

**Marketing  
Insight  
Guides**  
Book 5

# The Marketing Attitude



Insights  
That Help  
You Build a  
Worthy  
Business

**Marcia Yudkin**

Author,

*6 Steps to Free Publicity*

This complimentary copy of *The Marketing Attitude* is my way of thanking you for being a subscriber to my Marketing Minute newsletter.

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If you enjoy this complimentary copy of *The Marketing Attitude*, I would be grateful if you would post a review, tweet or blog post online.

Thank you! - *Marcia Yudkin*

# **The Marketing Attitude**

Insights That Help You Build  
a Worthy Business

The Marketing Attitude: Insights That Help You Build a Worthy Business

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# **The Marketing Attitude**

Insights That Help You Build  
a Worthy Business

**Marcia Yudkin**

Marketing Insight Guides  
Creative Ways Publishing



## Introduction

Seven years into our relationship, my primary care doctor, who practices solo, asked me what I did for work. His immediate next question: “Marketing, what’s that?”

“Marketing is everything you can do to make sure you are as busy here as you want to be,” I explained.

“Oh, you mean advertising?” he asked.

I steered the conversation back to the topic of my health, but I thought a lot afterward about his response. It’s a common misconception that only advertising brings customers, clients—or patients—in the door. Networking, referrals, direct mail and media coverage also boost business.

It’s even more common to overlook the subtler and sometimes intangible things that attract or repel customers, especially factors in the realm of attitude. Your demeanor, expectations, mindset and ethics profoundly influence what people do after interacting with you or the business environment you’ve created.

How you speak, what you do over time, decisions you have made (or not made) and elements you focus on or ignore also have a significant impact on your business fortunes.

In this book, you'll find anecdotes, explanations, tips and reflections that help you understand the attitudes and actions that can hold back success or nudge you toward a business that is as financially and psychologically rewarding as you dare to dream.

The chapters in this book originate in a weekly column, *The Marketing Minute*, that I've published since 1998. You can sign up for a free email subscription at [www.yudkin.com/markmin.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/markmin.htm). I always welcome marketing anecdotes from subscribers and suggestions for topics to cover.



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# **Part 1**

## **Basic Marketing Truths**



## Acquire Poise

While listening to the introduction to Napoleon Hill's 1928 masterwork, *The Law of Success*, I was struck by a word we don't hear much in business discourse today. Hill promised his reader the ability to go through life with harmony and poise.

Poise—it's composure. Dignity. The ability to remain balanced and confident while being pulled at from this side and that.

Someone with poise neither dominates nor gives in most of the time to the forces around them. If they have passion, they also have the willingness to wait until that passion meets the proper place and time for its expression.

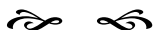
In marketing, poise comes from clarity of purpose, deep knowledge of cause and effect, and attunement to reality.

Instead of frantic efforts, desperate enthusiasm, robotic copycatting, nasty bluster or greedy pressure on others, you

focus serenely on getting from where you are to where you want to go, making adjustments whenever necessary.

You make your mark on the world with pleasure and grace, receiving respect and affection in return.

Poise certainly gets my vote as a virtue in business.



## Food for Thought

“Kill the habit of worry, in all its forms, by reaching a general, blanket decision that nothing which life has to offer is worth the price of worry. With this decision will come poise, peace of mind, and calmness of thought which will bring happiness.”

*—Napoleon Hill*



## Opportunity Can Strike Anywhere

**D**o you divide your life into business and pleasure? Great self-promoters go by the slogan “You never know” and never close themselves off to opportunities.

One woman was on an airplane and her seatmate wanted to know about her work. Instead of thinking, Geez, I’m on vacation, the woman talked about her work—a book for handicapped travelers that she had just published. Her seatmate turned out to be Abigail Van Buren, of “Dear Abby” fame, and a notice in Abby’s column brought the other woman sacks and sacks of orders for the book.

Sam Yost, a music producer, was on his way up a ski lift in Sun Valley, Idaho, when the man next to him started a conversation. He turned out to be an Arizona radio executive, and before they reached the mountaintop, he agreed to play Yost’s recordings on his stations.

And Joann Stoutenburgh of Antelope, California, once got nervous when a man followed her car for several miles

and then pulled alongside to talk. He was a lawyer, desperate for a word processing person, and he'd noticed her vanity license plate, "TYPNG4U." Aha! She was happy to oblige.

Opportunity can knock any day of the week, anywhere. So heads up!



## Food for Thought

"Life loves to be taken by the lapel and told: 'I'm with you, kid. Let's go.'"

*—Maya Angelou*

## The Power of Asking

I once learned a valuable lesson from Tony, a silver-haired man who looks like the corporate executive he once was. At a conference where he, another man and I had been hired as speakers, Tony was staying on the VIP floor, with a free computer and fax in his room and free room-service breakfast.

“I asked for a complimentary upgrade,” he explained. “I always do. I’ve been put in first class on planes too just for asking.”

The other speaker and I, staying in ordinary rooms, sat with this, stunned. “Do you give a reason?” I asked.

“Nope. You just ask as if you deserve it.”

Mentally I started rehearsing the magic sentence, “Do you have a complimentary upgrade?,” knowing that I’d have to practice my way into it. It reminded me of another key sentence, “My fee is...,” which equally requires confidence.

After all, what's the difference between the \$70/hour and \$700/hour consultant? Mostly, the latter asks—or simply tells. Daring to ask, and to ask convincingly: how scary and how utterly powerful.



## **Food for Thought**

“Wishing gains you nothing, but decisions can change everything.”

*—Alan Weiss*

## Nothing Sells Itself

What could be more lucrative than selling ice in the tropics? The attempt of twenty-three-year-old Massachusetts entrepreneur Frederick Tudor to do that in 1806 holds a lesson for anyone who thinks that brilliant ideas sell themselves.

The plan called for Tudor to secure a monopoly over the ice trade from the government of the Caribbean island Martinique. Packed in sawdust, most of the ice did make it from New England to its destination intact. However, the venture ran aground because his advance team met with derision and disinterest. Even the actual ice, once it arrived, did not inspire sales.

According to historian Diana Muir, “Ice has a long history of luxury use in parts of the world where hot summers alternate with cold winters, or where wealthy cities nestle against snow-capped mountains.” But in the tropics, no one

had ever seen or heard of ice, and they did not feel any need for it.

Tudor did finally establish an ice empire, becoming rich by transporting frozen water to warm places, after bouts of bankruptcy and spells in debtor's prison. Creating the market took 20 years.



## Food for Thought

“Advertising is the fine art of making you think you have longed for something all your life that you never heard of before.”

*—Anonymous*

## When You Stop Marketing

**A** *Marketing Minute* subscriber told me that three years ago, his company took in more than a million dollars. This year he's on track to earn one-fifth of that, if he's lucky. What happened? He handed over responsibility for marketing to an employee who didn't think continuing to reach out to new, current and past clients was necessary.

Two years ago, his company did no marketing. Coasting on referrals and repeat business, not till January of last year did he notice that orders were drying up. Come spring, the drought became dire. Frantically he's now trying to make rain, but there are few clouds left to seed.

Save this message to reread in case you think you're doing so great that you can give up marketing. You may not feel the slowdown for a while, but you eventually will, in a dreadful, delayed effect.

The law of entropy applies to businesses as well as physical objects: Anything in motion will eventually come to a rest unless given a boost. Marketing provides the energy enabling not just growth, but also maintenance of your success.

Be wise!



## Food for Thought

“Hell is a half-filled auditorium.”

*—Robert Frost*



## Profiting from Mistakes

Remember “New Coke”—when the corporation decided people were tired of Coke’s traditional taste, changed the formula and consumers revolted? Because the alteration was pulled back within weeks in favor of “Coke Classic,” this episode usually gets cited as a whopping marketing failure.

Sergio Zyman, the marketing guy then at the helm, says the campaign was a great success. His reasoning bears thinking about.

The purpose of changing the formula, he says, was to increase the attachment of the American public to Coca-Cola and sell more of it. Although no one foresaw the insurrection of Coca-Cola fans, their outcry and the quick reinstatement of the established flavor did deepen the bond between consumers and the brand. Sales shot up, reversing the trend of Coke losing market share to Pepsi.

Being able to learn a lesson like this is a hallmark of entrepreneurial maturity, I believe. When results don't turn out the way you expect, don't whine, wail or hide your head. Instead, consider what you now know not to do and how you can invest money and energy more wisely in the future.



## On the Web

Read an article on the six biggest mistakes people make in growing their businesses:

[www.marketingformore.com/mistakes.htm](http://www.marketingformore.com/mistakes.htm)

## Your Preferences Shouldn't Rule

**T**wo years ago, my dentist moved into a new office. Visually, it sparkles. Auditorily, it flunks. Treatment rooms connect with one another, so patients hear drilling and conversation in the next room. There's no effort to create privacy, and no music playing for a soothing ambiance. For me, going there is so stressful that I am looking for a new practitioner.

This dentist's operation ignores sound as an ingredient of customer satisfaction. Apparently everyone working there has a visual orientation to the world and assumes the rest of the world resembles them.

It's common to overlook the need to provide for people with divergent perceptual preferences. Some people learn best through hands-on, in-person experiences, some by watching demonstrations or seeing diagrams and pictures and others by listening.

In developing products, offer options: the same content that some can read, others listen to and still others come to a seminar to master in person. Surprisingly, some customers even buy the same content in more than one format. It's comparable to people who watch the movie and then read the book, or vice versa.



## Food for Thought

“Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.”

—*Erma Bombeck*

## Accepting Feedback is Hard

**Y**ou've slaved over your product and your marketing copy—or over a blog post, position paper or proposal.

Your audience—not just one person, but a chorus of four or five—offers a response that's radically off the mark.

One of two reactions is very common:

- ♦ “Ouch!” You withdraw, lick your wounds and sulk.
- ♦ “You're wrong!” A vigorous counterattack ensues.

Hard as this might be, don't take the feedback as a personal failure or evidence that people are hasty readers, sloppy thinkers or downright stupid.

Instead, communication has failed. Communication has a sender and a receiver. Consider therefore that you are 50 percent responsible for the misfire.

Take a deep breath and turn on your curiosity:

- ♦ What did you say or do—or not say or do—that led to that impression?

- ✦ What can you change or add to help people receive your message as intended? If it's too late to modify what went out, learn for next time.

Getting upset or angry about feedback is natural. I've been there, too. Transcend that, though, and your marketing gets better and better.



## Food for Thought

“To swear off making mistakes is very easy. All you have to do is swear off having ideas.”

*—Leo Burnett*

## Patience, Patience, Part I

Keep working the plan even if you don't notice immediate results," I've told several clients recently when delivering their customized month-by-month, one-year marketing plan. I'm taking my own advice now as I systematically implement my own marketing plan for increasing traffic to and sales from my web site. I'll admit, it's frustrating to work so hard and watch the numbers inch up, oh so gradually.

Yet I stay focused because of something I read more than 20 years ago in a book called *The Path of Least Resistance*. The author, Robert Fritz, pointed out that when you initiate change and don't notice any results, you're tempted to give up just when the effect is beginning to take hold. The evidence of success has not had sufficient time to appear. Quitting is understandable, but unwise.

Showman P.T. Barnum understood this. "If a man has not the pluck to keep on advertising," he wrote, "all the money he had already spent is lost."

Courage! Take the right actions and close your eyes to results until the slow-acting, steadily improving consequences show up.



## On the Web

Read comments from *Marketing Minute* subscribers on the question of how long is reasonable to wait from results from marketing:

[www.yudkin.com/waiting.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/waiting.htm)



## Patience, Patience, Part II

**H**ow quickly did you learn about the loss of the Columbia space shuttle and its astronauts or of the collapse of the Twin Towers? Chances are, you knew the sad news within hours.

In today's fast-notification society, it's natural to expect potential customers to make up their minds quickly and to conclude that a campaign failed when it didn't produce results on first try. According to Jay Lipe, author of *The Marketing Toolkit for Growing Businesses*, impatience derails too many marketers. "Ninety-nine percent of successful marketing happens over the long haul," he says.

Lipe recounts one very non-instant sequence of interactions that resulted in new business. His firm sent out a direct mail piece, to which Prospect X responded. A face-to-face meeting took place. Lipe sent a proposal. Prospect X received nine issues of his newsletter. Prospect X visited Lipe's web

site, then sent an email inquiry. A second face-to-face meeting took place, leading to a second proposal. Voilà! Prospect X became a client.

Total time from the first contact to the sale: five years.



## Food for Thought

“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

*—Thomas A. Edison*

## Delays Happen

**Y**ears ago, Arik Schenkler developed mathematical cross-word puzzles and tried to sell them to publications in Israel, where he lives. There were no takers. So he went on to other projects, eventually deleting his sample puzzles from his computer. Then he received a note from an editor saying he'd been impressed by the samples and wanted to run the puzzles in his magazine.

Seven years had passed before Schenkler's marketing efforts came to fruition.

Back then, the man now contacting him had been impressed by the puzzles, but his boss at the newspaper where he was deputy editor didn't care for them. Now, as managing editor of a magazine, he had the power to buy.

In 1710, Bishop George Berkeley appealed to God's all-seeing powers to explain how we know that objects don't vanish when we're not looking at them. Today, business requires

a secular variety of faith that marketing may be working unseen when no such evidence appears before us.

Remember this example when you're tempted to wail, "Nothing's happening!" (And pray that results occur sooner than seven years.)



## Food for Thought

"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."

*—Barack Obama*

## The Familiarity Effect is Real

In a fascinating book called *The Luck Factor*, British psychologist Dr. Richard Wiseman sheds light on something shrewd marketers know: Generally, the more times someone has heard of or encountered you or your company, the more well-disposed they become toward you. Therefore marketers aim to become a familiar name.

Wiseman reports a study in which people were shown a large number of meaningless squiggles and asked which they liked. Respondents preferred the squiggles they'd previously seen, without consciously remembering they'd already seen any of the squiggles or realizing the factor underlying their choice.

"This familiarity effect is not limited to squiggles. Without realizing it, we all prefer things we have seen before," Wiseman comments. "It is part of the theory behind branding and explains why companies are willing to spend millions

of dollars on advertising campaigns to keep their products in the public eye.”

Don’t have a fortune to spend? You can still use this principle by understanding that ten exposures of your name and offerings have a greater impact on your target market than one. Never spend your whole marketing budget in one go.



## **On the Web**

Learn how to become ultra-familiar by turning yourself into the company’s highly visible hero:

[www.yudkin.com/hero.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/hero.htm)

## **Part 2**

# **The Importance of Quality**





## Forget “Good Enough”

**A**s copywriter extraordinaire Gary Halbert once pointed out, you don’t need to be twice as tall to see twice as far. “Just a few more inches will put your head above the rest of the mob,” he says.

The same goes for your marketing materials. Tweaks for clarity here and there, a creative turn of phrase, fresh graphics and ordinary, sincere language instead of jargon can turn basic and banal into compelling and powerful.

“I made a conscious decision to put enough money into my web site to make it ‘good enough,’” one client confided recently. The trouble is that “good enough” evokes no enthusiasm and fails to provide reasons for someone to choose you rather than the alternatives.

To put it plainly, “good enough” produces a lousy response. “Better” begins to make your efforts profitable. “Outstanding” still isn’t perfect, but gets you noticed, remembered,

recommended and revisited when the time comes for someone to plunk down payment.

Last week, two people became clients who remembered me from five years ago. Are you making that distinctive an impact?



## **On the Web**

Discover how to go beyond quality to offerings with cachet:

[www.yudkin.com/cachet.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/cachet.htm)

## Setting a Standard

When E.H. Harriman was expanding the Union Pacific Railroad at the start of the twentieth century, he insisted that one stretch of track be made as perfect as it could be. Then he held out that stretch of track as a model for the entire railroad system.

While many people ridicule an ideal of perfection as a waste of time and energy, I don't agree. By having high standards and striving constantly to reach them, you become better at achieving a top level of quality in less time. This doesn't happen when you stop with "good enough."

In my copywriting mentoring program, where I'm teaching marketing writing, I've watched proteges internalize my standards and improve week after week. It's like what happened when Winston Lord turned in a speech to Henry Kissinger at the US State Department. Kissinger asked, "Is this the best you can do?"

Lord said, “I guess not. I’ll try again.”

The very same exchange reoccurred, until the ninth time Kissinger asked, “Is this your best effort?”

Lord exploded, “I couldn’t possibly improve another word!”

“Good. Now I’ll read it,” Kissinger replied.



## Food for Thought

“Whenever we come upon one of those intensely right words in a book or a newspaper, the resulting effect is physical as well as spiritual, and electrically prompt.”

*—Mark Twain*

## Why Quality?

**I**n an online discussion, I was surprised to see quite a few Internet marketers define “quality” as whatever gets customers to buy and keep a product.

That sets the bar way too low. Set it higher, and you’re more likely to inspire devotion, referrals and long-term patronage.

I’d define “quality” as having a low annoyance factor and prompting delight in at least one relevant respect.

Annoyances like spelling errors, poor organization, lousy layout, inconsistent facts or an abundance of “umms” rarely prompt returns or refund requests, but they register with users and affect enthusiasm for an encore performance.

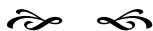
Merely getting rid of all the annoyances gets you only to “ho-hum,” however.

To achieve quality, try listing at least five kinds of excellence for your service, publication, event or merchandise.

Then honestly rate yourself—or have customers do so—along those dimensions.

Or identify competitors who stand out in those respects and assess whether you can match or surpass them—or stake out a different reason for reverence.

A dearth of quality causes indifference. Quality creates fans.



## **On the Web**

Read an article on how and why to create respect for quality throughout your organization:

[www.yudkin.com/everymarketer.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/everymarketer.htm)

## Why Good Enough Stinks

I'm so much more productive, now that I've learned to stop when I've achieved 'good enough.'"

Chances are, you've heard something like that and probably nodded your head.

Consider, though, this perspective from literary agent Jennifer Lawler in *Writer's Digest*:

"As an agent, I turn down 'good enough' ideas every day. The distance between 'good enough' and 'great' may not be huge, but if you go that extra 10 percent, I can tell. So can everyone else. 'Great' has me making lists of editors I should pitch as soon as you sign with me. 'Good enough'... I'd rather eat ice cream."

In a down economy, in a competitive environment, on an Internet where short attention spans rule, "good enough" gets you passed over.

Note that Lawler's extra 10 percent isn't exactitude of detail—so-called perfection. Rather, she means more developed,

more distinctive, more encompassing, coming from deeper within oneself and producing a stronger impact.

Whether you sell plumbing or divorces, do you always give your work your best effort?

People can tell, and they choose accordingly.



## Food for Thought

“There is always some kid who may be seeing me for the first time, and I owe him my best.”

*—Joe DiMaggio*



## Be a Good Client

**Y**ears ago, a motivational speaker told me he needed new web site copy, and after asking a lot of questions, I told him the fee would be \$3,000.

“I’ll pay you \$3,500,” he said. “I want your best work.”

I always deliver my highest quality work. But his gesture may have persuaded me to be sure to deliver my very best customer service as well.

Besides raising the fee, you can become someone’s A-list client by:

- ✦ Being as clear as possible in specifying what you want
- ✦ Setting reasonable rather than unrealistic deadlines
- ✦ Supplying the information or items they need to complete their project for you
- ✦ Refraining from changing the scope of work mid-stream whenever possible
- ✦ Saying “thank you” explicitly and often

- ◆ Providing honest feedback, both praise and constructive criticism
- ◆ Paying on time or earlier

Why bother? Treating your vendors well lowers your stress, raises the quality of your operations and may someday enable you to ask a favor so you can deliver out-of-the-park service to a client of yours.



## Food for Thought

“The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it.”

*—Henry David Thoreau*

# **Part 3**

## **You Vis-à-Vis Clients**



## Forget About Wanting Folks to Like You

**D**o you want people to like you? This near-universal human desire can hinder the growth of your business.

According to *Marketing Minute* subscriber Steve Clark, a sales trainer and proprietor of NewSchoolSelling.com, people whose need to be liked outweighs their need to take money to the bank fear upsetting potential buyers. They waste time with prospects who will never buy, never ask fence-sitters to make up their minds, and accept “maybe” because they dread “no.”

I’ve seen clients of mine drop promising opportunities out of fear of being perceived as a pest and delay raising prices to remain well-liked.

To counteract such a tendency, Clark recommends identifying self-sabotaging beliefs, like “It’s rude to ask someone about their budget” or “Follow-up is annoying.” Create and drill into yourself more constructive beliefs to replace them,

like “Discussing money is enjoyable” and “Follow-up is a service to others.”

“Selling is not a place to get your emotional needs met. It is simply an arena for conducting commerce. Becoming more detached can make you a 35 percent more effective salesperson,” Clark says.



## Food for Thought

“You can’t please everyone, and you can’t make everyone like you.”

*—Katie Couric*

## Can You Please Everyone?

Robert Mankoff, cartoon editor of *The New Yorker*, which he understandably calls “the best job in the world,” once set out to find a cartoon that nearly everyone who had any sense of humor would find funny.

He sent what he thought was his own very best cartoon to 2,000 men and women, asking them to rate it from 1 (completely unfunny) to 10 (extremely funny). About 80% rated Mankoff’s cartoon 7 or above, which delighted him. Yet some respondents gave it a 1.

Mankoff threw up his hands, calling this item “the most highly rated cartoon for funniness that I ever did, or (sob) will probably ever do.”

His survey has implications for your marketing efforts.

Whatever target market you’re aiming at, its members differ from one another, having diverse personalities, varying educational and cultural backgrounds, diverging tastes

or lifestyles and disparate values. Therefore, they won't all interpret what you present to them in the same way.

It's foolhardy to aim at universal praise or acceptance.

So long as you have enthusiastic advocates, ignore those who think you're incredibly off the mark.



## Food for Thought

"I don't know what the key to success is, but the key to failure is trying to please everyone."

*—Bill Cosby*



## Serve, Don't Be Subservient

Over the years, I've mentored hundreds of people, first in writing for publication and more recently in writing effective marketing materials. While much of the work focuses on improving technical skills, of equal importance—and lasting impact—are unexpected lessons in how to act like a masterful professional.

Some mentorees assume that serving clients means being subservient. They're surprised to learn that as a consultant, you don't have to accept the client's definition of the problem. Indeed, fulfilling the client's request may lead the client into a dead end. Instead, explain why they'd reach their goal faster by taking a different route.

Likewise, just because the client's paying you, you don't have to kowtow by accepting fees below what your experience merits or by putting up with nasty behavior.

For some people I've coached, their crucial step forward involves learning to deliver their work so their clients accept their knowledge and advice.

In a nutshell: Think before doing. And respect yourself as much as you respect others. The best clients respect you in turn for standing tall and telling them what's what.



## Food for Thought

“No matter what your product is, you are ultimately in the education business. Your customers need to be constantly educated about the many advantages of doing business with you, trained to use your products more effectively, and taught how to make never-ending improvement in their lives.”

*—Robert G. Allen*

## Client Crises: Resolved or Rejected?

**D**o your clients have emergencies? Jack Mitchell, author of the marvelous book *Hug Your Customers*, describes scores of urgent problems solved by staff of his clothing stores: a groom spilling coffee on his pants on the way to his wedding, switched luggage leaving someone without a suit to wear to a funeral and a woman desperate to buy men's underwear on a Sunday. (She'd packed her house for a move and her husband was furious that she'd forgotten to put aside clean briefs.)

I read about Mitchell's heroics while suffering through four days with muddy water at our house. The well company came on a Friday, seemed to have fixed the problem, then 20 minutes after the crew left, the water turned to mud again. They didn't return my call till Monday morning.

"If this happens again, can you give me a cell phone or beeper number where I can reach you?" I asked the company owner.

His response, counseling patience, conveyed that to him, living without water was no big deal. And until competitors move in on his territory, perhaps he can remain top dog.



## On the Web

Read responses from *Marketing Minute* subscribers to the question of whether or not they cater to client emergencies:

[www.yudkin.com/emergencies.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/emergencies.htm)

## Respect Potential Employees, Too

**D**o you treat prospective employees as well as you treat prospective buyers? *Marketing Minute* subscriber Mark Sherman, a copywriter in Lantana, Florida, says you should.

Sherman interviewed for a marketing position with a well-known software company and was told he was one of two finalists. The company had a hiring freeze, though, and he should call back in two weeks to set up a second interview. Two weeks later, when he called, the HR director said the position had been filled. What about the hiring freeze? “Well, the position is filled, that’s all I can say.”

Understandably, Sherman felt something fishy was going on and that he had not been dealt with honestly. And the incident had long-lasting repercussions when he shared his unease with fellow staffers for a popular online forum who had been recommending the company’s flagship product. The

consensus was to remove the demo from the forum library and stop recommending the program. “Hundreds, maybe thousands, of prospective sales were lost,” Sherman reflects.

Honesty and respect in all your dealings can have a ripple effect benefitting your company.



## Food for Thought

Many a man’s reputation would not know his character if they met on the street.”

*–Elbert Hubbard*

## Everyone Knows—Or Do They?

Last Saturday, I watched with pleasure a presentation for children that included musical instruments from around the world. As he concluded, the performer invited the audience to come up and touch the instruments he'd brought. I asked about a long bamboo cylinder that produced the mesmerizing sound of a waterfall when tipped.

"It's a rain stick, from Chile," the musician said. "I don't bother to introduce it any more since so many nature stores carry them now. Everybody knows it."

Well, I hadn't seen one, I thought, and I know a fair amount about music. And judging from their reactions, some of the kids present were encountering both his violin and rain stick for the first time.

It's tempting to assume that something you see or hear everywhere is equally familiar to everyone in your audience.

This exchange reminded me of times I'd been baffled by sports and fashion brand references in business copy, or by names well-known to enthusiasts but not to every customer.

In marketing, it's best to bring the uninitiated along by unobtrusively explaining insider references.



## On the Web

Learn how to demystify jargon in your writing without offending those who are already in the know:

[www.yudkin.com/jargon.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/jargon.htm)



## Pricing: Don't Explain

**W**hy does Report A, with 292 pages, cost less than Report B with 129 pages?"

"Why does your X service cost \$997?"

"How much time do you spend on Y for \$2,295?"

When you get questions like these, act like a sphinx. Smile. Change the subject.

Not every customer question deserves an answer, and these demand to peek into the sanctum of your business, where you lock away your preferences, procedures and strategies. Those belong to you and you alone.

In addition, such questioner curiosity shines attention on factors that you don't want customers focusing on.

As Mike Schultz and John Doerr put it in their *Fees and Pricing Benchmark Report: Consulting Industry 2008*: "The more the conversation focuses on the underlying compo-

nents of the price and price structure, the less it focuses on value, quality and outcomes.”

You want customers to care not how efficiently you work or what you pay contractors and employees, but how they benefit from what you do for them.

Value, quality and outcomes: Keep their eyes on that trio!



## On the Web

Obtain a crash course in the psychology of pricing from my article, “Four Paradoxes of Pricing”:

[www.yudkin.com/pricing.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/pricing.htm)

## Price Complaints? Here's What to Do

**W**hen potential buyers whine that your prices are too high—or seem to stay away for that reason—what should you do?

Add value. Pile on extra benefits that cost you little and mean a lot to the recipient, such as:

- ✦ More personal attention. Say you'll answer their questions, offer advice for no extra charge. (Maybe you already do this, but they don't know it!)
- ✦ More affordability. Accept credit cards if you haven't, start an extended payment plan, offer a pre-payment discount.
- ✦ More speed. Stop dilly-dallying with orders, and deliver service faster than they think they can expect.
- ✦ More security. Strengthen your guarantee. This nudges many potential purchasers over the decision line.

- ✦ More stuff. Toss in bonuses. Often you can get these from businesses complimentary to yours at no cost to you.
- ✦ More duration. Lengthen the duration of each transaction: free updates for a year, free six-month follow-up.
- ✦ More convenience. Make house calls. Deliver when and where the customer wants it. Create standing orders.
- ✦ More accessibility. Perhaps you already have people on staff who speak Portuguese or know sign language. Tell this to your market!



## Food for Thought

“Where quality is the thing sought after, the thing of supreme quality is cheap, whatever the price one has to pay for it.”

*—William James*

## Unwittingly, You Attract

A couple of decades ago, when I was a young college professor, a colleague flopped down next to me and complained. Students flocked to her office hours to beg for advice about their personal problems. I wondered about this, since students never dumped their problems on me. Surely something about her behavior in class was inviting the response she didn't like.

This incident floated back in memory when someone I was coaching mentioned that most of her clients had a hard time deciding what they wanted from her. "I've had a few clients like that over the years, but not many," I replied. "Might you be encouraging that somehow?"

She agreed with the principle that if you don't like how customers relate to you, the first place to look is how you comport yourself toward them.

Bothered by bargain hunters? You're probably sending signals that it's fine to try to dicker with you. Plagued by last-minute, gotta-be-done-tomorrow projects? Consider how you're inviting crises.

To paraphrase down-to-earth Eleanor Roosevelt, "No one can take advantage of you without your consent."



## On the Web

Read an article describing ten copywriting techniques for warning away unsuitable clients and inviting ideal ones:

[www.yudkin.com/idealcustomers.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/idealcustomers.htm)

## Oh, You Do That?

**Y**esterday at the copy shop I've patronized for seven years, I read a poster about the shop's publishing program.

I read it again, more carefully.

"Adam, you're printing books now?" I called to the man who was binding manuals for me. "In house?"

"Since last year. On that." He pointed to a machine behind him.

"Would you quote me on a book order?"

"Sure thing."

Driving home, I marveled at how hard it had been for me to make the connections needed to realize they could get the business I was about to give to a company in Tennessee.

I knew the local shop was publishing books. I had paged through some on previous visits. It never occurred to me that they would own the expensive machinery needed for digi-

tal book printing. Their poster talked about publishing, not printing.

I practically had to be hit on the head to get it.

They should have told me—explicitly—either personally (they know I’m an author) or through a newsletter (they don’t have one).

Don’t let loyal customers wander around oblivious to your capabilities.



## Food for Thought

“Early to bed, early to rise, advertise, advertise, advertise.”

—*Ray Kroc*



## Create Fans, Not Customers or Users

**H**ave you been trying to attract clients and increase buyers of your products and services? Don't, says *Marketing Minute* subscriber Bob Baker, author of *Branding Yourself Online*.

"I used to describe people who complimented my articles and books as 'happy readers,' or if they purchased something, 'satisfied customers.' Others talk about 'users.' 'Fans,' on the other hand, cheer you on, rave about you to their friends, follow everything you do with interest, go to great lengths to attend your public appearances, and more. Which would you rather have?"

Although "fan club" usually connotes glamorous fields like entertainment and sports, Baker argues that angling for fans encourages anyone to develop some distinctive quality that in turn increases memorableness, repeat sales and referrals.

Your distinctive quality might be an unusual point of view, a unique personality, an impressive background, remarkable connections, spiritual depth, or something else competitors lack.

Your marketing and publicity materials then play up that quality along with all the more usual information.

With a clear, appealing brand identity, you'll have taken the first step to generating a crowd of clamoring fans.



## **On the Web**

Read my article on marketing tools that turn first-time contacts into long-term fans:

[www.yudkin.com/fans.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/fans.htm)

## Cultivate True Fans

In March 2008, Kevin Kelly published a provocative piece suggesting that artists can make a decent living by attracting 1,000 “true fans.”

A true fan purchases everything you produce, drives 200 miles to see you sing, comes to your openings, has a Google Alert set for your name, buys your out-of-print stuff on eBay. They can’t wait for your next work, and they spend \$100 a year with you—for you, that’s \$100,000 a year.

Bloggers have quibbled with his math and attacked his assumptions, but Kelly’s idea of going for depth of appreciation has validity far beyond art and music. How?

- ✦ Nourish long-term relationships. One year-after-year customer has more value than four fickle ones.
- ✦ Be responsive. *Marketing Minute* subscribers express surprise when I reply to their emails. You deserve it!

- ✦ Be different. No one has intense loyalty for a “me too” product, company, person or service.
- ✦ Show up often. Fans won’t forget you when they run across your name continually.
- ✦ Be authentic, personal and consistent. Fakery and wobbling repel fans. Personality cements the bond.



## Food for Thought

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, and not a second-rate version of someone else.”

*—Judy Garland*

## **Part 4**

# **Find Your Own Best Path**



## Ignore Other People's "Musts"

**H**as some know-it-all ever told you, you must do la-de-da to get work?

You must have an up-to-date résumé or brochure. You must call friends of friends to network. You must... Sometimes these general "musts" set you up for failure.

If these "musts" don't fit your personality and your past success pattern, you may not execute them well—or get around to them at all.

My friend Kathleen has gotten hired for numerous jobs by walking into a certain office upon a signal from her intuition. No "Help Wanted" ad or sign, and no résumé on her part. Just being at the right place at the perfect time.

A computer programmer friend gets the nod when he has a chance not just to talk but to demonstrate what he can do. He needs to engineer these kinds of opportunities, not talky interviews, to move around in the work world.

Once a business partner insisted I had to make cold calls to drum up clients. Wrong, wrong, wrong!

Do it your way when that's worked for you before.



## Food for Thought

“I have to change a tune to my own way of doing it. That’s all I know.”

*—Billie Holiday*



## They Said I Had To

**B**ut you have to make cold calls,' they told me. I believed them, reluctantly, since they were the experts."

Over the years, numerous clients have told me this sad tale.

Cold calls, properly made, are powerful, and one of my favorite books, *The Well-Fed Writer*, describes how Peter Bowerman used them to launch a business communications practice despite having no experience and no connections.

But cold calls are not necessary to build a business. Through publishing, publicity, public speaking and networking, you can build a reputation that attracts business without you ever telephoning a stranger.

Likewise, web sites are powerful business attraction tools. Yet you can certainly have a thriving business without a web site. My favorite local restaurant keeps its tables full without one.

Are any marketing activities or paraphernalia mandatory? Maybe a telephone. Maybe an email address. Maybe just one or the other.

In deciding how to market yourself, clear your mind of “musts.” Come up with a fresh plan that suits both the expectations of your target market and your own preferences.



## Food for Thought

“Re-examine all that you have been told; dismiss that which insults your soul.”

—*Walt Whitman*

## Personality Stereotypes in Marketing

A business contact with whom I'd become acquainted by email and then by phone once sent me this candid comment: "Over the phone, you seem somewhat introverted. You must do some kind of Clark Kent/Superman thing when you give a talk if all of those testimonials are true."

Indeed, I do flip some sort of switch when I teach a teleclass, lead an in-person seminar or perform on radio. I've been known to flip the switch with clients, too. But the "introverted" comment reflects a popular misconception that certain personality types do better in certain media. In fact, many radio stars, like Garrison Keillor, and acclaimed actors, like Laurence Olivier, consider themselves shy.

Because while growing up I was the quiet one in my family, not until my mid-30's did I have an inkling that I could hold the attention of an audience, and enjoy it. With practice, I've developed and polished my presentation skills. Re-

cently several people have told me they envied my “natural” speaking talent.

Don’t allow personality stereotypes to keep you from exploring any method of marketing.



## **On the Web**

Download my free audio manifesto on marketing for introverts:

[www.yudkin.com/introverts.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/introverts.htm)

## Silent Like Cal?

Last month marked the one-hundredth anniversary of Calvin Coolidge becoming mayor of Northampton, Massachusetts, two towns over from me. This got me reading up on America's thirtieth president, who comes to us through the fog of history as "Silent Cal."

This taciturn man, I learned, was actually a distinguished communicator. The first US president to give a political speech on the radio, he held more press conferences than any president before him or since. Most Americans liked him and considered him principled and competent.

His nickname points to a paradox that remains surprising in today's society: Someone deeply introverted can shine on stage, on the air and on paper, can persuade and even be popular. Though Coolidge became president upon the death of Warren G. Harding, voters elected him to a term after that.

Contrary to stereotypes, introverts can excel at marketing—in business as well as in politics.

A quieter style can be strong, creative, empathetic and alluring. Too often, though, introverts swallow the myth that they compare poorly with chatterboxes when it comes to bringing in business.



## **On the Web**

Read about four ways that introverts can magnetically attract admiration and followers:

[www.yudkin.com/in-charisma.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/in-charisma.htm)

## Redefine Yourself—Why and How

**A** lament I often hear: “The market is starting to regard what I do as a commodity, driving down fees.”

However, by presenting you (or your firm) as offering something unique, not some same old thing, you come across as deserving premium pay.

First, articulate what makes you different from others with the same title or those performing the same services—“executive coach,” “human resources consultant” or “virtual assistant,” for instance.

Think: Who would be a perfect client for you who would not suit most competitors? Or try filling in these blanks: “I specialize in helping \_\_\_\_ (who?) who have \_\_\_\_ (what problem?) get \_\_\_\_ (what result?).”

Second, toss away or greatly downplay the title you previously used and come forth with your uniqueness. Then you’re no longer a commodity.

BEFORE: Executive recruiter

AFTER: We specialize in helping rapidly growing entrepreneurial companies find their first professional CEO.

BEFORE: Virtual assistant

AFTER: We turn “to-do’s” to “done’s” for overburdened moms.

BEFORE: Used car salesman

AFTER: Using matchmaking psychology, we find your next favorite car.



## Food for Thought

“If what you are selling is energy, charisma, and enthusiasm, there is no competition, because most others are selling things that are lifeless, loveless, and dull.”

*—Stuart Wilde*



## What's Your Business Philosophy?

**M**y company helps people in distress save their homes before they lose them via auctions to sharks,” wrote a guy named Ike Okwuosa from San Francisco, introducing himself. “I operate under the abiding business ethos that a mutually beneficial solution for all concerned is a win-win deal, and every human interaction, no matter how innocuous, is a holy encounter. This way of thinking is reflected in my company position statement, ‘Because People Are More Important Than Property.’”

Sincerity came through loudly and clearly in this statement. It got me wondering how many other people express a personal calling, a spiritual philosophy in their work.

Later in our correspondence, Okwuosa asked me a question I couldn't answer at first: “How about you, Marcia—what is your business philosophy?”

After thinking and thinking, I came up with two principles I hold dear: Integrity always matters, and excellence is worth pursuing for its own sake. These values have governed my life for more than 30 years. Yet I've rarely put them into words and never used them in marketing. They're simply who I am.



## On the Web

Read responses from more than 30 *Marketing Minute* subscribers on the question of their business philosophy:

[www.yudkin.com/philosophy.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/philosophy.htm)

## Set the Right Tone

Gosh, you certainly don't sound like a stressed-out academic" is a typical opener I hear on voicemail messages from friends who are college professors. "You sound so upbeat," marvel friends who call me.

So much is conveyed in the way someone answers the phone, and I've adopted the habit of using a cheerfully energetic tone of voice.

Someone who calls me in a depressed or angry mood isn't quite as lugubrious or upset after such a greeting, and someone who doesn't know what to expect from me may begin to feel rapport building even before we've started the substantive part of our conversation.

Other communication elements besides your telephone voice set a tone.

Photos: Do you smile in yours, frown or look off into the distance, aloof?

Prose style: Is your web site jammed with jargon or does it talk accessibly to the reader?

Reception area: Does your office waiting area offer comfortable seating with up-to-date, appropriate reading material?

First impressions last, and they begin sooner than you might think.



## Food for Thought

“Personality is the glitter that sends your little gleam across the footlights and the orchestra pit into that big black space where the audience is.”

*—Mae West*

## Understand Your Limits

**A** *Marketing Minute* subscriber asks:  
“When is it time to cut loose a difficult customer instead of trying to improve communication?”

View difficult customers as a mismatch between your expectations and theirs, what you're prepared to deliver and what they want, or your personality and their needs.

Customers who try your patience, for example, aren't horrible in themselves. For someone who loves extended interactions, they might be perfect.

The issue then becomes: How willing and able are you to stretch for someone with different needs, expectations or habits than what you'd prefer?

Sometimes attention to your communication skills resolves the problem. Then you become able to help a wider range of people.

Other times, it's not cost-effective for you to contort to what they want.

Or accommodating them is too stressful or unpleasant for you.

And perhaps you simply can't—psychologically or practically—satisfy them.

In the last three instances, you might be better off to cut them loose.

Prevent such headachy mismatches by describing your work process in such a way that ideal customers say “Yes!” and unsuitable ones go elsewhere.



## Food for Thought

“If you want to catch a trout, don’t fish in a herring barrel.”

*—Ann Landers*

## Cheesy or Credible? Your Choice

In one week, two clients voiced the same worry to me: “I don’t want to be cheesy.” One added, “I provide a high-quality service.”

My dictionary defines “cheesy” as “tasteless and showy, often in a vulgar manner; cheap, shoddy.”

According to Molly Gordon, author of *Authentic Promotion*, you can find important values in such concerns and then turn them into commitments. Like this:

Complaint: Marketing takes too much time.

Underlying Value: Balance, efficiency.

Commitment: I am committed to efficient and effective use of my time.

Complaint: Marketing costs too much.

Underlying Value: Frugality, wise use of resources.

Commitment: I am committed to making wise marketing investments.

Underlying the “cheesy” fear might be respect for substance over image, in contrast to the image over substance that pervades the media around us, Gordon suggests. “Marketing can be about sharing your enthusiasm and being available to those who want what you have to offer. Try sharing your energy, excitement and ideas without feeling attached to whether or not someone hires you.”

That way, your message clicks with your ideal clients—tastefully.



## On the Web

Learn how to become not only credible to potential clients but also believable:

[www.yudkin.com/believability.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/believability.htm)



## Forget Other People's Numbers

**W**e Americans have too much faith in numbers. The other day a client informed me that the average response rate to offers on postcards was 4 to 6 percent. It reminded me of advice I'd once read on getting published. The Rule of Twelve, this author called it: Send out twelve book proposals and one will be accepted. There are similar statistics floating around about how many résumés you must send out to get one interview, and how many interviews produce each job offer.

If these numbers encourage you to try harder, terrific. But please understand, such numbers have the solidity of air. They do not come from research. And they have no power to predict how quickly your marketing campaign will succeed.

If you create a perfect match, averages mean nothing. If you can write a project proposal that sparkles and persuades, averages don't apply. If you can keep trying after 200

rejections, and succeed on try #201, who cares what other people's numbers were?

Not averages but creativity and persistence get you where you want to go.



## Food for Thought

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

*—Albert Einstein*

**Part 5**

**From Success to  
Greater Success**



## Always Alert, Always Learning

**D**uring the season of going back to school, I thought I'd provide a few suggestions for free, on-your-own marketing education.

First, just becoming conscious of your reactions to the scores of marketing messages you encounter every day can teach you a lot. Which envelopes, letters, ads, newsletters and non-news stories in the news grab your attention, and which ones make you roll your eyes? With any "don't" you discover, try turning it upside-down into a "do." For example, recoiling from a brochure with an unfriendly, off-putting photo reminds you that your photo should be friendly and inviting.

Second, discuss the best and worst that you find with business colleagues. When the headline you loved leaves someone else confused, and the design you hated doesn't stop them from copying down the phone number to place an order, you've learned something valuable. Other times some-

one else will be able to identify in words the aspect of a piece that disturbed you.

Third, think about how you can borrow the techniques used successfully by others for your own business. For instance, I'm constantly hearing from readers inspired by *The Marketing Minute* to start their own email newsletter.



## Food for Thought

“You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself.”

—*Galileo*

## From Small Successes to Big Ones

Susan RoAne, author of *How to Work a Room*, calls it the “Go Know!” theory of marketing: “One day my Aunt Yetta is standing next to someone somewhere who just happens to..., which leads to...”

*Marketing Minute* subscriber Diane Darling has a story like this. Every couple of months she would send out an email newsletter containing tips on better networking to a growing list of more than 1,000 subscribers. In May 2001, she announced an upcoming seminar on networking in the newsletter.

Fifty participants attended, among them a woman who was later asked by a *Wall Street Journal* reporter about the role of networking in a job search and mentioned Darling. *Journal* reporter Joann Lubin attended Darling’s next seminar and described it in vivid detail in an article.

NBC Nightly News called after seeing Lubin’s article and filmed a networking session led by Darling that night. A

month later, that segment aired. McGraw-Hill called: Would she be interested in writing a book?

*The Networking Survival Guide* by Diane Darling came out in April 2003.

Aesop might put it this way: Large achievements from small actions grow.



## Food for Thought

“Luck to me is something else: Hard work—and realizing what is opportunity and what isn’t.”

*—Lucille Ball*



## Beware Misplaced Pride

**A**re you proud to say you get 90 percent of your new clients by referral? That does indicate people trust you, but it should also send up a warning flag: Your business may be shaky, just six months or a year from collapse.

Too many times to count, people have come to me who used to get all their business through personal connections. Until it was too late, they didn't notice referrals were drying up. Their industry had changed, their contacts had mainly moved on or younger folks became in charge.

Because they'd had such steady, dependable referrals, marketing was a cloud of mystery to them. They suddenly had to learn the basics, as if they had just hung out a shingle.

How to avoid their peril? Create a reputation that extends beyond those who personally know you.

Publish. Speak. Pursue publicity. Be known for a specific expertise or point of view. Get to know influential people by

commenting on their blogs. Offer resources on your web site that strangers want to link to.

Don't wait. Get going on building that reputation now.



## Food for Thought

“Begin somewhere; you cannot build a reputation on what you intend to do.”

*—Liz Smith*

## Create a Dependable Pipeline

**I**s your pipeline in tiptop shape?

If yes, you dependably experience a steady stream of inquiries from potential clients or customers, with little effort or attention.

If no, consider one or more of these measures, thereby creating a marketing infrastructure that continually delivers leads:

- ♦ Regular direct mail outreach. Each month, a mailing list company ships a local printer labels for newly incorporated or newly registered businesses in his area. Sending them a special offer for printed stationery yields a couple dozen new faces in his shop a month, some becoming long-term customers.
- ♦ Periodic seminars. For years, terrific leads came my way through several adult education programs where I taught every other month or so. After preparing

once, I merely had to show up and perform well—and I even got paid a small amount to collect these leads.

- ✦ Recurrent publishing. A blog, a column that you write every week or month or your own email newsletter will normally bring you inquiries like clockwork, too. Make marketing regular so you won't suffer dry spells.



## Food for Thought

“Repetition makes reputation and reputation makes customers.”

*—Elizabeth Arden*

## Are You In Front of Customers Enough?

**H**ow often is too often to contact customers? This question comes up at many of my seminars. Interestingly, I rarely hear it asked in a positive way: How often should we be contacting customers?

In truth, hardly anyone contacts their customers too often. And hardly anyone contacts customers as often as is most profitable.

Denise Lones, founder of The Lones Group, says that of 27,000 real estate agents she has asked over the years to add her to their database for marketing mailings, only five send her stuff more than four times a year. “And most of what they send is generic and boring,” she adds.

Repetitive contact maximizes the odds that when the customer is ready to buy, you’re the one who gets the business. Educate customers on a variety of issues and you build credibility. Sprinkle in some creativity so that readers enjoy

hearing from you, vary your offers, and you've got a scrumptious recipe for revenue.

Contact might be by mail, email or advertising on radio, in print and so on.

Stay in sight, in mind—and solidly in the black.



## On the Web

Download a free recording in which I interview the owner of a postcard marketing company on ways to use postcards to get and stay in front of customers:

[www.yudkin.com/postcards.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/postcards.htm)

## Not Advertising? Think Again!

Moving to a town of 920 people changed my perspective on advertising. The phone company wouldn't send us the Yellow Pages for three weeks, so I read ads in the local paper as if they held clues to buried treasure.

When the phone directory finally arrived, it didn't answer all our needs, since many tradespeople and personal service providers in the area don't spring for a business phone and therefore aren't listed. Even now that we've figured out where to shop or who to call for most of what we need, we occasionally get stumped, and asking around for referrals or searching on the web doesn't work, either.

When local businesses decide they can't afford or are getting along fine without advertising, they don't give even a passing thought to the folks who are urgently trying to find someone like them. National companies have their blind

spots too, like skipping Yellow Pages in outlying areas and distributing glossy circulars that don't mention locations.

If you don't advertise, you're missing perfect customers who are making do, going without or tearing out their hair. It's inconsiderate and shortsighted!



## Food for Thought

“Put yourself in the path of a charging stampede of people who are desperate to buy what you are selling.”

*—Ben Hart*



## The Grapevine Speaks

According to Northeastern University professor Walter Carl, when college students keep track of how many times any brand, organization, product or service spontaneously comes up in conversation, the average tally comes to 25 times a day.

You can improve the odds that your company or brand gets talked about.

Zipcar, a car-sharing service, gives each customer a colorful card to keep on their key chain. What tangible item can you give away that will be seen—and asked about—by others?

When professional speaker Patricia Fripp is at home watching TV, she signs stacks of “Thank you” cards so that every shipment from her office can include a hand-signed note. What personal touch can you add to your operations so buyers feel special?

Post-it Notes became a runaway success only when they were put directly into the hands of secretaries, who quickly

couldn't live without them and spread the word. How can you get your product to influential users who will tell their networks about your stuff?

When making a purchase, nearly 80 percent of people rely on recommendations, which you can encourage.



## On the Web

Find out how to form bonds with people who are often in a position to recommend you and your company:

[www.yudkin.com/influence.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/influence.htm)

## Long-ago Connections Can Return

Legendary advertising executive John Caples tells the story of a man who walked into a Steinway showroom to buy “the instrument of the immortals” 10 years after he first saw Steinway’s ad with that phrase. Only then was he in the position to buy the piano the ad had made him want.

I experienced a similar demonstration of the long-term impact of marketing recently. In 1991, to promote our book *Smart Speaking*, my co-author Laurie Schloff and I appeared on a Boston radio show. Eight years later, the host of that show called me to say she was now launching a business show on WBNW Personal Finance Radio. Would I like to be a featured expert on her program?

I became a Monday morning regular on the show, talking about marketing. She would never have remembered me, much less known about my current interests, had I not put

her on my mailing list and sent three postcards a year to her home.

With every bit of marketing you do, you plant seeds. Keep them watered so that they can sprout and bloom when their time comes.



## **Food for Thought**

“The person who is waiting for something to turn up might start with their shirt sleeves.”

*—Garth Henrichs*

## The Power of Intention

**D**o you believe that rustling up clients is hard work, or do you feel that they are waiting for you everywhere?

Often, life brings you exactly what you expect. Here's a story told by coach Zev Saftlas in his book, *Motivation That Works*. When his brother Ira got called for jury duty, he decided that one of the several hundred strangers he was sitting around with was undoubtedly a perfect client for his advertising agency.

Ira relaxed in the waiting room until he got an idea who the potential client might be. After going over to start a conversation, he learned that the man owned several businesses and did indeed need advertising services. "The rest fell into place by itself," writes Saftlas. "All he did was set a goal."

Coach Andrea Conway puts it this way: "You have to 'have it' on the inside before you can 'get it' on the outside. The more you identify with struggle, the more struggle you

attract to yourself. Instead, when you reach a place of inner security, knowing that potential buyers are asking for your offering, you can really soar.”



## Food for Thought

“By the act of observation and intention, we have the ability to extend a kind of super-radiance to the world.”

*—Lynne McTaggart*

## What a Standup Comedian Learned

**D**uring a cross-country call with copywriter and marketer Tony Blake, I couldn't help pelting him with questions when I learned his first career was standup comic. How did he get from there to a career similar to mine? What had he learned from entertaining crowds in comedy clubs that applies to wooing customers?

"As I traveled the comedy circuit, I saw that some clubs thrived while others were failing because they weren't marketing themselves properly," Blake told me. "I told club owners that I would do my standup gig at night while spending days coaching them on what was working elsewhere. Other comics asked for my help too, and before long I was doing much more advice giving than performing."

Blake added that one can't succeed as a comedian without becoming an astute observer and amateur psychologist, listening closely so one can shine the light of humor on

human behavior. “You learn to think on your feet, and you become familiar with failure. If the audience doesn’t laugh, you simply move on to the next gag—and any successful marketer does the same.”



## Food for Thought

“Advice is like snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into, the mind.”

—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*



## Become Unforgettable

**C**owgirl Smarts: It doesn't sound like a serious business topic, and perhaps that's why meeting planners and audiences have been cheering wildly since Texan Ellen Reid Smith, author of a book called *e-Loyalty*, began giving talks wearing black leather chaps and an outsized Stetson.

"I walk out on stage to a room of smiling, whooping attendees," Smith says. "We start off the hour with everyone giving their best 'Yeehaw!' It breaks down all formality and gets their energy flowing."

Smith's web site CowgirlSmarts.com continues the theme with historical lore, a series of books on the cowgirl approach to business and a period photo of one of her cowgirl heroes.

"Before signing the contract, some clients ask 'Now you're going to wear your chaps, aren't you?' I'd been speaking to groups on e-loyalty for years, and I wish I'd done something like this sooner. Showing up in costume makes me more

desirable as a speaker, more memorable and definitely more fun. I'll still drag out my silk suits for the right market, but I prefer boots and attitude."



## **On the Web**

Read my article on how and why to create a personal trademark:

[www.yudkin.com/trademark.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/trademark.htm)

## Don't Get Drained by Questions

Experts and consultants often find themselves perplexed on how to handle topical questions too big for a one-sentence answer but too small for a paid consultation.

My colleague Joan Stewart channels some “How can I...?” publicity questions by inviting readers of her weekly ezine to post suggestions for the questioner at her Publicity Hound blog. “This lets my subscribers flaunt their expertise by providing creative ideas and helpful suggestions—far more than I could offer by myself,” she says.

Others have occasional call-in times, where anyone who gets through between, say, 1 and 2 p.m. gets up to 10 minutes of complimentary advice.

You could also respond, “Thank you for your question. It’s queued up for a possible answer in my monthly newsletter. Make sure you subscribe at...”

Another option: Answer questions by email, then compile the Q&A's into a freebie report, a product or a Frequently Asked Questions page.

I've seen specialists offering a low-cost pay-per-question service.

My own solution is occasional "Ask Marcia" teleseminars, which I make available afterwards in recorded form.

Somehow, leverage those questions!



## On the Web

Download my free Q&A recording on getting media coverage:

[www.yudkin.com/publicityideas.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/publicityideas.htm)

# **Part 6**

## **My Own Business Lessons**



## 25-Year Marketing Insights, Part I

**I**n January 2006, I celebrated my 25th anniversary of successful self-employment. Looking back, I identified four lessons learned to share with you.

Lesson #1: Your first big success contains clues to a dynamic that comes easily to you. Figure out how to harness that strength, give it a good run on a regular basis and you'll experience a champion series of successes.

On January 4, 1981, my first published article appeared in the Sunday *New York Times*. One tantalizing sentence in my query letter to them two months before had opened that door of opportunity: "In January, I will be retiring from college teaching at the age of 28 and want to write about what it has been like to be a professor, compared with the way I saw professors when I was a student."

With that sentence, I promised an out-of-the-ordinary story skillfully told. This they wanted.

For me, words have opened doors over and over again. I'd be loony to forget this.

For others, impulsive calls or old connections sparked their first and later successes. Repeat what worked!



### **Food for Thought**

“Don’t measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.”

*—John Wooden*



## 25-Year Marketing Insights, Part II

**L**esson #2 learned from looking back at 25 years of successful self-employment: Customer comments can contain pure gold.

Many of my most in-demand services came about from a suggestion made by someone who wanted to do business with me.

- ♦ A decade ago, someone emailed, “I want to learn how to be you. Can you teach me?” I emailed back, “What do you mean?” We worked out a tutorial program through which I passed on my marketing consulting skills. With periodic updates, that training program has proved a consistent seller.
- ♦ Years before that, a Harvard professor called and said he couldn’t make my seminar. Could I present it to him at his office, privately? I met with him weekly and gradually realized what I was doing for him had

a name: consulting. Undoubtedly others would want that too, I guessed, correctly.

- ✦ When I started teaching seminars, the topics I knew the most about were already taken. The director of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education suggested “So You Want to Write a Book,” a class that went on to generate long waiting lists year after year.



## Food for Thought

“We are not doing the customer a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so”

*—Mahatma Gandhi*

## 25-Year Marketing Insights, Part III

**L**esson #3 from 25 years of being in business: Important strengths are not always obvious.

While I knew from the get-go that I had a knack for the written word, I had several misconceptions or blind spots that it took years to overcome.

- ✦ I believed I couldn't captivate an audience. In my family, I was the quiet one, the bookworm. To me, good speakers were extroverts like my uncle, known for storytelling and oratory. I taught reasonably well, though, and with practice, eventually shone as a speaker and radio performer.
- ✦ I also assumed I couldn't sell. I briefly had a business partner who excelled at schmoozing, but my seminars and referrals worked much better than her networking. Finally I understood that I did very well at bringing in business.

- ✦ Only in the last few years, because so many clients and subscribers have mentioned it, have I realized that my moral beliefs and practices set me apart from some other marketers. It wouldn't otherwise have occurred to me that considering moneymaking in the context of honesty and service could be a differentiating factor.



## Food for Thought

“If you always do what interests you, at least one person is pleased.”

*—Katharine Hepburn*

## 25-Year Marketing Insights, Part IV

**L**esson #4 from 25 years of being in business: Keep your feet firmly on the ground instead of getting swept up in what seems to be the hot new thing.

During the Internet gold rush, many of my peers scrambled to get their piece of the action. Some closed down dependable businesses in favor of unproven concepts or high salaries at companies that did not last.

I had job offers that would have required me to suspend the business I'd worked hard to build. So I said no. And I did not redefine my focus to online-only expertise, specializing in tactics that could quickly become obsolete. Consequently, my income dipped only slightly with the dot-com crash and quickly rebounded.

By understanding and applying the fundamental principles of marketing and persuasive communication—knowing who you're selling to, differentiating a company from com-

petitors, generating targeted offers—I maintained competence that can't go out of date.

And unlike those who flitted around during the dot-com boom, I still have clients who've been hiring me and singing my praises to others for more than ten years.



## **On the Web**

Read my tips on creating an email newsletter that lasts:  
[www.yudkin.com/stay.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/stay.htm)

## What You Already Know

Occasionally I get a product return or refund request with the rationale, “I already know all this.”

I process the refund, of course, but sadly.

My regret is not for my loss of revenue but for the buyer’s loss of value. I’ve experienced countless inspirations from reading or listening to points I already know.

- ✦ Being reminded of something you’d forgotten can bounce against a problem you’re currently trying to solve, sending the 8-ball right into the pocket.
- ✦ What you know but aren’t implementing isn’t doing you much good! Listening to or reading what you already know can rouse you into action.
- ✦ An expert who knows what you do may add surprising examples or perspectives challengingly different from yours.

- ✦ Communication strengths or flaws can teach you what to do or not to do in your own work.
- ✦ The very process of engaging with a topic sets thoughts swirling into novel patterns.

For me, audio listening is particularly generative. If my neighbors asked what I'm scribbling as they drive past me walking with a headset on my ears, I'd say, "Ideas sparked by stuff I already know."



## Food for Thought

"Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't."

*—Erica Jong*



## Time for “Thank You”

**I**nspired by the holiday season, I think, last week I received an unusual number of “thank you”s and tributes from subscribers. This reminded me that the “thank you”s should equally be headed in the opposite direction.

Every week, well over 11,000 of you decide to let me into your in-boxes, and I want you to know that I do not take that permission for granted. Without you, I would be missing a powerful stimulus for reflection and growth. So, thank you for your interest and for the minute or so that we spend together every week.

Thanks for agreeing with me—and for disagreeing with me. (I’m not always right, and I enjoy knowing you see things differently.)

Thanks for correcting my errors. (Like the time dozens told me “inertia” should have been “entropy.”)

Thanks for forwarding my emails to friends, colleagues, clients, students, networks, blogs or your Twitter followers.

Thanks for sending questions, clippings and topic ideas for future *Marketing Minutes*.

Most of all, thanks for the challenge of creating a zippy, useful marketing tip or anecdote week after week.



## Food for Thought

“When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears.”

—*Anthony Robbins*

# **Part 7**

## **Recession-Proof Marketing**



## When Recession is in the Air

**I**n 2001, my two biggest dot-com clients had to cut me out of their plans. I had to hustle to make the year's income match the previous year's, but I was not concerned because I knew which marketing tactics to use when the economy contracts.

Most businesses pay much too much attention to acquiring new customers and too little to current and former ones. When recession is in the air, it's especially smart to contact your customer base more often. Studies show that it costs one-fifth as much to sell again to your customers as to turn a stranger into a buyer.

Remember too that when folks believe a slowdown is in process, they become more cautious. Therefore anything you can do to reduce buyers' risk will help. Reconsider your guarantees—can you make them stronger? Add more testimonials to your marketing materials. When you do contact people

not already within your sphere of influence, extend a get-to-know-you special offer that invites them over your threshold with little ventured and much gained.



## On the Web

Download a free booklet, *33 Keys to Thriving During a Recession*:

[www.yudkin.com/recess.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/recess.htm)

## Don't Let Customers Feel Neglected

According to BBC radio in 2001, animals in the Colchester Zoo were suffering effects of Britain's foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. None actually caught the illness, but because zoos shut down as a precaution, animals were beginning to show signs of depression. They missed the human crowds to which they had grown accustomed.

As I listened to this story, I immediately drew a parallel with the economic slowdown in the United States. Advertising spending had dramatically shrunk, in many cases as a precaution against possible cash flow problems rather than as a remedy for a bona fide financial crisis.

"People should maintain spending to keep and expand market share," I said to an editor for a chain of community newspapers.

"Folks don't think that way," he replied sadly.

The BBC story gave me a new angle on this. If you stop sending catalogs and cut back on ads, customers will miss you and feel neglected. Keep marketing—and you'll be among fewer businesses reaching their mailbox or appearing in their magazines.

Picture customers' long faces, then make them brighter.



## Food for Thought

“The man who stops advertising to save money is like the man who stops the clock to save time.”

*—Anonymous*



## Bob Bly's Advice for the Last Recession

**D**on't get cocky. No matter how successful and busy you are, your business can take a downturn. Quickly. And quite unexpectedly. Take it from me."

Bob Bly wrote these words in his 1991 book, *Selling Your Services*, revealing that when the recession of 1990 hit, his two biggest clients stopped giving him work. His best source of leads slammed to a halt. His proposals were turned down one after the other. His income plummeted. He recovered within months, though, with these and other strategies:

- ✦ Get back in touch with former clients and those who previously put projects on ice.
- ✦ Propose new projects to current clients.
- ✦ Bid at the lower end of your usual fee structure.
- ✦ Give great service and don't be temperamental.
- ✦ Accept smaller jobs than you previously would.
- ✦ Spend more time and energy marketing.

Above all, he says, keep a positive attitude. “If you are depressed, prospects can sense your desperation and fear. Remember that you are talented and successful; the lull is temporary; and people will call you and hire you again.”

Timely wisdom for many people.



## Food for Thought

“Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents, which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.”

*—Horace*

## In a Recession, Reconnect

**Y**ears ago, Bob Bly wrote an article on marketing your way through a recession. He suggested that simply by calling past clients to say hello and find out what was going on in their business, you would get an average of one out of ten giving you a new assignment simply because you showed up in their awareness at an opportune time.

My experience bears this out. A new client, an attorney, asked me what kind of work I'd previously done for attorneys. So I contacted two lawyer clients to find out whether or not I could give their names as references to the new client.

Two out of two, in addition to saying "of course," asked if I could help them out with a current project.

"Warning: Don't call up and say, 'I'm not busy and need work right now; do you have any assignments?'" says Bly.

In one case, before sending my email, I visited the past client's web site and learned he had won a major publishing

award. Congratulating him on that news was a perfect way to reestablish our connection.



## **On the Web**

Find out how to network your way to connections that spell success:

[www.yudkin.com/networking.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/networking.htm)

## Before You Lower Prices

**S**hould you lower prices when cash flow slows down? Not necessarily.

Try these tactics first:

- ✦ Payment plan. Divide what clients owe into more installments than usual, which often feels more affordable to them.
- ✦ Discount for prompt or early payment. Not only do you thereby get your money sooner, you lessen the odds of having uncollectable receivables later on.
- ✦ Delayed payment. If prepayment or payment on delivery is standard in your industry, allow people to pay later, perhaps even much later.
- ✦ Bulk rates. Charge less when people buy more. This often raises the amount of your average order while making people think they got a great deal.
- ✦ Bargains. Promote low prices on items or services you don't ordinarily sell but that make good "loss leaders,"

enabling new customers to sample your stuff and become more interested.

- ✦ **Bonuses.** Offer extras with each purchase. Colleagues in related businesses may happily furnish bonuses at no cost to you for the promotional value this holds for them.

Anything you can do to reinforce perceptions that you provide top-notch quality helps you keep prices stable, too.



## **Food for Thought**

“I buy expensive suits. They just look cheap on me.”

—*Warren Buffet*

## Recession? Don't Run Scared

**D**uring a recession, scared businesses tend to cut back on marketing expenses. This appears to be the smart bet. After all, most customers have become more cautious about spending. So why not conserve your resources, wait out the downturn and have funds to spend when the economy picks up?

In fact, smart businesses expand during a recession because they know there will be a shakeout caused by the scared businesses shrinking.

During any recession, there are always more than enough clients out there to keep you busy if you continue to market, and market smartly. Capitalize on your strengths. Make the most of your business relationships. Create or revive programs that enable customers to move ahead. (I just filled a seminar teaching a highly marketable specialized skill.) Above all, stay upbeat, putting the dynamics of self-fulfilling prophecies in your favor.

If you behave like the scared businesses, or target them, you will contract. If you market to the smart businesses during a recession, you will continue to prosper.

It's up to you.



## **On the Web**

Discover five options for generating income fast:

[www.yudkin.com/newfast.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/newfast.htm)



## The Get-Clients-Next-Week Formula

Numerous *Marketing Minute* subscribers have been asking me how to get clients in today's slower economy. Here's the winning formula.

1. Select a problem urgently felt by people or companies you know how to find. Sample problem: High gas prices have tripled the no-show rate at high-profile restaurants.

2. Create a specific offer that solves the problem for a low cost and that serves as a logical lead-in to your usual product or service. For instance: "For \$295, I'll suggest five creative and publicity-worthy incentives not being used in your marketplace." (Upon getting excited about those ideas, some will want to hire you to execute them.)

3. Give the offer a catchy name, such as "The No More Skittery Customers Solution."

4. Add scarcity—you have space in your schedule for just three new clients or the offer is valid only through the Wednesday after Labor Day.

5. Put the offer in front of potential customers by calling them, sending a postcard or emailing them.

Because desperation repels, take these steps with confidence and a positive attitude.



## **Food for Thought**

“In good times, people want to advertise; in bad times, they have to.”

*—Bruce Barton*

## Be Choosy, Even in a Recession

According to Reed Holden and Mark Burton, authors of *Pricing With Confidence*, 79 percent of business-to-business companies serve any customer they can get.

What's wrong with that? Typically, they explain, 20 percent of the customers account for 225 percent of the profit, with 80 percent causing the firm to lose money. And that statistic doesn't take into account the extent to which the unprofitable customers increase your worry wrinkles and gray hairs.

Being choosy about customers benefits both the bottom line and your sanity. Consider sending away those who:

- ✦ Always press you for discounts
- ✦ Need or demand an exorbitant amount of handholding
- ✦ Previously requested refunds
- ✦ Are unpleasant to deal with, nitpicky, abusive, frenzied, uncooperative or irrational

- ✦ Threaten to go to the competition
- ✦ Never pay on time
- ✦ Represent where your company used to be rather than where it is going

“It’s simply better for you that unprofitable customers are served by your competition,” say Holden and Burton.

After shedding the undesirables, develop a clear picture of who you want as clients and pursue those. You’ll then have the positive energy needed to land them.



## Food for Thought

“He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to.”

*—Harry Emerson Fosdick*

# **Part 8**

## **Customer Service Matters**



## The Math of Satisfaction

**A**re your clients “satisfied”? Maybe even “very satisfied”? Then get worried. According to customer service guru Ron Zemke, the mathematics of customer satisfaction have surprising implications.

If customers rate you on a five-point scale, the increase in loyalty from two (poor) to three (satisfactory) is minimal. Improving your score from three to four (good) gets you just a modest rise. Only when you boost your rank from four to five (excellent) does customer loyalty take a dramatic jump: someone who gives you a five is two to six times more loyal than some who gives you a four.

Now let's translate that into revenue. You get a dramatically greater payoff moving fours to fives than raising threes to fours, because you will lose just a fraction of the fives every year compared to the fours. Fives spend exponentially more with you in the long run than fours.

Anything less than a five—“extremely satisfied” or “delighted”—and your buyers remain iffy and unreliable. What steps can you take today to lift your ratings to the top of the scale?



## On the Web

What is the optimal refund rate? Read *Marketing Minute* subscribers’ input on that question:

[www.yudkin.com/refunds.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/refunds.htm)



## Small Touches, Big Impact

While interviewing financial services clients about their experiences at one firm's office, *Marketing Minute* subscriber Reva Dolobowsky found a surprisingly large impression left by a simple gesture. Being offered coffee in the waiting room set a tone of hospitality and helped transform what could have been a stressful meeting into a positive one.

Clients also liked the fact that their advisor highlighted important points in a packet of information he was giving them to take home, and inserted all the materials tidily into a folder. "This was psychologically calming for the clients, signifying that chaos had been turned into order," says Dolobowsky, head of Dolobowsky Qualitative Services.

In another focus group, customers expressed appreciation for handles on big bags of pet food. "This often overlooked detail expresses a thoughtful concern for making customers' lives easier," Dolobowsky notes.

“Another thing that comes up again and again from customers is tone of voice. When someone is being patient with them, they can tell right away, and it matters,” she adds.

What extra touches do you offer that have an emotional impact on customers?



## Food for Thought

“There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.”

—*Roger Staubach*

## Soliciting Useful Customer Feedback

As a shopper, I go nuts when a store is perpetrating some easily avoidable outrage on customers and there's no easy way to tell the managers. As a marketer, I don't understand why suggestion boxes, common in my youth, have gone out of fashion.

The most popular feedback tool today is comment cards, usually in the format of self-addressed postcards. *Marketing Minute* subscriber Susan Keane Baker, author of *Managing Patient Expectations*, offers these do's and don'ts based on more than 20 years of experience with the use of comment cards by hospitals.

- ◆ Keep the number of questions to a minimum.
- ◆ Avoid two-part questions. "Confuse them and lose them!" says Susan.
- ◆ Tell customers you appreciate their feedback.

- ✦ If you ask for respondents' personal information, do so at the end of the card, not the beginning.
- ✦ Make comment cards available where customers wait, or mail them with your newsletter or invoices.
- ✦ Ask permission to share what they've said, as in "Please initial here if we may share your comments on our web site."

Making customer feedback easy is a must when you aim at excellence.



## On the Web

To learn how to generate more repeat business, listen to a coaching session in which I help the owner of a translation agency with both traditional and innovative customer retention tactics. It's a free downloadable audio just for readers of this book:

[www.yudkin.com/repeatbiz.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/repeatbiz.htm)

## Apologies That Defuse Disaster

**I**nevitably, you will make some horrible mistake. To keep the mistake from turning into a disaster, understand the difference between an apology that appeases indignation and one that turns a spark into a public relations wildfire.

An effective apology has three components.

- ✦ Admit blame. Say that what you did was wrong.
- ✦ Express regret. Say the magic words: “I’m sorry.”
- ✦ Extend an olive branch. Offer something to help take away the sting of the harm done by the mistake.

Do not offer excuses. This is probably the hardest part of the formula.

Do not blame the person who was wronged.

You may have read about the magazine based in my neck of the woods, *Cooks Source*, which reprinted without permission a previously published article. The author learned of this copyright infringement and complained.

The editor's aggressive, you-should-be-grateful apology, shared by the aggrieved author and many outraged bloggers and news reporters, flashed around the Internet, igniting a firestorm of condemnation and the uncovering of scores of additional copyright violations.

The magazine folded—mainly because of the wretched apology.



## **Food for Thought**

“The first rule of holes: When you’re in one, stop digging.”

*—Molly Ivins*

## Where's the Start Button?

**A**n entrepreneur profiled in *Forbes Small Business* called her system for sending payments via cell phone “simple: once you complete the registration and download the software to your phone...”

Simple? Yikes! Downloading software to my cell phone is something I've never done and would attempt only with trepidation.

I'm a scaredy-cat when it comes to technology, and companies don't cater to me.

This week I looked at a disk I ordered from an information marketer and could not determine whether it was a CD or DVD. It arrived without a cover letter, with no instructions on or in the case. When I popped the disk into my computer, I could see both audio and video files on it, but the video files wouldn't open properly no matter what I tried. I couldn't find a “read me first” file on the disk, either. Also missing: a contact email.

What's easy or obvious to a techie may not be to the customer.

Keep in mind the power of fear and unfamiliarity. Plan for rampant cluelessness and you'll see wider success.



## Food for Thought

“If you have knowledge, let others light their candle at it.”

*—Margaret Fuller*



## Worried About Bothering Customers?

I once read something shocking from Anne Holland, Marketing Sherpa's Content Director: Some 40 percent of those who purchased her company's PDF reports did not download what they bought—much less read them.

After discovering this, Holland took steps to encourage customers to consume what they bought. After all, except for shopaholics, buyers who don't use an item won't turn into repeat customers or recommend the company.

This story completely changed my feeling about follow-up after the sale.

Instead of thinking, "Well, they bought, now it's up to them to put it into action," I understand now that it doesn't serve them if what they were trying to do or learn remains in the purgatory of their to-do list.

I am hardly bothering customers if I send follow-up messages like these:

- ✦ Don't feel overwhelmed! Here are two ways to get started.
- ✦ Still have questions? Some have wondered about X or Y. Read today's additional tips.
- ✦ Here's how so-and-so used the product you bought.

Such follow-ups help customers—and by doing so, also help the company sending them.



## Food for Thought

“We are here on earth to do good to others. What the others are here for, I don't know.”

*—W.H. Auden*

## No Parking? No Problem!

Considering the traffic, scarcity of metered spaces, expensive parking garages and merciless ticketers, driving to do business errands in downtown Boston is not for the faint of heart. Tom Roulston, a Business Printing Specialist at the Kinko's near Boston's Government Center, makes this chore easier for his regular customers. They call him on their cell phone and describe what they're driving, and he goes outdoors to meet them in their car. While the car is double parked with the engine running, he takes their printing or copying order.

For the customer: no ticket, no parking fee, no need to drive around the block looking for a non-existent space. For Roulston: customer retention that costs him nothing but the willingness to leave the store at a moment's notice.

*Marketing Minute* subscriber Minerva Sprogis, a customer of Roulston's and the owner of a consulting company called The Magic of Manners, told this story during

a Recession-Proof Marketing seminar. “I’m not a huge customer, but Tom makes me feel like a million bucks when he meets me in my car,” she says.



## Food for Thought

“If you don’t care, your customer never will.”

*—Marlene Blaszczyk*

## A Tale of Two Banks

Last week I called a local bank where I'd opened an account two weeks earlier. I hadn't yet received the box of checks they'd ordered. Could they please print me four checks that I'd pick up in an hour?

An hour later, I walked into the bank, and a teller waved the checks in the air and rushed over to hand them to me with a big smile.

I smiled back in astonishment. The teller had seen me exactly once before. Her warmth was echoed by others in the office. In New England, where I live, such feelings are rare in everyday business transactions.

Compare now the branch of a large national bank that tries hard to be friendly. A designated greeter waylays me with pointless conversation. The tellers always chat me up, and once when I failed to play along, a teller repeated her question to me more aggressively.

The policy-driven friendliness of the second bank grates on me so strongly that I dread going there during business hours. I feel the opposite about my new bank.

Don't fake it. Phony cheer chills the soul.



## **Food for Thought**

“Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway.”

*—Mother Teresa*

## Appreciative Gestures Work

People like to be thanked. People like to feel important. I know these principles intellectually, yet still I've been surprised to see how the famous Gallup Poll organization carries them out.

For the last five months, I have been a member of the Gallup Poll “panel” (note the flattering term!), offering my opinions on politics, health care, consumer purchases, etc.

As many times as I've been asked to fill out a four-page survey and send it back, I've received separate mailings enclosing a magnet, a memo pad, a calendar, a members-only magazine—always thanking me for my generosity and service, urging me to get in touch if I have questions. On every survey, they even ask how interesting it was. Their sincerity feels real.

Aren't they going overboard? I've wondered, then remind myself that their testing undoubtedly shows that such

gestures keep their respondents from sighing and rolling their eyes when another survey form arrives in the mail.

It feels great to be appreciated. Do you see a lesson here for your business? I do: Never take customers for granted.



## **Food for Thought**

“The person who has stopped being thankful has fallen asleep in life.”

*—Robert Louis Stevenson*



## Recommended Books

The following books provide valuable insights into marketing fundamentals, especially the inner side of attracting and keeping customers.

Abraham, Jay, *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got: 21 Ways You Can Out-Think, Out-Perform, and Out-Earn the Competition*. New York: St. Martin's, 2001. Tips for growing your business from one success to the next.

Goldsmith, Marshall, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*. New York: Hyperion, 2007. Learn how to overcome your business blind spots and get out of your own way.

Hill, Napoleon, *The Law of Success*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2008 [and many other editions]. Originally published in 1928, this is a timelessly wise course in achieving success from the inside out.

Kennedy, Dan S., *No B.S. Business Success*. Irvine, CA: Entrepreneur Press, 2004. A good place to start if you haven't yet encountered this street-smart expert's marketing and self-management perspectives.

Levinson, Jay Conrad, *The Way of the Guerrilla: Achieving Success and Balance as an Entrepreneur in the 21st Century*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. How to create a business you love that sustains you in return.

RoAne, Susan, *How to Create Your Own Luck: The "You Never Know" Approach to Networking, Taking Chances, and Opening Yourself to Opportunity*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2004. Teaches the art of creating and seizing opportunities.

Vitale, Joe, *There's a Customer Born Every Minute: P.T. Barnum's Secrets to Business Success*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007. A fun read offering a three-ring circus of ideas for overcoming business obstacles and creatively capturing public attention.

Yudkin, Marcia, *6 Steps to Free Publicity, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2009. Contains a chapter on overcoming fears of self-promotion, along with ideas for spreading the word by harnessing the media, networking, public speaking, social media and more.

## Get the Whole Series!

What you are reading is the fifth of five volumes collecting my *Marketing Minute* columns and presenting them by theme. The other volumes are:

Book 1: *Persuading People to Buy: Insights on Marketing Psychology That Pay Off for Your Company, Professional Practice or Nonprofit Organization*

Book 2: *Meatier Marketing Copy: Insights on Copywriting That Generates Leads and Sparks Sales*

Book 3: *Strategic Marketing: Insights on Setting Smart Directions for Your Business*

Book 4: *Publicity Tactics: Insights on Creating Lucrative Media Buzz*

The series includes two audio CDs for each volume, on which I read the columns in that book. Listening to the contents in your car or while exercising often triggers ideas you'll want to implement in your company, professional practice or nonprofit organization.

For more information or to purchase the rest of the Marketing Insight Guides, go to:

[www.marketinginsightguides.com](http://www.marketinginsightguides.com).

If you're not already a subscriber, sign up to receive the *Marketing Minute* free in your inbox every Wednesday by going to [www.yudkin.com/markmin.htm](http://www.yudkin.com/markmin.htm).

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## About the Author

Since 1981, when she joined the ranks of the self-employed after deciding college teaching didn't suit her, Marcia Yudkin has built a worldwide reputation as an author, consultant, coach and expert in creative marketing.

Prior to the books in the Marketing Insight Guides series, she published 11 books, including *Freelance Writing for Magazines and Newspapers*, a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and *6 Steps to Free Publicity*, now in its third edition. Her articles have appeared in publications as diverse as *The New York Times Magazine*, *New Age Journal*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Business 2.0*.

Her "Marketing Minute" segment aired weekly throughout New England for more than a year on WABU TV, and it turned into a free weekly newsletter on marketing and publicity that reaches more than 12,000 loyal subscribers on five continents.

As a marketing mentor, Marcia Yudkin advises business owners, independent professionals and corporate marketers on actions and attitudes that attract ideal clients and keep them. Her clients range from publishers and software producers to financial planners, executive coaches, management consultants and psychotherapists.

She has a Ph.D. degree from Cornell University and a B.A. from Brown University.



## For More Information

Main web site: [www.yudkin.com](http://www.yudkin.com)

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Naming and tag line service: [www.namedatlast.com](http://www.namedatlast.com)

Contact Marcia Yudkin: [marcia@yudkin.com](mailto:marcia@yudkin.com)

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*—Nick Osborne, Author, Net Words and New Path to Riches*

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Author of 15 previous books, Marcia Yudkin is a popular marketing mentor and publicity coach. An introvert who delights in the spoken and written word and in the power of an unusual angle, she guides clients toward creative, practical, short-term and long-term business success.

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