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Success Is Straight In Front Of You

So why do you set your sights so high?

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Thank you, [Joseph Ratliff](#)

Message From The Author

Success has been *straight* in front of you all along. No, not *right* in front of you, but straight in front of you...

All you have to do is observe what everyone else is doing at “your level” in business, and do that just a little better.

And yes, success is that simple. Why?

Because most people are lazy. Most people won't do “that little extra” required to succeed in business (or in life for that matter).

But you're not “most” people, right?

Prove it to me by reading this collection of articles and acting on at least one piece of advice. Its action that sets in motion the habits required to do “that little extra”.

Enjoy the read.



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Look Straight In Front Of You... And You Can Be Successful In Whatever You Do...

Uh oh...I think I might have done it...

I can hear my email account going crazy.

“But Joe, aren’t we all taught to ‘mimic what ultra - successful people are doing’ to gain success ourselves?”

I am here to tell you that is not entirely true. As a matter of fact, you may be letting yourself down a little if you strive for such a high level right out of the gate...or even at your current level of success.

Instead...

Study what the competitors are doing at your level, **and do it better.**

What you will find is that when you truly make that a practice...you will start to “look straight in front of you” and find ways to continually improve yourself and your business at a rate that will blow you away.

Why?

You will continually see the competitor right in front of you that does things “just a little bit better than you do right now,” instead of the super - guru that already has passed that level up a long time ago.

When you repeat the process of “doing it a little better” a few times...then something magical starts to happen:

You “do it better” a lot faster!

You see, you start to experience many more times in a row when you can “out do” your competition in incremental steps, rather than shooting for the moon and trying to see success in huge chunks.

And when you reach the top of the mountain of success...you will be able to see all those others that you passed up along the way:

* Still trying to get their success in huge chunks...

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- * Failing over and over again, and...
- * Dropping their internet businesses eventually.

Does that mean there is never an exception? **Very few.**

And I hate seeing this happen.

So...you can take the following steps to ensure that you see a stream of small successes that will lead to the big one:

1. Evaluate what level you're at in terms of internet marketing success. It is critical that you really do an honest "check up from the neck up" here.
2. Do some research and find those that are on "the same level" as you, or close.
3. Find out what they are doing, how they market, what techniques they use, what help or mentorship they seek (very important).
4. And find ways to do it better.

But, do this today, please.

Do You Have A Can Of Tom Thumb In Your Cupboard?

I do.

What is a can of Tom Thumb?

Good thing you asked...

This is a can of pork and beans that I have had for a long time in my soup cupboard. The brand name is a generic one...Tom Thumb.

Alright...so why this article about Tom Thumb?

It is a lesson in humility that we all need from time to time. In my case, there was a time a little over 12 years ago...when life was not this great...definitely not as good as it is now. During that time, me and my family started to run low on food once.

And out came Tom Thumb.

That can, plus a loaf of bread, was about all we had to eat that night (true story).

It was a pretty sad situation. But...that moment made me realize something...*“Holy smokes, I need to go out and do something about this.”*

Why was I in this situation?

Well, a couple of months prior to that moment, I had gotten laid off from a car dealership where I worked the parts counter. We had some savings to get by, but at this moment, we were way past draining them. We were literally moments away from having to get on the food line.

But this was my first lesson in success as well. I felt this gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach, a pulling feeling in my chest, and I just couldn't take it anymore. I couldn't look my family in the face and say:

“We are going hungry tonight.”

So I didn't let that happen. I had, up until that moment, had some setbacks in getting another job to support my family. But staring Tom Thumb in the face made me reach deep down and “suck it up.” The feeling I had inside of me now was one of invincibility...**I could not be stopped.**

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I had to get a job the next morning...so I walked in the office...sat down for an interview...and did not leave until we were filling out new hire paperwork.

From that moment on, we have **never** faced that type of adversity in our lives again. As a matter of fact, life is filled with a richness I cannot describe, only feel.

It is 2010 now, and since that moment we are completely humble and Tom Thumb still resides in our cupboard (we had to eat the original Tom Thumb, so we bought another).

Tom Thumb is still in our cupboard to remind us of that humbling moment...and I vowed to never allow him to the front of our cupboard again (which means that can of beans probably can't be eaten, can it?).

To this day, he is still hiding there in the back...reminding me that there was a time when it wasn't this good...Which motivates me to help others reach their goals...and along the way I will reach mine too.

It has worked for me, to a very successful degree so far.

Do you have a can of Tom Thumb in your cupboard?

Quick Inspiring Business Statement...

If you want to achieve goals that are seemingly impossible to others, you must first prepare your mind for the journey.

--Joseph Ratliff ©2009

3 Secrets That Will Allow You To Amass Great Wealth In Your Online Business...

I want to share some secrets with you today.

I also want to make a promise...

If you make an effort to truly understand these secrets, then really make an effort to wrap your mind around them and put them to use for yourself, you can have massive success with the creative ideas for your online business and life in general.

So, without further delay, here are 3 secrets that I use regularly in internet business (and life) to gain massive momentum and success with whatever I choose to accomplish.

SECRET #1 - Unlock The Real Power of Your Mind and The Secret Behind “Resistance”

Your mind is so powerful, you cannot even fathom it. It is widely known that human beings only make use of a very small portion of the massive potential locked away in the “gray matter” between our ears. That is a sad thing, because it is a truly sad thing to waste.

I will bet you already knew that though. So what is the secret with the mind and “resistance”?

Well, I will illustrate this secret in two ways...

1) With the ordinary garden hose. Yep, this simple device is actually a key to understanding this massive power we have locked away in our mind.

Imagine water flowing through a garden hose on high pressure...

If you squeeze the hose, the water flow is restricted, and almost can be stopped if you squeeze hard enough. If you don't squeeze the hose at all, the maximum amount of water and flow is allowed (key idea here) to come out of the end of the garden hose.

So, we are really just talking about resistance here. The more resistance you create in your creative processes and in your mind, the less creative ideas that can flow from your mind to your business.

In other words, if you have a difficult time expressing and creating new, profitable ideas and innovative marketing thoughts for your business...

You're thinking way too hard!

You're thinking yourself out of the best potential for your internet business creative ideas and marketing processes.

You need to allow your mind to work on a business problem or question you have, with as little resistance as possible, so it will provide the answer for you.

Get out of your mind's way, and let it do its work on any business or life problem, and the miracle can happen. In other words, quit "squeezing your mind" and creating resistance with additional thoughts and stresses.

Which leads me to the second illustration that will "bring this concept home" in your mind...

2) The reason those subliminal message (relaxation) audios work to unleash the creativity and positive energies from within you.

Have you ever wondered exactly how these work? I did too.

Here is what happens when you listen and truly follow one of these audios...

First of all, you **relax**. When you relax, you allow your inner mind to start working to more of its fullest potential. If your mind is allowed to do this, without the additional resistance normally encountered when you are under stress or lacking concentration, you begin the process of unleashing your creative within.

Secondly, after relaxing, you allow your mind to focus more of its energies on whatever questions or creativity you wish. But the hardest part is, truly relaxing.

This is why this concept sounds so simple, but few actually wrap their heads around it and unlock its full potential.

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All you have to do is:

- a) “Ask your mind” a question, or pose a problem, whatever that is.
- b) Then lower the resistance your mind encounters (relaxing helps this process greatly).
- c) And allow your mind to give you the answer or creativity you seek.

The better that you finish step b) above, the greater results you will achieve with this secret.

Keep in mind you may not get an answer right away. This is definitely not an instantaneous process...but in a number of cases, I have “woke up in the middle of the night” with an overwhelming inspiration and clarity for my best business ideas (this blog was born of that process, as a matter of fact).

Please do more research on this mental liberation process...it is a true secret to the creative processes of the greatest entrepreneurs both online and offline.

On to secret number 2.

SECRET #2 - “Taking Massive Action (it isn’t as simple as you think)”

We have all heard that one of the secrets to success is to “take action” and implement what you read, or hear...all in order to gain results in business and in life.

But for secret 2, I am asking that you take this a step further.

I am asking for you to take massive action, not just take action. You see, in my business, simply taking action has never been enough.

Please allow me to give you an example that may resonate with you...

We will use the example of starting an online business. You can apply the principle behind this to your business in a number of ways.

Let's use **John I. Net** as our character for this story. John is working the typical 9 to 5 job, and hates it. He is seeking a change, but is afraid of leaving his "secure" job for creating his new online business.

So, John does a Google search for "making money online", and purchases an e-book on the subject of creating an internet business.

He reads the e-book, absorbs its content, and gets very excited to make the transition.

But F.E.A.R. sets in (False Expectations of expanding your Actual Reality, or your fear of moving outside of your comfort zone). Once fear sets in, John backs off a little...but the seed has already been sown.

John later does a Google search for "online business success" and similar keywords. He finds yet another e-book, and reads, absorbs, etc...

John does something different this time though, he actually takes action on his inspiration, and starts an online business. He registers a domain, puts together a website, and starts the slow process of making money online.

But he didn't take massive action. While he was excited to start his new business venture, any failures, or mistakes that he would make slows him down...his online business eventually fails...and a couple of restarts later, he eventually gives up on the idea. The idea and online business both lost momentum.

Fast forward 5 years...

It's five years later...and this time John is really sick and tired of his 9 to 5.

He is burning out fast, and starts to ponder on the days, 5 years ago, when he was starting that online business.

And the feelings started to rush back...

Those liberating feelings.

But he also started to think about the failures. You see, John failed and had to go back to work at a J.O.B. (Just Over Broke) to feed his family.

This time, he started to have a revelation. In order to overcome the failures, he learned from his mistakes and did one more important thing...

He took MASSIVE action!

John took action on a massive scale, and quickly. He built momentum faster than he ever did before...he planned, executed, worked hard etc...and got the online business off of the ground (anyone who tells you it does not take hard work and some long hours in the beginning to create an online business is flat out lying to you, remember that).

So, what is massive action vs. regular action?

Massive action can be equated to a magnet. It comes with taking all of the “little actions” required to sustain momentum and build or grow businesses.

You have to be prepared for this crucial step in the business building process.

Your plan cannot just be “do this, and get results”, instead it has to be:

“Do these things, get results, and do these related things, to sustain and build upon the results gained in this part of my plan”.

Re-read the italic area above this sentence at least 5 times before continuing to the rest of this article. Don't worry, I will wait.

Read it? 5 times? Good.

On the contrary, taking action for the sake of taking action is just not enough. You see, information is fragmented, and so are your ideas...so simply taking action on only one idea will only further that idea for that amount of time.

Simply taking action on one idea will not sustain an entire business, as a business is built and sustained on a massive number of ideas...not just one instance of taking action.

Re-read the bold area above this sentence at least 5 times before continuing to the rest of this article. Don't worry, I will wait.

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Read it? 5 times? Good (if you really did it).

You need to take massive action to gain the massive results you are seeking in business or life, as this lesson is also applicable to anything you do in life as well. Last but definitely not least, we move on to secret number 3.

SECRET #3 - The willingness to fail, repeatedly and without hesitation.

The key word in secret 3 is **willingness**.

Accepting failure as a part of business growth is simply not enough.

You have to be willing to fail...and your mentality has to be centered around it as part of growing your business. You have to want to fail.

Am I telling you to fail intentionally?

Nope.

I am telling you that when you do fail, get excited, because you are one step closer to massive success in whatever you are attempting to do.

If you aren't failing, your business is being left to chance, because you have no clue if what you are doing is wrong or will have negative consequences later. So when you fail, understand that you have just removed a road block to your success later on.

Thomas Edison failed over 1000 times to invent a light bulb that worked. He just thought of it this way...

"I figured out 1000 ways that a light bulb doesn't work."

But when he found the **one** way that did, well, massive success awaited.

You see, Thomas Edison wanted to fail as fast as he could, so he could get to the one success he was desiring. He simply chalked failure up as part of the light bulb development process. Your mentality has to follow this pattern if you want true success for your internet business.

Here's why...

Until you are successful, you are going to fail more than you succeed.

Even when you are successful, you will still fail a bunch.

Period.

If you think for a second that you will build the perfect system or product etc... that defies failure, you will have a rude awakening. There will be some measure of failing along the way. It's just a process.

Be willing to fail, not just accept failure, and you will attain success much faster. Follow these 3 secrets to success, and I look forward to hearing any stories or results you may have.

18 Mistakes That Can Kill Your Online Business...

If any of these resonate with you, avoid them at all costs...

1. **I can do it for free.** You cannot build a business online for free. Get over it.
2. **Build it, and they will come.** You cannot just put a website up, and expect to start raking in the profits.
3. **Decorate it, “Trick it out”, not for websites...**this might work for brick and mortar stores, but online you have to keep it to reasonable level.
4. **Lacking a Unique Selling Proposition.** You need to generate a real presence online...and you have to be unique.
5. **“I don’t have to work hard to succeed online.”** Pfui. Sometimes harder.
6. **Earn money in your sleep, 24/7/365, etc...** Yes, you can, but your business requires attention.
7. **“I already know what to do, I don’t need a game plan, plans are for newbies.”** You might as well count yourself out now, turn in the keys and go home.
8. **Not getting to the point.** People have so many other distractions nowadays, you don’t have time to go into theory, just get to the point.
9. **Writing for the offline audience is the same** as writing for the online audience. Wrong answer, thank you for playing the game.
10. **Failing to remember you are dealing with people online.** It is so easy to do online, and the impersonal nature of the media can help you lose business as fast as you can gain it.
11. **Stopping at the first sale with a customer.** Big error, this is only your first contact with a person who said “I trust you”...what are you going to do next?
12. **Give them more reasons to show up again and again.** It doesn’t stop at the first visit, what are you going to do to keep ‘em coming back?

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13. Having a terrible follow up system. Are you following up with someone who gave their email address and name to you by sending endless offers?

14. “I have 10 million hits and no sales...how is that possible?”
Traffic isn't the key, targeted (quality) traffic is.

15. Don't make them think. Getting your visitors the information they are seeking as quickly and easily as possible should be a primary objective.

16. Lack of focus on your business. There is more ways to make money on the internet than you could write a book on...but you need to pick one and focus on it until it develops profits consistently.

17. Failing to re-invest in your online business. You always need to focus a certain percentage of revenue back into the business.

18. Failing to properly track and monitor your online business. It is so easy to do this online, yet many don't even try.

Well, there they are, 18 of the most critical mistakes you can make that will kill your online business.

Affiliate Marketing And Google: The Death Of...The Rebirth Of...Huh?

Affiliate Marketing.

Basically, it's just like commission sales...but the term seemed to gain popularity online.

But let's get to the point of this short rant/post/lesson...

There seems to be a lot of talk on the 'net about Google's recent treatment of quite a few affiliate accounts by banning them (and probably non-affiliate accounts too, but we'll get to that).

My take on all of this "death of" and "rebirth of" affiliate marketing on Google stuff is...

Horse pucky!

Good lord people, affiliate marketing on Google is not dying by any stretch of the imagination because Google bans some (or most) affiliate accounts!

It just means the game is changing, as all businesses evolve, so must Google at certain points...

To me, it all boils down to a 4-letter word that many affiliates don't want to hear...**work.**

And lots of it.

It's the shortcuts and "chasing money" types of accounts and promotions that Google is probably banning, not honest hard working affiliate **businesses.**

The long and short of it is...affiliates will have to quit taking shortcuts in order to survive this "Google banning revolution". Oh yeah, and about the "revolution"...if you were one of those affiliates trying to game the Adwords system, or take shortcuts...well...

Now it's time to pay the Ferryman.

If you were taking shortcuts, or failing to add value for Google's searchers...how long did you actually think you would be able to get away with it?

Instead, let's focus on creating an online business people!

I know, I know, that requires a great deal of effort, resources and work right?

I mean, more effort than putting up a one page landing page and sending Google traffic to it for any type of affiliate offer right?

Gotta do it folks...no more shortcuts.

You have to create websites that deliver more value than *"I'm preselling this, make a decision right now and buy it"* sites.

Add a blog to your landing page, add articles on html pages, add the standard *contact us, privacy, TOS*, and other pages etc (talk to your legal professionals, that ISN'T legal advice)... in short, **add freakin' value for your searchers!**

That's all Google really wants...value for its searchers, so more searchers will use Google, bringing more revenue possibilities for advertisers...and quite frankly so Google can raise fees and such because it will be a more "in demand" search engine (not that it isn't already, but if you think it doesn't want to do better, well...).

The long story short of today's lesson:

Professional, value-building affiliates who genuinely want to over deliver that value to people through their businesses (for real) will always be in...the rest will be or are already out...period. *Which one are you (or will you be)?*

If you haven't been affected by this "banning" of accounts yet...take this time to evaluate your entire offering to your market.

If you even have the slightest "inkling" or gut feeling that "more value" or putting more work into your offering would **help more people** in your business...you should probably double your thought and do it, right now.

But, if you can look at your own affiliate business and really say "Damn, I've got a site here that can really impact the lives of the people that visit it"...you're probably ok (but think about putting more value into it anyhow).

Google and its searchers will love you, and most importantly, **your commissions will be impacted as a direct result of the value you're delivering.**

(so long as you ask for the money when you should too, after all affiliate marketing is still direct marketing)

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How Much Should You Invest Towards Marketing Your Business?

I hear this question way too much.

Here is the answer...

As much as you want.

I know, you are probably getting ready to fire up your email program and roast me for such an elementary answer...but don't do that just yet.

Here is the rest of the answer...

In the right places, using the right techniques, directed at the right audience.

Period.

This mentality with your marketing will consistently produce a solid **Return on Investment**. So, invest as much of your available funds this way...because it will just keep making money for you.

But here is the catch...

Miss any **one** of the three key elements:

- 1) The right places (market area)
- 2) The right techniques (correct message, and type of marketing)
- 3) The right audience (marketing your product to someone who wants to buy)

And your campaign goes BOOM (it implodes)!

Period.

It doesn't matter if you invest 3% of your sales or 30% of your sales...if you have the three key elements locked in...you will get pretty much the same proportion of Return On Investment.

So if you invest \$100 on marketing your business properly, and get \$200 in sales from that investment...what would happen if you invested \$1000 in the same marketing campaign? \$10000? \$100,000? That's right, you can keep on trading investment for profits until the market dries up (which is extremely rare, so no excuses). =)

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In my humble opinion you have two options...

1) Keep tossing a bunch of marketing and advertising dollars at the “wall” and hope they stick.

2) Focus your message, use the right method, and make sure the people reading that message will want your product or service. And PROFIT ALL DAY LONG.

I already know which option you would like to choose.

What are you going to do in your business today to choose it?

Have You Ever Had That “Pulling” Feeling?

You know...

That feeling you get when you get ready to take on something big, try something new and exciting, start another business etc...

You get this tight feeling in your arms and chest, your breathing seems to be more rapid, and various thoughts of “*Can I really do this?*” start swimming in your mind.

This feeling seems to be pulling you back. Back to where everything is *comfortable*.

Is this a bad feeling to have?

Nope.

This feeling comes from the fear of the “unknown.” And it is actually a good feeling to have.

Here is personal example from my own “pulling feelings”:

Back in my last days of working in the retail field (a long time ago now)...I was thinking to myself...

“Self, can I really start educating business owners on how to market their businesses?”

I mean, I am nobody when it comes to being recognized as an authority in marketing, my credibility is close to zero with few clients yet, and what happens if the money runs out?

How do I support my family?”

Man...I am thankful for that “pulling” feeling. I am thankful because that feeling made me sit down and create what I had created for a couple of business owners already...

A Strategic Marketing Plan. I figured out that day what I would do for the next 6 months to generate a steady stream of clients. Then, I mapped out a three year and five year plan to expand the business I started in my mind already.

Boy did that feel good. And you know what happened to that “pulling” feeling?

It went away. It has yet to come back.

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I am a little past the other end of that five year marketing plan now (I started marketing consulting locally in 2001). My business and family life is so fulfilling...I cannot even explain it to you.

And it all came from that one moment. Can you create your own?

So what is the lesson here?

Well, this lesson is in two parts:

1) Get out of your comfort zone, often, repeatedly, and stay out of it. This is huge. If things are going as planned in your business...get out of your comfort zone and try new things. Otherwise, your business will get stale...and your results will start to match.

2) Set aside time to work on your business, instead of in your business. Until you master this...all you have is a self-employed job. And you do know what "JOB" stands for, don't you... Just Over Broke.

The more you get that "pulling" feeling...the more success you can have...but you have to reach out and take it without fear.

The Great Filtering Of Online Marketing...

It has begun...

...and if any of the things I mention in this post apply to you, take heed of the warning, or be prepared to close the doors.

This is probably going to rank in the most important posts I write all year...

Let's get started, shall we?

Over the next decade, we are going to witness a "great filtering" of sorts in the online marketing arena (and business in general for that matter).

What do I mean?

The shady business people, the snake oil salespeople, the ones that just don't care about their customers (or even worse, ignore them completely)...and any so-called business person that can be lumped into these categories...will start to suffer a slow and painful business death.

And I mean, all of them...not a percentage...not some, all of them (finally).

How can I make such a widespread claim?

One word...access.

The Internet has changed the game (not will change, has changed). It has allowed a level of access on many different platforms...that businesses can't "hide" any more...

- They can't scam their customers and get away with it...
- They can't hide behind a monitor and be "anonymous" anymore...
- They can't make bold-faced lies to the people that do business with them (or are thinking of doing business with them) anymore...

Because it can all be revealed by using the Internet.

Yeah, there will still be scams, unscrupulous business people, and such...but when they set up shop...their lifetime is extremely limited, and will be even more so as the "great filtering" takes place over the next 10 years or so.

So what exactly is the great filtering?

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It's the process where those businesses that fall in the above-mentioned categories will begin to be "filtered out" by the public.

It's already begun to happen, for example...

What happens to a book on Amazon when a bunch of people leave negative feedback (legitimate negative feedback)? It gets filtered out...falling off the charts. Those that leave negative feedback that is just not legitimate get filtered out as well.

Spammers aren't even being paid attention to anymore (other than the customary "how do we get rid of them?" feedback).

If someone uses an anonymous "user name" on a forum, blog, or other social communication media, they usually get "filtered out". In the rare case where they are listened to...they always have that barrier they must overcome before what they say matters (eventually, they won't be listened to at all).

People want to interact with **real people**, not those who hide behind anonymous or "hidden" information etc... While it's certainly possible (for now) to continue to do this... eventually you'll automatically become "noise" if you're currently doing this.

There are a TON of other examples I can point to, and I will do so over the course of the next two years or so...(perhaps pointing out some specific examples as they appear to me). For now, just think of ways for you to avoid **"The Great Filtering Of Online Marketing"**.

If you already are, congratulations, it will get easier to do business as time goes on from this standpoint.

One Disease That Is Destroying The Response In Your Direct Response Copy...

There's no doubt that **direct response copy, or the words that move people towards a specific action on your web page** plays a large role in the success of your website.

If you don't believe that, well, sorry...don't call me when the money runs out.

Onward...

When examining the many websites my clients use to market online, and other websites that I surf regularly...I find a common theme lying in the "weeds" of failure those websites share (i.e. when a client tells me "*my website isn't producing*" etc...).

It's almost like a disease, hence the title to this post.

What is this disease? (translation: "Joe, get to the damn point!" 😊)

I call it "Lazy-research-osis", or LRO for short.

Symptoms include:

- Web pages that have **no** call to action where they should.
- Web pages that have the **wrong** call to action according to the message (copy or video) on that page, like selling *way* too soon for example.
- Copy that doesn't give an **immediate** feeling of "*Wow, this message is directed at me!*" to the people reading your message.
- Copy that "feels" like it's written **generically**...loaded with "corporate" language. You need to write directly to the people in your audience.
- Copy that "feels" like you didn't even research your market at all (I mean **real market** research, not just combing through some Ezine Articles and calling it good). This is a BIG problem on a good majority of websites.
- **And on, and on, and on...**

So, if your website suffers from this disease in any shape or form...the "antidote" for "Lazy-research-osis" is simple...

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Don't use shortcuts when you're researching your market.

Contrary to some advice provided on the Internet, don't just "throw a website up" and try to sell until you've completed this research.

Some of the elements of complete market research include (emphasis on some) :

- **Talk to people.** I can hear the clicks off of this post now, and your "shuddering" when you read that...but yes, actually talk to the people in your market. Ask them questions about what they want when it comes to the product you're about to bring to market. Find out what drives them emotionally (which is the FIRST reason people buy, not logic).
- **Read articles in a number of magazines pertaining to your market.** That doesn't mean read one and you're done...sometimes when I'm writing copy for a client, I will read 25 – 50 articles (the Borders bookstore here almost knows me by name).
- **Develop a general curiosity about life and things in general.** Read about a lot of stuff, file away interesting stuff, talk to people you don't know (if you're an introvert, get over this fear, people are nice for the most part).
- **And yes, part of your research can be done online.** Watch the "free" information available though. I subscribe to a few paid research sites, where info is accurate and studied. [The Extreme Searcher's Handbook](#) is a good place to start if you don't know what I mean by paid subscription research sites.
- And on, and on...don't stop until you feel you have 5 – 10 times the info you think you would need for your website.

If your website suffers from LRO, real market research is the cure. Arm yourself with more info than you need, because if you don't, this disease can infect your website in even the smallest "crack" in your content.

So get to it then...I want to see some websites that sing to me people!

Social Media: The Hatfield's Versus The McCoy's

Holy smokes, the nerve of some people.

As a specific example (not that he needs me to stick up for him), Chris Brogan seems to be coming under fire because he's re-organizing his business (key words: **his business**)...and on The Infopreneur, there are a few people are actually whining about how much he engages his audience, how he might "brag" too much on his blog, has a "smug" attitude, or even how the freely given content isn't "valuable" to some people any more.

And on, and on...

These "haters of Social Media marketers" seem to be coming out in droves lately...and it's actually really disappointing to me to see fellow human beings acting this way towards others.

So it's time to call this group out.

Where the hell does anyone get off criticizing someone for taking "less" time to provide ANY free content that they could use to improve their businesses or lives AT ALL?

It's free content folks, so it will come when it comes...

...and heaven forbid someone actually tries to make money while recommending affiliate products using their own blogs, or even the Social Media (not referring to spamming, or any other illegal activities)...

...because we are (for the most part) adults, not children, but when someone is selling something via FREE content, especially when they provide WAY more free content than selling, that's not wrong, it's the business of marketing folks. It doesn't matter what tools you're using.

I just don't get it. Has Chris (or any other ethical free content provider) scammed you out of your **money** or something? No?

I'd venture a guess that you could in fact get a full refund of all the money you paid for reading his blog if you wanted (oh wait...it's free content freely given by the time and energy of the individual providing it...sorry).

These exchanges usually center around people offering their opinion about said free content provider, and that opinion is one they are entitled to for sure, but the problem and my issue comes when those opinions *evolve* into what I define as a **Social Media virus** (term coined by Nathan Hangen).

Some believe you can use Social Media as a business tool, and some believe you shouldn't...and guess what? You're both right, so leave the other side to their OWN desires and the way they want to pursue them, **with what tools they want to use to pursue those desires, including using social media tools to make money if they want.**

My personal take on the Social Media as it applies to the business world is the Social Media represents a set of engagement tools, and **that's it. Tools to use at a business owner's discretion to reach out to an audience of people that have chosen to follow them.**

*(Using Chris Brogan's business as an example, **45,000-plus** people have chosen to follow him...and if they don't feel there is a reason to do that anymore...they shouldn't, period)*

A big secret here is...tools don't replace people, *nor* are tools responsible for establishing any "rules" that govern how to use those tools in an ethical, 100% legal, and moral manner.

Some people, suffering the Social Media Virus, have somehow manufactured the "proper" way to use Social Media...and the truth is, there is way more than one "proper" way.

Since we live in a capitalist society...those tools are available for use in the art of making money while engaging audiences...

...or to contact friends and family members...

...or to reconnect with past acquaintances...

...and on, and on...and I respect the fact that not everyone uses the Social Media in their business-building efforts. That's totally ok (not that it has to be ok with me, but it is), and the main Social Media sites are in fact **great** tools to connect with people for other reasons as well.

But the people who whine about those who are in the business world using Social Media tools to market, make a profit, and engage other people towards that end...well...sometimes they just make me sick.

And I've bottled it up for long enough, this had to be written in my opinion.

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It reminds me of a couple of two-year olds fighting over a toy in a playroom. One two-year old says that toy is “*theirs*”...and the other says “*they won’t share with me*”.

Come on folks...the tools are available, use them as **you** see fit (legally, morally, and ethically of course) and quit worrying about how other people choose to use these tools (don’t we have bigger fish to fry anyhow?). If a person chooses to use Social Media in an illegal, unethical, or immoral manner...**life will at some point punish those people, guaranteed.**

So, let’s quit coming back to some fantasy land where Social Media can only be used for “noble” or “non-moneymaking” purposes eh?

And if you’re suffering from the Social Media virus...

Social Media Virus symptoms: whining on blogs and forums about who is using the Social Media to make money, picking apart *caring* people with larger businesses built on one thing...then having to evolve because of that growth...or just because you might be jealous of another person because their business is WAY more successful than yours...

...get over yourselves. We’re all people with lives, emotions, and different reasons for doing what we do...let’s all grow up and act like it. Who put you in charge of how the Social Media is to be used anyhow?

If someone wants to use Social Media as part of building and growing their business...let’s let ‘em, and if they don’t, let’s let ‘em too...but let’s not continue a “*Hatfield’s vs. McCoy’s*” thing over something that quite frankly is so trivial.

*(By the way, who cares actually? Quit following an individual if you don’t feel value is being delivered and stop whining about it, that’s your choice. People like Chris Brogan **aren’t** the only ones who have experienced great success by building a business around “giving freely” then having to change that direction a little as their business evolves, nor will they be the last)*

Life is way too short to worry about whether or not Chris Brogan, or anyone else for that matter, comments on their blog enough, or whether he needs to change his business model (which I imagine will **still** provide value for free on a different scale). Instead, let’s just get back to building our own businesses...and perhaps grow them to a level we can be proud of.

Quite frankly, if you grow a business to the level that a Chris Brogan, Gary Vaynerchuk, or any of the other “social media stars” have...then you **will** experience the very same set of challenges they are trying to overcome right now as well, guaranteed.

One of those challenges **will** unfortunately include some “group” of people who suffer a “virus” similar to the Social Media virus, where they will try to tear down your own success, and when (not if) that happens...

What will **you** do about that?

I think that once you answer that question comprehensively for *yourself* first...**then and only then** could you comment on how a Chris Brogan or Gary Vaynerchuk could be running their businesses better and recommend the tools they are using.

/rant

The Money Is NOT In The List...

Ahhh...got you thinking didn't I?

First of all, you don't have to light up your email program and fire off all the reasons why I'm wrong...

Because I'm going to cover the 2 primary reasons why the "money isn't in the list" right here.

1) The money isn't in the list, it's in the "lists". You don't only build a list and make money from it...you have to segregate your lists into more targeted lists.

And before I hear a "*Duh, Joe!*"...

Most marketers aren't doing this **at all**.

I know this as a fact, because the majority of my clients and even associates don't do this.

The most basic list segregation technique is to put those people that have purchased something from you (or followed your recommendation as an affiliate) onto a customer or "buyers" list.

If you aren't doing that already...stop reading this post and do it **right now**.

I'll wait...

You haven't done it yet, come on, this is a BIG business builder for you...

Whatever, you'll never do it then.

Moving on...

By separating your buyers into another list...you have a list of the people who obviously trust you enough to pull out their wallet and buy something from you or on your recommendation...and I think that is a BIG trust that we as marketers take for granted **all the time**.

Come on, you do take that trust for granted...don't you? You assume that because you have the greatest product on earth, that everyone wants what you're selling...and nope, that's not how it works.

Which brings us to the next reason the money isn't in the list...

2) The money isn't in the list, it's in the relationship you form with the people on that list. So before you go thinking that by putting #1 above to work will solve all of your making money problems...

You first have to think really hard about each individual person on your list.

Really hard.

It sounds so simple, yet it's another area we take for granted as business people...that real people, with real problems and emotions, are on our marketing list.

You don't "own" them...

You had better not be "renting" them out...

They aren't "your" list of subscribers/buyers/people over the age of 50...

And the DEFINITELY are not "one of your list of 5,000"...or a number.

Change your thinking to how you can serve that list of people (for real), and your income will increase in reflection of how well you do that. If your income doesn't increase, you're focus hasn't changed.

No, I didn't give you the "full" blueprint here...I expect you to think about this and apply it to your business (heaven forbid...do work?).

The sad reality is...90% of you will still go about your busy days and never take any time to sit and ponder the impact this rather "simple" advice can have on your business...

Of the 10% that do something with this advice, **only the top third** or so of that 10% will actually use this advice and make changes.

So about 3 out of every 100 readers of this article will actually do something that will have a HUGE impact on their business right now, today.

Will you be one of them?

How To Make Real Money Using The Internet Part 1

Before you go getting all excited, I want you to know what this article is not:

- It's not about making money online fast (like within 3 minutes).
- It's not about “gaming” Google or any other search engine.
- It's not about making money “without work”, “with no selling”, or any other magic.
- Most importantly, this is not the only (or the complete) answer...there are many ways to accomplish this.

This is an overview of how to make **real** money on the Internet (the way I have), the kind of money you can **count on** month after month without having to alter your business plan on a daily basis.

Contrary to what most of the over-hyped crap out there says about making money online...there **are** a few qualifications you must have before building a business of any kind (or be willing to make mistakes to learn from along the way), but especially when you use the Internet (because things move so fast online).

Sorry to break this news to you if you hoped this was the “next magic bullet”...

- **You have to be able to sell** and understand what true selling is.
- **You must understand marketing, copywriting,** and building businesses (not necessarily before you start, but you must gain that knowledge).
- **You must drill into your head that business is about the people you serve (your market)**...this is probably the most important part of the whole understanding.
- **You must know “why” you’re creating a business in the first place.** Many people miss this critical step, and end up like a fish out of water.
- **You must develop key relationships** to grow your business.

More about these points will be covered in this article as you read.

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Building a business using the Internet isn't easy, it requires an above-average understanding of how people buy to be successful in a short period of time.

With that out of the way...let's get to the meat of this post, shall we?

Based on my observations of the marketplace in online business, and discussions with my own clients (hundreds of them), I am going to frame these "how to's..." first with "*what most people do...*" then with "*what you need to do...*"...

Let's get started.

What most people do:

Focus on the money, and the "quick buck".

What you need to do:

Focus on the people in your market that you serve. How can you help **them** add value to **their** lives. This business isn't about you...**it's about them**, always. The customer may not always be right, but even so, they can make or break your business.

What most people do:

Try to figure this whole business out before trying or testing anything.

What you need to do:

Test everything...try everything...screw up several times and learn from those mistakes. That will get you to success faster than trying to figure it out beforehand, every time.

What most people do:

Run their business like they are the only ones running it.

What you need to do:

Develop partnerships. Not the "legal business" ones necessarily...but key joint venture partnerships that are mutually beneficial. This means you must get over yourself, and get out there and talk to people (see next point).

Developing partnerships means quit sending templated emails to all the "gurus" and actually attend a seminar and network. I can already hear the whining, get over it...you have to make personal contacts at some point, or you can count on flushing your business down the toilet.

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What most people do:

Hide behind their computer screens because it's comfortable and anonymous.

What you need to do:

Get over yourself. Put yourself out there. If you want to be comfortable, and keep operating within your comfort zone, go bake some cookies. If you continue to stay hidden and in your comfort zone, you'll enjoy average or below-average results...continue to struggle from opportunity to opportunity...and never build a real business that serves people in a market.

Black hatters and those that game the system might disagree with me on this...but eventually, they'll suffer too.

What most people do:

After they get some momentum going, they continue "plugging away" and seem to end up running around like chickens with their heads cut off.

What you need to do:

You need to remember two words that make the difference between piddly income in a business and millions of dollars...**systems and leverage.**

Once you get going, you need to automate parts of your business with people, leverage, and systems so you can begin to work "on" your business...instead of "in" your business. The sooner you make this transition, the sooner you'll experience a "breakthrough" in income...period.

People: Eventually, you cannot do this yourself, you will need to involve people in your business for it to grow. Did I say hire employees? Nope. But you might actually want to. Contrary to bad advice out there, the headaches with employees are minimal when you do things upfront in the process that minimize the chances (didn't say eliminate, I said minimize) of getting the wrong person for the job.

Creating a vision for the employees to follow, not settling for the "next best" person for the job etc... (you're in complete control of the hiring process, the results you get are a reflection on you).

Leverage: You must use the Internet for all it's worth in terms of leverage. Aside from the obvious ones like autoresponder accounts to send automated emails, and programs used to put your video marketing all over the place...who's to say you can create and attack multiple segments of your market aggressively using multiple sites, with "marketing channels" set up to automate the selling process to each of those segments?

Folks, aside from legal, ethical, and moral standards...**there are no rules.** Get your message out there in as many ways as you can.

Systems: This is the part many people get wrong. Setting up systems has to be done in a fashion where you could hand it off to someone else, and that person would NEVER have to contact you to ask a question about how to operate the system.

From procedures, to issuing various levels of authority to customer service staff so they can take care of customers...

*You can't lose sight of your business while creating systems...but you must create systems so you can see **more** of your business.*

-Joseph Ratliff ©2009

A final bit of important advice about systems creating...only create a system that will provide leverage for you as a business owner, don't create systems in your business just for the sake of creating systems.

[How To Make Real Money Using The Internet Part 2](#)

This is the final part of a two part post that should have been a small report I guess 😊

Continuing our “what it really takes to make money online” theme...

This whole internet marketing business game really boils down to one simple concept (and yes, it IS this simple)...

You need to think about how much value you can deliver to people to help them improve their lives first...before thinking about any profits you'll make.

Most marketers are very selfish in their mindset to making money online. They want that elusive “internet lifestyle” so bad that they will try to “game the system” or use all the black hat tricks to make money using the internet.

Those internet business models don't have long – term value...because they don't serve people...instead they annoy people.

John Reese covers this thoroughly in his document “The Rebirth Of Internet Marketing”, which incidentally, you can [download here](#).

Yes, it's from 2007, but really, the strategies that John makes reference to (as well as the strategies that I've pointed out in these 2 posts) are all evergreen concepts that will transcend any “marketing gimmick” that doesn't serve people.

You can also download my [Ramblings 2 Report](#) which contains nothing but evergreen business strategies (105 pages of them) for you to enjoy.

(keep in mind, that blog is the one that “died” a short time ago, so I don't know how long this download link will be active until I change hosting and change the link)

Anyhow...I think this concludes our lessons (for now).

Are You Doing The Right Thing...Right Now...In Your Internet Business?

Here's a scenario...

You have 5 phone calls to make, but **one** will move a money-making project forward after you take a little more time to finish that project after the phone call. Or do you focus on "getting the remaining 4 done."

Are you using your time to manage tasks? Or to achieve goals?

Examples...

One phone call moves the money-maker forward, and the rest of your day devoted to finishing that project = **Goal Accomplished.**

The next day you repeat, focusing on **accomplishing goals** instead of just completing tasks...but you might miss some comfy admin time.

Or...

All 5 phone calls completed, all tasks completed, so more admin stuff completed and day over.

Then the next day is started finishing the money-maker from the day before (maybe), then more tasks to complete.

See the mindset shift here?

2 days = 2 days of \$\$\$ if you're focused on accomplishing goals instead of completing tasks...

...or 2 days = possibly 1 day of \$\$\$ if you like completing tasks for the sake of completing tasks (or because they may seem important to you)...

Which would you rather have? 2 days of money? Or 2 days with all tasks completed, and possibly only one day of money?

Think about that today.

Society Kills The Internet Star

Alternate title for this post (not used because it was too long)...

*If Anyone Ever Tells You You'll Fail, Or That You Can't Accomplish Something, **Forget 'Em...***

Now on with the story...

The date was August 1st, 1981.

The day the music industry changed forever.

Buggles played a video called "Video Killed The Radio Star"...and from that day, the marketing of rock bands was forever changed...and radio bands who had enjoyed success using that media alone were dropping like flies.

Now, we're going to apply this to internet business and success in just about anything...

Nobody wants you to succeed online. In fact, many will line up against you.

Some examples...

Friends who are jealous of your potential success will keep trying to drag you down "to their level" again in various ways (but are they really friends? Hm...).

Relatives the same...they will tell you "that's too risky" or "you're insane if you think that will work".

Social communities that notice your star on the rise and make negative comments to tell you your idea sucks...could never work...etc...and try to bring you down to earth.

It's all bull.

Everyone will try to "bring you down"...and no one will tell you it's ok to be successful. You have to reach out and take it. **Now.**

There is no way in hell that anyone who tells you "You can't do _____, it'll never work" or a variation of that **has any idea** about the behind the scenes or research you've done...so don't let them put you down...ever.

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Plus, most people (over 80%) don't understand true success...therefore they tend to want to "bring you back to earth"...or to where they are comfortable again...so you'll be part of their crowd again, with misguided and "comfortable" views about how it's all supposed to work in the land of "reality".

(who the hell defined what *reality* is supposed to feel, look, and taste like anyhow?)

Again, all bull if you truly want to break free and have success in business or other areas of life.

One of the manifestations of "the land of reality" is the 40 hour workweek.

Who wrote into law that a magical number like 40 hours (or more sadly) per week was a required amount of time to accomplish any job task. The average person only really does productive work about 2 hours (or less) a day...so *what makes 40 hours a week "full-time"?* Hmmm....

SIDENOTE: If you actually think you really do productive, meaningful work for a full 40 hours a week...or more...I would ask you to do a work journal, and prove it to yourself. There are very few people that can maintain a productive work schedule for that long.

The "nay sayers" will kill your ideas...because in **their** mind, there's no way that someone can reach out and grab success...leaving **their** (the nay sayer's) world of comfort...and leave them in the dust.

In short...they are jealous of what you are achieving or are about to achieve.

Imagine a swimming pool.

In the swimming pool, are the people who make up the majority, the normal...the nay sayers. In order for you to have success, you have to break free, and jump out of the pool so you can more freely walk around.

But they will try to stop you...they will grab you, try to drag you back into the water with them...where it's nice and warm. Even when you **think** you're finally breaking free for the first time...they will gang up and try one last time to bring you back into the nice, warm water with them.

You can only **start** on the the journey of success when you get out of, and away from, the swimming pool. Then, you get true freedom. And there will be a few people that want to make the journey with you (for real)...and people that have already made it out of the pool...hang out with them.

HARD HIT OF REALITY: This might mean you have to change who your friends are...it might mean you don't contact certain members of your family for awhile until you have enough success that they can't bring you down into the swimming pool any more.

ANOTHER HARD HIT OF REALITY: If you think you will be able to start on the path of success in the beginning and you can "deal" with these individuals (friends or family) along the way, you will probably be sorely disappointed. It's a rare feat that you can begin to experience true success (it's not a destination, but a journey) when the people you hang out with...are from the swimming pool of reality themselves.

Successful people have supportive spouses, friends, and family that are supportive (and for the most part successful) themselves. Sorry to break it to you this way...but it rarely works out differently.

Now I am **not** asking you to kill off relationships you have with other people or family...unless doing so is necessary in your mind. 😊 What my main point is, is you should reduce contact with those people that just won't allow you or support you on the journey of success.

The media, news, newspapers, etc...are another main "distractor factor" from success. Go on a "news diet" for 2 weeks, and I guarantee you'll have a different view of the media and its importance in your life.

Society kills the Internet Star.

Will society kill your Internet stardom? Or will you break the cycle...and reach down deep...then break your "normal" life to achieve real success?

I hope to see your success story.

The Internet Business Game Is Changing...Are You?

It's almost as if business owners are afraid to promote their businesses.

You look for all of the “simple” ways to advertise, probably paying WAY too much I imagine, then sit back and complain every time you turn the news on and see yet another small business closing its doors.

Some of the main complaints I am hearing from potential clients...

“Man, I wish I could figure out how to get more customers to my business.”

“Sales are down for yet another month.”

“If only I had seen this (the recession) coming, then I could have prepared for it.”

Blah, blah, blah...whine, moan, complain.

What's really sad, one of the answers to your business growth dilemma is right in front of you, you're just so snowed by “whoa is me” crap to see it...**and probably too uncomfortable to actually use it.**

Come to think of it, maybe I should just stop writing this post.

Nah, I'm not that much of an asshole. 😊

One of the promotion secrets actually has nothing to do with the direct selling of products (most of you are probably going to click off this post right now, too bad for you)...in fact, it's not about selling at all...

It's about **the brand of you (or your business).**

Are you using social media at all? Have you tried, but failed, and think that social media is a fad?

If you're not using social media to some extent to promote your online business, or an offline business that might extend that presence to the web...you're missing the boat **big time.**

There's more leverage than can possibly be imagined in social networking, social marketing, Web 2.0...whatever you want to label it.

Your mindset just has to be adjusted to think about social marketing the right way...that's all.

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It's not about direct selling...in fact, if you sell directly via social media, and haven't earned the right to...your results will suffer or be non-existent. It's the most common mistake made by 90% of marketers and business owners using Web 2.0 stuff.

So what's the correct mindset?

First, you cannot have a hidden agenda. When using the social media, your objectives have to be both transparent and pure. You have to be genuine to yourself, and the results you want to obtain.

Then, you need to imagine the online social media like a giant seminar. You don't walk up to someone at a seminar and immediately begin to pitch them something, do you?

Then why the hell would you do that when social marketing?

As with all people-oriented business building strategies...relationships are the key. Relationships and people first, profits and money are a benchmark for success only (not, scratch that, **never** the objective).

So...when using social media...you need to develop the branding mentality. I equate this with creating a magnet that will attract your following of loyal customers to you. While creating that magnet will not result in direct sales immediately for the most part...over time you will create a "snowball effect" where more and more sales result from people referring other people to your business, **and buying into your business.**

And that my friends, is really the secret to business overall. It's a people oriented arena (especially with the level playing field of Web 2.0). If you forget your people, you can forget your profits.

A prime example of this on the large company scale...is the automobile "Big 3" ...which don't seem so big now, do they? 😊 They forgot about their people...instead opting for direct sales and forgetting to cultivate relationships with their customers. It's not about the "mechanical things" like customer surveys any more Toto.

Does your business follow the example of the Big 3 Automakers?

If it does, and you don't change, save yourself the stress and money invested...and just close the doors now.

Do you want to make a change?

Good. Blueprint time!

Create a video blog, and on a weekly basis, create a video post for your market to enjoy (entertainment is a BIG reason people surf the web). Once you start to develop a positive following of people, and not before, start to introduce your sites and business to that following (gently).

To submit your videos to other sites...you can use

<http://www.tubemogul.com>

To look for a video cam and tripod to create your videos (along with a microphone) ... look into [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

And a good site to submit to as well, <http://www.viddler.com> .

One more thing you'll need is [Camtasia video editing software](http://www.camtasia.com).

Brand yourself with your weekly content...make it interesting. The best example I can find of this (aside from what I will be doing later this year) is Gary Vaynerchuk's [Wine Library TV](http://www.winelibrarytv.com).

Think about giving tips in a weekly format, or useful news for your audience. Over a pretty short period of time, sales will start to increase naturally...without much more effort. Heck, you might even be called to interview or show up on Oprah.

I understand that there are more ideas on this subject, and I will cover them in later posts...but get creative...I am sure you can do it.

Why You're Totally Lazy If You're Cutting Your Prices During This Recession

I am tired of hearing this on the news.

“Wah, we have to cut prices to compete any more...”

Or some variation of that **business-killing** statement.

That's the friggin' laziest way through this recession. I mean really, don't you feel like doing any work at all to try and prosper in business?

Ok...rant over.

The top companies that will prosper in this recession will be those who start to do what I will call “market flexing.”

What is market flexing?

It's flexing with the changes in your market right now. The economy has only changed the way people are spending...not how much they spend

*(spending might be down, but could that be due to poor marketing?
Hmmm.....).*

The news media might have you believe otherwise...by picking out the select examples of people who are “hard on their luck” and flashing them right in your face.

*(sidenote: why do you watch the news, except for weather and sports?
Think about that today)*

Onward...

You simply need to flex with how your market is spending money...and adjust your value proposition accordingly.

Quite honestly, for some businesses online this isn't even that complex...you may just get away with finding another market of buyers, and adjust your offering to what they are buying (**which is the secret to marketing anyhow right? Find a market that wants to buy something**).

So, if you need to flex your marketing...or flex your offer...why is price the first thing you give up?

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That's actually the last thing you should give up...if at all...because reducing price is never the permanent solution to the problem...and responsible for more business deaths than anything else.

Ok...so what are you to do then? How do you “flex” to your market?

By finding out how and what your market is buying right this moment. One way to do this (there are hundreds of ways) is to go to Google Trends and type your market into the search bar there.

See what you can find.

You can also go to Ebay Pulse and find out what's hot on Ebay related to your market or industry.

You can go to Shopping.com's top searches to find out if your industry is on the list, click it...and you'll see what people are searching for in your niche.

I can sense a question this might bring up already...

“But Joe, I don't want to change what I am selling...or how I am selling it!”

If you're thinking any variation of the above...then you need to go to Dictionary.com and look up the definition of insanity.

In other words...are you going to flex to your market? Or are you going to close up shop?

It's that simple of a choice. Beef up your offers, get crazy with customer retention, and just friggin' take over your market...because no one else is doing it. Many are just cowering in fear about the next drop in the DOW JONES.

Look, the Internet gives you so much power, it's not even funny...you can start a video-blog and rebrand yourself or your business. Do a weekly video-show on your topic (industry) that your market will be interested in watching...and don't sell a thing during that show...make it valuable content...but have a link to your selling site somewhere in the vicinity.

Viral video marketing is powerful. Gary Vaynerchuk does it...I will be doing it...you need to start doing it too.

You gotta do what you gotta do. **Go out there and kill it.**

Laugh in the face of this recession, don't cower in whiny fear.

You can do it.

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Internet Business And The Ripple Effect

Sometimes I think we run our online businesses with the freakin' blinders on...you know that? Turn on the news, and some business person seems to be whining about how much business they lost...

Come on...then do something about it whining business owner!

There's money all around us, and **we can't even see it. Even when Peter Schiff's predictions come true.**

Also, did you know it's possible for you to cause damage to our economy on a much larger scale than you think?

We are going to cover both how to wrap your mind around the opportunities in this economy, and how to stop damaging the economy...all in this post.

The good stuff.

It's what I call, the Internet Business Ripple Effect...and it both provides opportunity, and takes it away.

Starting with the money...

The big concept here is when the economy is determining your market for you...you have to take the blinders off to see that market. Here's the big picture with this concept...

big concept → bad economy → creates pain → pain creates problems → you solve problems and make money

So this bad economy is creating several "pains" right? Well, that pain creates problems...which if you know Marketing 101, you find a market that needs something and sell to it right?

So why the hell are there ANY business owners whining about the economy?

There is opportunity abound people. We just need to take off the friggin' blinders.

The definition of **insanity** is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Are you insane? I am sure you're not (well, you might be, but...)...so when there is a **different** economy...logic would tell me that you have to conduct your marketing **differently** to continue to prosper.

The Ripple effect starts with the small changes you make to your business **right after you read this post** (if you're not making money, you will take action right? Ahhh, forget it, you probably won't...). From there, you re-position your business to solve the new problems created by the economy we're in.

Let the big companies (Fortune 500's) make the cutbacks, cut their marketing budgets, and keep whining about the economy...you're in a position as a smaller business owner where you can make the changes on the fly...hell, even if it requires you totally overhaul your marketing objectives and go after different markets. No whining when you have to do a little work now, you do want to survive this recession right?

Onward...

You can actually damage the economy following this Ripple Effect as well.

Where you are physically, and how you act creates a ripple effect for businesses.

Here's an example (but NOT the only one)...

You're in a bad mood and go into a bank. Then, you get grumpy with the bank teller because they screwed up something in your transaction. For the rest of the day...that bank teller treats every customer "less than enthusiastically because of your lack of respect.

When that bank teller goes home...they "spread the poison" to their families and friends with bad thoughts from their bad day you created. They also have to get groceries, and if they're in a less than favorable mood...the poison spreads... **all because of your inability to keep your emotions in check. Spending goes down, depression rises etc...etc... (well, maybe not that bad).**

See how one small interaction with one person affects more than just that one person. If we could all just create "positive" Ripple Effects, perhaps this economy wouldn't be that bad?

Something to ponder.

And we have **all** done this...including me...maybe not with a bank teller, but perhaps “ripping” someone on a forum, or by not paying a vendor on time...but we are each responsible for our own actions.

This is just a warm up post...but please take this away —> Your actions, no matter how small, affect much more than just one person...so work hard to create the positive Ripple Effects that will help to re-shape our economy...alright?

Adversity...

Ahhh yes, one of my hot buttons with my mastermind clients and private clients is how they handle **adversity**.

Don't discount how critically important this concept is to your success as an affiliate manager, affiliate, or just as a person.

Adversity manifests itself in many forms, the most common of which is when someone tells you:

"You can't do that..." or *"Don't do it that way"*, or a variation of either one of these.

Personally, when anyone tells me any variation of the above...**I just laugh.**

After a good, hearty laugh...I say the 2 magic words that start the mental process that can also differentiate you from those that are unsuccessful...

"Watch me."

There are numerous examples of successful people who've "gone against the grain" and done things that were once seemingly impossible (Bannister in the 4 minute mile, John Reese having the million-dollar day in IM, etc...etc...).

The "how they did that" stuff is available all over the place, this post is about the mindset you set in motion by confidently stating *"watch me."*

Your brain clicks inside when you don't acknowledge the limitations that those people who don't understand fully what you're setting out to accomplish are placing on you.

Wise advice has been passed down that states *"you can't choose what happens to you, but you can choose how you react to it"*, and that applies here as well.

You can accept the "status quo" mentality, or you can do what 90% of people won't do and prove that mentality wrong.

The choice is yours.

Bottom line here is...you will encounter adversity as you continue your journey in building your affiliate businesses, that I can guarantee you (if you don't, you aren't really playing the game, you're dabbling).

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Some examples:

“You can’t write Google ads that way...”

“You need to write your articles less than 800 words...”

*“You can’t do affiliate marketing online and offline...”
(real example from someone who once told me that wouldn’t work)*

“Social media marketing doesn’t work...”

There are more examples that you could encounter, or perhaps have already, and if you have a story to share...I would like to hear it in reply.

(also how you used “watch me”)

Why You're NOT An Entrepreneur Just Because You Started A Website Or Blog

begin rant/

Holy Christmas – Chrastmas people...

I've just spoken with several people who were under the mistaken impression that because they are marketing using the Internet (e.g. they set up their website or blog)...that they are entrepreneurs (or business owners).

Nope.

And here's why:

For one, that sales letter you might have read that says you can set up a business online (using the Internet as a primary marketing medium) and start cash flowing into your bank account 24/7/365...

IS...

FUCKING...

WRONG...

There, I said it. Don't believe that marketing wholeheartedly. It's not just as simple as throwing up a website and making money, or EVERYONE would do it.

You WILL NOT, let me make this very clear...will NOT immediately start making thousands of dollars online (or anywhere for that matter) with a business unless you meet one of the two following conditions:

1) You have business assets (e.g. a marketing list or access to one, working capital to leverage AND the knowledge or access to the knowledge to leverage it properly, etc...).

And/Or

2) You work your ass off, make a ton of mistakes, learn from them, and build a business that way.

One of those two...that's it...end of story.

You're an entrepreneur *when* you actually create something and market it or have it marketed to the world successfully (using a website or blog if that's your choice). Not before then. /rant

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The 80/20 Rule For Business Part 2

The 80/20 rule...you've probably heard some variation of it by now...

"80% of your results come from 20% of your actions."

Or something like that.

We'll, in this blog post we're going to be examining this a bit deeper...as it applies to your business (the first time I wrote about this was in an article titled "[All Is Not Fair In Internet Business](#)"). The cool thing is, it doesn't matter what type of business you operate, this will apply in some form.

Also, [Perry Marshall](#) examines this principle as well, I want to examine it in my own way...but do not want to detract from what he is doing either, you should check his newsletter out.

So...

If 80% of your results come from 20% of your actions I propose:

- 80% of your customers come from 20% of your marketing.
- 80% of your profits come from 20% of your customers.
- 20% of your customers therefore need 80% of your time.
- 80% of your customers therefore need 20% of your time.
- And within each type of customer (lead, low-ticket buying, high-ticket buying, back-end product buying etc...) the 80/20 rule applies again and again.

Can you see the potential of where I'm going with this?

What if you spent the majority of your time with customers that feed your family and help your business soar...and spent or even automated the time needed to support the customers that will probably never buy from you again?

See the leverage? If you're devoting your efforts to customers who will provide the most leverage for profits anyhow...and not devoting time to the "time-suck" that the other customers could be producing...you'll see a huge return on investment of those efforts.

In fact... I would bet that 80% of the return could come from only 20% of the efforts your devoting to the customers who support your business. Hmmm...

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And even better, the remaining 80% of customers who only support 20% of your business still receive the attention they need to interact with your business on the level they choose to do so. Why?

Because you'll put simple and effective systems in place using the automation and other [tools](#) available to serve those customers well. They really only need 20% of your time anyhow...right?

Are you starting to see the full picture here?

So start today by at the very least examining how many resources (time, money, marketing etc...) you could redirect towards the customers that support your business to serve them better (*this is the second in a long series of posts I will be [writing](#) on this topic — next we'll examine data and case studies*).

But at least do something...today... ok?

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Why Can't We Be Human On The Internet?

I mean it...I'm asking a serious question here.

With all this talk about authenticity, transparency, blah blah blah...I'm wondering if we all just can't be human on the Internet and it be ok?

Being human comes with all of the things that make up a human though...

- We make mistakes in judgment.
- We say things that don't appeal to every single person on earth (although it's possible for every single person with an Internet connection to see them).
- We have different opinions.
- We express our emotions differently.
- Some humans like rules, others don't.
- And on...and on, it's either the whole package or none of it.

I have this question in my mind because people keep trying to make sets of rules about "how you act" online and outside of basic moral, legal, and ethical boundaries...why can't it be just like offline?

Why do we have to use Facebook just to connect with friends, and not for business purposes? Can't we use it for both? If you're tired of looking at ads...don't look at ads...don't follow the person sharing the ads for their businesses.

Why do we have to respond to comments on blogs? Who established that as law? Why do we have to use Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus AND LinkedIn just because we're geeks? Who said that had to happen?

Why can't we make money with our blogs? Even after initially choosing not to? Can't we run our own websites the way we want to?

Who made up all of these rules?

10000 Hours

When you need to master a complex skill or concept, it requires you apply yourself to mastering that skill or concept for approximately 10,000 hours to master it.

Pay close attention to the master level copywriters, marketers, business people, surgeons, and on... and on.

Almost every single one of them has been attentively practicing their craft for at least 10,000 hours (approximately 10 years) before attaining a level of “mastery” in that craft.

Now, I wonder...

How on earth could anyone pick up a business opportunity magazine for example... then expect to select any business opportunity and develop that opportunity into a successful business in any less time than 10,000 hours?

(don't pick me apart here, sure there are anomalies, but for the most part super-successful, mastery level businesses aren't built in less than 10 years)

You wouldn't expect to bat over .300 in the Major Leagues unless you had been playing baseball all your life would you? Hell, you couldn't expect to make the Major Leagues in the first place...right?

Then how on earth are you planning to turn that business opportunity into a full-time productive income in 30 days?

Think about this today.

Free

If you get **free** wrong... you can be “not important.”

Now, let’s explore this “free” concept with [mobile](#) phones as an example...

IMO, today’s consumer knows what free really means, unless YOU the marketer change that definition. In the case of mobile phones, I know that when a mobile phone is “free,” it really isn’t. The data charges are where they make their money. I propose that the majority of the buying market knows that.

So is the mobile phone really free? Not in that case. And as an aside... have you ever gotten a free iPhone (no, because Apple doesn’t HAVE to offer free, but that’s another blog post for me 😊).

But, what if Verizon decided one day to change the “free mobile phone” landscape?

A hybrid model of sorts.

What if they offered a “free for teens,” a “free for women,” a “free for men,” etc... approach?

Free for teens: Free phone plus “a teen-oriented PAID app” free for a year or something (they could work out the deal with an app owner).

Free for women, and free for men the same way... but the free offer tailored specifically for the group they are marketing to.

Obviously this is off the cuff... there could be a bit more research put into the offer, but I hope the point gets delivered.

Free isn’t free unless the end user doesn’t think it’s free, instead free is only free when the end user thinks they got away with something or got HUGE value for nothing.

If your end user thinks they got something for free... they’ve already devalued that thing in their mind... so free becomes “not important.”

Don’t be “not important.”

Interaction Versus Indication

Let's start by defining interaction and indication...

Interaction: Reciprocal action or influence.

Indication: 1. A single sign or piece of information that indicates something.

2. A reading given by a gauge or meter.

So, I have bad news for those companies that think people who are clicking the infamous Facebook "Like" button on their posts or Facebook pages are actually *interacting* with their brands.

Wrong.

People who click the Like button are *indicating* they want something, or that they like something... and that is NOT an interaction.

There is a BIG difference here, because interaction, as it applies to **social media** (think about that) implies there is a *person* on both sides of the interaction... not a wall, or some stupid coupon.

Otherwise, as a person I'm indicating that I want your coupon... but DON'T for a minute think I'm interacting with your brand... I'm not. Unless of course, someone from your company interacts with me... and further develops a relationship with me.

I suppose the over arching theme here is companies are stopping WAY short of the "social" part of social media, thinking that social media tools represent another way to post advertising that encourages say, a click of a Like button... and that is it.

Fuck people... can't we get more creative (and more importantly, personal) than that?

Edit: My friend Walt Goshert just published an excellent comment that "bottom lines" this whole thing...

The Illusion: "Likes", "Followers", "Re-Tweets", "Shares" are the new Internet currency.

The Reality: People actually spending money to buy your solutions is what fills the gas tank and puts food on the table.

Kinda puts icing on the cake... don't you think?

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The Product

Ok... to all business owners, executives, marketers... even copywriters...

The product does NOT, repeat... does NOT sell itself.

There are way too many choices, there is way too much information available, and... people just don't care about you or your product until they are CLEAR about what's in it for them (WIIFM).

So make a world-class product... by all means.

But don't think for a second that the product itself will do *all* the work, or even *part* of it, without a catalyst, a spark to light the "flame" of success selling that product.

And if your product truly is unique... the job is harder still to prove **WIIFM**... not easier.

Conclusion - We Need To Be Kids Again

I know I haven't posted in awhile, but good things come to those who wait.



This will probably be the most important post I've written on this blog.

Let's start with a question:

Do you remember what it was like to be a child?

You wanted to be an astronaut, a doctor, a dentist, whatever...

Why aren't you?

But that's not the point...the point is you lived and imagined without limitations...without fear, without "experience" (because you didn't have any yet).

And now, your "experience" gets in the way of being a kid again.

What happens when you start dreaming of the business you wanted to create (no matter how "stupid" it might seem)? What happens when you want to try some unorthodox method of marketing your current business?

Yep...experience gets in the way of you being a kid. You have an opportunity to truly enjoy life, to live by your own terms...and your damn "experience" gets in the way of doing that.

Fuck experience.

Do it anyway.

Build the business you wanted to build all along, market it the way YOU wanted to all along, be an astronaut, be a dentist...join the Peace Corps...whatever.

Who said your experience was always a good thing? It seems like it's saving you the trouble, that "wisdom" prevails...but what is it keeping you from doing?

Now, I'm not saying it's a good idea to jump in front of a bus or anything, but is that experience talking? Or was it **instinct**? (Hmmm....)

Don't do anything stupid...or should you?

Think about experience this way:

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Every time you have an “experience”, it’s like a sheet of paper, gently landing on top of you...and over time, thousands of these sheets of paper pour on you.

In the end, you end up getting buried in paper...right? The real you, the child, the kid screaming to get out from under all of that paper...the “experience” you build up...the “wisdom” that supposedly is “saving” you from making a bad choice.

We have GOT to be kids again. Sure, after you break your arm, you learn not to jump head first off of the jungle gym...but should that “experience” save you from jumping out of an airplane with a parachute?

It certainly tries to.

If you wanted to write [that book](#), but you’re afraid of what the people in your audience will think of you after you publish...that’s experience talking again.

To be creative means you’re telling experience NO!

Now, don’t get me wrong, some experience does in fact keep you safe, like when you decided it was cool to try licking an electrical outlet in your house. *(not cool, and my tongue was numb for hours afterwards)*

So, in the end, try telling your experience NO once in awhile...you just might be able to break out from under that pile of papers again.

We need to be kids again.

Have a great 2012 and beyond my friends.

Joseph Ratliff

**Joseph Ratliff
Creative Business Thinker
Writer
And Motivator**

Resources

Look, I have **plenty** of clients keeping me busy through most of the year; in fact, breaking into one of my 2 Platinum Mastermind groups is next to impossible. On top of that, I'm not a cheap copywriter or consultant, nor do I write "\$5 articles" or anything (that's content writing, not copywriting by the way ;)).

With that being said, following are some services I provide which you might be interested in for the future:

My Private Coaching, Consulting and Copywriting Services

Most of the time, I'm booked out anywhere between 4 weeks and 6 months out...but if you plan your business the right way, who knows, you just might have room to skyrocket your online sales right? ([Click here](#) to contact me for more information, but those with small advertising and marketing budgets need not apply...)

My Platinum Mastermind Groups

I operate 2 of these, with 10 members in each group that invest \$995 a quarter to be included. Three times a year we share data, ideas, and hold each other accountable for results...and we also do private monthly teleseminars. The synergy is absolutely amazing (Closed to new members for the last 26 months, [send me an email](#) to be automatically added to the waiting list IF an opening were to be available).