

Free Agent Marketing Tips

July | August 2004

Your One-Page Marketing Plan (Part I)

By Doug Florzak

Marketing tips for
Free Agents,
Independent Consultants,
Freelancers,
and Small Business

Continuing our series on guerrilla marketing, this issue focuses on building a marketing plan. It's surprising how many people start a business using the "build it and they will come" model. This model rarely works. It's easy to get so distracted with the tasks of setting up a business (renting office space, setting up phone service, printing business cards, opening a business checking account, etc.) that you forget the most important part—planning how you will get customers!

Actually, you should create a marketing plan way before you commit money and resources to a business idea. It should be the first document you create, even before your business plan. Besides, the core of a good business plan is the marketing plan anyway.

What is the difference between a business plan and a marketing plan? The business plan is the basic blueprint for your company defining your mission, funding, cash flow, and owner profile. Here's how the Small Business Administration describes the components of a business plan: "the basic components include a current and pro forma balance sheet, an income statement, and a cash flow analysis. It helps you allocate resources properly, handle unforeseen

complications, and make good business decisions. Because it provides specific and organized information about your company and how you will repay borrowed money, a good business plan is a crucial part of any loan application. Additionally, it informs sales personnel, suppliers, and others about your operations and goals."

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Although most business plans include a section on marketing, a separate marketing plan is much more focused, identifying the goals, target audience, techniques you'll use to reach that audience, and how much you'll spend to accomplish your goals.

Like business plans, there are many different ways to write a marketing plan. In my practice as a Certified Guerrilla Marketing Coach, I encourage the use of a one-page marketing plan based on Jay Conrad Levinson's 7-Step Guerrilla Marketing Plan. The components of the plan include the following: Goals, Benefits, Target Audience, Niche, Identity, Budget, and Marketing Tools.

This issue will cover **Goals, Benefits, Target Audience, and Niche.**

Goals: What do you want your marketing efforts to accomplish? When you write down your answer to this question,

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make sure you're specific enough that you can measure the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns later on. To accomplish this use the SMART principle: make your goals Sensible, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound. For example, "Add five new clients by the end of the first quarter, 2005" or "Increase gross revenues by 15% by the end of 2005."

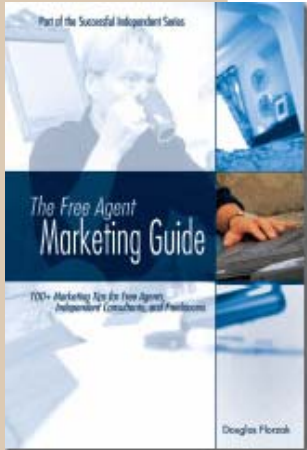
Benefits: "Features" are the properties of things that people buy. "Benefits" are what customers really want from what they buy. For example the benefit of a teleconference is that you don't have to commute to a class. The benefit you get from a drill is the hole. To get at your benefits ask yourself (1) "What do my clients want?" (2) "How am I different?" (3) "What do I offer that my competition doesn't?"

Target Audience: I once heard a story about Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.com. When he has a meeting with his managers, no matter how many people are packed into the room, he leaves one chair empty. Do you know what that empty chair

represents? The customer. He wants to create a physical presence to remind everyone who they are in business to serve. When you're considering the target audience for your service or product, ask yourself "Who sits in my customer's chair?" Make sure you don't say "everyone" because you want to create a niche for yourself. Which brings us to...

Niche: How will you stand out from the crowd? As a small business, it's better to find an area of the market that's an inch wide and a mile deep. It's much more difficult to fill an area that's a mile wide and an inch deep. You can define a niche by location: "You're the only photographer within five miles"; by focusing on a subset of your services: "You're the pet photographer!"; or by focusing on a particular business vertical: "You're a product photographer for the furniture industry."

Next issue we'll cover Identity, Budget, and Marketing Tools. ■

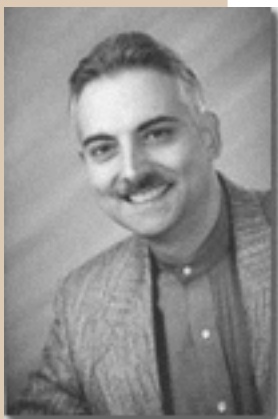


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Get a jumpstart on your marketing plan!



Take advantage of my 6 Week Guerrilla Marketing Springboard package. This is a highly focused 6-week coaching program in which we create a one-page marketing plan, create a marketing calendar, work on your presentation skills, find fusion marketing partners, and examine online marketing.

Working together, we will build your marketing plan and get your marketing attack started. In each session I will coach you on how each marketing principle applies to your business. Since our goal is to create results, I will assign you homework each week. You will also have

time each week to address your individual needs for the week.

The program is only \$799 and includes a copy of the Guerrilla Marketing Toolkit. I offer a money-back guarantee: if after the first session, you don't think coaching is right for you, I'll refund your money.

As a bonus, if you sign up in the next 30 days, I'll include a copy of both my books: "Successful Independent Consulting: Turn Your Career Experience Into a Consulting Business" and "The Free Agent Marketing Guide."

For more information, go to
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