doesn't work. You have no idea where to actually

"We can believe that we know where the world should go. But unless we're in touch with our customers, our model of the world can diverge from reality. There's no substitute for innovation, of course, but innovation is no substitute for being in touch, either."

– Steve Balmer

start. You surely can't afford to hire somebody to do it for you. So you do nothing. You'll think about it again tomorrow.

There are several other scenarios like this on the site, and the point is that your prospects will see themselves in one or more of the scenarios and want to learn more about how you go about solving their problems.

Take a few minutes to write out several scenarios for your own business. Ask yourself, "What are the problems that my clients are facing?" Write out the various ways those problems might show up in their lives. Write as many scenarios as you can think of, then choose the best (no more than 8) to post on your site.

When you've finished with the scenarios, then come back here and learn about your "How we work" page.

The "How we work" Page (How it all works, How we help you)

The truth of the matter is, most of your prospective clients are not really interested in how you achieve the results you get; they are only interested in the results. So on my website, I have a page that I call "How we help you" and this is what is on that page:

"Through teleclasses, action guides, and one-on-one coaching, I help coaches, therapists, healers, and other professional service business owners discover how to reach beyond traditional ways of branding and marketing to bring their most authentic selves to their marketplace. My students and clients discover how to stop *chasing* clients and to start *attracting* them instead.

"In addition to providing an eclectic and fun business learning environment, I help other 'soul' proprietors in creating beautiful and effective graphic designs for their marketing materials, from business cards to websites to eBook layout and design.

"If you'd like your marketing materials to be working harder for you, or if you'd like to discover creative ways to market your spiritually-centered business, please get in touch.

"I also provide phone and email consulting and can teach you how to grow your practice or business."

On this page you're going to want to tell prospects all the options they have for getting their problems solved by working with you. Tell them the methods for how you will deliver the service you are selling.

Do you offer teleclasses or workshops and seminars? Is your work hands-on with the client? Do you do phone coaching or do you coach only in person? Will you travel to them or must they come to you? How many sessions will they need? And so on.

The "About Us" Page

Every prospect that visits your site will only do business with someone they know, like and trust. While it is unlikely that a prospect may make a decision to work with you based solely on what they read about you at

"This may seem simple, but you need to give customers what they want, not what you think they want. And, if you do this, people will keep coming back."

– John Ilhan

your website, your “About us” page is a good place to begin letting them know who you are and what you’re like as a person.

You can get as personal as you like on this page, but first let me offer a word of caution. Most prospects are not going to want to know your most intimate secrets. It’s certainly fine to talk about your family and home life, if you wish, but if you are dealing with things that might not shed a positive light on you as a person, or even merely be distracting, then leave those details out.

As for my personal life, visitors to my site will find that I am currently living full-time in an RV traveling the USA with my partner and my dog and where I went to school, but little else. You’ll know your audience best, so act accordingly.

The “About us” page is where you get to tell your story. Make it interesting and lively. If you’ve got a sense of humor, this is certainly a good place to let that shine. If you have a fun hobby, such as a love of cooking, or if you’re an avid tennis player, this is the place to talk about that. Let them get to know you on a more personal level.

People love to know what the person they’re dealing with looks like. Be sure to include a recent photo of yourself. If you don’t think you photograph well – and most people seem to hate their own photos – have your photo made by a professional photographer. It will be worth the extra expense to have nice photos made.

Never stand against a wall and have your photo snapped as if you’re having a mug shot taken. Those photos are always unflattering. And don’t have those glamour shots made either. Most people rarely look like that in real life and are often unrecognizable even to family members. Look nice, look professional, look confident, and smile. People want to work with other people who are pleasant to be around, and a smile goes a long way to conveying that image.

Today there is a lot of technology available that also makes it very easy to include video presentations on a website, and the “About us” page is a great place to use a video of yourself saying a few brief words to the visitor. This is a great way to let your real self show up.

If you use a video, dress in the same way that you dress while working with clients, speak clearly, smile, and be animated without being distracting. Put some energy and expression in to what you are saying, and keep it relatively short. 3 to 4 minutes or less is the best amount of time.

The “Sign-up” Page

One of the more important reasons for having a website is to be able to capture the email addresses of your site visitors so you can continue to market them long after they’ve left your site. With a consistent reminder of who you are and what you do, prospects are more likely to remember you when they are ready to buy.

Sometimes it may take years for people to become comfortable enough

*“If you work
just for money,
you’ll never
make it, but if
you love what
you’re doing and
you always
put the
customer first,
success will
be yours.”*

*– Ray Croc,
FOUNDER OF
MCDONALDS*

with you to make a purchase. I recently had a new client tell me that she had been on my mailing list and receiving stuff from me for three years before she was ready to make a purchase from me. So you just never know how long it will take to turn a prospect into a paying client.

Soul proprietors often ask me how long they should continue to email or snail mail someone on their list before giving up. My reply is that you never give up. The only time you remove someone from your list is when they ask you to. Once they actually buy from you, mailing to them becomes even more valuable because, once someone buys from you one time, they are likely to buy again. And if they've had an outstanding experience with you, they'll buy more often and also tell others.

However, these days, people are rarely willing to give you their email address or other contact info just because you ask. People tell me all the time that they get more email now than ever, and they are becoming more and more selective about who they allow into their inbox.

So to get that coveted email address, you'll do better if you have something to offer of value in exchange for their contact information such as a special report, an article or a gift of some sort. And "value" is the operative word here. I subscribe to the philosophy that you can never give too much away, so when you write a special report to give away, make it as meaty and informative as you possibly can, but leaving the reader hungry to learn more. And the "more" is what you deliver when you sell your services.

On your sign-up page you'll want to include a description of what you are offering in exchange for their email address and also tell them what else they are getting and when and how it will be delivered.

So if you will be contacting them every week with an eZine, and you'll occasionally send out special offers, and you'll usually do that on Mondays or Fridays, tell them.

If you're not comfortable in doing it yourself, have a graphic designer create a mock-up of a cover for your eZine as if it were a real magazine that was going to sit on a shelf somewhere. Do the same for the special report or eBook you might be offering. People respond to those visual representations of what they will be getting and are more likely to sign up for what you are offering.

This page will also need to include a form for capturing their email address. You don't want to ask for too much information here, because if you ask for too much before they have a chance to get to know you, you'll likely scare them away and lose any chance to build a relationship with them.

It is enough to ask for their name and their email address. You can always ask for more information later when they're more comfortable with you.

You'll need a database for capturing and holding this information, and the best way for most folks to do this is to subscribe to a bulk email service like *Aweber* or *Constant Contact*. For a low monthly fee, these services take

“Spend a lot of time talking to customers face to face. You'd be amazed how many companies don't listen to their customers.”

– Ross Perot

Make the Connection
Sign up here for *Soul Food*
from Marty Marsh at Great Living Today!

Name:
E-mail:

You've taken the awesome steps to improve your

An example of a sign-up box.

the headache out of email marketing. We'll discuss more about that when I talk about eZines and newsletters later in this guidebook. Your webmaster will know how to set up a form and how to interface with any outside service you might use.

Be sure to include a privacy policy that people can read to be assured that you are not going to use their information in nefarious ways, and be sure to tell them that they will always have the option to unsubscribe at any time.

The “Contact Us” Page

Every prospective client will want to contact you in a way that is most comfortable for them, so be sure to include on your “Contact Us” page all the ways that someone can get in touch with you. Give them as many choices as you can. Spell out for them exactly the ways they can contact you. If you have a preferred method, by all means mention that, and then tell them what to expect.

You may prefer that prospects email you. In that case, it's best if you provide a form for them to complete instead of listing your email address. The reason for this is twofold. If you put your email address on your site, it is easy for spambots – robots that go out to the web and find email addresses – to capture your email and start sending you lots of SPAM emails. And if you use any type of junk mail filtering system, you are likely to miss a legitimate email that someone might send you later.

Using the form eliminates both of those problems, as the form will come to you from an address that you will already have set up in your email program, and you won't risk missing any messages.

Be sure to tell prospects that, if they contact you, what they can expect to have happen next. Will you respond right away, within a set number of hours, such as “within 24-48 hours”? If they leave a phone message, when are you likely to respond? The same day? Within a set number of hours? If you have office hours, list those hours. If you are only available on certain days, mention that.

Be as open as you are comfortable in being. Include your phone number if you're willing to accept calls. A mailing address is always a good idea, and you can easily get a private mail box at a mail receiving center or a post office box at the post office if you are concerned about your safety and security.

A separate mailing address is a good idea these days because you won't want someone just showing up at your door, especially if you work from home. Of course, if you have a physical office someplace other than your home, use that address. In fact, your contact page is a great place to include a map and directions to your address, if it is public.

While fewer and fewer people are using faxes these days, it is still a good idea to provide a fax number for those folks who still like using it. You can easily acquire an electronic fax account for no charge from a variety of resources for those few faxes that you will inevitably get. Faxes can come right to your computer inbox.

“We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better.”

*– Jeff Bezos,
FOUNDER OF AMAZON*

Encourage people to contact you. You have a better chance of selling your services to a prospect if you can somehow connect with them on a personal level, such as the phone or in person. You'd be surprised at the number of small business owners who tell me they don't have time to deal with clients and to answer their questions. Don't be that kind of business person. Make yourself available.

Your "Home" Page

Lastly we come to your home page. Since your home page is the first page that most prospects are likely to see, you want to do everything you can to capture their attention and keep them there long enough to learn more about you and, hopefully, sign up to be on your mailing list.

As mentioned earlier, your prospects need to recognize themselves and be comfortable in knowing they've come to a place where they are likely going to get their needs and wants met and their problems solved. So be very clear on your home page who you work for. (This is your perfect client.)

Spell out the benefits that they'll receive when working with you. People aren't likely to take the time to read long paragraphs of copy, so keep paragraphs short, and where possible, use bullet points to get your message across in as few words as possible.

At the bottom of the home page, tell the reader what you would like them to do next. On the Successful Soul Proprietor home page I make three suggestions as to what the visitor can do next, including signing up for my mailing list, listening to a free audio course that's available for download, and lastly, joining my Soul Proprietor Success Center where they can find on-going help with business and marketing issues.

It's best if you can make at least three recommendations, as I've done, but you might also simply ask a question and then let them know they can find the answer on the next page. For example, "Do you want to find out how to make your marketing sacred? Click here to find out how." Then the visitor clicks and is taken to a new page that answers that question.

At the bottom of each page of your site, give options to the visitor as to what they might do next. Now, there is no guarantee that they'll follow your suggestions, but the likelihood that they will goes way up when you make the suggestion of what to do next. This is a great way to take visitors through the most logical progression through your site.

Be sure that you put the link for signing up for your mailing list in a prominent place. Your webmaster can put in a "capture form" right on your home page where the visitor enters their email address and name. When they click submit, they'll start the process of getting a confirming email in



An example of a home page.

Get your own custom URL

You *must* have your own custom URL for your website. Besides being more professional, you'll be able to send emails from your URL and this will further enhance and enforce your brand in the mind of your clients.

Here are some sources for buying a URL for \$10 or less per year:

- godaddy.com
- buydomains.com
- aplus.net
- networksolutions.com

their inbox and getting on your list.

You can also create a link that takes them to your sign up page if you want the chance to “sell” them on signing up for your list and for getting the premium you are offering in exchange for their contact information.

The most generally accepted – and expected – layout for your home page is to have the name of your company in the upper left corner, along with any other identifying information needed at the top of the page, your mailing list sign-up form or link in the upper right corner, and the various navigation buttons needed to maneuver around on your site in a narrow column on the left side of the page, with the main copy running down the center.

Of course, there are a variety of ways to lay out an effective and attractive website, and this is why it is a good idea to get some professional help. Looks DO matter, and you want to always project the most professional image you can.

If you have testimonials from satisfied clients, the home page is a great place to display those. It’s always better to have people tell your story than you telling it yourself. We’ll talk more about testimonials and how to use them later in this guidebook.

Do a search on the web to find other websites of people doing work similar to yours to gather some ideas about things you might want to include. And go outside your industry and look at web pages to see how other groups are presenting their services. Keep track of the URLs for sites you like, and let your web designer and webmaster have a look at them, too.

Use the information you’ve already written on your other website pages to formulate the wording you want to use on your home page, pulling in some elements from each of those pages so that you tie the whole site together into a whole.

Of course, there’s lots more to building an effective and comprehensive website – one that attracts your perfect clients – than we have space for here. So I suggest that you educate yourself about websites and what works and doesn’t work. There’s a plethora of resources to be found on the web itself and also at the Soul Proprietor Success Center.

Write. Write. Write.

Many Soul Proprietors get in a panic whenever they contemplate having to write anything, let alone an article that dozens, maybe hundreds, maybe even thousands of people might read. I hear it all the time – “But I’m not a writer,” or “I was just never good with words,” or “I’m not very good with spelling and grammar,” or “I just don’t like to write.”

Please don’t let any of those excuses come out of YOUR mouth. You can write. In fact, you MUST write.

Why?



*“A word is not
the same with
one writer as
with another.
One tears it
from his guts.
The other pulls
it out of his
overcoat pocket.”*

– Charles Peguy

Tip from Marty:

Do your own writing. You know your business and your clients best and you can say what needs to be said best. Get help if you need it, but be the first source for your clients.

Articles are one of the best ways to show off your expertise and knowledge. People have an immense amount of respect for people who have articles, stories and books published, and they look to that person as an expert in their field. Articles build your credibility in the eyes of your prospects and reinforce in the mind of your existing clients that they've made the right decision to work with you.

When you write authentically, your prospects will get to know you. Your humanity will come through, and they will be able to connect with you on a deeper level. Articles are a passive, non-threatening way to connect with your perfect clients and promote your services.

Writing articles is an inexpensive way to reach your prospects, and articles are much more believable than ads. A good marketing article will contain information. Lots of it. And very little "selling."

Hands down, writing articles is one of the best ways to build a relationship with prospective clients – and that's what marketing is really all about – building relationships. Write articles on a regular basis that will inform and entertain your readers and, ultimately, you'll turn them into buyers of your services.

You've heard the phrase, "Content is king," I'm sure. You've gotta have content – the words that make your clients and prospects want to do business with you – and that content needs to come from you.

As Scott Ginsberg, the Nametag Guy, says, "The more you write, the more you will *like* writing; the more you like writing, the more you will *want* to write; the more you want to write, the more thought, time, and effort you will put into your writing; the more *thought, time and effort* you put into your writing, the better your writing will become; the *better* your writing becomes, the more *confidence* you will have; the more confidence you have, the *more you will write and want to write*; and then the pattern repeats itself. *Forever.*"

And its true. I've always liked to write, but I never liked taking the time to write. So I was always putting it off. Always behind in getting my eZine out (or not getting it out at all). Always having a good intention to write that special report to pass out at the next networking event. Always going to write that letter to my mom.

What I finally had to do was take Scott's advice – stop making silly excuses and just write.

What to write

What sort of things will you write? Your website copy, your blog entries, articles, special reports, eZines and newsletters, emails, sales letters, and on and on. A lot of what you're going to be doing as a marketer involves writing.

Yes, you could hire a ghost writer to write for you. I've even done that myself. But the problem with a ghost writer is that no matter how good they are, they will never know your business and your clients as well as you do, and they'll never fully capture your "voice."

One of the things we Soul Proprietors pride ourselves on is our authen-

"Writing became such a process of discovery that I couldn't wait to get to work in the morning: I wanted to know what I was going to say."

– Sharon O'Brien

ticity. We want our real selves to shine through in everything we do and, honestly, the only way for that to happen in the written world is to write it yourself. (Sorry, no way out of it.)

One of the easiest ways to get started writing is to create a blog and add to it on a regular basis. You'll accomplish two things: your writing will get better the more you write, and your blog will get noticed and start attracting your perfect clients to you. We'll discuss blogging in more depth in another section of this guidebook.

How to write

Write like you talk. That's what I do. If you're finding it hard to put pen to paper – or fingers to keyboard – just write like you talk. You can also try writing as if you were writing a letter to someone, telling them all the good things you want them to know.

Here's a BONUS tip for you: Think about your favorite client and write specifically to him or her. I have a favorite client who is also my perfect client, and with everything I write, I write as if I was writing only to her. When you're writing to just one person, the job becomes a lot easier, and the writing is much more effective!

My style of writing is such that I sit down and just write. I write and write and write. Then I go back and edit for spelling, grammar and sentence structure. I take stuff out. I put more stuff in. I rearrange the sentences. And rarely does the end product finish up like it started. Often the paragraph in the middle is the one that ultimately becomes the lead (first) paragraph.

Then I always go back and “clean up” what I've written one more time.

After that, I let someone else read it. Not just for editing, but for clarity and understanding. Sometimes when we write like we talk, without the gestures, vocal inflections, facial expressions and the hand waving, the reader might miss what we are really trying to say. So having someone else read it ensures that what you've written is understandable and clear. Plus, my editors always have a clever way of saying the same thing I want to say in a much better way – a certain “turn of phrase” as they say in the writin' business – so I always value their input.

You can also start out writing by figuring out the end first. Ask yourself, “what is the one thought or major idea I want my reader to take away from this article?” Then fill in backwards all the things they'll need to know to get them to that one final thought or idea.

Scott Ginsberg also tells us why content is King (or Queen) and why it is so important that we write, write, write:

The more content you have ... the better the search engines rank you.

The more content you have ... the better an authority you will be.

The more content you have ... the bigger your reservoir will grow.

“Words – so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them.”

– Nathaniel Hawthorne

The more content you have ... the deeper your expertise will go.
The more content you have ... the easier and quicker it will become to compile your projects.
The more content you have ... the greater your opportunity for client diversity.
The more content you have ... the higher the perception of your expertise.
The more content you have ... the higher your average sale will be.
The more content you have ... the higher your number of subscribers will be.
The more content you have ... the less likely you are to be viewed as a commodity.
The more content you have ... the less likely you are to be viewed as a one-trick pony.
The more content you have ... the more equity you maintain.
The more content you have ... the more hits you will get.
The more content you have ... the more money you will earn.
The more content you have ... the more options you will have.
The more content you have ... the more pre-qualified prospects will seek YOU out.
The more content you have ... the more your website will come up in organic searches.
The more content you have ... the more the media will come to you.
The more content you have ... the more value you can provide.
The more content you have ... the more likely customers will find you
The more content you have ... the more advertisers will come to you.
The more content you have ... the more you can customize every encounter.
The more content you have ... the more you will develop and perfect your voice.
The more content you have ... the smarter you look.
The more content you have ... the stronger your portable sales force is.
The more content you have ... the stronger your web presence is.
More content = more value.

Write a Main Article.

Some folks call this a core article or a special report. The key thing is that you have something written that you can use over and over again to connect with prospective clients.

What can you do with this main article? Send it to newspapers and magazines, post it to article distributors on the Internet, or give it away on your website in exchange for your prospect's name and email address.

One of the perfect uses for a main article that I know is to use it as a follow-up tool. The next time you're at a networking event or talking with someone who shows interest in your service, tell them you have this article or report you'd like to send them that will give them more information about solving the problem they are facing. Note that I did not say "that will tell you more about me and my services."

This main article that you write should inform without being preachy or

Great Rules of Writing from William Safire:

- Do not put statements in the negative form.
- And don't start sentences with a conjunction.
- If you reread your work, you will find on rereading that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.
- Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.
- Don't overuse exclamation marks!!!
- Unqualified superlatives are the worst of all.
- Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided.
- If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
- Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.
- Last, but not least, avoid clichés like the plague.

overselling. In fact, this article should not overtly try to sell at all.

Now, when you tell that prospect at the networking event that you have this article or special report to share with them, don't give it to them at the event. Instead, ask for their mailing or email address (or better yet, both) and tell them that you'll send the report to them the next day. (Then make sure you do.)

A few days later when you're sure they've had time to receive it, call them on the phone and ask if they received the article or report and if they have any questions about it. And on this follow up call, don't try to sell anything. Now that you have their contact information, you can follow up with additional materials and a letter asking for further opportunities to connect and to do business together. As you build your relationship with them, you'll be able to continually demonstrate to them why you are the best choice for solving their problems.

So how do you write this article?

Write about what you know. Ask yourself, "What do I know about my business that will help my prospects? What can I tell them that will help them solve their problems and enrich their lives?" Write about subjects that are near and dear to the hearts of your prospects, and they will be naturally attracted to you – but only if you are giving them information and not trying to sell them.

Many Soul Proprietors are concerned that they'll give away too much information in their articles and therefore the prospect won't have any reason to pay them for help in solving their problems. My approach to this is that you can never give away too much.

Here are some types of articles that you can write:

Step-by-step articles. Examples of titles: Five Steps to Selling Your Home; Seven Tips to Save on Taxes; Nine Steps to Saving Money at the Grocery Store; Nine No-Fail Closing Techniques.

What problem do you solve? What are the steps to solving it? Write them down, one by one, and you've got an article.

How-to articles: These articles tell the prospect how to do something. Examples of titles: How to Write an Article; How to Sell Your Home the First Time; How to Stay Out of Trouble with the Taxman; How to Improve Your Golf Swing; How to Buy Gold and Silver. How to Catch More Fish.

People respond favorably to anything that tells them "how to" do something. Notice the title of this eBook for example. People are eager to learn and if they know they can get step-by-step instructions they'll be eager to read what you have to say.

On the other hand, sometimes the best way to approach problem solving for your clients and prospects is to teach them how NOT to do something. The negative approach sometimes works, and you'll need to try it to find out if you're comfortable with this approach.

How-NOT-to articles: Some examples of titles: How NOT to Buy Your First Home; How NOT to Sell Your Boat; How NOT to Lower Your Taxes. Get the idea?

“Write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought are commonly the most valuable.”

– Francis Bacon

An approach similar to this is to write articles about mistakes people make when doing certain things. Example titles might be: Do You Make These Mistakes While Driving? Do You Make These 11 Mistakes When Marketing Your Business? Do You Make These Common Tax Mistakes in Your Home Business? Do You Make This Mistake When Talking to Prospects?

And people love specific numbers of things. They are attracted to something that is going to give them “11 ways” or “7 mistakes.” It is concrete, and the number sounds doable. “I can do 7 things,” they think, and are eager to get your eBook or article.

The important thing about writing is that you do it. Set aside some time daily to write something. Anything. Set a timer for just 15 minutes to get you started. You can quit at the end of the 15 minutes, or you may decide that the words are flowing and that you want to keep going. The choice is yours.

Be sure to show your work to someone else who will give you only helpful criticism. If your spouse or partner tends to put down what you do, share it with somebody else. You’ll gain confidence as you write more, and having positive feedback will go a long to your enjoyment of writing.

If needed, take a writing course and read some books on writing. There are many available.

Finally, after your article is written, and rewritten and proofed, and you’re satisfied that you’re ready to share it with the world, format it in a way that shows off your words in the most attractive manner.

If you’re proficient in a program like Microsoft Word – which is fairly universal when it comes to people being able to read documents on both the PC and Macintosh platforms – set up your article in an attractive manner that will entice people to read it. Use color sparingly, and use bold and italics where appropriate for emphasis. Use “white space” in your layout. Don’t crowd or squeeze the content too densely.

If you’ve written a lengthy special report – say 8 or more pages – you may want to make a PDF out of it. If you’re not proficient at doing this yourself, have your graphic designer lay it out in a professional graphics program, adding artwork and photographs and other graphic and typographical elements that will make it look nice, including an enticing cover, and have them give you a finished PDF. The beauty of PDF is that it is truly “cross platform” – anyone should be able to download it, print it, and read it no matter what computer they own.

Be sure to include your biographical information in an author’s bio at the end of the article. Anyone that re-publishes your article – with your permission, of course – will include this info with the article so that readers will know how to contact you. We’ll discuss creating an effective author’s bio in another section of this guidebook.

Now that you’re comfortable writing, and you’ve got your main article written and formatted in a way that is easy to send to prospects, what else can you write, and how will you use what you’ve written? Write down all the ideas you can think of, and start writing!

*“The best time
for planning a
book is while
you’re doing
the dishes.”*

– Agatha Christie

Create a Bio

Any time you write something – especially if someone else is likely to publish it – you’ll want to have an author’s bio ready to attach.

When folks read your words of wisdom and resonate with what you have to say, they are going to want to learn more about what you offer, who you are, and how to contact you.

The bio is a snippet of information that tells a bit about you and how readers can reach you. This is a great use for your powerful attraction statement, too.

Always write your bio in the third person. (This means that it sounds like you are writing about someone else.)

A big mistake that Soul Proprietors make is in writing about their accomplishments instead of telling the reader what they can *do* for *them*. Remember, people only care about “what’s in it for them,” so give them what they want.

Once you’ve written your main article or special report, you can mention it in your bio, which gives readers a reason to visit your website. Without some motivation, they are unlikely to click through to your site. Give them a good reason to do so.

You can also tell a bit about yourself, if you like, and if you think that it is important to the reader. If knowing that you grew up in Kansas a mile or two from the Emerald City does nothing to compel readers to want to know more about you, or to click through to your website, then leave it out.

Here’s an example of a brief bio that I use on some of my articles, depending on the audience I am trying to reach:

“Marty Marsh has been self-employed since 1995, learning the ins and outs of successful business marketing – sometimes the hard way – and helping other ‘soul’ proprietors to create marketing plans and campaigns that are easy and fun and effective. His free report, “How to Get the Word Out About Who You Are and What You Do” is available for immediate download at his website, www.successfulsoulproprietor.com where you can also discover the many other marketing and business development programs he offers for Soul Proprietors.”

I use other bios, of course, depending on whom I think will be reading my articles and the action that I want them to take. If I’ve just created a new eBook or a new special report or have something else of value to offer at my site, I’ll include that in the bio.

Now, write your own bio, or two, or three. Remember to refer to yourself as if you were someone else, and include something of value that your readers will want to get.

Create a Blog

An easy way to start writing and getting your words out for public consumption is to create a blog and update it on a regular basis.

“In business, I’ve discovered that my purpose is to do my best to my utmost ability every day. That’s my standard. I learned early in life that I had high standards.”

– Donald Trump

Experts tell us that to get the most notice from writing a blog, you should update it at least three times a week, more if you can make the time and have something to say.

Besides honing your writing skills, a blog is easily picked up by the search engines. The more often you publish to your blog, the quicker the search engines will begin to find you.

It's easy for you to update a blog often. There are several blog packages available that allow you to create as many blogs as you wish under one account. You simply log-in to a main control panel on a website and start typing away. Some you might consider are *Blogger*, *TypePad*, and my favorite, *WordPress*. Some are free; some require a small subscription fee. Check the features and the available templates and make your decision based on your needs, not whether a package is free or not. You get what you pay for! (Or don't!)

Blog software does all the work for you so you don't have to know a thing about websites or html. You just need to be able to log in and write and push a button to publish. It is really that simple.

Today's blogging software also allows you to add various kinds of pages to your blog so that, in effect, you can build a whole website around your blog. You may not even need a regular website if you don't want it.

Another great thing about blogging is that you can create a blog and have an immediate web presence. So if you're attending a networking event and someone asks if you have a website, you could say "sure" and then rush home to create a blog in a matter of moments.

Another advantage of blogging is that it's seen as a less formal way of doing business. More of your real self can come through on your blog than you might be willing to show on your regular website.

A blog is a great way to build a relationship with people because it is a two-way communication vehicle. People reading your blog can post comments about what you've written, adding to the conversation in a unique way. In fact, a blog is possibly the closest you will come to having an ongoing "conversation" with people on the web.

Many Soul Proprietors think that having a blog (or a website) is all that is necessary to attract clients. While a blog will go a long way in helping you build a relationship with your prospects and clients, it is only one of the many tools you will want to use to reach your perfect clients.

Capture Emails and Addresses

It goes without saying that there is gold in your address lists. You'll want to set up ways to capture both email addresses and regular mailing addresses of your prospects and clients so that you can market to them over and over on a continuous basis, both online and off.

When your prospects are ready to buy, you want them to think of you. Prospects have short attention spans. They are continually bombarded by advertising and marketing messages at every turn, to the tune of something

Blogging for the beginner

Blogging has changed a lot since its development and now is a front line tool in Internet marketing.

If you've decided that you'll set up a blog for your business, here are some tips on how to make it more interesting and popular.

1 - Know your audience. Make sure they find what they're expecting at your blog. If they recognize themselves they'll also visit your main website.

2 - Use pictures. A large block of text can become very boring when reading, especially online. Picture or graphics placed within the text keep the reader interested to the end. Just make sure the pictures you use are relevant to the subject of the post.

3 - Relevant content. The posts made to your business blog need to be relevant for your audience. They come to get a certain kind of information from you, the expert in your field.

4 - Keep it simple. The art of effective online communication is to keep things simple. Keep away from any technical jargon unless absolutely necessary, and keep your sentences short and to the point.

5 - Make it interactive. Encourage your readers to leave comments on your posts. Make sure that this feature is turned on, and then decide if you want to approve comments before publishing them.

6 - Post often. Posting to your website 2 or 3 times a week will keep interest up in your blog and will get noticed more quickly by the search engines.

like 5,000 different messages every single day. If you aren't at the top of their mind when they are ready to buy, they will buy from someone else, guaranteed.

The best way to capture email addresses is on your website. This way you can be sure that when someone joins your list that they will be happy to receive email from you. Ask your web designer or webmaster to include a sign-up link in a prominent place on every page of your website.

It is okay to use a co-registration system with another complementary business that helps you both build your lists, like I do with my co-registration with Solo-E at Successful Soul Proprietor. But you never, ever, under any circumstances want to buy a list of email addresses from anyone.

No matter how many times they tell you that these people want to be on your list to get offers from you, I guarantee that they won't remember they opted in to that kind of list – if they really did in the first place – and they will likely report you as a spammer.

Neither should you just add someone to your list without asking their permission first. Even if they give you their verbal permission, by the time you email them they may have forgotten who you are and that they gave you permission to send them email. Then they may report you as a spammer, and that creates a whole bunch of problems all on its own.

Using a third party service, such as *Aweber* or *Constant Contact*, not only makes it easy to manage a lot of email addresses, but they have processes in place that automatically make sure that your prospects have asked to be on your list. They call this process “opting in,” and a double opt-in procedure is the best way to go. Some email service providers require it.

These days, most folks have been around the Internet and email long enough to know about double opt-in and are savvy enough to work with it. When your prospect first enters their contact information into a form, they are notified that they will receive an email that will contain a confirmation link in it. When the email arrives, they will simply click on that confirmation link and then are immediately added to the list.

Of course, on your sign up page, as well as in every bulk email you send, you must include a method for them to unsubscribe from your list. Third party services automatically add this feature to every email you send, and you never have to worry about it. Both the sign ups and the unsubscribes are automatically handled and you never have to do a thing.

You must have a clearly stated privacy policy listed on your website to be in compliance with the law. You can get an idea of what to say in a policy like this at my website. Visit [put in url here for policy page]. Feel free to use this as a model to write your own. However, depending on the type of business or practice you are in, you might want to run your privacy policy by a lawyer that specializes in that sort of thing, just to be sure you are on the up and up and have covered all your bases.

Improve your marketing with your list data

- Gather as much information about your clients (and others that are important to your business) as you can, including mailing addresses, birthdays, anniversaries, kids' names and so on. Then use the data you gather to market more effectively to your existing clients and potential clients.
- Tailor marketing messages to individual clients based on the information you have about them.
- Identify your best customers and what they like and want.
- Track their buying preferences so you'll know when and how to notify them of new services or products or when you put something on sale.
- Identify your best clients and pay closest attention to them and their needs.
- Pay attention to buying trends so that you can prevent clients from becoming “former” clients because they haven't done business with you for an extended period of time.

Use Direct Mail

Using Direct Mail as part of your overall marketing campaign is a savvy way for Soul Proprietors to reach their prospects, too. These days it is important to do some offline marketing as well as online. Rarely will using just one method get you the results you are looking for.

Giving away something physical to your prospects is the best way I know for getting a regular postal mailing address. It can be a gift or a special report that you print out on your own paper and mail. It can be a newsletter. People love newsletters because they feel as though they are receiving something of tangible value.

If you have a retail location or an office, you can print up forms and have people fill them out to get on your list. Put out a guest book and collect the information that way.

Have a drawing and require that people give you their mailing information. Why do you think that restaurants give away a free lunch or dinner in exchange for a business card in a jar? Because a free lunch is a small price to pay for capturing information they can use to further market to you.

Having a comprehensive marketing plan that includes good old-fashioned direct mail will help you reach more prospects than just using online methods. Sure, direct mail will always cost you money, but the payoff can be enormous.

Yes, direct mail is what some folks affectionately call “junk mail.” Of course, it’s all junk except what you and I mail, right?

Once you’ve captured your prospect’s mailing information, you can mail a variety of things to get their attention, including postcards, newsletters, special reports, gifts and premiums.

The biggest obstacle to direct mail success is in getting your prospects to open your envelope. It used to be that you not only had to write compelling copy on the contents inside the envelope, but now you need even more compelling copy on the outside of the envelope to get it opened at all.

Direct marketers have resorted to all sorts of “tricks” to get people to open their mail, including not only compelling copy, but also handwritten (or the illusion of handwritten) addresses and return addresses, or no return address at all, just to name a few. I’ve seen copy on an envelope that says “Don’t Open This Envelope...” Of course, saying don’t open this envelope is a direct command to open the envelope anyway to find out why you shouldn’t be opening it. Genius or a trick? You decide.

Today there are two easier ways to make sure people see your message: use a medium like a postcard that does not require an envelope, or put something lumpy in the envelope to pique their curiosity enough to open the envelope to find out what is making the lump.

Lumpy Mail

Good lumpy mail can be a lot of things. Put in a pen or a booklet, or some other advertising premium. There are lots to choose from. Recently

Tips for building your own lists

- Start with current and past clients.
- Include professional colleagues, friends, family and any other names of people that match your perfect client profile.
- Ask others for names of people that might be your perfect client and add them to your list as you receive these referrals.
- Capture the names and email of people that visit your website.
- Give something away in exchange for client contact information.
- Set up a guestbook — online as well as at your office or store — to capture mailing information.
- Continually keep your list updated. This includes culling out addresses that no longer work. Note any changes in addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

I've seen a company use sheets of bubble wrap that make the envelope puffy. And more recently, I received a piece of direct mail that showed a real nickel through a small window. I must confess I opened it up, took the nickel and threw out the mailer without reading it. But for some folks, that nickel may be enough to get them to open the mail and then read what it says on the inside.

I'm a big fan of lumpy mail. Anything you can send in a box or a tube or a bottle or a bag will get people's attention and at least make them look. You still have a big job to do, once they get inside, and only by making a compelling offer will you move them to action.

Test Every Mailing

Because of the expense, you will want to make sure that direct mail is right for you and that it works. The only way to find out is to test.

Mail a few hundred pieces and measure the response you get. Then make a decision about how much more you are going to invest to reach more prospects. If the mailing works, of course, you'll want to keep it doing it. If you are not satisfied with the results, then you'll need to rethink your strategy. (Keep in mind that as little as a 1% response rate on a single mailing is considered a good response.)

Perhaps a different headline would work better. Perhaps different artwork. Perhaps a different offer altogether. The important caution here is that if you are going to continue to test a mailing piece, change only one thing at a time and test each change you make before making another.

This is why a lot of marketers today shun direct mail and use only online email for offers. Email certainly will give you near instant results with your testing, while direct mail will take much longer and costs more. Many third party emailing services, like *Aweber*, now offer the option for what is called "split testing." This where you mail two separate emails to your list using two separate subject lines, then measure which one gets the most "opens."

Use Postcards as Newsletters

A relatively inexpensive way to use direct mail is to send postcards. Postcards can be printed in a variety of sizes from the standard 4x6 up to 6x11 or bigger. A compelling appropriate photograph or other artwork, along with a compelling headline, will get attention. Use the back side for the rest of your message. (Remember that the recipient will almost always see the "address" side of a post card first; design accordingly.) You can use postcards as coupons asking recipients to bring the postcard with them when you perform your service. Postcards are a great way to build brand awareness and to invite people to visit your website.

I like using postcards as newsletters. You can create an attractive newsletter layout on a larger size postcard. There's no envelope to open, and your message is readily seen.

You can also mail regular newsletters without an envelope. Simply create an address panel on an outside fold of the newsletter, seal the edges

Tips for better Direct Mail

- Create your own list based on current and past clients and any potential clients.
- Buy a quality mailing list of proven buyers in your niche. (Never buy a list of email addresses as you'll just be asking for trouble with these.)
- Use an addressing machine or a printer to ink the address directly on to the paper instead of using mailing labels.
- If possible, use your own handwriting to address direct mail pieces or use a facsimile of your own handwriting.
- Be sure that you include a call to action in every direct mail piece you send. "Call to make an appointment"; "Visit our website"; "Call us."
- Use the word "you" in your copy as often as you can and avoid the word "I" as much as you can.
- Test. Test. Test, but change only one thing at a time.
- Use the post office. The post office has a wealth of information about direct mail and how best to use their services.

with tape, add postage, and mail. Put something interesting on the outside panels of the newsletter that will entice the recipient to open it up to read the rest. Underneath your return address you can list the table of contents showing what to expect inside.

A printed newsletter that you mail to clients and prospects is one of the best ways to get your message across in a non-threatening way. You can tell a lot in a newsletter, and it is a soft-sell approach. A newsletter is one of the best ways to build goodwill and to get recognition, long before you make an in-person sales call or a phone call.

People like a newsletter because they can hold it in their hands, read it whenever they want to, and take it with them wherever they go – even to the bathroom. Best of all, they don't have to use their own ink and paper to read your message.

Like all marketing strategies, Direct Mail works best when it is done consistently. So if you are going to mail postcards, do so at regular intervals. The same goes for a newsletter. Once a month is best, but if you can only afford to mail once a quarter, then do that. The key is in the consistency.

We'll talk about newsletters in more detail a little later in this guidebook.

Bonus tip: You can generally mail just about anything you want. People have mailed pieces of wood as large as plywood size – 4 feet by 8 feet. Now THAT would get your attention wouldn't it? I heard once of someone mailing clean underwear with a message silk screened on each one. In fact, it has been common for tourists in Hawaii to mail a coconut, as is, to friends at home. Just write the address on it and put on a stamp. The possibilities are endless. Just be sure to check with the postal service BEFORE you put your mailing campaign together. They'll tell you what you can and can't do and how much it will cost.

eZines

I've said over and over that staying in regular contact with your prospects and clients is necessary for business success. A big mistake that Soul Proprietors make is not staying in regular touch with their website visitors.

Publishing an eZine is a great way to stay in touch with prospects and clients, and it costs virtually nothing to do so, other than your time and a small fee to a third party emailing service. If your list is less than 1,000 addresses, expect to pay only about \$11 per month.

The key to publishing an effective eZine is in the consistency. If you say you're going to send out the eZine once a week on Monday, then make sure that when Monday rolls around, you've got an eZine out there. Having good content, full of useful and valuable information, makes your eZine a hardworking marketing tool for you.

But the buzz these days is that there are so many eZines being emailed

“Remember that you are a teacher, you are helping people, making them feel safer, taking them from fear to love, from ignorance to knowledge.”

– Stuart Wilde

every week that folks are becoming overly saturated with them and don't have time to read all that they receive. That's very true; but as I said before, you'll nevertheless want to send your eZine to your prospects and clients until they tell you to stop.

Truthfully, I get a lot of eZines myself that I don't have time to read. But I want to stay on those lists because I don't want to forget who those people are and what they do, because one day I might want to do business with them. So even if your prospects aren't opening and reading every eZine you email them, every time it shows up in their inbox they remember who you are. So it serves as a continual reminder that you're still available.

So if folks aren't going to read your eZines, why bother to make sure the content is good? Because people WILL read your eZines, and they'll read them every time they show up, *if* the content you include is both relevant and has some value to them. And, as you build a relationship with them, they'll be more inclined to want to read what you have to say.

There's no getting around it. Ezines can be a lot of work to produce on a regular basis. Most eZine publishers I know always have plans to get three or four eZines ahead so that they are not always working under the pressure of getting them out on time. (Me included.)

The reality for most is, however, that they're busy writing and working on their eZine just a day or two before it gets emailed. And most tell me that the reason for this isn't so much poor time management as it is the desire to be emailing something relevant and timely.

My suggestion is that you send an eZine, at the minimum, once a month. Weekly is better, if you can get it done without making yourself crazy. The easiest way to avoid the crazies is to write short tips that the readers can read in just a minute or two. Use the form in the appendix on page 77 of this guidebook to help you plan the editorial for your eZine.

I publish two Soul Proprietor eZines. Once a week I email my Monday Marketing Memo, which contains a quick marketing tip that can be read quickly. I send it on Monday so the readers have all week to implement the tip if they want to. Then, once a month I send out The Successful Soul Proprietor eNewsletter which is longer and contains more information.

Both eZines contain additional information about things I'm offering such as teleclasses, workshops, and eBooks that I have for sale. But the meat – the valuable information – goes at the top, and the rest of the stuff follows. Folks can read as much as they have the time for.

Remember the subject line of your eZine email serves as the headline for what's inside. Write catchy headlines – subject lines – to draw your readers in to read what you have to say. Of course, your readership may be so eager to hear what you have to say that they only need to see that the eZine is from you. But until you reach that point, write an enticing subject line. And then continue to do so indefinitely for the new readers who don't yet know you well.

Not only must you be consistent in mailing your eZine on time, but you must also be consistent in the email address that you use to send your eZine

Great headlines stop skimmers

Headlines and Subject Lines are there for one reason only: to help readers decide if they want to read an article or your ezine or not. More than five times as many people will read a headline as will read the articles. So make sure you go for maximum impact.

A great headline will:

- Grab their attention
- Tell the story of what is to come
- Lead the reader into the story
- Classify the story
- Enhance the look of the printed page

Five ways to emphasize a headline

- 1 Use a different typeface, with lots of contrast. If you use a serif type for your body copy, use a sans serif type for the headlines.
- 2 Use a larger type size. A heavier weight of the same type such as the bold or extra bold version will also create contrast.
- 3 Avoid long headlines. Don't go more than three lines deep, two is better.
- 4 Use all caps sparingly. Using all capital letters makes a headline harder to read and will tend to "scream" at the reader, so use all caps sparingly, generally no more than one or two words.
- 5 Place the headline in proximity to the article it goes with. It needs to be close enough to leave no doubt which article goes with which headline.

Create attention-getting headlines and subject lines by: using the active voice (verbs), using present tense, short words and limited punctuation (avoid exclamation marks), and avoid abbreviations if possible.

FROM. Tell subscribers when they sign up that they need to “whitelist” or “safelist” your email address, or add it to their address book, to avoid your eZine from winding up in their junk folder, or worse, being filtered out altogether so that they never have an opportunity to even see your eZine.

Ezine deliverability can, at times, be a challenge, but there are now lots of resources on the net about what you can and cannot do to best ensure that every eZine or email you send gets delivered as it was intended and requested.

Always use a double opt-in sign up procedure to protect yourself from charges of SPAM, and use a third party emailing service to ensure that your emails are delivered and that you are complying with all the new laws applicable to sending bulk email.

Due diligence on your part will ensure that you are abiding by the rules and the law and that your emails and eZines are always welcomed by the recipients.

Autoresponders

In addition to sending out regular eZines, you can use autoresponders to do a lot of emailing grunt work for you automatically.

Chances are, if you’ve made an online purchase for just about anything, shortly after you completed the transaction you received some kind of an email thanking you for the purchase and maybe even including additional information or details that you might need or want. That email was being handled by an autoresponder with no human intervention at all.

You can use autoresponders in a variety of ways, including the one just mentioned. You might also use an autoresponder to send out a series of emailed lessons or courses, or to send out preprogrammed messages at certain intervals to remind people on your list about services you offer, or to remind them of upcoming events.

It becomes too time consuming to do these things “by hand,” so using an autoresponder such as *Aweber* makes the task fully automated, once you’ve set it all up. There are lots of sources to tell you how to do this. I want you to be aware that this is available so you can figure out ways to use an autoresponder to automatically promote your business. *Aweber* offers a lot of helpful information and lots of ideas.

Email signature

Every email you send – even to the folks that get your emails on a regular basis – should contain your email “signature.” An email signature is an often overlooked but very powerful marketing tool, and it doesn’t cost you a thing to use one.

An email signature is information that is automatically attached to the end of each of your emails to identify you and to give useful information to those with whom you are corresponding. You can also use your signature for marketing purposes, to make special offers, and to share information.

*“Next to doing
the right
thing, the most
important thing
is to let people
know you
are doing the
right thing.”*

*– John D.
Rockefeller*

Here's an example of one of mine:

Marty Marsh
The Successful Soul Proprietor
Seattle, WA 206-290-7901 Fax 904-216-7945
Email: marty@martymarsh.com
Website: <http://successfulsoulproprietor.com>
Marketing, Advertising and Graphic Design Teleclasses,
Workshops and Coaching for "Soul" Proprietors

Some folks add favorite quotations and marketing information, like this other one of mine, shown below. It's fairly long, but it is very effective at getting people's attention about the services and products that I offer. Many folks tell me that they weren't aware of everything I do until they saw my signature, and many click through to view my websites. I've also made many sales of my eBook because of my signature:

MARTY MARSH, CCO

Chief Clarity Officer & Soul Proprietor
"Helping you bring more love, service and spirituality to your marketplace."

Get my new eBook: Law of Attraction for Everyday Living
by visiting here: <http://greatlivingtoday.com/EverydayLiving/>

Visit my business BLOG at: <http://www.soulproprietorblog.com>

Follow my travels at my "Notes from the Road" BLOG:
http://attractionzone.typepad.com/martys_notes_from_the_road/

Subscribe to my ezines:

Soul Food: <http://greatlivingtoday.com/newsletter.php>
Soul Proprietor Journal: <http://soulproprietorblog.com/ezine.php>

Lots of goodies at my websites:

<http://www.martymarsh.com>
<http://www.greatlivingtoday.com>

Get in touch:

Call me: 206-290-7901
(Generally available Tues., Wed., Thurs., 10am-3pm Eastern time)
Fax me: 904-216-7945
Write to me via email: marty@martymarsh.com

Wise Words:

"Marketing is not an event, but a process... It has a beginning, a middle, but never an end, for it is a process. You improve it, perfect it, change it, even pause it. But you never stop it completely". — Jay Conrad Levinson

You'd never want to use an email signature this long in a newsgroup or a forum that you participate in. For those uses, you'd want to stick with one more like the first one and keep it to no more than five or six lines. Often, online forums and email lists will strip out more than about 5 lines anyway.

So be sure to create your own signature and attach it to every email you send. If you've got something to sell, put it in your signature. Direct people to your websites and also include all of your contact information. Having your phone and fax numbers and email address close at hand helps people get in touch with you without going to a lot of trouble to find your numbers.

Most email programs allow you to create a signature that attaches auto-

"Like almost everyone who uses e-mail, I receive a ton of spam every day. Much of it offers to help me get out of debt or get rich quick. It would be funny if it weren't so exciting."

– Bill Gates

matically to every email you send, and most of them will allow you to include graphics as well. Check with your provider if you don't know how.

I tend to discourage the use of graphics in your signature, only because it creates an unnecessary attachment to your email. Some junk mail filtering systems will automatically strip off any attachments, since attachments tend to carry bad things with them such as viruses and worms. At worst case, the email might not be delivered at all because of the attachment. Graphics also tend to make the email file size bigger, too, and this can create deliverability problems for the recipient.

Remember, if you type <http://> before any website address in your email signature, that makes the URL you put in a live, clickable link. This makes it easy for someone to simply click on the link and be taken directly to the website you choose. In addition, clicking on an email address will very often automatically open an email window so that the reader can simply type in a message and send.

The email signature is an often overlooked but very powerful marketing tool, and you should be using one in every email you send. Best of all, its free marketing for you.

Using Voicemail to Your Advantage

Telephone voicemail has become one of the most indispensable business tools we have at our disposal today, and yet very few business people are using it as a marketing tool.

We all say we hate voicemail, but how many times have you dialed a number wishing you'd get the voicemail instead of a live person?

One of the big advantages of leaving a voicemail message for someone is that you can be as precise and detailed as you need to be and can be confident that the recipient will hear your message as intended. If you have to tell someone answering the phone what you want to say, have them write it down, and then depend on them to deliver it to the recipient in a timely manner, there's lots that could go wrong in the process.

You should always be prepared to leave a voicemail when dialing a number. Your chances are about 9 out of 10 times that you'll get a machine and not a person. Know what you intend to say, and then say it.

A pet peeve of mine is that callers will often leave a very precise, easily understood message until they get to their call back phone number. Then they rattle it off so fast, I can barely catch the number. Sometimes I have to listen again and again to get the whole number down accurately. This does not make me happy! When leaving any voicemail message, speak slowly and clearly, *especially* when leaving phone numbers or other instructions.

In fact, it's a great idea to clearly state your name and phone number at the beginning of your message as well as at the end, in case you get cut off before finishing. That way, the recipient will have your call back number, no matter what.

If you're making a marketing or sales call, rather than ask the caller to



“We have technology, finally, that for the first time in human history allows people to really maintain rich connections with much larger numbers of people.”

– Pierre Omidyar

call you back, tell them that you will call them back and then tell them when.

The mistake that many Soul Proprietors make when making a sales call and leaving a message is that they ask the prospect to call them back. You're likely to be disappointed, as returning sales calls for most people is a pretty low priority task especially if they've not expressed any interest beforehand.

And the worse thing you can do is to leave another voice message saying you called before but didn't get a call back. Prospects never want to be chastised. If you mention that you called before, simply say you'll call again.

If you've met the prospect already, say at a networking event, be sure to remind them who you are, the conversation you had, and where you had the conversation. Busy people will appreciate your call if they know it will help solve their problems and if they don't have to wrack their brains trying to recall who you are.

Your Greeting

Your own outgoing voicemail message is a golden opportunity to give a marketing message to callers, and it is another tool that is often overlooked by business people. If you were to call my phone number and get my voicemail right now, you'd probably hear something like this:

"Hi there, you've reached the voicemail for Marty Marsh. Thank you for calling. My office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 4pm Pacific time. If you've called during that time, I'm most likely either teaching a teleclass or coaching with a client. Please leave a message on this private line. I generally return calls within 4 hours. In the meantime, please visit my website at www.martymarsh.com. Thank you."

Several things are happening with this message. There's no need to state the obvious. If they've reached my voicemail, obviously I'm not available to answer the phone but I do mention what I might be doing. A new caller or even a current client may not be aware that I teach teleclasses or that I coach people. I've had a number of people say to me after hearing my voicemail message, "I didn't know you were a coach. Tell me more."

By stating my office hours, I'm telling the callers when I'm available and when they may reasonably expect to reach me. By mentioning that I return calls within 4 hours, it reassures people who may be in a buying mode that they can still get what they want in a short amount of time, and they are more likely to leave a message, rather than just hanging up.

Coaching can be sensitive for some people, and knowing that they can leave a message on a "private line" lets them know that they can safely say what they need to say without fear of others overhearing it.

And finally, I mention my website so that people who may not have visited there will be encouraged to do so. Sometimes I'll mention an eBook that I'm selling and give the URL of where to find it, and sometimes I'll mention my email address as an option for contacting me.

There are lots of other things you could include as a marketing message. You might mention weekly or daily specials that you're offering. You

"It is a pretty recognizable brand name. Originally it was Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web' but we settled on 'Yahoo.'"

*– Jerry Yang,
FOUNDER OF YAHOO*

can mention upcoming programs or ask callers to register for a teleclass, invite people to a workshop or speaking engagement, or tell them you've just completed an exciting project.

You could even say you've just published an eBook and that you're out celebrating. This will pique curiosity in people, and they'll want to know about the eBook. The options for what you say in your marketing messages are endless.

If you're going to be away for an extended period of time, such as for a vacation, you might mention that you are away until a certain date but that the caller might find the information they are seeking by visiting your website. If you use the services of a virtual assistant, you might also mention that your VA can likely handle anything they might need in your absence and how to contact them.

One last note: Use the voicemail system provided by your phone company even if it costs you a few extra bucks each month. You can create longer outgoing messages, your long-winded callers can leave virtually unlimited messages, it is safe and secure and private, and you're not likely to lose messages because of a machine malfunction. And it is easy to retrieve messages from anywhere.

Old-fashioned answering machines are just that – old-fashioned. They malfunction and are unreliable, their message capacity is generally limited to only a few short seconds, and most of them are not private, as anyone standing nearby can hear the message being left. This presents an unprofessional image, and we always want to “look” our best – even over the phone.

The important thing is to use that telephone message time to your best advantage, whether someone is calling you or you are calling someone else.

Newsletters

A powerful way to connect with prospects and existing clients alike, and to build an authentic relationship with them, is to produce a newsletter that you print and physically mail to them.

According to Elaine Floyd, author of *Marketing with Newsletters*, a newsletter will encourage action on the part of your readers, including responses from your readers in the form of comments and letters to the editor. Newsletters get saved for future reference, and they get passed around to others, as the recipients will often share them with colleagues and friends.

All newsletters promote specific goals, and yours will need to do the same. Think about exactly what you want your newsletter to accomplish. You may want your newsletter to keep your good name in front of your perfect clients and prospects and to create goodwill, or you may even have specific sales goals you'd like to achieve.

You can use it to introduce new products, services and people. A newsletter, sent consistently, shows your prospects that you have permanence – that you'll be around for a long time to serve them. It is also one of the best soft sell, low-key approaches to building a long-term relationship.

10 Reasons to Publish a Promotional Newsletter

- 1 Become a trusted name by reinforcing your company name and service again and again
- 2 Build rapport with a prospect before you ever meet them
- 3 Show off your strengths and everything you do so well
- 4 Present benefits your customers receive when they do business with you
- 5 Build credibility and authority as the expert in your field
- 6 Enhance your company's reputation
- 7 Show prospects your permanence, reliability and consistency
- 8 Sell your products or services
- 9 Increase your chances for new or additional business as you gain additional exposure
- 10 Remind customers and prospects to think of you automatically when they are ready to buy your product or service

You'll want to make sure that you include useful information in your newsletter and not just be trying to sell something. Newsletters that inform and entertain will go a long way to opening future doors for you. Anyone who has received your newsletter for a while will feel as though they already know you. You'll be a welcome guest, not an unwanted pest, when you come knocking on their door for a sales visit.

Again, this is one of those areas where, if you are not confident of your abilities to create an attractive and newsy newsletter, you will want to consider hiring the services of a professional graphic designer. You want to look good as well as sound good.

Give your newsletter a catchy name. The print version of my newsletter is called "The Successful Soul Proprietor Journal" because it is a "journal" of sorts that contains a lot of tips and tools for successful business management and marketing pizzazz. It's something that people will want to keep and refer back to later.

The beauty of a newsletter that you *print* and mail is that, unlike lots of other promotional mail that people receive, it is not considered "junk" mail. Studies have found that a newsletter that provides helpful information is 400 times more likely to be read than other promotional mail.

Because of the expense of producing and mailing a quality newsletter – and maybe even because of the time involved in producing one – mailing once a quarter, at a minimum, is enough. But if you can afford the time and money to do it, mailing once a month is more ideal.

You can always start out with a quarterly mailing schedule, and then as you become more familiar with the process and understand more about what your prospects and clients want and can track increases in sales and revenue directly to the newsletter, you might then consider increasing the frequency of your mailings. Always test. And then test some more.

The key to publishing a newsletter, as with any of the marketing activities we've discussed in this guidebook, is to do it *consistently*. Once you start, don't stop. Make the commitment to keep it going. The only reason you would stop is if you realized, after testing and measuring, that it was not producing an increase in clients and revenue. Use the form in the appendix on page 77 of this guidebook to plan the articles for your newsletter or ezine.

Word-of-Mouth Marketing

When I ask many new Soul Proprietor clients how they are getting most of their business, almost 100% will tell me they are getting their clients through "word-of-mouth."

On the surface, this sounds great. It means that you are delivering such outstanding service that your clients are then willing to tell others. That's a good thing.

The only drawback to using only word-of-mouth to attract clients is that it can be very limiting in the number of clients you can get and serve. So, while word-of-mouth marketing is an excellent strategy, it is not the only

Most popular sections in a newsletter

Industry news – write solid, condensed summaries of the happenings in your industry, but be careful. Don't fill your articles with jargon that only insiders can appreciate.

Remember you are writing for customers and prospects. Educate them but don't bore them to death.

Inside information –

Everyone likes to feel like they're "in" on something special so be sure to include insider tips on what's happening either in your company or around your industry. And make special offers just for your newsletter readers.

Honest, hard-hitting editorials –

avoid those horrible "letters from the president" articles which only tend to bore the reader. Good editorials are direct interpretations of what's happening in your industry. Editorials are a great opportunity to show your "human" side.

Cartoons, humor or inspiration –

people will remember a message better when injected with a little humor, so give your readers a good laugh or throw in some tips for success.

People – they're really what it's all about aren't they?

Include news of interesting people in your industry, feature success stories about your clients, especially those clients you've helped get there! People love to see their names and pictures in print. Give them what they love!

strategy you should be using to get clients.

Perhaps hearing that word-of-mouth marketing is a strategy may have surprised you. Doesn't word-of-mouth marketing just happen? It can, of course, but having word-of-mouth as one of your planned action strategies can help increase the number of word-of-mouth referrals that you get.

One of the best strategies you can employ as a Soul Proprietor is to stop looking at your competitors as competitors – someone to outwit and beat, and start looking to them as referral partners.

If you've done your homework and you know exactly who your perfect client is, you'll recognize them immediately when they show up. On the other hand, when someone shows up who is less than a perfect fit for you, you'll recognize them, too.

If you've met a few other coaches or business people who are offering the same or similar services that you offer, and if you have a good understanding of what makes a client perfect for *them*, you can easily refer that person who is not a good fit for you to someone else who is a better fit. Everyone wins.

You win because you're seen as someone who is helpful and not greedy, as someone who wants the best for a client, even if you're not the one to deliver the service. The "competitor," your referral partner, wins because they get a client that is indeed a good fit for them, and of course, the client wins because he or she gets the service they need from the best person to deliver it to them. It's a win-win-win all the way around.

Most anyone can be a referral partner, even your current clients, and you'll certainly want to partner with other business people who offer complementary services to yours so that you can refer clients to each other.

I know a massage therapist who burns some delightfully fragranced candles while giving massages. She gets those candles from a candle store owner who provides them to her for free, in exchange for a mention to the client as to where they can get the candles for use at home. Over at the candle store, every time a sale is made, a flyer or a coupon goes in with the purchase promoting the services of the massage therapist. They both provide discount coupons and flyers for each other's services so they have a tangible reminder to give to each of their clients, and they share in the expense of having the coupons and flyers made.

Again, it's a win-win-win situation for all concerned, because not only do the businesses each get a client, but the clients are satisfied, too, because they get what they want as well.

Give some thought to potential referral partners you might like to work with. Come up with a plan as to how each of you will win in the process, and then approach them. You'll be surprised at how much new business can come your way with several referral partners.

Another aspect of good word-of-mouth marketing is to ask your satisfied clients to refer you to others. You see this a lot in service industries like accounting, insurance, and real estate. But a lot of Soul Proprietors seem not to be comfortable in asking for referrals.

“Obviously everyone wants to be successful, but I want to be looked back on as being very innovative, very trusted and ethical and ultimately making a big difference in the world.”

– Sergey Brin

The first rule you must remember is that you can't ask for a referral before you've delivered your service. If you're a coach, it is only after you've been coaching a client for a while, and only after they've made it clear to you that they are delighted with your service, that you will want to approach them about giving you a referral to others.

Too often we make a sale and then ask for a referral on the spot. Insurance people are notorious for this strategy. But until a client experiences your service, they have no real basis for referring you to others. And besides, they won't yet really know who your perfect client is and may refer someone to you that is an inappropriate match for you.

Another key in seeking out word-of-mouth referrals is in consistently delivering outstanding service each and every time you interact with your clients. Do what you say will. Fulfill all your promises, no matter what, and if problems ever do come up, fix them quickly and efficiently so that you and the client come out on the other end looking and feeling good.

Your consistently produced eZine and newsletter can go a long way to educating your clients about the kind of clients – your perfect client – that you serve the best. You can also tell them about the qualities you want in a client.

When you are ready to ask for a referral don't just say, "Hey, if you know anybody who needs a coach, send them my way, please." The person you're asking, at that time, may have no clue who they can tell about you, even if they want to.

Be specific when you ask. Knowing who your perfect client is makes this easier. If you were a professional organizer, you might say something like, "Marsha, who are some women you know between the ages of 25 and 35 that have young children at home who would love to get their houses uncluttered in time for the holidays?"

See how this zeroes right in on the kind of client you want? The person hearing this type of question may be able to think immediately of a half dozen of their friends or family members who would enjoy having their houses cleaned up and organized in time for Thanksgiving.

And remember, anytime you ask for a referral you are not only putting your reputation on the line, but the reputation of the person you're asking for the referral from. We all want to be liked and respected by our friends, family and colleagues and we never want to steer them wrong or cause them to spend money on something they are unhappy with.

The person you've just asked for a referral from must be 100% confident that you'll deliver what you promise, that you won't make a pest out of yourself, that you won't try to sell something that their friend does not want, and a whole host of other objections they might think of. Ultimately, they don't want to take a chance on losing a friendship over something that YOU might do or not do.

A tame example of this is when you go to a restaurant and you love the food and love the service and tell all your friends. Someone that you've told about your experience then goes to that restaurant, and they hate the food and have terrible service. Chances are you won't lose their friendship because of

Learn more about creating your own "word-of-mouth" from the book **Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking** by Andy Sernovitz.

that experience, but they may be leery of ever asking you for restaurant recommendations in the future. The same can happen with your business.

Is it okay to offer something in exchange for referrals? Sure it is. My dentist gives me a couple of free movie tickets when I give him a referral who comes in and has work done. I love my dentist and his staff, so it is easy for me to give a referral. And the bonus for me is that I get to go to the movies for free. (Another win-win-win situation.)

You may offer a free coaching session in exchange for any client that brings you 3 new clients who also start working with you. You might send a bouquet of flowers or a box of candy (I love *See's Candy*) to someone who sends you a new client.

No matter what you do, a handwritten thank-you note is to a client always in order. And sometimes that's all the thanks someone needs to give you a referral.

So, surprisingly, there is a lot of risk involved in asking for – and getting – a referral. Be absolutely sure that you're ready for a referral when you decide to ask, and do everything you can to minimize the risk to the person giving you the referral. Everyone wins when you do.

Networking

When was the last time you went to a networking event – a meeting, a chamber open house or a trade show – and came away with some good leads for doing future business with some of the people you met? Most Soul Proprietors tell me they'd rather have a root canal than go to a networking event. Does that sound like you?

The big mistake many of us make is that we go to these events without a plan for what we want to accomplish while we're there. It isn't enough to show up thinking that you're not leaving until you get five business cards in your hands.

Again, this is just one more reason why it is so important to know who your perfect client is and to have a powerful attraction statement planned in advance. If you've not figured this out yet, go back and re-read those sections of this guidebook and do the work.

Know that at networking events, everyone is there for the same reason – to get more business. Those that are successful in that mission have a plan beforehand.

Go with the intention of meeting and talking with as many people as you can. The goal here is not to get a business card from everybody, but rather for them to make a connection with you and for you to get business cards from the people there who are the best fit for you – your perfect client – or to meet the people who know other people who are a good fit for you.

Since everyone is there for the same reason, there is no reason to be shy about approaching people, introducing yourself, and shaking their hand. First, be interested in them. Ask them about themselves. Ask them

Attract more clients with referrals

- Know who your perfect client is so that you can describe to anyone who is most likely to benefit from the services you offer.
- Make a list of all the people you know who might give you a referral and why they would be inclined to do so.
- When you mail out eZines and newsletters, always ask your readers to share (forward on) the eZine to people they think might also be interested in what you offer.
- When someone gives you a referral, be sure to send a handwritten thank-you note or call to say thanks.
- Follow up on every referral given to you, even if you think the referral might not be a good match for you.
- Develop "referral partnerships" with other, complementary businesses so you can share and exchange leads.
- Reciprocate as often as you can by giving referrals to those who give you referrals.
- Join a business networking group in your area like BNI. Learn more at www.bni.com.

what they do. You can learn a lot by listening, and you may realize from that conversation alone that they are not a good fit for you.

They will almost surely ask you what you do. You can say as little or as much as you need – using your powerful attraction statement as your basis – depending on what you learned in the conversation earlier. But it is best to not make an assumption too soon, because this person, upon hearing what you do, may know someone who needs your problem-solving skills, even if they themselves don't.

At that point it is appropriate to ask for and exchange business cards.

Stay to the end of the event, offer to help clean up, and get to know the event organizers. Better yet, you might even call ahead of time and offer to help in some way. It is a great way to get noticed, not only by the event organizer, but by being a part of the “team” you can get to know a lot more people simply because you are more visible.

Many Soul Proprietors make the mistake of going to the wrong networking events. A meeting of coaches might not be the best use of your time if you're looking for coaching clients; but on the other hand, it might be perfect if you're looking for referral partners.

The number one key in determining which events you should attend is the nature of the other people who will attend the event. You can learn this by calling the event organizer ahead of time and talking to someone about what and whom to expect at the event. Let the organizer convince you to come. If they can't, you'll know that that event is not right for you.

Know why you want to attend an event. Are you wanting to find new business? Are you just wanting to let people know who you are and that you're available? Do you want to meet someone specific who is going to be there? Do you want to meet someone who knows someone else that you really want to meet? Will they be at that event?

Another networking event mistake that Soul Proprietors make is to take a stack of brochures and leave them on the table with a lot of other brochures. This may be fine in some instances, and there is nothing really wrong in doing so, but you might want to use your brochure – or better yet, copies of your special report – as leverage for making follow-up contact with people who are your perfect clients, or at least with those who you think are your perfect clients. Most of those brochures left on a display table will probably wind up in the trash.

When you meet someone who is a good prospect for you, tell them about your special report or brochure and ask if you can send it to them later. You can get their contact information and either mail it in the regular mail (the best way in my book) or email it to them. With their business card in hand, you can make a phone call later on to ask if they received the item and to answer any questions they might have. You can then determine if they are worth pursuing as a client.

With a clear plan in mind before the event, every networking event can be time well spent.

*“To be successful,
you have to be
able to relate to
people; they have
to be satisfied
with your
personality to
be able to do
business with
you and to build
a relationship
with mutual
trust.”*

– George Ross

Public Speaking

Besides writing articles, the one thing that seems to put fear – or rather, *terror* – in the hearts of Soul Proprietors is the idea of making a public address. But there is no better way to present yourself as the most credible and qualified person in your field than by making a speech or giving a presentation.

I learned a long time ago from Dale Carnegie that the secret to effective, easy and fearless public speaking is to know what you're talking about. You know your business, you're passionate about it, and you believe strongly in what you have to offer, so making a speech should be easy for you. Simply talk about what you know.

The big fear here, of course, is not in your ability to give a good speech; the big fear lies is that you might look foolish. That fear holds more people back than any other. But again, if you know what you're talking about, you'll never look foolish.

Just be sure that you've chosen a subject that is right for that particular audience. If no one in the audience has an interest in what you are selling or what you do, then you shouldn't be speaking to them in the first place. So always make sure you are right for the event.

Being a speaker always lends you the most credibility. Why else would you be up there talking if you weren't an expert? People respect that and will want to get to know you. Speaking is a great way to connect with a lot of prospects all at once.

Teach a Teleclass

Another great speaking venue for Soul Proprietors is through the medium of teleclasses. Put the word out that you're talking about a certain subject, get yourself a conference call bridge line (many services are available for free), notify the people you know that you are presenting this class, and use this opportunity to teach.

Just like adding a bio to the end of an article, the teleclass is a great way for people to get to know you better, connect with you, learn some valuable information, and in the process, learn that you can help them solve their problems and that you're the best one to do just that.

The big benefit of a teleclass is that neither you nor the participants have to dress up nor travel anywhere to attend. They simply pick up the phone, dial a number, and they're there! My teleclass participants have no idea how many classes I've taught in just my underwear or while sitting under a shady tree.

It's important, though, that you make a good impression on your students when teaching a teleclass. This is an area that it's best not to wing it. There are a number of programs available that will train you how to be a great teleleader.

Teaching a teleclass is different from being in front of a room of people that can see you and it will benefit not just you but your participants as well

Some resources for becoming a better speaker

- toastmasters.org
- speakingwithoutfear.com
- dalecarnegie.com
- speakermatch.com
- fripp.com

Some resources for becoming a better teleclass leader

- teleclassinternational.com
- planetteleclass.com
- passionforbusiness.com
- coachville.com
- teleseminarleadingsecrets.com

if learn the various techniques for teaching a creating a teleclass, teaching it, and reaping the profits from it. See the sidebar on the previous page for some suggested learning experiences.

Hold a Live Workshop or Seminar

Another version of public speaking is to offer live workshops or seminars, where you do the speaking and teaching. Again, this is an excellent way to expose a lot of people to your services and help them in the process. Many clients may come to you from these experiences.

If you don't yet possess the confidence to get up and speak in front of a crowd, there are many ways to gain that confidence. *Toastmasters* comes to mind.

Toastmasters has helped a lot of people overcome their reluctance to speak publicly, because they offer not only a platform for honing your speaking skills, but through kind and honest feedback they help you become the speaker you want to be. In addition, you may come away with new clients just from participating in a *Toastmaster's* group.

The next time a group asks you to be the presenting speaker, first find out if the group is made up of the kind of people who would be interested in your services and, if so, jump at the chance to talk.

One last note: remember that everyone in your audience is on your side, and they want you to do well. They'll be rooting for you all the way, and they'll be eager to hear what you have to say. Audiences are surprisingly forgiving, unless they're bored, or if they feel like they were deceived about the subject they were expecting to hear. So even if you flub a few lines or stammer a bit, they're still going to be rooting for you. They've probably been in your shoes more than once and will lend an empathetic ear.

Send a Handwritten Thank-You Note

Common courtesy and good etiquette seem to have gone out the window, not only in our personal lives but in our business transactions as well. Go to any retail establishment or to a fast food joint and you'll know what I mean. Getting a simple "thank you" these days is becoming more and more rare.

Anytime you have a transaction with someone – whether they buy from you or not – a handwritten thank-you note from you is warranted. Yes, handwritten. Folks are not used to receiving handwritten mail, and they will eagerly open it up to see what it is.

Write sincerely, thanking them for the time spent with you. Thank them when they buy something. Thank them when they refer someone to you. The opportunities for sending thank-you notes are endless.

I keep a supply of nicely printed fold-over notes and envelopes that I have custom printed with my name printed nicely on the front. Whenever I make a transaction with someone, I follow it up with a handwritten thank you on one of those cards.

“When you undervalue who you are, the world will undervalue what you do and vice versa”

– Suze Orman

Marty's Marketing QuickTip

■ Call attention to your business letters by handwriting a "P.S."

It's often the first element that readers notice (and may be the only thing they read). And by writing it yourself — even if the rest of the letter is typed — you make the point stand out even more.

When you write a thank-you note, make it just that. A thank-you note. Not a sales pitch. Not an invite to call you later. It's okay to include your business card when you mail it off, but make no mention that the card is there.

Simply say "thank you."

You'll have lots of opportunity for other follow-up marketing and sales messages later, but don't include any of these in your thank-you note.

You may be surprised when you get a phone call saying "thank you for the thank-you note" because getting one is so rare. Be that exception, and you'll be more memorable in the mind of your prospect.

Create a New Client Kit

One of your many marketing goals should be to build a community of people around your business. A community of people look after one another and generally have a lot in common, and members of a community want to feel like they are a part of that community – members of the team, so to speak.

Welcome your new clients in style, make them feel special, and include them as part of your "team" by sending them a "new client welcome kit" whenever they come on board to do business with you.

Once you've put your "new client welcome kit" together, you can also send it to your existing clients so they feel like they are being included, too. Anytime you create something new to offer to new clients, you should consider including your existing clients in the promotion as well.

If you offer a discount to entice new clients to join you, and its something you've never done before, consider also offering the same discount to your existing clients, perhaps for a limited amount of time. Or you may consider offering the discount to your existing clients a few weeks or days before making the offer to entice new clients.

What do you include in a "new client welcome kit"?

First, have some nice pocket folders made, customized with your business name and logo on the front. The folders can be a bit on the expensive side, especially in smaller quantities, so do some research to find the best buy and the best quality for the money.

You can also buy some very nice plain pocket folders at larger office supply stores, and this might be the best way for you to go until you can afford to buy custom folders in larger quantities. Customized is always the best route to go, but I understand that economics plays a role in this, too. The key to remember is that whatever folder you use must look and feel nice. Don't buy the 29 cent school folders at the drug store!

Inside, on your stationery customized with your name and logo, include a personally signed letter from you welcoming the client; let them know what they can expect from you as you work together.

Include any forms that the client may need to complete, or if contracts have been signed, be sure to put copies of the contracts or other completed forms in the folder.

Former Nordstrom executive and author of *Fabled Service* (Jossey-Bass, 1995) Betsey Sanders offers up these eye-openers about customer complaints:

- Only 4% of unhappy customers complain, the rest leave angry.
- For every customer complaint you hear, there are 26 you don't hear.
- If you resolve a complaint quickly, 96% of customers will come back.
- The average disgruntled customer tells nine other people. 13% tell more than 20 others.

If you're a coach, you might include a list of instructions of how to work with you. No matter what business you're in, providing a list of instructions or expectations – what you will do for the client and what you expect them to do in return – is a good way to reinforce key points the client should know about working with you.

You might consider making a checklist, or including a sheet with important information on it. A coaching checklist might include some of these items:

The days and times for your appointments

The phone number the client must call

Instructions for what to do if they don't reach you

Your client's coaching goals

Instructions for preparing for the coaching call, such as having an agenda ready, relaxing before the call, having some water or some other beverage handy for the call, tissues in the case of tears, and other things that they client might need to remember for each call.

You can customize these types of checklists and forms specifically for your business or practice.

Additionally, if you have one, include a brochure or two, and mention in your welcome letter that the extra brochure is included for them to pass along to someone else who might be interested in what you're offering. Include your business card and any other premium items you want to include.

Examples of some premiums that clients generally find useful:

Pens, Pencils, Highlighters customized with your name and logo and contact info

Note pads customized with your name and logo and contact info

Sticky-note pads customized with your name and logo and contact info

Key chains customized with your name and logo and contact info

Calculators customized with your name and logo and contact info

Rulers customized with your name and logo and contact info

Mouse pads customized with your name and logo and contact info

Refrigerator Magnet customized with your name and logo and contact info

Note that all the items mentioned should be “customized with your name and logo and contact info.” This is important because these items serve as a continual reminder of your good will, and they make it easy to always find your contact information, should they want to pass it along to someone else or to call you themselves.

You can include a sheet that has testimonials from satisfied clients. These testimonials that you've gathered will serve as a reminder and reas-

“Sometimes the situation is only a problem because it is looked at in a certain way. Looked at in another way, the right course action may be so obvious that the problem no longer exists.”

– Edward de Bono

insurance to the new client that they've made the right decision in choosing to work with you.

I've heard that car companies often run car ads on TV, not so much to sell the features of their cars, but to reassure people who have already bought the car model that they made the right choice. Your testimonial page can serve the same function in the "new client welcome kit."

Be sure that all items in your kit have your name and contact info on them. Every piece of paper included should have this info on it somewhere, even if in a small line of type at the top or bottom of the page.

I've also seen Soul Proprietors create a customized file folder with their name or tag line on the tab, also filled with the items mentioned. The beauty of a file folder is that it will fit nicely in your client's file drawer, making it easy for them to file and to remember where they can find all of your information as it relates to working with you.

You can also take this one step further and use this as an opportunity to give your new client a welcome gift, such as a customized coffee mug or a t-shirt. They'll think of you every time they use it or wear it.

Portfolio, Testimonials and Samples

If you create a product such as art or graphic design, or have some other tangible evidence of the work you do, you must have a portfolio that showcases your work so that prospects can see what you're capable of doing.

The portfolio can be a physical "bag" or notebook that you carry with you, or you can create a portfolio right on the web. Either way showcases your talent.

For those in a purely service business, where there is no tangible physical evidence to show off, testimonials from satisfied clients will serve the same purpose.

Many Soul Proprietors are afraid to ask for testimonials from their clients, but most clients who like you and are satisfied with your work – and you'll know who those are – will be most happy to provide a testimonial and will be pleased that you would ask.

Clients often have good intentions of writing a testimonial but never get around to it. You can always offer to write their testimonial for them, based on things they've told you, and then show it to them to get their approval so you're sure that this is what they would want to say about you. Don't be shy about doing this.

Some Soul Proprietors set up special phone lines with recordings to capture spoken testimonials after inviting clients to call in and do so. You can then transcribe the testimonial for use in printed pieces and on the web, or you can post the recordings on the web so prospects can hear the actual words in the client's voice.

Client testimonials are one of the best ways to promote yourself because it is always more believable when others say nice things about us than us having to say it ourselves.

How to develop strong client relationships

- Relationships take time to cultivate so you must be committed to staying with your efforts for the long-term.
- It's easier to build a relationship with clients when you know that they are the perfect client for you and your business.
- Schedule time to make phone calls to get to know your clients better.
- Stay in touch for as long as they'll allow you to do so with eZines, newsletters, and other activities.
- Spend most of your time with a client listening and trying to understand their point of view and spend less time "selling."
- Enjoy your clients as people and don't view them simply as part of your job or a "dollar sign."
- Be interested in their personal lives, their hobbies and other interests outside of the work you do for them.
- Say "thank you" often and let them know regularly how much you appreciate having them as clients.

Just like Mrs. Fields passed out cookie samples – and still does – to entice people into her cookie stores, you can also provide samples to prospective clients in the form of sample sessions and teleclasses. Think about what you do and figure out a way to sample it out to others. Besides providing sample sessions, you can also sample with articles that you write, blogs that you post, and newsletters that you publish. The idea, of course, is to let people get a glimpse of what you can do for them.

It worked for Mrs. Fields; it will work for you. What is your “cookie”?

Give Stuff Away

People love free gifts. Go to any trade show and you’ll see people walking around with bags and bags full of materials and trinkets and every manner of giveaway you can think of. They grab up all of this stuff without ever thinking about how they’re going to get it all on an airplane and get it home.

But this is a testament to the fact that people LOVE free stuff.

The key to giving stuff away is to make sure that every item you give away has your name and logo – your brand – on it.

Anytime you can give items away that tie into some promotion that you are doing, it gives the gift more meaning and will have more of a lasting impact.

Whenever I teach a live workshop or a seminar, I provide the attendees with several gift items, all something useful that they can use while they are participating in the workshop and then can take back home or back to their office and continue to use. You never know how many other people will get to see your name on those items, and therefore there is always the potential for new business coming from them.

Here’s what I give away at a live workshop event, bearing in mind that all items bear my logo and my name and my contact info:

A binder/folder that includes a pad of lined paper that also bears my customization. (I have these pads custom printed and drilled with holes so they can take notes and then easily put them into a 3-ring binder later. Depending on the type of workshop, I might even include the 3-ring binder.)

A pen AND a pencil for use in taking notes. I prefer note taking with a pencil. Others like a pen, so I give them both.

A package of M&M’s candies that contain my name imprinted on each one and in my custom company colors. This alone provides a memorable snack.

There are all kinds of promotional items that are available (see the chart to the right). And there are many distributors of these products. Find someone, preferably locally, that you can work closely with. Tell them what kind of promotions you want to do, and they can help you find unique and different items to give away.

The tried and true – coffee mugs and t-shirts being the most popular –

*“You must give
some time to
your fellow men.
Even if it’s a
little thing, do
something for
others –
something for
which you get
no pay but the
privilege of
doing it.”*

*– Albert
Schweitzer*

are always welcomed too, but anytime you can do something a little differently, you get a leg up in the memorability department, and that's what it's all about, being unforgettable in the eyes of your prospects.

Giving things away also has the effect of creating the thought in the minds of your prospects that they have an obligation to buy from you since you were kind enough to give them something.

You can get the same effect on-line by giving away other things of value, such as special reports, insider information, and client-only discounts. Most of these things cost you nothing but the time to write them or put them together.

Just remember that you can never give too much away. Surprisingly, but true, you can give away a whole program in increments through an email course, and still have the reader buy the same information when repackaged into an eBook or a book.

The benefit of giving stuff away that has real value – even if it is simply your words of wisdom – is that it creates the idea in the mind of your prospects that if you are willing to GIVE AWAY this really good stuff, what they have to pay for to get from you will really be worth it. It's amazing how that works.

There are certain things that people have a hard time throwing away, such as refrigerator magnets and CDs. Provide your business card on a magnet and it surely will wind up on the front of someone's refrigerator. You can put just about anything on a magnet; just be sure your contact info is there, too.

Record your special report – read in your voice – or a recent teleclass you've given on a CD. Print an attractive label on it with your contact info, of course, and give those away. Whether anyone ever listens to the contents or not is a moot point, because they won't throw it away, and every time they move it, they'll see your name and contact info and remember your thoughtfulness in giving it to them in the first place.

Another way of giving away is to make donations to charitable organizations in the name of your clients. You might even want to choose a charity and then let all prospects and clients know that you'll donate \$1 (or any amount you choose) from the sale of your products and services.

Find something you can afford and give it away. You'll reap the rewards for a long time to come.

Ask the Right Questions to Make the Sale

You've been to a networking event and met a few folks and passed out your card. You've been marketing diligently by sending out your eZines and newsletters and postcards. You've given away pens and pencils and coffee mugs. You've written articles and had them published all over the net and in your local paper and your industry's trade magazines. Your phone message includes a neat marketing offer. Your website is getting lots of hits. Your blog is gathering comments from folks from all over the world. You have a signature in every email you send. You've been asking for referrals.

“The spirit in which a thing is given determines that in which the debt is acknowledged; it's the intention, not the face-value of the gift, that is weighed.”

*– Seneca
5BC–65BC*

And, you're beginning to wonder if all this marketing work is ever going to start to pay off.

Then the phone rings. It's someone wanting to know more about your business who is considering hiring you. They ask you how much you charge, and suddenly you freeze up; you have no idea what to say.

"How much do you charge?"

It is very common for prospects to call you on the phone after having read your brochure, explored your website, and talked to all of their friends. At that point, they've likely made a decision to work with you or they wouldn't have called, but the only obstacle standing in their way is needing to know how much you charge.

When asked how much they charge, many Soul Proprietors stammer around and hem and haw. They're afraid that if they quote the wrong price they'll lose the sale. They're equally afraid if they quote too low that they'll leave "too much on the table," as salespeople tend to say. So it creates quite a dilemma.

But, at this point, even when the prospect asks what you charge, this is not the appropriate time to talk price – yet.

First, you want to know for sure that this client is right for you and that you are right for them. Again, this is where it is so important to have a clear idea about your perfect client and what you are looking for. So, ask them to tell you about their situation first.

Listen carefully as this is your chance to determine if you believe that you can really help this client or not. When you are comfortable that you understand their situation, then you can explain to them how you work – how you would go about working with them – and what you would expect from them if you take them on as a client.

Only then is it safe to discuss what you charge. And state what you charge proudly. No hemming and hawing. You want to give the impression that you are worth every penny that you're asking for – and you are!

The day that I became very matter of fact about what I charge without apology and without stammering and stuttering was the day that I started making more money. You'll find that to be true for you.

Another pricing strategy that you'll find helpful is to have different packages at different price points. Package A costs X amount of dollars and includes X services. Package B costs Y amount of dollars and includes fewer services for less money and so on. At a minimum, I would suggest that you have at least three packages to offer. Be sure that you are clear that your most expensive package is actually the best value (make sure that it is), then ask which package would work best for them.

This is a Yes-Yes offer, or in the case of three packages, a YES-YES-YES offer. The idea is that you give them two or three choices, any one of which they can say yes to. They can still say "no" but your chances of getting a new client to say "yes" to one of your offers, at this point, goes way up.

Help clients to pay you

Make it easy for clients to pay you for your services:

- Accept all credit cards, not just Visa and Mastercard. If you work with business clients you must accept American Express. Decide if Discover is worth accepting after you've tracked which credit cards your clients use most.
- State firmly what your fraud and/or chargeback policy is.
- Accept checks and debit cards.
- Avoid having the expense of a merchant account by using third-party pay merchants like PayPal, 2COM, and Clickbank.
- State your refund policy.
- If you offer a guarantee, state it clearly and prominently to minimize risk to potential clients.
- Is layaway or deferred payment an option for your business? How about extended payments over time?
- Offer discounts if clients are willing to pay for multiple services up-front.
- Offer gift certificates or gift cards.

You can also ask, “When would you like to get started?” This will give them the opportunity to make a decision.

If they tell you they need to think about it, ask them what you can do to help them make a decision. Tell them you are available for answering further questions. If you have clients that are comfortable in giving you referrals, you might also ask those clients if they’d be willing to talk with people who might be on the fence about hiring you.

Now, some Soul Proprietors are going to think that even these questions are being too pushy. The truth of the matter is that you sometimes have to help move along a prospect to make a decision. And remember, you are not selling something to someone who doesn’t want your services. People will only buy what they want and what they believe will solve their problems. Remove all the doubt that they might have and you’ll find it easy to make the “sale.”

Calling to ask about price is not the only reason why people will call you. You may want to sit down and think of the answers to questions you’d like to get from prospective clients and be prepared to bring up those questions when they call you. Have a selling script in front of you so that you remember everything you either want to say or to ask.

Like a good boy scout, be prepared for when your phone rings. It WILL ring when you’ve put a marketing campaign into place and have started working it. Being confident in your discussions with prospects will go a long way to, not only make you feel more comfortable, but to instill a level of confidence in the prospect that you are the best one to solve their problems.

Project Planning

David Allen, the time management guru, teaches that one of the best things you can do for yourself is to get all those ideas that are cluttering up your brain and fighting for space in your head out of there and onto a piece of paper – or into a computer file.

He calls this a “brain dump,” and I’ve found that doing this exercise is quite liberating. Take a couple of hours and just start writing down everything that is in your brain and on your mind. Don’t censor yourself. Unload every idea as it comes to you onto your paper. Don’t worry right now about whether you can actually do something or not. Don’t try to figure out how you would do it. Just write it down.

Once your brain is clear of all that accumulated stuff, you can start thinking of new ideas. The difference now is that you will write these ideas down as you think of them, always leaving your brain free to think of more things. And you have all those ideas down on paper so you can do something with them if you want.

I keep a handful of “project sheets” on hand at all times so that, as I have ideas for things I want to do – especially marketing ideas, I can write them down on a project sheet. The idea is out of my brain, and I don’t have to worry about forgetting it. Later on, I can come back and decide if I want to implement that idea, and if I do, then I can break it down into the

“You can’t overestimate the need to plan and prepare. In most of the mistakes I’ve made, there has been this common theme of inadequate planning beforehand. You really can’t over-prepare in business.”

– Chris Corrigan

steps required to accomplish it. You can print out project sheets like the ones I use from the appendix on page 70 in the back of this guidebook.

I'm a paper kind of guy, but you might prefer to keep track of projects in your computer. You can easily create a project "form" or template in Word or some other word processing program. The key, of course, is to capture the idea while it is fresh in your mind so you can evaluate it later.

At the beginning of a new week, I like to page through my project sheets to see if there is something that I'd like to work on that week. Sometimes, if I find I have extra time on my hands for some reason, I'll go through my project sheets and see if there is something in there that I can give my immediate attention.

Another way to manage projects is to use the monthly project planner form you'll find in the appendix on page 72. This is based on the idea that most months have four weeks. Write down the various projects you'd like to do each week of the month. If you publish a weekly eZine, write it down for each of the four weeks.

This is a great form to use for writing down the ideas you have for marketing projects that you want to accomplish at certain times of the year. You can write down the projects on this monthly form, then transfer each project to a project sheet where you can then figure out all the steps necessary to get the project done. Remember that you may need to get printing estimates or to hire outside help. Knowing what projects you want to accomplish and all the steps involved helps you to get the projects accomplished.

The Marketing Plan

Having a marketing plan – in writing – that encompasses the whole year will give you the opportunity to really think about what you'd like to accomplish with your marketing and the strategies you'll need to employ to accomplish your goals, and it gives you a guide to follow so that you can get the work done when the time comes without having to think about it.

Planning in advance makes your marketing efforts virtually stress-free. You can adjust your plan as needed, and you can plan for the amount of money you'll need for the various projects and campaigns. You won't forget things. You can get a head start on campaigns so you can get them done on time. You can tie your marketing efforts into various events and holidays throughout the year, and you can assign projects to others if needed.

Above all else, having a plan gives you peace of mind, the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your marketing will get done which will ensure a steady stream of business. You'll never be in panic mode for getting clients when the rent comes due because you've been doing the marketing work all along.

Knowing how much money you're going to need – unfortunately most marketing is not free, even online – allows you to set aside the funds you need without causing stress to the bank account or making your accountant pull out her hair. And when that salesman from the *Pennysaver* comes knocking on your door, all you have to do is check your marketing budget to see

Tips for creating your marketing plan

- Lay your foundation and do your homework first.
- Know exactly whom your perfect client is.
- What is the purpose of planning? What do you want to accomplish by having a plan?
- Be honest about your opportunities.
- Be honest about your shortcomings. What obstacles are likely to get in the way of you achieving your goals?
- Your plan does not have to be long to be effective. Include the essentials:
 - Choose a strategy.
 - How will you implement this strategy?
 - How much time does it take?
 - How much does it cost?
 - Who is responsible?
 - Deadlines.
 - Measure the results.
- At least once a month, review your plan and evaluate the success or failure of your efforts and make a new plan based on the trends and results you observe.
- Be flexible and open to marketing opportunities but make educated decisions.

if you can afford to run an ad. Better yet, you won't be making uninformed, snap decisions – and wasting your marketing money on resources that aren't right for you like the *Pennysaver* – if you have a plan in place.

Now, this isn't to say that your plans might not change throughout the year. You will always want to take advantage of marketing opportunities that are truly right for you and within your budget. You may have planned to publish an additional newsletter in March but realize you might do better to use that money for a new trade show that will attract your perfect customers. With a plan, you'll always have the freedom to change your mind and do what's best for you at the time. Without the plan, you're likely to waste a lot of money and a lot of time.

Soul Proprietors tend to not like the planning process – they seem to be afraid that it is going to box them in, or that it has to be perfect – and this is a big mistake, because planning does not have to be hard, nor does it have to take a long time or restrict you.

Creating a marketing plan is as simple as writing down the marketing activities (strategies and methods) that you want to do in a given month or week, figure out approximate costs for doing each one and who's responsible for doing it, and setting a target date for completion.

Say in the month of March you plan to attend the chamber mixer on the 17th, your eZine will go out once a week on Mondays, and you plan to send out a postcard showing your April specials.

So, using the Monthly Marketing Calendar in the appendix on page 71 of this guidebook, print out the page, write March at the top, and then list all the things you are planning to do, how much they will cost, who's going to do them, and by when. It's really about that simple.

Another big mistake that Soul Proprietors make when making a marketing plan is that they plan to do too much. It might be great to do 16 different marketing activities each month, but the reality for most is that doing no more than three activities is about all that most of us can handle because of everything else we have to do – like, serve our clients!

So choose the two or three top marketing activities that you LIKE to do, that you can afford to do, and that will yield the most revenue for you. Remember, the reason we market is to attract clients, but at some point we have to start earning money from those efforts.

So if you really love going to networking events, but they never yield any clients or any revenue, then you might want to use that time more productively on some marketing activity that will bring in the dollars and cents, such as a postcard mailing or a newsletter or an eZine.

You'll notice on the Monthly Marketing form that the last column has space for writing in the results you get from that marketing activity. After you've completed a marketing activity, you must write down what happened, especially the revenue gained or new clients that resulted directly from that activity. You'll refer back to that information later to decide whether that was a good campaign for you or not. This also gives you the opportunity to analyze why it was good or not.

“You must master your time rather than becoming a slave to the constant flow of events and demands on your time. And you must organize your life to achieve balance, harmony, and inner peace.”

– Brian Tracy

So something else you'll need to think about is how you are going to measure your results so that you'll know whether or not it pays to continue to utilize each of your marketing activities.

If you're mailing a postcard, for instance, you can easily track your results by asking recipients to bring the card with them when they visit you, or more likely, since clients might not come to a physical place to do business with you, you may simply ask them to mention a certain code when they call, or you could send them to a specific landing page on your website and then measure the number of hits that come in, or make a specific offer which is exclusive to that postcard mailing, and you'll know how many calls or orders you get based on that.

Those ideas mentioned in the previous paragraph will generally work for just about any marketing activity you pursue. Certainly if you go to a networking event you'll know how many contacts you make and whether those contacts translate into business for you.

Your eZine or newsletter may be harder to track unless you are specifically asking for certain actions or if you have offers that you can track the response to. Every eZine should contain clickable links that you can track through your emailing program such as *Aweber*. You'll begin to get some idea of what your readers are doing and where they go on your site by watching those numbers. Offering something through your eZine – a free report or something to buy, such as an eBook or a teleclass – is also a good measure of your marketing efforts.

The key is to start paying attention. Notice where people are going, notice what they are looking at, and notice what they are buying. As you become aware of trends, you'll be able to make more intelligent decisions throughout the year about your marketing efforts and can then make adjustments to your plans as you go along.

Another key element of your marketing plan is knowing how much things are going to cost. Unfortunately, not all marketing is free. I'm a big advocate of doing as much low cost and no cost marketing as you can, but there comes a time when you need to pay for some things, and having the money on hand when that time comes allows you to follow through with your plan without a hitch. Use the Monthly Goal Planning form on page 73 in the appendix of this guidebook to get an idea of costs you can expect.

Estimating and budgeting the costs involved for your chosen marketing activities may frighten you a bit. How are you really going to know in December what a project is going to cost in June? Truth is, you may need to make some adjustments in May or June based on a variety of factors, but you can still get a general idea of how much things are going to cost when making your plan. Better to have most of the money available for a project in June than to not have any money available at all.

Call your printer for estimates, or get online quotes, for anything that is going to be printed such as postcards, newsletters, catalogs, flyers and brochures. Talk to your graphic designer to find out how much they charge for various items such as a newsletter or a postcard design. Now is also a good time to ask the designer how much time they need to complete various projects. Figure out

Signs that you may have chosen the wrong marketing activities for you or your business

Here's how to know if you're a bad match for the marketing strategies you've chosen:

- Did you make a plan but now you don't want to look at it?
- Do you find that you're not doing your best work when working on your marketing activities?
- Are you continually making excuses for not getting your marketing activities done everyday?
- Do you feel out-of-sorts, cranky or exhausted after you've spent some time on your marketing?
- Are you easily distracted when trying to work on marketing activities?
- Is it possible that you could be unconsciously (or consciously) sabotaging your marketing efforts?

postage rates. Pay attention to the post office and, if rates change, you will need to adjust your budget figures. If you have to pay for dinner at the chamber mixer, how much will that cost? Do you need to figure in gas, or cab or bus fare? Sometimes your best guess is the only answer you can come up with. That's okay, plug in that number, and change it later if necessary.

Get a general idea about all the costs involved in each project while you are planning so that, if necessary, you can set aside funds each month so you have enough to cover all the costs when the project is ready to be done.

Bonus note: The price of color printing these days has come down dramatically. You can find lots of printers online that now offer some streamlined options for printing jobs that brings the cost way down. Since we all know that color sells, using color in your marketing materials and direct mail efforts makes a big difference in your image. Use color wherever you can.

And you're going to need to estimate how much time each activity will take. Something like a networking event is easy. You know you need to show up at 7pm on Wednesday night and it's all over in a couple of hours. But do you need a new brochure to take with you? Is your business card supply running low? Those things may add time to what just looks like a 2-hour networking event. But if you're paying attention, you can handle all of these things and be able to show up at your event with everything you need.

So, you've decided to mail a postcard to your list of 987 prospects at the end of March with an offer for a discount on several of your services. You know that the printing and shipping time for the postcard is going to be about 10 days total, and you figure the postal service will take about a week to deliver all the postcards. Wow! That's about three weeks time right there, and you've not yet thought about how much time your graphic designer will need to prepare the card itself, plus how much time is going to be needed for affixing the postage and addressing.

At this point in your thinking – which hopefully is being done while you're planning the first quarter or two of the next year in December – you may realize that this postcard mailing may need to be started sometime in February in order to make sure that the cards are in the hands of prospects by the time April rolls around.

If you hadn't taken the time to plan, it might be mid-March before you took a look at this and realized that there is not enough time to do this promotion for April. So then the project gets moved out to May or later, or maybe it never gets done at all. There goes all that potential extra revenue for April. And there goes your revenue projection for the month, because to make the numbers you want, you need those extra sales.

Are you beginning to see how important the planning process is? And how important it is to write these things down? In advance?

If you're not up for planning out a whole year – and you may just not have a clear enough picture to do so – at the minimum, make a plan for

Tips for measuring the effectiveness of your marketing activities

- Set measurable goals. Without goals, how will you know if you're succeeding or not?
- Use methods that allow you to collect the data you need. i.e. codes in coupons and mailers, special website landing pages, special links in emails, etc.
- Ask clients where they heard about you.
- Test every marketing effort before committing a lot of time and money to unproven activities.
- Check to be sure that the marketing activities are paying off. Are you making the amount of money that you want to make from each activity?

each quarter; measure, then make a plan for the next quarter; and so on, making your quarterly plans at least a month ahead of the start of the next quarter. If you wait until the last minute, you'll always be playing catch-up and may not make the wisest decisions. To make planning a year in advance easier, I've provided an annual marketing plan form that you'll find in the appendix of this guidebook that starts on page 74 (4 pages).

The time spent in planning will be repaid to you many times over throughout the year, and you'll see a marked increase in the number of clients you are serving, as well as the revenue increases that come as a result.

Planning also challenges you to grow. At the end of the year, you can happily look back on the marketing investment – not as an expense, but an *investment* – that you've made, and you'll realize that you've just had your best business year yet.

The next year will be even better, and the one after that will be better, too. Planning yields consistent growth. Year after year after year.

So, what's next?

It's time to take action. No more procrastinating about marketing.

It's time to make a plan and get busy.

If you've read through this ebook, it is now obvious that there are no mysteries about marketing. It should also be evident that it doesn't take a lot of money for marketing, and it doesn't require a great deal of creativity or ingenuity – something that many Soul Proprietors think they lack.

Marketing is really as simple as choosing a set of marketing activities that you enjoy doing and doing them over and over and over.

Consistency is the second key to marketing success. Keep marketing. Never stop. Plan something that you can do every day toward marketing your business.

Start with the basics as outlined in this ebook and grow from there.

Continually educate yourself about marketing. Join me at the *Soul Proprietor Success Center* where week after week you'll be able to discover everything you need to know about marketing, and you'll find the motivation and success skills to build the kind of business you were dreaming about when you first went out on your own.

Remember, you are your own best salesperson. Nobody else knows your business the way you do, and nobody else has the passion for it that you do. The success of your business – no matter how many employees you might one day have – lies solely on your shoulders.

And above all else, remember that life is supposed to be fun, and being in business can be a lot of fun.

So, go. Have some fun. Make some money. Make lots of people happy.

Marty Marsh

THE SUCCESSFUL SOUL PROPRIETOR

“I teach something I call The Law of Probabilities, which says that the more things you try, the more likely one of them will work. The more books you read, the more likely one of them will have an answer to a question that could solve the major problems of your life, make you wealthier, solve a health problem, whatever it might be.”

– Jack Canfield

Appendix

**How to Get the Word Out
About Who You Are and What
You Do: Essential Marketing
Tools for Soul Proprietors**

Soul Proprietor Daily Plan

I PROMISE THAT NO MATTER WHAT, I WILL GET THIS DONE TODAY:

OTHER GREAT THINGS TO DO TODAY:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

APPOINTMENTS FOR TODAY:

9:00 AM _____

9:30 AM _____

10:00 AM _____

10:30 AM _____

11:00 AM _____

11:30 AM _____

12:00 NOON _____

12:30 PM _____

PERSONAL TO DO'S/ERRANDS:

MARKETING TO DO TODAY:

1:00 PM _____

1:30 PM _____

2:00 PM _____

2:30 PM _____

3:00 PM _____

PERFORMANCE & IMPROVEMENT

What I will do today to improve my overall performance:

3:30 PM _____

4:00 PM _____

4:30 PM _____

5:00 PM _____

READING FOR TODAY:

WORK _____

WORK _____

FUN _____

TODAY'S INCOME:

_____ \$

_____ \$

_____ \$

6:00 PM _____

6:30 PM _____

7:00 PM _____

7:30 PM _____

DIET & EXERCISE PLAN:

TODAY'S EXPENSES:

_____ \$

_____ \$

_____ \$

CALLS TO MAKE:

JOURNAL

WHAT I WANT TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY

DELEGATE TO VA/OTHERS:

TODAY, I'M GRATEFUL FOR:

PROJECTS TO-DO

START
DATE

COMPLETION
DATE

Project Title: _____

Project Description: _____

Estimated time needed to complete: _____

Today's Date: _____

Location of information needed:

Others involved: _____

Where to file or send after completion:

Notes: _____

Project # _____

PROJECT STEPS

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Step 4: _____

Step 5: _____

Monthly Marketing Project Planner *for Month of* _____

	Marketing Activities	Assigned to	Results	Date Due	✓
Week of: _____					
Week of: _____	Marketing Activities	Assigned to	Results	Date Due	✓
Week of: _____	Marketing Activities	Assigned to	Results	Date Due	✓
Week of: _____	Marketing Activities	Assigned to	Results	Date Due	✓

Additional Notes / Future Ideas: _____

Annual Marketing Planner ■ 1st Quarter

Marketing Activities		Steps, Tactics & Tools	Due Date	Done
JANUARY	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
FEBRUARY	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
MARCH	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			

Annual Marketing Planner ■ 2nd Quarter

Marketing Activities		Steps, Tactics & Tools	Due Date	Done
APRIL	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
MAY	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
JUNE	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			

Annual Marketing Planner ■ 3rd Quarter

Marketing Activities		Steps, Tactics & Tools	Due Date	Done
JULY	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
AUGUST	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
SEPTEMBER	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			

Annual Project Planner ■ 4th Quarter

Project Name		Steps, Tactics & Tools	Due Date	Done
OCTOBER	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
NOVEMBER	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			
DECEMBER	WEEK 1			
	WEEK 2			
	WEEK 3			
	WEEK 4			

Newsletter & eZine Editorial Calendar

Newsletter Name: _____

Publication Month / Year: _____

Pub. Date:	Article Name / Title / Theme	Research / URLs / Other Info	Date Due
			✓
	Article Name / Title / Theme	Research / URLs / Other Info	Date Due
			✓
	Article Name / Title / Theme	Research / URLs / Other Info	Date Due
			✓
	Article Name / Title / Theme	Research / URLs / Other Info	Date Due
			✓

Additional Notes / Future Ideas: _____

Creative Enterprises **Marty Marsh**

**This is not the end, it is only the beginning.
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*“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness
is the key to success. If you love what you
are doing, you will be successful.”*

Albert Schweitzer

A SOUL PROPRIETOR GUIDEBOOK

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