

# Small Business Marketing

Tips for making your marketing more  
effective and cost-effective

This guide includes extracts from Toby Marshall's 2009 book,  
'Small Business Internet Marketing' – available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).  
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“Recently, I attended a seminar which Toby ran. It was fabulous! Toby provided us with a wealth of information in a short time-frame & I came away with plenty of ideas to implement. I would have no hesitation in recommending Toby for anyone needing help in generating leads.”

*Debbie Carr,  
Director of True Colours Recruitment*

### Contact Lead Creation

Phone: (02) 9281 5938

Fax: (02) 8580 5280

Email: [admin@leadcreation.com.au](mailto:admin@leadcreation.com.au)

Suite 106

410 Elizabeth St

Surry Hills, NSW

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## The Best Marketing Advice You'll Ever Get.

**Let's start this marketing journey by cutting to the chase. By being really blunt:**

Small Business<sup>1</sup> Marketing is **only** about getting more customers—about generating leads that become the sort of clients you want many more of.

Everything else like 'raising your profile' is just so much hot air. Or falls in the category of "nice to have, but way too expensive for my small business".

This famous quote from John Wanamaker sums up the advertising and marketing dilemma of big business:

*"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half."*

Well, you'll soon discover that in advertising small businesses, the wastage is typically 80%, and we do know where most of it is wasted.

### **Where is the 80% wasted by small business?**

Well, my mate Bob<sup>2</sup> runs a small business in Melbourne and what he went through perfectly illustrates the incredible wastage that can occur when an SME starts a marketing journey.

Bob provides financial advice to very wealthy families, his office is in the rich inner Melbourne suburb of Toorak. His team of five professionals provide a great service, and it's a very profitable business.

One morning in February 2008 Bob arrived in the office and surprised his staff by saying he was a bit tired of being the main salesperson. That since he was bored with constantly going out and doing presentations and running seminars, he thought he'd invest in some marketing to get some new clients instead.

Turns out a few sales people had been to see him—hard selling people whose message had fallen on receptive ears.

The first was a consultant selling 'Position and Brand your Business'. And \$8,000 later, Bob had a new logo and a new letterhead. Plus he had a 'strategy' to raise the profile of his new

<sup>1</sup> What is small business? It's companies with sales of under \$10 million a year, employing less than a hundred staff. Right down to a solopreneur working from home.

<sup>2</sup> Name changed to protect the guilty! And for you non-Oz's, mate just means a friend. We're not married!

brand. It didn't worry Bob that most of this bloke's clients were large companies, for whom this sort of money was 'pocket change'. It didn't occur to him that it might be a problem.

The branding consultant then introduced the alarmingly attractive Brenda who sells advertising in an industry magazine, plus 'special' sponsorship rights to their conferences. Bob is like most men, and so \$15,000 seemed like a great investment.

Then a species that hopefully small business will not encounter for too much longer turned up on the doorstep: a web designer. Young and stylish, he and his partner built great looking websites. \$3000, plus \$100 a month to host. Great deal, thought Bob.

The last salesman to knock on Bob's door seemed to offer the last piece of the puzzle: Qualified leads, delivered on a plate, using Google AdWords. "These prospects will see my new logo and new positioning statement, so it was a no-brainer" said Bob. Just \$12,000 and leads will flow for 12 whole months. "One client will pay for it all!" said the salesman.

So, Bob had now spent \$38,000, a large chunk of his net profit for the year. Plus ongoing monthly charges, some of which he was yet to become aware of (courtesy of the spiky haired web designers).

And he sat back and waited for the clients. And waited. He rang the salespeople and told them not much was happening. They told him he had 'raised his profile' and to be patient, that the clients would come. But Bob had now turned off the money flow and the advertisements weren't appearing anymore—and if his 'profile' had ever been raised, it was now sinking fast. In fact his 'profile' was following his money down the plughole.

Bob would probably still be hoping that some new clients would shortly appear if we hadn't had a chat the last time I was down in Melbourne. He was tearing the last of his hair out as he realised he'd been conned. He's now back on the road doing what he has done for twenty-three years, selling, while he slowly and cautiously considers buying Lead Creation's marketing system. I appreciate he is a bit jaundiced about marketers and that it may take some time!

I'm unhappy as well, because he hadn't read this book and called us first—we build an entire marketing system for less than half of what he wasted. But at least one person was a winner: The young and incredibly attractive Brenda got a nice bonus!

**Once you've read this book you'll know there were some *really* important pieces missing from Bob's marketing strategy.** Pieces that meant he had zero chance of getting a flow of leads – in Australia, we say he had Buckley's chance. Here are some of the main ones:

- **'SEO'** was MISSING: this is what enables people to actually find your website

- **Persuasion Copywriting** was MISSING: the words that people read or hear on your website must make them want to get to know you and to download your stuff
- **Autoresponder** was MISSING: this is the technology that automatically sends potential clients your great information.
- **User control** was MISSING: the autoresponder and website will need to be updated regularly—so you need to do it yourself, and not pay \$500 every time to the spiky haired web designers!

You'll also discover as you read further why 'image' or 'profile raising' advertising in magazines, newspapers and radio is just a waste for a small business like Bob's. And finally, you'll see that charging that amount of money on Google AdWords for a micro business is just obscene. No other word for it. Less than \$2,000 will generate customers for 95% of small businesses if you follow the strategies in Chapter 8 on AdWords.

## Advertising Small Business

Most small business owners wanting more clients take this phrase literally. And they go out and buy advertisements in the mass media—newspapers, magazines and radio. Which costs a fortune and has dubious benefits. Advertising small businesses means something very different in this book, as you'll discover. It means promoting your small business, and they are poles apart.

It means using one of a number of different techniques to get your message out to the people you want to read it. It means internet marketing; social networking; videos on YouTube; building a big profile on LinkedIn. And yes, god forbid, advertising your small business may find you on Twitter (where no-one wants to know what you had for lunch!).

## Small Business Marketing that Actually WORKS.

**If you are going to part with your hard earned money, any marketing you do must have ALL of the following components:**

1. It needs to be diverse, you don't want to put all your eggs in one basket. Bob bought four extremely large (and overpriced) baskets, but he really needed nine smaller and more affordable ones.
2. All the components need to work together. Bob had Google AdWords, but no-one told him about Landing Pages—critical for small business marketing (Chapter 4: Persuasion Copywriting). Or Autoresponders (Chapter 7: Autoresponders). He had a website, but Spiky Hair didn't tell him about small business SEO (Chapter 3: Search Engine Optimization – Spiky's not too sure about

optimization anyway<sup>3</sup>, let alone why it's different to what big companies do. But hey, he loves building cool websites.)

3. It needs to be measurable. Your results need to be quantifiable so you can see what's working and what's a dog. What's getting you good leads and sales and what isn't. So you then spend more on what works and maybe shoot the dog.
4. It needs to be testable before you spend big money (pretty hard to do with ads in Magazines!). For example: if you need five Google AdWords campaigns, build one on low traffic words and make sure everything works. Then test and tweak it on high traffic words. When it works, build the other 4 campaigns.
5. It needs to be 'off the shelf' where possible. So it's robust, scaleable and connectable. And someone else is worrying about making the technology work better as internet marketing changes at warp speed. Web sites and the technology to stay in touch with your clients are now virtually free. Something Spiky Hair is going to painfully have to live with. Maybe he'll move into SEO, just as that stops being flavor of the year!

Marketing that has these five components is called Direct Response Marketing. Before we look at this type of small business marketing in more detail, let's clear some misconceptions up...

## Small Business' Common Marketing Misconceptions

### Misconception #1

"Sales is marketing". No. It's *sales*. And sales always involves people trying to talk to/talking to potential customers. Marketing, on the other hand, brings people into your 'funnel' so you can later sell to them after you are positioned as the expert. (More on this later.)

### Misconception #2

That "the kind of marketing done by large companies is the same as what small businesses need to do". This is simply rubbish but believing it is destructive of your hard earned money. Almost equivalent to buying a yacht—just a hole that you pour money into which quickly vanishes!

For a large company, their advertising and marketing essentially focuses on building a brand, building their image in the marketplace. They do this because:

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<sup>3</sup> I once pointed out to a spiky that the truly beautiful \$11,000 site he had just proudly shown me was now 6 months old but didn't appear in the first 500 Google results for their main keyword. The site was invisible online. His response: "SEO is a waste of money; it only works for a short time". Amazingly narrow sighted and WRONG!



The marketing department in big companies has a real battle on its hands if it wants to create marketing that is effective. Now, if it's hard for them, it's impossible for you. Brand marketing is very expensive which just makes it ridiculous for small businesses who don't have big budgets to blow on hit and miss campaigns. Or the money to spend on something as vague as 'raising their profile'.

Which brings us back to **Direct Response Marketing**. If you follow the strategies in this book, you'll see it is very effective, low-cost and simple to implement. Most importantly, a small business can quickly see what works and what doesn't – and then do more of what works.

Direct marketing was pioneered in the world of hard selling consumer junk marketing—weight loss, muscle building, Readers Digest, etc. So many small business owners who are professionals or sell BtoB are rightly skeptical. They believe it could make them look 'unprofessional' in the eyes of their industry colleagues.

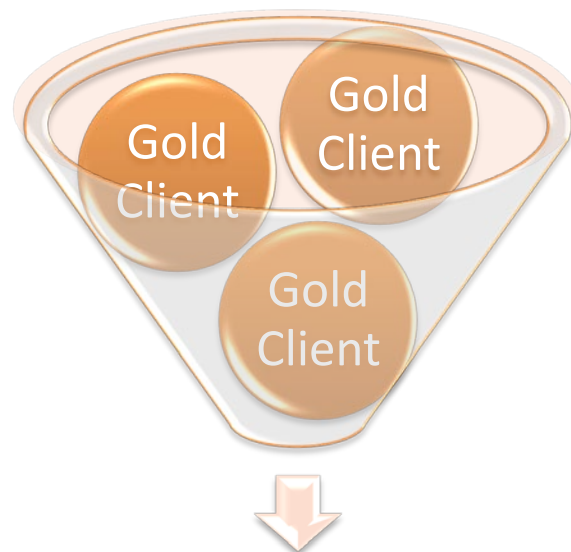
Well they'd be right if they started selling their Accounting services alongside the cellulite ads on late night television. Or put their Risk Management services in the local newspaper alongside "Once only, never to be repeated offers" with giant headlines and semi-naked models!

The truth is that there are some very good principles that underlie these hard selling and crass advertisements. At **lead creation** we have spent nearly five years working with mentors and studying the techniques and how to adapt them to the world of small services businesses. And in particular, professional services marketing—which needs to be a long way away from the "you too can lose a hundred pounds in two weeks" ads!

**What are some of the principles that can be adapted?** We've already discussed a major one: the need to test before you waste your money. Brilliant.

However the main one is the need to start building a relationship slowly. Give something away that your audience values that doesn't cost you too much. Something that establishes your credibility. That does the 'Heavy Lifting' for your business before you get on the phone. So you can stay as the kindly Dr Jekyll and not switch to the hard selling Mr. Hyde, which rather ruins your positioning as the 'expert adviser' (and isn't that where we all need to be?).

As we've seen, Direct Response is ideal for a small business with a limited budget and lots of competitors. And using its proven techniques to acquire new Gold Clients must be the number one priority of small business marketing. It's only the opinions these clients have about your marketing that counts, not your competitors or the customers you don't want.



**The large niche of A list clients who are the most profitable for your small business.  
A well-defined group to whom you provide high service levels for a premium price**

Cost-effective marketing that gets these Gold Clients through your door is paramount. Once you provide them with a professional service, 'word of mouth' quickly becomes an important part of your marketing strategy. Gold Clients and their referrals will ensure the stability, profitability and growth of your small business into the future.

## **Direct Marketing Power: What It Can Do For You**

Now you've got lots and lots of competitors like all SMEs. So how do you stand out? Well fundamentally, all those competitors are doing the same things—they are selling to their potential clients, and trying to

do media advertising and fill seminar rooms. If you continue to do what they do, you can expect the same poor results they get. Your marketing strategy needs to make you stand out from the bunch and position you as the expert.

Direct Response Marketing is an extremely effective, low-cost and simple marketing strategy to implement in order to reach your Gold Clients and increase your profit margins. Direct Marketing contacts potential clients through mail, email, faxes, telemarketing, social networking and so on with the express purpose of prompting them to respond. For this reason, it is an incredibly effective and powerful way to market when it is done correctly and professionally. Each of these areas is a separate topic that we will cover in detail within this book.

## How to Protect Your Small Business –The Importance of Marketing

If asked what business you are in, your initial answer might be, ‘Financial Planning’ or ‘Business Coaching’. There are two other correct answers to this question, however, that are not often obvious to people working in professional services like Financial Advisory, coaching, the law, etc.

Did you know that:

### **Firstly, you are in The Marketing Business**

While your initial answer is right – you generate your income by providing financial advice – this is a relatively lowly paid and relatively replaceable activity. Your *real money* instead comes from having a system that generates new clients for your small business. This business is a marketing business – whether it’s business to business marketing or business to consumer marketing. Without a marketing system, you are limiting yourself in the recruitment of new clients and inhibiting the growth of your small business.

The far more challenging part of any small business is not providing your service but the marketing of that service. Once you make *that* your personal focus, then you are in the marketing business, and you can give yourself the best possible chance of ensuring your future and improving your profitability.

### **Secondly, you are in The Self-Aggrandisement Business**

Now, this was a hard notion for a professional like me to accept, who was an accountant, then a marketing manager in investment banking and then a marketer in executive recruitment. To me my profession was accounting or marketing. So when I first heard the concept that all professionals are in the self-aggrandisement business, I thought: *What a load of rubbish*.

But clearly I thought about it some more.

Success is not always (some even say usually) about talent or intelligence. There are many very talented and very smart professionals who earn a lot less than a net of \$250,000 per annum from their small business.

This is where Self-Aggrandisement comes in. If your clients believe you are the only person that can solve their problems they won't go to anyone else, and you can charge premium fees for your premium advice to that niche.

However, getting them to believe you are the 'only one' is a big ask unless you specialize in solving the problems of people like them. And you do it every day. So you really understand them. Of course, to make this level of specialization profitable, they must be a group worthy of such focused attention.

**This leads you to the two key questions underlying this book:**

- 1) Who are your gold clients?
- 2) How do you make them aware of your expertise and understanding of their specialist needs?

## Who Are Your Gold Clients?

Gold Clients are simply the type of clients you need to run a highly profitable small business. They are identified by four factors – they are Reachable, Advisable, Profitable, and Satisfying.

- **Reachable:**

People belonging to a niche have one thing in common: they hang out or congregate in similar places both online and offline. They are in the same associations, attend the same sort of clubs. They read similar magazines and often the same supplements in the same newspapers. They'll have similar hobbies and visit the same sorts of websites.

Now, you're in small business so you can't afford full page ads in major magazines or to sponsor major public events – which is your only marketing choice if your clients are diverse. If you narrow your focus, however, to target a single niche then you can direct your advertising and promotions to where this specific group congregates, to what they read, to what websites they go to and so on.

**You can only ever effectively reach a niche with marketing. The most profound words in small business marketing are also very simple: "You can only ever reach a niche."<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> OK, they're my words! But I believe they get to the heart of small business marketing.

- **Advisable:**

Gold Clients listen to you as they have been positioned right from the beginning to see you as the expert. They came to you as the authority after reading your White Paper or newsletter, or hearing how you helped others like them (more on these topics later) and you didn't have to go into your hard-sell 'Mr. Hyde' mode.

In this situation you begin the relationship with the upper hand and can then provide the service you know your clients need to achieve their goals. In short, clients will be far more likely to follow your advice or use your product or service in the way they will benefit the most.

- **Profitable:**

Gold Clients in a narrow niche have similar needs and require similar services. When you focus on that niche it's easier to sell to them because they know you are the expert, so it reduces your selling effort. It also lowers your costs significantly as you keep providing similar services over and over again. In this way small businesses can start to leverage their time by delegating the work to others because the systems and the processes are set up just to handle this niche. Also you can often negotiate volume discounts and other benefits from your suppliers.

And finally, when you focus on a narrow niche, you are adding more value so you can charge premium pricing!

- **Satisfying:**

Gold Clients (as we have defined them) get good results from your small business because they act promptly on your advice and implement the solutions that you know will work. It is satisfying to watch your clients achieve their goals and dreams.

**Identifying your Gold Clients is the first step to creating incredibly powerful and effective small business marketing.** To find out more about innovation marketing that works, read on.

## Lead Generation to get Gold Clients

If you run a small to medium sized business and you're looking to gain more clients, you will need to dig out qualified sales leads. It *all* begins with sales leads. In the Professions and in other businesses that sell 'business to business', lead generation is the hardest piece of the marketing puzzle.

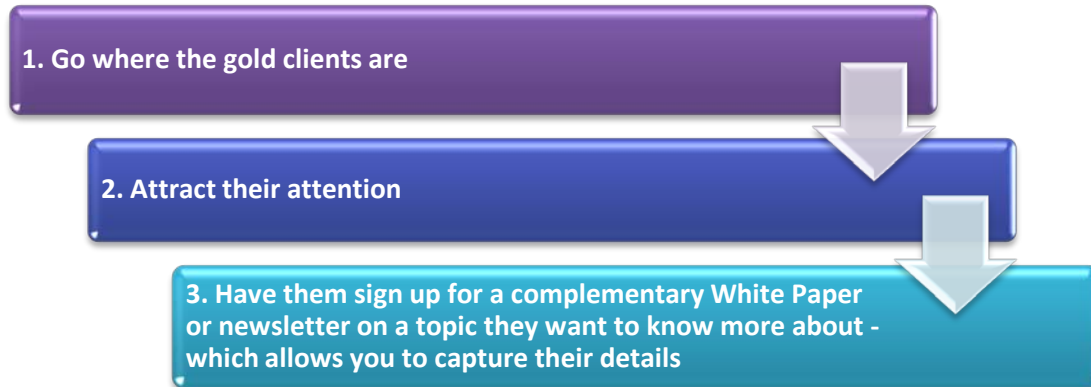
The three foundation stones of successful small business Marketing are:

1. Deciding which clients you want many more of—Gold Clients

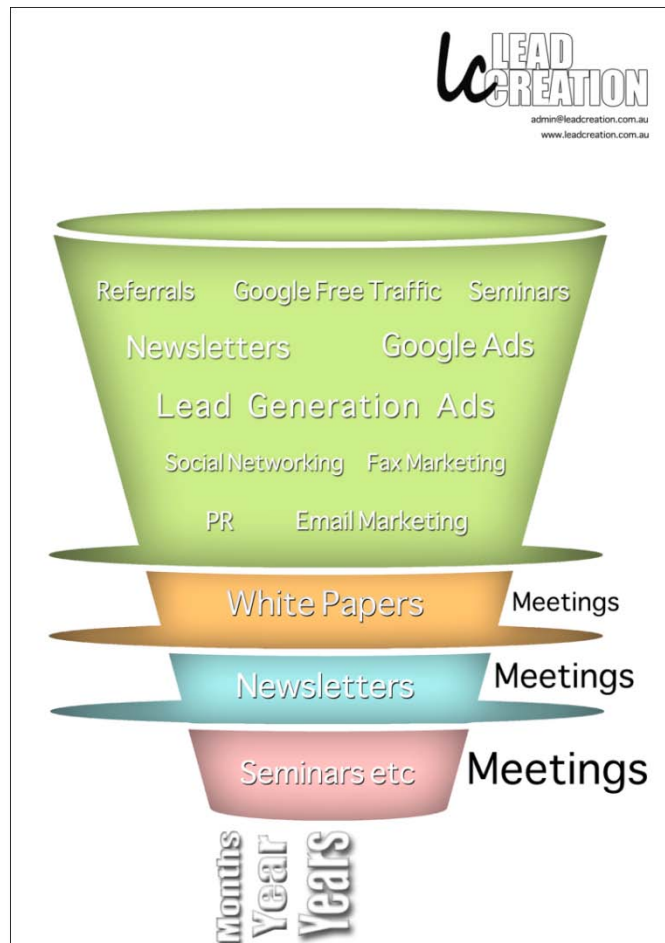
2. Filling a 'Funnel' with potential Gold Clients
3. Staying in touch with your Gold Clients without annoying them

**How Do You 'Fill the Funnel'?**

Well very simply, there are only three ways to do it:



**Small Business Marketing Funnel**



## Effective Marketing in a Nutshell

Marketing breaks down to three core elements, as shown in the Marketing Triangle. Each is explained in depth below.



### Your Market:

This is your Gold Client, who belongs to a narrow niche as we addressed earlier. When you know who your Gold Client is then you can think of what media to use to reach them, and what messages will make them sit up and notice you. In order to identify your Gold Clients, the things you will need to consider include:

- Who are your best clients right now?
- Are there a lot more of them that you could get as clients (is it a large niche)?
- Which of your services do they value the most?
- How do they think?
- Where do they live and work?
- How do they like to use your services?
- What work do they do?
- What is their education level?
- What cars do they drive?
- How old are they?
- What are their interests and hobbies?

- What associations are they in?
- What newspapers, magazines, radio stations, websites do they like?

Once you are clear as to which clients you want more of, it's easier to work out how to target your marketing only to them.

#### **Your Message:**

Think of the message as 'bait' for your Gold Clients. It is not one-size-fits-all—you need a message that's magnetic only to your Gold Clients. It must also get them to respond immediately by using an offer that appeals to them and makes them want to share their contact information with you—such as by providing a free report or White Paper for them to download online. Effective small business internet marketing achieves this. This process of immediate detail capture gives you the ability to continue marketing to them using the automated system that we will talk about shortly.

#### **Your Media:**

Media is anything that gets your message to your Gold Clients. For most professionals and BtoB companies, the main media are seminars, newsletters, industry magazines, newspapers, radio, inserts, flyers, websites, emails, faxes and so on. (One Gold tip about media: faxes really work well. Counter intuitive I know, but they do. And in Australia at least, they are not covered by Privacy laws) Diversification of media is a good strategy to get your message out there.

#### **Using a diversity of media is great for two strong reasons:**

1. Different people respond to different media. For example, some people never go to seminars while others are seminar junkies. Some never read their emails and some live on Outlook or their Blackberry hour-by-hour, day by day.
2. Using only one or two different media makes you very vulnerable to aggressive new competitors, to major shifts in technology and to changes in the laws around privacy. You need to employ a spread of media in order to balance against these risks.

#### **GOLD TIP**

**The best media of all is the free traffic you get from Google. You can optimize your website to just reach your Gold Clients. And the best news is that virtually none of your competitors are doing it yet if you are in Professional Services or Business to Business marketing.**

To find out more please visit [www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au), or buy the full book by clicking [Small Business Internet Marketing](#).

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

There are hundreds of millions of websites currently online with more created every hour. How will potential clients find your site in this vastly expanding sea of information? The cold, hard truth is: if you don't know anything about Search Engine Optimization, new clients *won't* find you. You *won't* be able to generate leads online and your small business internet marketing will be useless. You can learn more about a good SEO strategy in the video section of Lead Creation's website: <http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au/videos/>

### “What is SEO exactly, and why is it important for my business?”

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process where you deliberately improve and optimize your website so that when people search for services like yours, they will find you before your competitors. It's the process of making your website appear more relevant in the eyes of Google. What about the other search engines? In Australia, Google totally dominates—to the extent that the others are irrelevant. In fact, we have started calling it GO for Google Optimization, and not SEO. In most other countries, for businesses that market BtoB or who are in Professional Services, Google is by far the dominant engine. However, the techniques for optimizing Google are very similar to the other engines and will work there as well.

If you want prospects to find you, you need to be towards the top of the first results page—which is the first 10 entries on most people's browsers. The simple fact is that the higher up you are on the results page, the more people will click on your link. A ranking on page one will greatly increase the traffic that visits your website. People don't and won't sort through the thousands of entries that come up in their search. Many rarely even go to the second page.

### Techniques for Improving *On Page* SEO

- Increase the number of pages on your website. This increases the visibility of the site to search engines
- Use keywords in menu links, if you have a navigation menu. This gives additional SEO significance to the pages to which the links refer—and help you generate leads online
- Use keywords in your URL (your website address)—Google loves it. For example, most law firms use the partners' names in the URL – a huge waste. One of our clients is O'Neill Partners. We bought the URL [www.oplegal.com.au](http://www.oplegal.com.au) for them and having this major keyword in their address has given their new website a huge boost

- Use keywords in the name of an HTML page file, it has a major positive effect on your ranking
- Use keywords and descriptions in your 'anchor text' (the underlined text, the link). Those who know nothing about SEO write 'Click Here' as their link, which is a complete waste of this extremely valuable 'real estate'
- Use the Alt tag attribute on images. This provides images with a text description that can be 'seen' by Google, because as mentioned before, the website analysis programs cannot read images or graphics just by themselves
- Make use of your site's Meta tags. These are used to carry information, which can then be read by browsers or other programs. Metadata consists of a title, description and URL.
- Use keywords within the internal links on your site. If your navigation menu or header consists of graphic elements to make it more attractive, search engines will not be able to index the text of its links. Your navigation menu/header should be text based so Google can analyse it (though spiky haired young web designers don't want to hear this. You are taking half their fun away. But it's your website, and do you want customers or just to look funky?!)
- Use keywords in headings. Headings are text highlighted with larger and bolded fonts. You only need to highlight each keyword two or three times on a page for it to have a positive effect on your position
- Use keywords in the title tag of each page of your site. The title of your page should be 65 characters maximum including spaces. This shows up on the Google search results page with the description of your website underneath. The description should be 155 characters max. including spaces
- Create a site map of your website to allow search-engine 'spiders' easy access to your entire site.

## The 6 Steps That Will Improve Your Optimization

Our expert team at *lead creation* use twelve strategies to optimize small business marketing websites like yours. SEO is a complicated and time-consuming process, so here are six of the easier and most powerful strategies that you can implement yourself.

### 1. Use text appropriately

You need to have a text-based website. Understand that Google can only read text. Google sends out programs that analyse the text on your page, these are called robots or 'bots'. Websites that are overloaded with graphics and flash can't be read by Google—and therefore won't appear in search results.

Text must be used everywhere possible. You can still have a professional website by loading up images (and using the alt tag function) and having a neat and clean presentation. You can still have a nice background and professional colours, but don't overload it with images and flash.

## 2. Use keywords

Keywords are what your potential clients put into the search box in order to find you. Pretend you are one of your clients and imagine what they type into Google when looking for you.

## 3. Position keywords in the right places

Keywords should be put throughout your text, but shouldn't interfere with the flow and feel of your page. The place that will provide the biggest impact for your keywords is the Metadata. Metadata includes the 'behind the scenes' titles and descriptions for each page. Implement appropriate keywords on those pages and this will almost instantly boost your page position in search results. Titles must be kept to a maximum of 65 characters including spaces, and descriptions should be kept under 155 characters including spaces—it's all Google will read.

One of the easiest and most effective places to use keywords is in the titles and body text visible on your page. Google's programs read all of this text. Your <H1> (first heading) tags are the most important piece of visible text, followed by <H2> (second heading), <H3> (third heading) and so on, then your link text, **bolded**, *italicized* and underlined text, and then lastly your body text. Your body text should contain about a 2-5% keyword density.

## 4. Linking and anchor text

The fourth of these six strategies is to use links effectively between sites. If a website relevant to what you do has a link to your site, Google will see this and view your site as more relevant. It is always better to have more links heading into your site than out of it.

While you can't really control other people's sites, you *can* control sites such as your own blog, your YouTube posts, and social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and so on. Google visits all of these sites too, so it's a good idea to take advantage of that as well. Linking all your sites will help you generate leads online by improving your SEO.

Don't forget your anchor text. Anchor text is the literal text that you see when you create a link. Use a keyword as your link, not the usual 'click here' or 'download now' links. For example one of our main keywords is Small Business Internet Marketing. So our link might say: "Click on Small Business Internet Marketing for more on this topic." And the URL is hidden 'under' this underlined text—in your Content Management System, you click on the Link button that usually looks like a chain to achieve this.

## 5. Use Directories

Directories are websites that provide a directory service. Making a submission to them provides links to your website and these are highly valued by Google. The best of all directories is [www.dmoz.com](http://www.dmoz.com), which Google visits almost once a day. Again you should submit keyword 'loaded' titles and descriptions to these directories – 65 characters for the title, 155 characters for the description including spaces.

## 6. Change your content frequently

If you are frequently making changes or adding or extending pages, then Google notices and will make sure that it drops by to visit you more often.

Have you ever seen the 'cached' link below a Google search result? That shows you what your website looked like the last time Google was there, and that cached result is how Google still sees you now; it's what they have stored in their database.

The more you change your content, the more Google will visit you, which in turn will make your site more relevant.

### **\*\*\*Beware of over-optimization\*\*\***

If your page doesn't read well, or if you advertise for something that is irrelevant to what you do, people are more likely to leave your page without taking action. This is not good small business marketing and Google can actually track this. Google monitors how long people spend on your page and what they do there. So if people are leaving your page and going elsewhere, Google knows about it and knows that your page isn't relevant. Your site's ranking will decrease.

As an aside, is anybody else getting worried about how much global power Google has? And how much more it is about to get as it successfully challenges Microsoft (in a loose alliance with Apple and its amazing iPhone) and also its challenge to another Gorilla, Amazon?

To find out more please visit [www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au), or buy the full book by clicking [Small Business Internet Marketing](#).

## What can an Autoresponder do for my Business?

At some point everyone's received the email 'John Smith is out of the office and will return at the end of the month.' This email was delivered by an autoresponder system (computer software program) which sends an automatic reply to whoever emails. But there's **a lot more** an autoresponder can do than simply informing your friends that you're out of the office. Did you know that an autoresponder is an incredibly effective tool for turning sales leads into clients?

Now, an autoresponder won't write emails for you. Nor is it used to spam people by sending unsolicited emails. An autoresponder system is useful because it allows you to set up a sequence of prewritten emails that are sent out to prospects in your database at regular intervals determined by you.

In order to do this, you need to capture details from people who visit your website. Usually, this is done by offering them a free White Paper, or something else such as a newsletter which they can only receive if they submit an email address first.

Besides sending out simple, standardised messages, autoresponders can also send out an unlimited number of follow-up messages that can be delivered at intervals over a certain period of time. Whether it's done through your email program or your web server, you are able to keep your client base, and prospective customers, informed and up-to-date with the goings on of your company. It's also a valuable tool in providing recipients with product and service information. MailChimp is a good example of an autoresponder system – find out more at [mailchimp.com](http://mailchimp.com).

The point of using an autoresponder is that when people search for services like yours in Google, they may just be inquiring. They may not be ready to commit money at this stage. **An autoresponder allows you to:**

Keep in touch & keep yourself 'front of mind'

Deliver information a potential client will value

Deliver an ongoing relationship so that they begins to trust you

Position your business as the expert in the field so that when a potential client is ready to commit, they come to your business first

## If you can't control your autoresponder, you can't control your marketing

We bank online. Find jobs online. Buy airline tickets, book our seats and print our boarding passes. We manage our database of friends and connections. We now have more control over our own lives and can access what we want online without having to leave of our offices or even make a phone call. We can now do things at our convenience without the mediation of a third party.

And yet in business, most of you don't have the control you would like over your online activities – your web designers do.

**And *the* big thing that 99% of businesses don't control: their autoresponders. This one, seemingly small thing, cripples your marketing.**

Firstly, what is an autoresponder? It's the web based software that controls the interactivity of your website. Why is interactivity so important? There is now less and less 'all at once' marketing, where everything out goes out on the same day to a mass audience. An autoresponder allows you to keep focusing your marketing, and ensures that the messages you send out are always the most effective ones to reach your potential clients.

Many business owners and managers can now access their website to edit pages and add new pages. But what few can do is control the **interaction** with visitors. For example, they can't change the forms that 'capture' the information on your website (name, email, phone number, etc). And they can't alter the email/s that go out once people have completed the form. They can't change how many emails are sent out, the frequency of sending or directly edit the content. Their web guys control this.

### **Let's look at a fairly typical marketing event.**

You are one of the sponsors of a 3 day conference where one of your staff is speaking and you have a prize draw. Three things happen:

- (i) On the first day, Friday, you are only handing out a few brochures from your booth. One of your staff on the booth tests the email system and notices a typo in the email acknowledgement. And she points out that one of the colours in it is wrong.
- (ii) Saturday is your big seminar presentation, which you expect over 200 people to log on and register for. At breakfast on the big day, a friend comes over and says he registered yesterday, but the email he got was very confusing (and turns out his email can only receive plain text emails).
- (iii) Finally on Sunday after lots of feedback, you realise it would be a great to do a 'last minute offer'.

**Now this story has two potential endings.**

### **The First Ending:**

On Friday you ring your web design company and tell them of the two problems. No problems: they ask you to email them and they'll get straight on to it. And 2 hours later, they email you with a question. You don't see it for an hour but then quickly respond. Now you're a good client, so the designers stay back on Friday evening. No problems, all fixed, big relief. (Bill for \$400 arrives later).

On Saturday morning you make a quick call to the web design company to tell them about fixing the plain text email. As expected, there is no answer. Oh well, only 20% of emails are read in plain text, it can't be helped.

On Sunday – your idea of a last minute offer? Great thought, but impossible to achieve. Plus \$400 would have made it a bit marginal even if the web guys worked on Sunday.

### **The Second:**

On Friday, you go online and fix the problem yourself in a few minutes, it's all web-based. Designed for chimpanzees to use and so even a technophobe marketer can use it. On Saturday you change the plain text emails and on Sunday you create the 'last minute' deal, all without having to consult anyone else.

The software is MailChimp and it has over 275,000 users globally. Does it cost much? No. It's almost free.

### **Here's another example of why you need to control your own technology online:**

You are launching a seminar program to your 2000 clients and subscribers. Is your strategy to send to all 2000 emails at once and pray that nothing goes wrong? Or do you want to test that it works first on 100, then iron out the kinks and send to 200? And fix any other issues and send to 500, and finally send it to the last 1200.

I know what we and our clients do. By controlling your own online marketing via your autoresponder, you effectively control the messages you put out there and make sure they're the right ones. Controlling your autoresponder allows you to easily fix it yourself, quickly, if it isn't right. Your mantra might be: "Give me control of my autoresponder or give me death!"

## **What else is an autoresponder good for?**

### **Stay Front of Mind with Clients who aren't ready to buy just yet**

Once you have a potential client's email address, you can send them a series of marketing emails in order to inform them of, and ultimately sell them your services. It is crucial that this information is relevant to what the potential client is seeking - you don't want to spam them because this will annoy them and turn them away from using your company in the future.

However, if you send subtle, engaging and informative content to a potential client through an autoresponder system, you will keep yourself front of mind. When they are ready to commit to using services like yours, they will think of you first.

### **Effective Ways to Use an Autoresponder**

1. Include autoresponder sign up forms on all the important pages of your website. Give them an incentive to sign up such as by offering them a free White Paper
2. Immediately acknowledge those who contact you. Let people know you've received their email and you'll get back to them shortly
3. Let those on your mailing list know you've added a new blog to your website
4. Send out an FAQ document that tackles the questions that are often asked about your product or service
5. Make all your company articles and newsletters accessible via autoresponder
6. Offer a sequence of free reports or online courses to position your company as the expert in the industry. Predetermine how often you'll send these
7. Offer chapters or excerpts from books or e-books you've created
8. Send subscribers any videos or audio related to your products or services
9. Send out a survey about your product to get valuable feedback
10. Recommend programs or products that your company is affiliated with

## **The Upside of Email Marketing**

Many small businesses aren't confident that 'email marketing' is a good idea. They think it will alienate potential clients and give them a bad reputation. This is a very common reaction and completely understandable when we think about the typical way most businesses practice it. And they're completely right. Just think, if you received numerous irrelevant and repetitive emails on a product or service that you weren't interested in, without any clear ways to unsubscribe and be left alone, you'd be annoyed too. That's spam.

There are ways you can use emails in a professional and effective way, to attract and retain clients instead of repelling and alienating them. Firstly, research shows that 31% of people like to be marketed to by email (although they don't mean spam like 'Viagra' sellers, of course).

Secondly, there is a fundamental truth of marketing:

**There are lots of different marketing media:**

Media stories (from PR); ads; brochures; emails; seminars; posted letters; newsletters and faxes and so on.

What worries businesses the most when emailing, is annoying their potential customers. And you certainly will if you frequently send people unsolicited junk without telling them how they can unsubscribe. In this situation, yes, email marketing is a terrible way to generate leads.

However, this can easily be avoided. As long as you create relevant content for your audience, keep your sales pitches subtle, don't send too often and always include an option to unsubscribe, you shouldn't alienate potential customers. A carefully created email *will* generate leads. For people who have subscribed to receive emails from **lead creation** clients, we implement our Auto Responder system using mailchimp.com to automatically send out a sequence of relevant emails, which include the option to unsubscribe every time.

## Rules You Must Follow When Emailing a Cold List

A 'cold list' is a list of people whose details you have, who you intend to market to, who have not expressly agreed to receive any material from you. For business-to-business marketing. In Australia, you are allowed to send unsolicited content if it is relevant to the receiver's business. However, it is a grey area where the bureaucrats err on the side of the receiver, so to avoid complaints, there are **three rules we strongly recommend our clients follow when emailing to a cold list:**

1. Never send more than **two** emails. In these emails you give them the opportunity to register to receive more information from you. If they haven't registered after the two emails, you take them off the email list. Permanently
2. The email must be carefully tailored to a small, very targeted list. A list for whom the offer of a free White Paper is likely to be seen as valuable if they read the email
3. You tell them in the second email that this is the second and last email they will be receiving from you (of course you still include the automatic unsubscribe button). This message goes near the top of the email

While we are careful about the marketing messages and content we send out in email, there is of course an overarching rule that we advise all our clients: **only** use email if you feel comfortable with it. It is a valuable but not critical component. Not sending any emails is not mission threatening, as it is a very small part of lead generation.

## How to get your Emails Opened, Not Junked

The two most important factors to getting your emails opened are:

### 1) The From Line:

This needs to explain exactly who is sending the email. The name needs to be recognisable. Your company name will typically suffice. If you're sending to people who haven't registered to receive information from you, this may make them wary of opening, but if you use just any name, or your first and last name, you may make them far warier. After all, most people won't bother to open emails if they don't know the sender.

### 2) The Subject Line:

This needs to give the reader a compelling reason to open the email. It should be engaging, arouse curiosity, offer some promise of relevant, important information. The more personal and relevant it is to the person receiving it, the more likely they are to open it. It could have a time clause in it, to prompt the reader to act quickly and read now, not just to leave it and look at it later.

Curiosity is one of the main factors that drives people to open an email. One of the easiest ways to excite a recipient's curiosity is to start a sentence, then put an ellipsis and continue the sentence in the email body. These teasers can be very effective. An unfinished subject line creates great tension, making the reader want to find out the rest of the sentence and thus, open the message.

However, one small caution. A teaser subject line should be composed very carefully. If it looks too spammy, not only does it hurt your open rate, it can ruin the recipient's faith in you as a reputable marketer. With all that said, the best way to write a teaser subject line is to use implication. The Subject line should imply that the answer is in your email and tease the reader to open the message looking to find it.

There are certain words, however, that junk mail software will recognise and junk an email for. For example, **emails are likely to be marked as spam if:**

- The subject line contains the word "advertisement"
- The subject line contains "!" AND contains "\$"
- The subject line contains "!" AND contains "free"
- The body copy contains the words "Guarantee" AND also contains "satisfaction" OR "absolute"
- The body copy contains the words "SPECIAL PROMOTION"
- **Learn others at:** <http://office.microsoft.com/Assistance/9798/newfilters.aspx>

So check your messages for any spam triggers—being shoved into junk mail won't get you any customers!

To find out more please visit [www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au), or buy the full book by clicking [Small Business Internet Marketing](#).

## What is Social Networking & Why Should I Care?

**Think of Social Networking as like owning your own electronic newspaper.** Your own electronic niche ‘newspaper’. A paper where you do all the jobs.

As the *Distribution Manager*, you decide who you want to receive your newspaper. You also control which distribution media you choose to get your paper to it’s readers—but it’s all the same words, just on different media (with social networking the media is endless: LinkedIn, Twitter, blogging, YouTube, Delicious, Plaxo, and another page full of names!). As the *Editor*, you have the final say in what your audience gets to read, listen to or watch. As the *Journalist*, you do the research and decide what stories you will write. And the Editor can of course hire other journalists (writers).

And as the *Finance Director* you decide how much time and money you should spend to make your newspaper profitable. How much to spend to generate leads and raise the profile of your small business.

Now this is a book about lead generation for small business, for SMEs. **In this book we don’t care about the social aspects of ‘Social’ Networking.** Care zilch about getting more friends and spending hours ‘chatting’ online—if you need more friends, the bookshops are overloaded with books on how to find them!

Our whole approach in this book on small business marketing is about first defining your niche. Your gold clients. The ones you want more of. It’s all about business networking.

Well, **knowing your niche is absolutely fundamental to Social Networking.** How else can you create a ‘newspaper’ of value? Can you write content for everybody? If you did, would they be interested? No! More importantly, how can you select who to send it to? How can you build a distribution list?

**If you don’t have a niche, you might as well stand in 5th Avenue in New York or George St in Sydney with a loudspeaker,** calling people to gather around you. And then try and collect all their business cards. Useless.

**Our approach is simple and practical:** Decide where you want more connections, where you want more clients for your small business. Then go out and connect to them following the strategies in this chapter.

**Before we explore social (i.e. business) networking in more detail...**

Extract  
from  
*Small  
Business  
Internet  
Marketing*

Chapter 9:  
Social  
Networking  
—It can do  
amazing  
things for  
your  
business

## What Came Before Social Networking and Twits?

Before Twitter and LinkedIn, there was Networking—and it helps to refresh ourselves on the fundamental rules of networking offline. Why? Because people are people and the principles of networking haven't changed just because you're doing it on the internet. And the techniques are innate to humans and the communities they gather in. Whether in Karachi or San Fran.

**In a nutshell, networking is about making a connection and establishing a relationship.**

## Networking 101 – The Basics You Need to Know

When we talk about how to build connections and networks, there are three vital concepts to keep in mind:

### 1. You have to give people a reason to want you in their network

There are billions of people in the world, and as individuals we all have control over who we let into our network. Unless you can find a way to help the people you want to network with—a way that makes sense and is valuable to them—quite simply, they won't want you in their network. The network that they have complete power over!

The aim is to give before you receive. As such, some networks have clichéd mottos like “Givers gain” but it is founded in truth. Now there are exceptions to this rule, primarily for the super rich, the very powerful or the very beautiful. But you could argue that they are ‘giving’ their beauty or sharing their power. However, this is for 1% of the world: you run a small business, you want to promote your small business and you're not super rich (yet!)

This first step is absolutely vital. It is the foundation stone. Give Now. Receive later.

### 2. People have to know you, and what you're good at

This is the second foundation stone of networking theory. It's not just about going to a conference or networking group and meeting and chatting with people. It's about making sure others know what you are good at. There are critical things you need your networking colleagues to know about your small business: What kind of clients can you really help? Why should they refer your services?

**Remember the old cliché?**

**'It's not what you know, it's *who* you know' - it's rubbish!**

It's about who knows *you* and who knows what you're *good at*, what services you offer. That's the important bit.

### 3. Focus

Work out which types (or groups) of people would be the most valuable for you to network with. Think about who else directly or indirectly influences or sells to the people you want to influence. Where do they congregate? How can you help *them*?

If your networking colleagues in the industry have this information about you, the next time their boss says: “We need a new financial advisor for our business”, they’ll put you forward. Referrals from inside a company—magic!

## The Power of People You Barely Know

Many people know how important friends are in helping you find a new clients or a new job. However, when asked *which* friends are the most valuable, nearly all answer 'close friends and family'. But this just isn't the case. Your close friends are mostly not the best ambassadors for you anyway. They will be seen to be biased, and can also be too close to you to be objective.

Your close friends also tend to know the same people as you so they hear of the same marketing opportunities. *Loose* connections are the most beneficial—that is, those who by definition, move in different circles to you. There are also a lot more of them. When you are actively seeking new clients you should find ways to stay in touch with this broader circle—and ideally find ways to help them. To give.

### Final comments on using friends to find new clients:

Your friends may never know what your ideal client looks like. It is human nature to assume our friends know: but they don't in nearly every case. Test this on ten friends—it would be highly unusual if you didn't get at least 5 different answers to this question.

**In the book we recommend you use blogs, LinkedIn and Twitter. In this guide, since we only have limited space, we'll just discuss the most important network for professionals and managers – LinkedIn.**

### Why use LinkedIn?



In publishing your 'Niche Newspaper', you decide the media you will use to distribute it. If your business only has time for one 'distribution channel' (one Social Network) ...

### It must be LinkedIn.

It's the clear cut choice if your Finance Director (you!) only has the budget of time and money to do one and you work in:

- Any small services business that sells to high end professionals or managers

- Any professional services business, small or giant, from the following list (which is the client list for our business, *lead creation*):

**Financial Planners**

**Accountants**

**Lawyers**

**Engineering Consultants**

**Stock Brokers**

**Project Managers**

**Strategic Consultants**

**HR Consultants**

**Non-executive Directors (seeking more Boards)**

**Recruitment Firms**

**Business Coaches**

**Executive Coaches**

**Life Coaches**

**Training Companies**

**Architects**

**Quantity Surveyors**

**Marketing and Branding Consultants**

**IT Companies**

**IT Support**

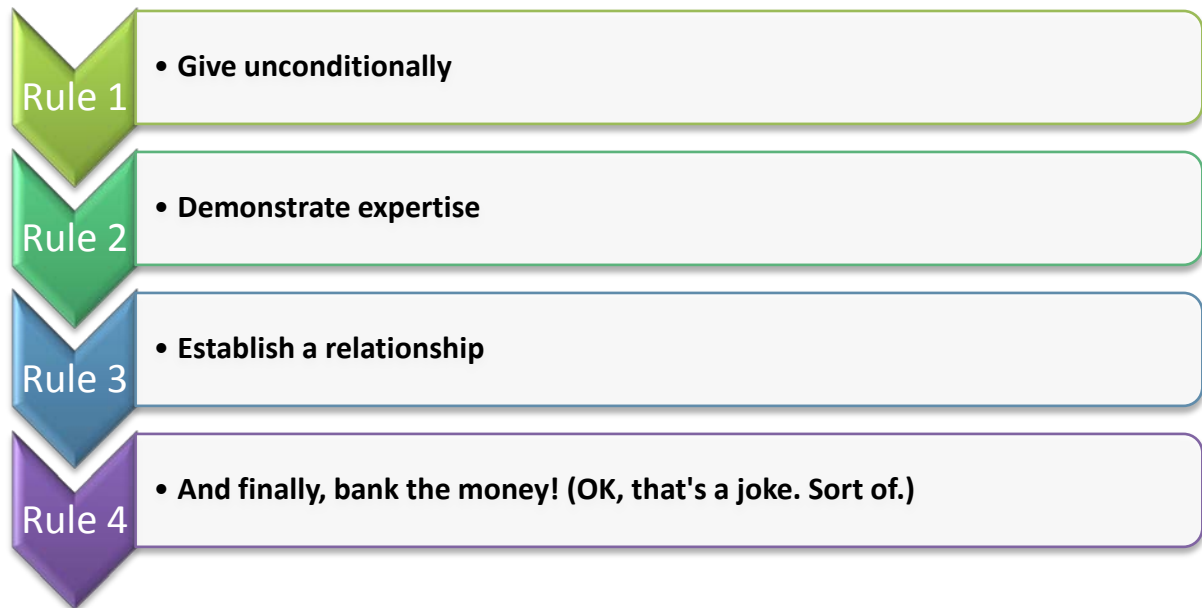
## **Why is LinkedIn Essential?**

It starts with there being more than 50 million professionals and knowledge workers on the site—a milestone they reached in early October 2009. Once you know your niche, you can connect with anyone in this network if you offer value and follow the networking strategies outlined in this chapter.

What can you do with LinkedIn? Well, no surprises given the title of this book—it's a powerful tool in the arsenal of small business internet marketing. A powerful tool for micro and small businesses. One that can turbo-charge the stream of prospects filling your marketing funnel (can you turbo-charge a funnel? Don't know, but it sounded good!)

Secondly, you can solve problems and issues by asking questions. There are experts on LinkedIn in almost any obscure field you can imagine. Some of these, in fact often lots of them, just love to answer questions to help people and demonstrate their knowledge.

In fact, most of them are following the golden rules of marketing outlined in this book:



## What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a social networking site where users integrate their business and professional contacts into an online network. Some have (stupidly) criticised it for not being open enough and for charging for too many of its services. However, after Facebook it is the most popular online social network for business professionals and managers aged 25 and over. More importantly, it makes money and so is likely to survive and grow—it's risky to invest your time and effort into a site that isn't.

**Your big opportunity? Very few SMEs and small businesses are using it effectively, leaving the field wide open for professionals who have a clear strategy to get more business.** There is a lot of 'low hanging fruit' waiting to be picked for at least the next 2 years. This chapter gives you clear and effective strategies, and will enable you to research, solve business problems and generate more qualified leads. And remember, that's the whole point of this book: lead generation for small businesses.

LinkedIn is a social networking website specifically aimed at creating connections between business professionals. LinkedIn passed 50 million registered users in October 2009 and is growing steadily. Its main functions are to strengthen and establish new relationships with business professionals, hence the slogan "*Where Relationships Matter*". On LinkedIn, you can connect with professional colleagues, meet new people, find recommended services and new contacts in your current network, allowing you to reach 50 million professionals and many of the world's major corporations.

You are at the centre of your own network, and LinkedIn creates opportunities for you to meet people who are two degrees (people who know people you know), or even three degrees away from you. The implications this has for your small business is that it could be used as a form of viral marketing which

will increase brand awareness. And not through blatant advertising, but as a more credible source in positioning yourself and your company to the outside world.

## More Reasons to Incorporate LinkedIn into Your Marketing Strategy

- **It's free!** LinkedIn is free to use, but companies have the option to pay to increase the features they have access to.
- **Increase your business' visibility.** By networking through LinkedIn, you will reach more potential clients than you can imagine. Also, there are options to set your profile to be indexed by Google and the other search engines which further increases your company's visibility to the big world out there.
- **LinkedIn helps you meet the right people.** LinkedIn will assist your business not only by helping you meet new clients, but also people in the same industry who are on the lookout for opportunities to deal with you.
- **Testing the waters.** Just like other people can see your company's profile, you can also see other companies' profiles. LinkedIn allows you to check out competitors' teams, clients, references and other information that's not usually available to you.

## Getting More from LinkedIn

There are many different social networks around and the common questions raised are, "what is the difference?" and "which social network should I use?" While Facebook is currently the largest active online social network, LinkedIn is the **only** choice for businesses, particularly those in professional services. It's easier and way more valuable to incorporate LinkedIn into your business marketing strategy than using other social networks. And it's more likely to survive in the long term.

**So where do you start? Your profile** on LinkedIn is one of the most important brand assets you have online. It is essential that you work to keep it informative and optimized for search engines. Make sure that the URL to your company's LinkedIn profile is branded and make good use of the space you have to communicate information about your small business to viewers, but be careful not to clutter your page with too much information. Your headline shows up wherever you appear in LinkedIn (just below your name), so make sure it is as informative and clear as can be with the 120 characters you have to do it—for SEO and impact reasons, it is best to use as many of the characters as you can. For example, Toby Marshall's uses 120 characters as follows:

*Small Business Internet Marketing; implementing innovative & effective lead generation, espec. for professional services*

It's outcome focused and also uses our three main keywords. This makes it much more likely that searchers will find this profile—people tend to use the same terms whether searching in Google or elsewhere.

Finally, make sure that your company's website (and blog if you have one) is displayed on the company profile page.

**Recommendations!** The point of a social network is not just to make new connections, but also to nurture existing relationships. An extremely useful feature of LinkedIn is the ability to write recommendations (testimonials) for other people (which act as a reference for other people looking to connect with them). What does this mean for you? If you give someone a good recommendation, chances are they will return the favour and write you one too.

Recommendations give your potential clients a fair idea of who you are and what to expect from you and your company. Be honest when writing recommendations and only write for people who you actually want to recommend. Writing recommendations just to receive one in return defeats the purpose of the system and will backfire on you. When? Well, once someone's looking for a supplier they may be looking in depth at 2 or 3 profiles. Clearly fake testimonials will put egg all over your face. Worthy of an Online Darwin Award!

One of the great but unsung benefits of LinkedIn is it makes it so much easier for people to write you a testimonial. It is easier than writing a letter, and of course has much more impact as it is broadcast so broadly. Are testimonials important for getting new clients? Absolutely, they are the single most important piece of your online and offline marketing—see the testimonials chapter for why, and how to get ones that work. You can also view our testimonials for *lead creation* at: <http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au/client-testimonials/>

**Joining and/or leading groups** is one of the keys to improving lead generation with LinkedIn. Being part of groups that are relevant to your small business not only lets you meet new people belonging to the same group, but also opens up the opportunity for you to take part in group discussions. Creating groups is another good way of displaying your expertise in a niche. By being the leader you gain added influence within your network and people interested in your niche group will join and learn more about you.

Be careful not to create groups that are too similar or identical to ones that already exist because they will be seen by others to be pointless or even as a desperate attempt by you or your company to grab attention (spam).

**The strategy for starting a group?** Join 3 or 4 groups in a similar field and monitor the discussions. Look for what topics seem to interest people. Engage with a few of the active people by responding to their

comments, and perhaps ask them what they think of your group idea. Then, start the group slowly by inviting people to join and by leading off some discussions. As always, don't sell, give and help while building your credibility and perception of expertise.

**Answer (and ask) Questions!** The Question and Answer feature on LinkedIn gives a small business the perfect opportunity to position themselves as the experts in the field, just like the discussion boards. The more questions you answer, the more people will become aware of your company. Answer questions thoroughly and thoughtfully to show that you care and are willing to help. And don't blatantly sell. In fact, don't sell at all!

Your answers can be rated by readers so make sure you don't answer questions if you don't really know what you're talking about. Gaining 'good' or 'best' answer ratings for your answers will definitely give you some added exposure.

Asking questions will also help you gain some recognition if they promote interesting and insightful discussion. Be careful not to ask questions that go against your main objective to become positioned as the expert.

**To get started:** Ask one or two friends to post a real question, in your core area of expertise, and then answer it really well. Then ask them to award it Best Answer—having this award then features next to all your answers in future and people are more likely to take notice of your answers. Warning: don't do more than two of these. This is a real community, don't spam it.

## Creating Leads with LinkedIn

LinkedIn is one of the best social networks for a small business to implement their online marketing strategy. **Lead generation is the biggest goal that we are focusing on for our clients.** In doing so, we need to ensure that the audience we attract for our clients lead to quality leads because we are targeting the right people. There are a few steps to follow:

- When choosing the group to target, pay attention to the level of activity and not just the population of the group. It is better to be part of **a smaller group that encourages interaction** between its members than a large one with minimal activity.

You will need to join a group in order to see its activity. Once you have joined and assessed the groups that are relevant to your company and field, narrow down your scope by disregarding the ones that don't have much discussion. The aim of this is to reduce the amount of effort wasted in trying to grab the attention of an audience who aren't listening and maximize chances of sales lead generation by communicating with people who respond.

A large number of LinkedIn users are those who seek employment, which is expected of what is also a giant career networking website. When trying to create leads, you need to filter out the job seekers by **targeting groups that are actively discussing business concerns** rather than employment opportunities.

- LinkedIn provides a medium by which you can share new material within a community, such as white papers or webinars. When sharing this material, try to do it within the context of a discussion as opposed to promoting a product. For example, you can start a conversation within a group by asking for feedback about an updated version of the whitepaper you've been working on.

This is beneficial as people are given the freedom to express their views of your work and it draws your attention to any areas you can improve on. Another method to subtly promote your work is by monitoring other conversations and responding if the **opportunity to show your expertise** arises; you may then **post a link to your whitepaper or webinar** as part of your offer to assist people.

- When joining groups for lead generation, it is a good idea to **join under an individual name as opposed to using your company's identity**. By joining a group as an individual it helps to establish a personal presence within the industry, and people you potentially want to network with will not get the impression that you are trying to sell a product (and so avoid you).
- LinkedIn is a social networking website, so in order to fully take advantage of this and leverage it in your small business you need to be **active in discussions** to position yourself as the expert and also receive feedback from others. Answering questions in discussions will show potential clients that you are the person and company to go to when their need for your services arise.
- The transition from LinkedIn to a company landing page can be quite abrupt. A smoother transition in the form of a **landing page designed purely for the LinkedIn visitors** could assist in creating continuity. There is no need to create a completely different page to the standard landing page you use normally, but merely to modify some text to address and welcome the users arriving from LinkedIn.

To find out more please visit [www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au), or buy the full book by clicking [Small Business Internet Marketing](#).

## Business will never be the same again!

For 5 years I've wanted to use that headline, ever since my first Copywriting workshop! AdWords is the perfect opportunity.

It's a big claim, but that's how major the impact on business and particularly small business marketing is going to be. And it's already started to happen.

If small business advertising is being hit by the equivalent of a marketing tsunami, why have 95% of small businesses not noticed?

Before we answer that, some background for those of you who have been totally focused on your business and solving client problems...

### What are Google AdWords?

When you search in Google, the results show up underneath the search box. Have you noticed that the results that come up on the right hand side or above these 'free listings' look different? These are 'Sponsored Links'—advertisements created with Google AdWords.

**The name pretty much describes what AdWords do:** people type in *words*, and the *ad* linked to those words appears. They are an incredibly effective and inexpensive method for small businesses to market online and to create and control a profitable flow of leads.

AdWords enables your site to show up on the first page of the search engine results for the words and phrases you know your potential clients will type into the search box to find your services. The best thing about AdWords is that *you don't waste a cent on ineffective marketing*. How is this possible? You only pay when people click on your ads.

AdWords are simply the ultimate in Direct Response Marketing, which as we showed in Chapter One is the only type of marketing that works for small business.

And yes, the other Search Engines like Yahoo also have AdWords. But it's like what happened in 1908 in America with the Model T Ford. The Tin Lizzie totally dominated the car market for everybody except the super rich. There was really only one car for Middle America, and of course it only came in black.

This is a practical book on small business marketing. We only want you to spend time and money in places that will help your business grow. Google is the Model T of today. Start with Google AdWords, and when you've got them working well and making you money, you might want to consider the others. If you have the time after servicing your new clients!

**Why will Google AdWords change the world?** And particularly the world of advertising small businesses?

Every person reading this book and virtually every knowledge worker goes to Google to start our research or to answer questions. And in particular, it's where most of us start our process of buying—what's out there? What does the service or product do? Where can I get it? What does it cost? Is there something cheaper or more effective? These are all questions we'll ask Google first.

AdWords are there when you begin your research process and as you refine it. And Google works hard and (usually) intelligently to deliver the right ads so the searcher finds the web pages they need. The Google mission is 'increasing relevance', and this is the bedrock of their amazing and growing dominance.

Why must AdWords become a key part of your advertising and of how you promote your small business?

**Let's look at two alternative advertising approaches:**

1. You pay a dollar or less when someone clicks on your ad—and less than 20 cents if you follow the advice in this chapter. Someone who's typed words into Google that match what you sell, and who has a good chance to be looking to buy from you.

**OR**

2. You pay a thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars to place an advertisement in a newspaper. Many thousands buy the paper, a few see your smallish ad (you're a small business; it's all you can afford). Most who see your ad ignore it as it's not relevant to them, or they are not ready to buy yet.

Spending even a thousand dollars is a waste. Why? The two final nails in the coffin of mass media advertising are that

1) it's not interactive, so they have to make a lot more effort to get in touch with you. Whereas it's only one click on Google. 2) Have you heard about the research on how few young people read newspapers? Who would want to be a publisher!

**So, the Math:**

If the newspaper ad works really well, you'll get fifty qualified leads, and let's say it only cost a \$1000 and you only ran it once (freakish results, you must write great ads!). The ad runs, lot of effort, campaign is now over.

However, on Google you might spend \$50, or ideally \$10, and also generate fifty leads. And you can keep testing and refining the ad campaign, reducing the costs. And the leads keep flowing, day by day. This campaign is ongoing and low cost.

### **Guess it falls in the no-brainer category. So why haven't AdWords become a tsunami yet?**

Well firstly, it sort of has: Even in little Australia, Google's revenue was nearly a billion dollars last year (and the Aussie dollar is currently about 88 cents to the mighty Greenback). That is significant and dwarfs a lot of traditional media, and that's happening in other countries as well.

Secondly, there are some powerful industries linked to the world of mass media advertising that are continuing to sell what they do in the traditional ways. Publishers, TV networks, radio networks and of course traditional advertising agencies. These are big strong companies and they won't vanish overnight.

But you and your small business can ignore this battle: Right now, Google AdWords are like 'low hanging fruit'—ripe for the picking.

### **Two final questions before we show you how to get started:**

Will the price of AdWords go up as millions more small businesses start to use them? Of course, AdWords are like an auction, you bid to be on page one. Should this deter you? No, because they are cheap now. And you don't really have a choice as your competitors will be there even if you choose not to be.

**Secondly, is Google's dominance a concern?** Absolutely. They are challenging Microsoft (Google Apps: the perfect business platform for SMEs, we use it and love it); challenging Amazon (with Google Books), initially in books sales and they have an incredible business advantage in this challenge. But why will they stop at books; they potentially have an advantage in selling any product.

And finally in dominating AdWords, Google operate in what economists call a 'natural monopoly'. And such monopolies are virtually impossible to challenge without another technology breakthrough. Or unless the market demands something different and Google doesn't feel it needs to address that: Henry Ford thought consumers wanting a choice of colors was ridiculous. He paid for that view.

But these issues are for Governments and the big boys to sort out. Right now your small business needs to jump on the bandwagon and get rolling...

Simply go to the Google AdWords site today and set up an account. Once you have created an AdWords account, you then start creating Campaigns, Adgroups and finally the advertisements themselves.

## The Frustration of AdWords Eliminated

Google AdWords is a powerful tool for gaining business today, however, many people don't know how to use it correctly and so instead waste a lot of time and money on it without gaining many sales leads. It can be an extremely frustrating and expensive system to use if you don't know how to improve the rates at which people are clicking on your ads.

Believe it or not, this is a good thing for you. It means that, with a little help and a lot of testing, you can discover how to write effective Google AdWords ads while your competitors simply throw up their hands in despair and eventually throw in the towel. You'll be able to utilize a marketing platform that not many of your competitors took the time to master. This will give you an exclusive way to access your niche market of prospective clients.

Google AdWords *can* be a cost-effective way to market once you know how to use it properly. Learning from the mistakes and successes of others will put you miles ahead when you come to write your own ads. So sit back, grab a pen to underline and discover what you can do to make your Google AdWords the most effective they can be.

## AdWords Format – Learning the Rules of the Game

An ad written for Google AdWords has a very specific format. You are very limited to the maximum number of characters you can use (including spaces and punctuation), so use them wisely. An AdWords ad looks like this:

<a href="#">Expert Home Loan Comparisons</a>	<b>25 characters inc. spaces max</b>
Obtain The Best Advice On Fees	<b>35 characters inc. spaces max</b>
Minimise Monthly Payments With Us!	<b>35 characters inc. spaces max</b>
<a href="#">www.YourDomainName.com.au</a>	<b>35 characters inc. spaces max</b>

As you can see, an AdWords ad has:

- 4 rows per ad (of which, one is the destination URL – the page they are being sent to)
- No pictures
- No colours except for blue for the headline and green for the URL – Google does this automatically and you can't change it
- Punctuation marks only in the body copy and NOT the heading

## How to Write a Good Google Ad

There are a number of diverse factors that determine how successful an ad will be.

### A good ad is:

- Relevant to your target audience

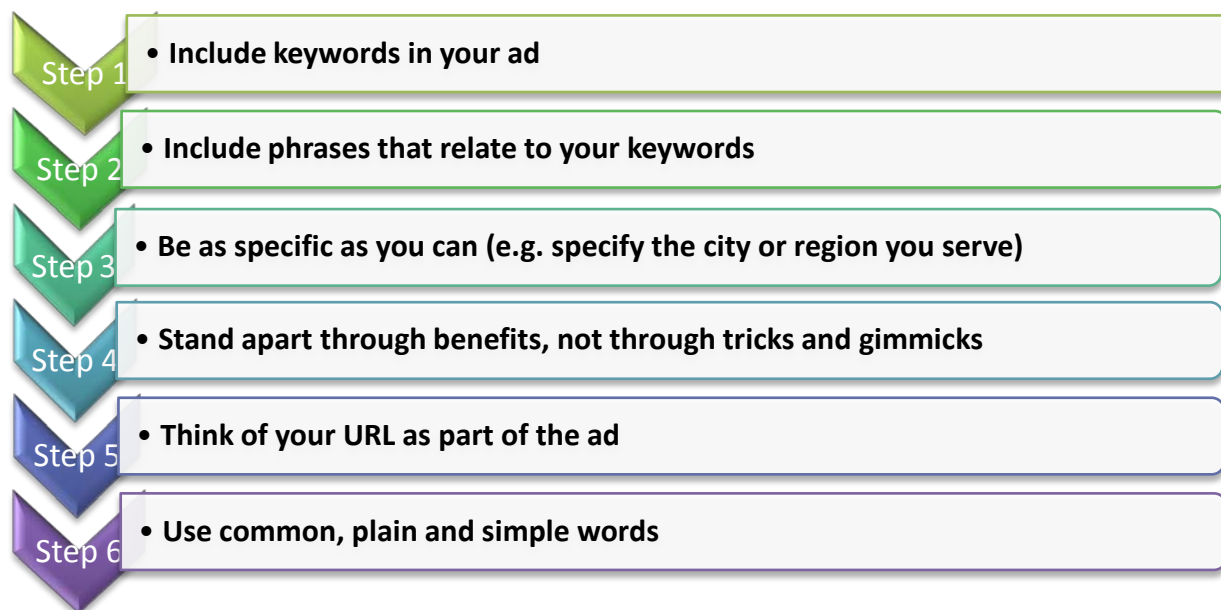
- Clear and direct
- Interesting and engaging, arousing curiosity
- Able to make people want to act right now
- And, most importantly, has the keywords that they are searching for in the ad (and the same keywords must be on the landing page too.) **HOT TIP: Never send them to your home page!**

Probably the most important element of your ad is the **headline**. The headline is what people read first and often the only thing they'll read if it doesn't grab and hold their attention. One way to make sure your headline jumps out at potential clients is to use keywords in it. If a person typed in the word 'accountant' and their local area and your ad had those two keywords in its headline, your ad would obviously be extremely relevant to that person and would hold their attention. You need to work out what your clients are searching for and use those specific terms in your ad.

Apart from the headline, it's important when writing one of these ads to consider your tone. Pick the tone that best suits your audience. You want to demonstrate that you 'speak the same language' as your potential customer. Clear and simple is often the most effective ad copy to use. Aim to make your ads personalised and ensure that ad titles and/or the body copy match (or come close to matching) the keywords that were typed in to bring the page up.

## Six Simple Steps to Write Amazing AdWords Easily

Even if you do nothing else, make sure you use the following simple, easy, fool proof and 'sure-fire' techniques to create your ads. You *will* reap the benefits:



## Quick Tips:

**Tip 1:** Ensure the Ad has a specific amount of chosen keywords that will trigger your Google ad word to be displayed in the sponsored links.

**Tip 2:** The body copy should have keywords included in them as they will be highlighted/bolded if the keyword is searched for. Why? Because the more bolded print a customer or searcher sees, the more your Ads are inline with what they are searching for. Every ad you create should have a minimum of 4 keywords in the ad itself.

**Tip 3:** There should be a keyword in the title of the Google ad word ad along with 3 other keywords in the body copy of the ad. Keep this in mind when creating URLs, registering domains, creating sub domains and creating domain extensions etc. because if you have a domain name with which you are able to utilise an important keyword, the relevancy of the site would be deemed higher and your quality score higher, so you pay less.

## Testing Your Ads – Survival of the Fittest

Once you find the most effective of your ads – with the highest click through rate **AND** conversion rate, this becomes your ‘control’ ad. The next step is that you need to tweak the ad somehow – change the word order, change the punctuation or some other small element – and test that against your control.

This is called ‘split testing’ or just testing. The aim is to find an ad which beats the best ad you have so far. You do this by testing different variations against it and seeing which achieves better results. This also allows you to see what elements of an ad simply ‘kill it’ in terms of reducing clicks through and conversions. You can then avoid these mistakes in the future.

As soon as you have an ad which outsells your control ad, the new ad replaces it and becomes your control. You then tweak again or devise completely new ads to compete against this one and replace it again as soon as you discover a better performer. This is an ongoing process which allows you to judge through measurable results which ads are the best ones to get you new sales leads.

## Tips for Better AdWords

### Keep your Keywords Focused

Group Keywords into tightly focused groups, and create an adgroup for each keyword grouping. This ensures that the Ads you create are extremely relevant to each adgroup, increasing your Click Through

Rate (CTR). Don't write a generic Ad for all keywords. The best way to do this is to have multiple adgroups for your different set of keywords so that you can easily write specific Ads for each Group.

### **Use Keywords in Your Ads**

Google highlights keywords found in search results - which includes the AdWords Ads, so if you use keywords in your Ads, then this will draw attention to your ad, increasing CTR.

### **Think About Where You Want Your Visitors to Arrive**

Don't just send people to your homepage. If the information relevant to the ad they clicked on is not on that page, many will simply hit the back button on their browser, resulting in a wasted click charge to you. AdWords allows you to display your homepage URL whilst sending visitors to another page (i.e. The Landing Page), so choose the most relevant page on your site.

Your landing page should include the relevant keywords that you have bid on. Therefore, each of your Ads should have its own relevant landing page with relevant keywords you have optimized for.

### **Use Negative Keywords**

When researching your keywords, be sure to eliminate any irrelevant searches by using negative keywords.

For example, for the keyword 'golf equipment', you should choose to add negative keywords for '-volkswagen' and '-vw'.

To find out more please visit [www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au), or buy the full book by clicking [Small Business Internet Marketing](#).

## What do Clients have to say about Lead Creation?

*"I've been working with Toby Marshall and the team at Lead Creation in developing and positioning my board presentation skills training business. I've enjoyed working with them, found them to be entirely knowledgeable on their topic area, and a great source of inspiration in helping me to drive my business forwards. The whole team has been a source of inspiration to me in terms of how to develop leads which will take my business further, faster. I hope they help you as much as they've helped me."*

Julie Garland McLellan,  
Board Presentation Skills Trainer and Corporate Governance Expert  
March 2010

## Contact Us

If you have questions or comments, or would like to find out more about our services please don't hesitate to contact us.

Phone: (02) 9281 5938

Fax: (02) 8580 5280

Email: [admin@leadcreation.com.au](mailto:admin@leadcreation.com.au)

Suite 106  
410 Elizabeth St  
Surry Hills, NSW 2010

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[www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au](http://www.smallbusinessmarketingonline.com.au)

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**Cheers from Toby Marshall & the Lead Creation Team!**

