TURNING VISITORS INTO CUSTOMERS

The Online Marketing Sales Cycle

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Turning Visitors Into Customers: The Online Marketing Sales Cycle

DISCLAIMER.

The advice and suggestions in this book are the author's own. They have been gleaned from years in marketing and particularly studying online marketing and website design since 2001. Similarity to other people's concepts is inevitable. Other online marketing experts like Ken Evoy, Perry Marshall, Ed Dale, Dan Raine, Bob Bly, and many others have been Rick's mentors and his inspiration for many of the concepts found here. He gives them full credit for those concepts and sincerely appreciate their teachings.

Why You Should Read This Book

Do you want more customers?

Of course you do. That's why you are here.

And that's probably why you wanted a website in the first place. It's a critical marketing tool for any business these days.

And the beauty of online marketing is… If you do it right, your business is on auto pilot. Your website will find customers for you 24/7, and you don't even have to be there.

Sounds like a dream doesn't it?

Actually, it is.

Most websites and online businesses don't work that way. People don't just go to a strange website and then buy something. Not unless that website is a well-known, credible brand (like Amazon) or sells a high-credibility, high-demand product.

The reality is, if that site visitor is there for the first time, or even the twentieth time, they probably don't know you or trust you. And people always want to buy from someone they know, like, and trust. All they know is they'd like to make a decision — a decision to solve their problem.

But they are nervous…

- Will they get burned?

- Will the product or service even work?

- Will it really be 'as advertised'?

That decision-making process is called the **Sales Cycle**.

Unless your website helps them find the answers to the questions they have, you'll probably have a difficult time turning them into a customer. They may be gone quicker than you can say "back button."

Now, the Sales Cycle has other terms that people use these days. Sometimes it's called the **Buying Process** or the **Customer Journey**. It still adds up to the steps that someone takes before they buy a product or service. And understanding those steps will help have a context for all your marketing.

The Paradigm Shift

There's been a big change in marketing since the Internet came along. Previous marketing tactics usually involved trying to get people's attention while they were busy doing something else. Newspaper advertising, TV advertising, billboards, even direct mail, tried to get and hold people's attention by interrupting them and trying to switch their attention to something else — bait and switch.

It became harder and harder to get that attention because many of these mediums became overwhelming and bothersome — to the point people just shut down their attention and stopped

responding. Interruptive advertising tactics began to be less and less effective.

The response was also difficult to track and it was hard to know if your ad was working and that you were getting a return on your advertising dollar.

With the advent of the internet, marketing became **interactive** instead of **interruptive**. People responded on their terms and only when they wanted to.

The interactivity of online marketing is what sets it apart and is still something many marketers have a difficult time wrapping their heads around. I often see online marketing with no clickable links, and no interactive **Call To Action** — They just put their newspaper ads online.

And the change meant that, instead of marketers fishing for customers, customers were now fishing for them. **They had the control and they liked it that way.** They only responded when they found what they wanted and believed that it solved their problem. If not they could move to the next solution very quickly. This meant marketers had to learn something new — **How To Get Caught**.
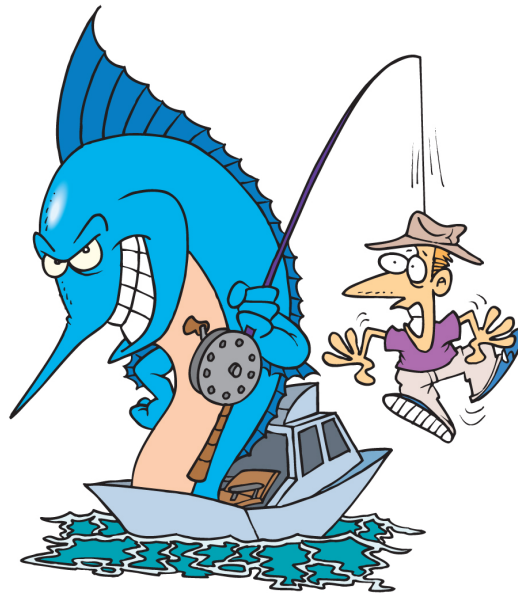
That's what makes Google such a powerful player in the marketing world. Much like the old **Yellow Pages**, when someone goes to Google to search for solutions to their problem, they are in **buying mode**, and they are much more likely to buy a solution — if they find it.

Search Marketing became the new Yellow Pages and why not — it worked even better because people could continue down the sales cycle until they researched, compared, found and bought that solution, often right there and then.

But maybe best of all for marketers, the advantage of online marketing is everything is trackable. You can determine the **Return On Investment** for you advertising dollar extremely accurately.

And even more importantly, you can determine **Customer Intent** far more intimately and personalize your marketing message so the it provides exactly

what the customer needs at that moment — if you know what that is. And that's really what this book is all about — understanding what the customer needs at any point in the Sales Cycle.

GETTING PEOPLE TO YOUR WEBSITE

Certainly, getting people to your website is the important first step in your online marketing. And the Sales Cycle does begin at whatever "touchpoint" we first meet our prospects. But the focus of this book is on what needs to happen once we meet someone — and then how to turn that prospect into a customer.

And most talk about Online Marketing focusses on getting people to your website — *Search Engine Optimization (SEO)*. Seldom do experts talk about how to turn that visitor into a customer. Yet, all your SEO efforts are wasted if that visitor leaves within the first few seconds of arriving, as over 70% of most website visitors do.

Here we'll focus on turning that visitor into a customer and what to do once you do meet a prospect — and what they need when you meet them. We'll focus on the tactics that get your visitor to make a decision to solve their problem.

Where Are They Now?

And when you meet someone, whether it's on your website, in an email, on Facebook, on Twitter, or on some other website, you should realize they could

be anywhere in that Sales Cycle. They could be at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. And you'll need to respond appropriately to that location — to that need.

So unless you truly understand your visitor you may not be able to help them along the way.

But if you can empathize with them and **truly understand their underlying needs**, then you may be able to get their attention and then help them make that decision. You can truly become, not just a salesperson, but a solution provider. And the bottom line is you'll be helping people.

And isn't that really OUR underlying need?

IT'S THE CONTEXT FOR ALL YOUR MARKETING

One of the big benefits of understanding the Sales Cycle is it will give you a context for all your marketing — online and offline. When you meet someone in a particular location, like Facebook, you'll have a better sense of how to talk to them. You'll know what they need at that particular touchpoint. Now your content can be more effective because it's more in tune with the stage they are at that particular touchpoint… what they need at that moment.

KEYWORDS

There's a lot of talk about "keywords" in online marketing. We see them and use them all the time.

We usually think of them as part of our *Search Engine Optimization.*

But they do more than that.

Once you can put your keywords in the context of the **Sales Cycle** you can better understand what the underlying *intention* that keyword implies. And you can know how to respond to that intention with the best content to keep them moving forward. If you can read between the lines, you'll have a better chance of converting those suspects into prospects and then into customers.

And while we're talking about Conversion, let's be clear.

CONVERSION IS KING!

Our content, our touchpoints, and all of our links, are the tools we use to **Convert** prospects into customers. We want to make sure we can track all of these tools and tactics so that we can fully understand and measure our *Conversion Rate*… the king of all website metrics.

So what is *Conversion Rate*? It's the percentage of visitors that get turned into customers. The higher that percentage, the better for your business — obviously.

But many factors contribute to that higher rate. And that is what this book is about.

How do we turn as many visitors as possible into customers?

Read on…

What Is The Sales Cycle

The **Sales Cycle** is the decision-making process that someone goes through before they are ready to buy a product or a service. They probably have lots of questions they need answered first.

Some of the questions they may have include...

- "What is my problem and why do I need to solve it?"

- "What solutions are available?"

- "How will I feel once I solve this problem?"

- "Is this solution the best of all available solutions?"

- "How do I learn more about my problem and the solutions?"

- "Why should I buy now?"

- "How do I buy?"

People move from general awareness of a problem, to a desire to solve that problem, to research and evaluation of the best solution to that problem. Unless your online marketing helps move people through this process, and gives them the answers they need, you're going to lose your prospects as they move through the Sales Cycle.

Your Sales Cycle

Of course, each type of business may have a different Sales Cycle. Some cycles may be long and prospects take months to decide.

Some may be short and people decide quickly, sometimes within minutes.

Some cycles may be more educational, where your prospect needs to learn about their problem and the solution before they can decide.

Some cycles may be ongoing, and bringing the customer back for more is just as important as that first sale.

And some may just be "I know what I need now, just give it to me."

So, understanding your businesses' particular Sales Cycle is important too. This means understanding your business and your prospects. The better you can understand your customers and their needs the better chance you have moving people through your cycle and getting them to take the action you want them to take.

We'll breakdown the Sales Cycle in more detail shortly. For now, just be aware that it does exist and helping your prospects move through this cycle on your website is one of the keys to successful online marketing.

Meeting People Where They Are Now

WHERE THEY ARE NOW

This is an important concept to understand. 'Where They Are Now' is the basis for where you meet them and how you talk to them.

And it's not just their online location. It's also "where" their thinking is too. It's the conversation that is going on in their heads — that you'd like to join.

Yes, it makes a big difference if they are on Facebook, or on Google, or in a niche forum related to your solution. Each of those "touchpoints" indicates a different readiness to solve their problem. More about that later.

But that conversation in their heads is also an important context for your marketing as well. If you can truly empathize with them and understand their needs, you have a much better chance of getting their attention and joining the conversation. And that's important.

GETTING THEIR ATTENTION

In these days of media overload and spammy marketing tactics, getting someone's attention is harder than ever. The **wall is up**. So unless you can connect with someone's needs and wants very quickly, more than likely you will never get their attention.

And great online marketing is not just about helping them solve their basic problem. It's not just about them buying your particular product or service.

There is often an **underlying need** that is the real motivator for them taking action. If you can understand that underlying need you can build a deeper relationship and maybe find a lifetime customer.

There's an old marketing axiom that says when people buy a drill, **what they really want is a hole**.

I like to think beyond that simple viewpoint, and say that what they really want is the joy they will feel when they are partying with friends and family — enjoying the deck they will build with that drill. **Their underlying need is far more fundamental and emotional.**

So the better you can understand your niche and it's problems and solutions — and it's underlying need — the better your chance of connecting with your prospects on a deeper level and getting and holding their attention, hopefully for a long time.

UNDERSTANDING TOUCHPOINTS

We will meet prospective customers in a number of different places online…

- We may meet someone on Google when our website gets listed on the Google Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

- We may meet someone on Facebook when we add a post to our News Feed or comment in a Facebook Group — or when they search.

- We might meet someone on another website that's related to our niche

- Perhaps we "tweet" a message to our followers on Twitter

- We might meet someone in an eBook we write (like this one)

There's actually a wide range of places we are likely to meet someone online — and more evolving all the time. And that meeting can be casual or calculated depending on your strategy.

TOUCHPOINT VALUE

Each touchpoint will also have a different value. Some will work better than others. It may even be good to think of our **Return On Investment** on each type of touchpoint. Some of those touches will turn

into sales and some will not. Some touchpoints will be effective and some will be a waste of time.

But whatever the value of each touchpoint, it's important to understand the best way to talk to a person we meet there. If we don't understand the **context** we can lose a prospect and burn a bridge very quickly.

This is one reason why understanding where someone is in the **Sales Cycle** is very important. If you assume someone is anxious to buy your solution when they aren't, you could come of as pushy and lose credibility and turn off a perfectly good prospect — and never see them again.

But how can you possibly know where someone is in thos **Sales Cycle** when you first meet them on Facebook?

You don't. That's the point.

That's why you have to ask *qualifying questions* and offer links into your **Sales Funnel**. Those questions and the subsequent steps they take in your Sales Funnel will help you learn the best way to speak to them and perhaps get a hint as to where they are in the Sales Cycle.

ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION

It's always best to assume that you are meeting someone who is just beginning the Sales Cycle. Perhaps someone you meet may not even have the

problem that your product or service can solve. If you start selling to them, you may lose a friend and a potential prospect for later.

So it's important to tread very gently in the beginning and use your *Qualifying Questions* to test the waters, and perhaps move them into your Sales Cycle. We'll talk about those a little later.

FACEBOOK FOR EXAMPLE…

People go to Facebook to socialize. That's why it's called **Social Media** after all. They aren't there to solve problems. *They may even be there to avoid their problems.*

So Facebook may not be the best place to start talking about your solution. It would be like walking up to strangers in a bar and selling them insurance. You would have a hard time getting their attention — and you might get something worse from them — like a punch in the nose.

But Facebook is a great place to Network — to get to know someone, start a relationship, and perhaps ask some questions to find out what their interests are — maybe even learn something about their problems.

If they hint they may have a problem you can solve, or seem interested in your niche, you can offer a link to your website where you can further qualify them and perhaps turn them into a prospect.

So understanding how these *touchpoints* fit into the Sales Cycle will help you understand how to talk to "suspects" when you meet them. Perhaps if you "talk" in a way that connects with them, you can turn that suspect into a prospect.

The Problem-Solution Profile

Understanding "What's In It For Them"

Every human being is looking to take care of themselves — to solve their problems. Whether that problem is building a new deck, or losing weight, or fixing a leak in their toilet, or getting new customers. **They only care about you and your website to the degree that you can help them solve their problem.**

So your marketing must know how to connect with the **What's In It For Them**, or WIFT, that is the basis for *the conversation going on in their heads* when you meet them.

But so many businesses think that talking about themselves will somehow attract customers. You see it everywhere…

"Our service is prompt and reliable."

"We won the Honda Sales Award 5 years running."

"Our doctors are board certified."

Telling people how great you are will not work. Most of your customers don't really care. **They don't care how great you are… they only care about how great you are going to make them**—what you can do for them,

So as a marketer it's critical to be able to understand what your prospects want and need. That's the only thing they really want to talk about.

And to put that into one word, what they want to hear from you are **benefits**. The benefits you can offer to them — the benefits of them solving their problem with your solution.

In other words, *what you can do for them*. This section will dig deeper into exactly how you turn your content into *benefit driven language* that will hold your visitor's attention and then get them to *act to solve their problem*.

UNDERSTANDING PROBLEMS

If you're in business, you're in the business of solving problems. It doesn't matter if you're a plumber or an accountant, you'll get hired only because you can solve a problem. It's that simple.

Your marketing must convince people that you can do just that.

The problem is, for many businesses their customers don't always realize they have a problem. Sure if their toilet is leaking then it's pretty obvious what their problem is. But if they are paying too much income tax, they may not even realize it until their accountant goes through their taxes.

So as a marketer, part of your job is to thoroughly understand your customer and their problems. It's not enough to just understand your solution. You must be able to **empathize** with your customer and understand how their problem affects them.

Why is this important?

Because before they will be ready to buy your solution, they want to like and trust you. And if you can show that you understand their problem, and want to help them solve it, they will be much more likely to like you, and buy from you. After all, people want to buy from someone they like and trust. It's just human nature.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

The problem I see is — most business marketing centers around the company talking about themselves — about how great they are and about how good they are at their business.

But customers only really want to know how you can help them… *What's In It For Them* (WIFT). So your marketing language must be about your customers. **You might even say that your website is not about you… it's about your customers.** And your content must show that.

So to connect with your customer on an emotional level, you must be able to understand and empathize with their problems. That empathy comes from analyzing just what they need and want. It's often more than just a solution.

THE UNDERLYING NEED

Actually, like with the drill analogy, you should try and understand the underlying need that your customer is trying to satisfy. What do they really want? It's probably something beyond just your product or service. It's probably something deeper and more fundamental. It's usually about joy, satisfaction, security, health, or beauty.

So, what does this mean to your marketing? How do you make that emotional connection?

Use concrete examples of real people who you've helped solve their problem. Tell their stories and use their testimonials whenever you can get them. But even if you don't have any testimonials, paint a picture of how the problem feels and empathize with the pain that that problem causes. Show people you identify with that pain and truly understand them. This will create trust and credibility for you.

When you talk about "the problem" in your content make sure you **remind people how they will feel when they solve that problem**. That feeling should be communicated via the images on your website and the tone of all your text. Be sure to communicate the emotional benefits someone will experience once they solve **their problem**. This will keep them motivated to solve that problem and to take the action required to do that. That action will

of course be to buy your product or service. We'll talk a lot more about this in the "Emotional Credibility" stage of the Sales Cycle, perhaps the most important stage of all.

UNDERSTANDING SOLUTIONS

The basis of your business is that you have a solution to offer people. That solution solves a problem and of course is wonderful and brilliant. But just because you think so does not mean your prospects will believe you. It will take a lot more than fancy features and cool copy to convince your prospects to take action. **It will take benefits**.

PEOPLE BUY BENEFITS

It may seem as if people buy your product or service, but what they are really buying are the benefits your solution offers. Just because your widget is simple and beautiful and will last forever doesn't mean those features will get your prospect to buy it. If your solution doesn't solve the problem and they believe that it will — you don't have a customer.

The human fact is people only care about what you can do for them. They don't care how great you are — **they only care about how great you are going to make them**. In short, they only care about the benefits to them.

The benefit is the hole the drill creates, but also the beautiful deck that drill will help build. That deck will

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bring fun and joy and satisfaction to your customer. That's the real "solution" they are looking for.

So, as you talk about your solution, be sure to frame your copy with plenty of benefits. **Features alone won't get the job done.** You have to be able to turn those features into the emotional benefits that they will deliver.

For example:

Feature: Black & Decker 18V Hiper Drill has a professional grade high torque motor that provides 330" lbs. of torque

Benefit: You'll always have enough power for even the most critical drilling situations.

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Feature: 2 spring loaded batteries

Benefit: Easier and faster battery installation will help you get the job done faster

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Feature: Single sleeve all metal chuck with spindle lock

Benefit: Easier and faster tightening of screw driver and drill bit accessories

--

And don't forget the old marketing adage…

"People buy on emotion and justify the purchase with logic."

The **benefits provide the emotion** and the **features provide the logic.** Logic alone will not usually make a sale.

MAKING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

So now that you understand problems and solutions how do you connect the two. How do you move your prospect from their problem to your solution.

Again, this is what understanding the **Sales Cycle** is all about.

Remember our definition of the Sales Cycle? It's the decision-making process that everyone goes through before they are ready to buy our product or service.

So, the simple answer to how you connect the problem with the solution is to **answer their questions**. If you can anticipate all of the questions that people will have — even all of the potential objections — and then answer them, your site visitor will be ready to take action.

But first let's briefly talk about the online mechanisms we use to move people through our Sales Cycle.

LINKS

The beauty of online marketing, and website technology, is it offers something called a **hyperlink**. This link is something that gets clicked on and moves a site visitor from one place online to another place. This could be from one place on your own website, to another place — or one website to another.

A website's navigation is one example of a hyperlink. A picture can be a hyperlink too.

But most commonly, and the one that is most helpful to us, is a text link. The text link is part of our web copy that links to another part of our website. The powerful part of a text link is we can control what that text link says. We can use these text links to ask questions, or provide a **Call To Action**, and when someone clicks they move to a new place, ideally one that answers their question, and moves them further down the Sales Cycle.

And if our website tracking is in place via something like *Google Analytics*, we can know exactly which links get clicked on. More about that later.

So, this is one more reason why understanding the Sales Cycle is very important. It will help us build the navigation and text links that move our visitor through their decision-making process. It will also let us track these links and learn how, and maybe why, someone moves through our website.

And once we get all of our "ducks in a row," and our links in place, our website will automatically move someone through the Sales Cycle and they may buy our product or service — all without us even being there, or knowing it's happening.

Now isn't that cool?

SUSPECT INTO PROSPECT

For most of the people you meet online you really have no idea if they have the problem you can solve or not. And you certainly don't know how anxious they are to solve their problem. That's why it's best to think of anyone you meet as a **suspect** and not a **prospect**.

And until they take some action that indicates a desire to solve a problem, you could be wasting your time, or worse — turning off a potential prospect by promoting too aggressively to them.

But once you know for sure that they really are a prospect, and have the problem you can solve, and a desire to solve that problem, now you can talk to them differently and proactively move them through your *Sales Cycle*.

Actions That Indicate They Are a Prospect

We'll talk more about this in my section on **Most Wanted Responses**, but in general, if they do one of these things you can begin to treat your visitor as a good prospect.

- They arrive on your site using a keyword search phrase that clearly indicates *buying intention*.

- They go to certain pages that indicate they are doing more than just *tire clicking* and looking

for free information. Certainly, your *Sales Page* is an example of that type of page, but it could be any page that indicates they are serious about solving their problem.

- They stay on your site for a long time. Your *Google Analytics* data will tell you which pages are being visited for a long time.

- They "Like" your page or "Tweet" about a page.

- They go to your Facebook Page and "Like" it.

- They come from a site where you were advertising about your solution.

- They sign up for your email list.

- They fill out a contact form.

- They call you.

The problem is… many of these actions are hard to track. Except for signing up for your list, there really is no way to isolate someone as a prospect as they move through your site. The best way is to have some pages on your site where you can send them that indicates strong buying intention. Again, good links and *Navigation* will help you move people to these pages.

On Your Site

Once someone arrives on your site you can begin moving them through your Sales Cycle. As they move you can assume they are getting more interested and their intention to buy is increasing.

What's the trick to moving them through your site?

As we mentioned in the last section, a hyperlink is the key to moving them down the Sales Cycle and using the correct link text will help you qualify them along the way. In the next section we'll get into more detail about **Qualifying Questions** and ways to learn more about their intentions.

WHAT IS A QUALIFYING QUESTION?

A good 'qualifying question' does three things…

1. It makes your prospect aware they might have a problem.

2. It tells you whether they have the problem you can solve, or not (especially if it is a clickable link).

3. The link provides an answer to the question on the page at the other end of a link.

If your question can make your prospect aware they have a problem, when perhaps they weren't aware already, you have a chance of introducing them to your solution.

And if they don't really have the problem, then you know you don't want to spend any more time or resources with them. You can cut bait.

And if you provide a hyperlink into your website, now you can track that link. And that link might jumpstart them down your Sales Cycle by sending them directly to your best site page for answering their question. This will keep them moving through your sales process and into your Shopping Cart or other Call To Action.

And if they click on the link, you can be pretty sure they are motivated to solve their problem. It's **like they raised their hand and said… "help me."**

Of course, creating good qualifying questions is not easy. You must really understand your prospect and the **Problem/Solution Profile** of your business. The question must not be too pushy and must imply that you are interested in helping them solve their problem.

But if you can create a list of good questions, you can use them over-and-over throughout your marketing and on many touchpoints. **Those touchpoints can turn into "hot buttons" that move people right into the heart of your Sales Cycle.**

How To Create Qualifying Questions

Often the best questions relate to the problem. They simply ask "do you have this problem?" Then let them know there is a solution "at the other end of the click."

Too simple?

Well of course you may need to ask the question in the right way. You must be concrete, and use language that will help someone actually feel the problem.

Here's some examples...

- "Is your website getting visitors but those visitors don't seem to call you? There is a reason. Click to learn more."

- "Do you seem to be always low on energy? Click here to learn why you may be eating the wrong foods."

- "Is that email SPAM making you crazy? Did you realize there is a way to stop it? Click here to learn how."

- "The Top 5 reasons why your children never call you."

- "Is your car really ready for winter? Here's how to know for sure."

- "Is money always tight? Here's a great way to earn extra income without leaving the house.

- Want to see our no-risk, money-back guarantee?

- Looking forward to enjoying fun time with family and friends on your beautiful new deck? This drill will help you make it come to life. Click to learn more.

The great thing about many of the questions is they also mention the problem. So, when someone clicks they are raising their hands to tell you they have that problem at the same time. They actually are self-qualifying themselves when they click.

Steps In The Sales Cycle

Online Marketing Sales Cycle

BUYING INTENTION →

	AWARENESS	INTEREST	EMOTIONAL CREDIBILITY	PRODUCT CREDIBILITY	INVOLVEMENT	INCENTIVE	DECISION
	Becomes aware of the problem and the solution	Starts to believe the solution may solve their problem	Becomes emotionally connected to the solution	Begins to believe that this solution is the best of the available solutions	Actively becomes involved with buying process or "needs" to learn more	Searches for reason to buy or looks for special promotion	Makes the decision to buy
Question:	"What is my problem and why should I solve it?"	"Will this solution solve my problem?"	"How will I feel when I solve my problem?"	"Is this the best of available solutions?"	"How do I learn more?"	"Why should I buy now?"	"How do I buy now?"
Where:	Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.	Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Website	Website, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter	Website, Blog	Website, Blog, Facebook	Website, Blog	Website, Blog
How:	Sees Ad, Watches Video	Sees Ad/Link, Watches Video, Web Page	Watches Video, Views Page, Reads/Views Testimonial	Watches Video, Views Page, Reads Testimonial	Email Signup, "Likes" Social Media Page	Sees Promo, Reads Page, Guarantee	Buy Button, Phone Call, Contact Form

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CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THIS CHART

STAGE 1 - AWARENESS

This first stage in the Sales Cycle seems fairly obvious. This is where you make your prospect aware of your solution.

But this stage is not as simple as it first seems.

Why?

Because, depending on where you meet them, and what their problem is…

1. They may not know they have the problem

2. They may not yet be interested in solving the problem

3. The "place" where you meet them is not appropriate for talking about their problem

If course, if they found you on Google using a keyword that clearly indicates they are trying to solve a problem, then you can safely assume that they are aware of their problem. But that may not mean they are ready to take the action required to solve the problem. They may need a good reason — or a **benefit** to be motivated.

But if you are meeting them in some "neutral" location like Facebook, or Twitter there is no way for you to know if they have the problem or have any interest in solving it.

And depending on your business niche you may need to make them aware of their problem before you can move them into your Sales Cycle.

For example, if you are a plumber or a doctor, then more than likely, they are fully aware of their problem.

But if you are a Financial Advisor, people may not realize they should have a will or a financial plan.

If you are a website developer perhaps people aren't aware of what it takes to get on the first page of Google, or turn a website visitor into a customer.

In that case, a big part of your marketing job will be to educate them and make them aware of their problem — and also the benefits of them solving their problem.

So, to frame this stage as the question on your prospect's mind, this is what they are asking.

"What is my problem and why should I solve it?"

Of course, they may not be ready to ask the question in exactly this way, but as a sophisticated marketer it is your job to empathize and put yourself in your prospect's shoes. If you can ask the right questions and draw out your prospect, you may be able to find what's really underneath the surface of their situation and make them aware of their problem.

Suggested **Qualifying Questions** for this stage…

- "Do you realize that 70% of people die without a will? That means their money is tied up for months, or years in probate court and their family cannot even use it to pay bills."

- "Is your back pain ruining your quality of life? Click here to learn some simple techniques for making back pain a thing of the past."

- "Are you having trouble sleeping? Did you realize that the problem may relate to your diet??

STAGE 2 - INTEREST

Once someone knows they have a problem, and becomes aware of a solution, the next step is to get them interested in solving that problem. Don't assume they are ready to buy yet. You'll have to do a bit more convincing before they are completely ready.

Here's the question on their minds…

"Will this solution solve my problem?"

Creating interest is about giving them good reasons to solve their problem by showing them the benefits of doing so.

This is the point when **you've actually gotten their attention**. They are beginning to care about solving their problem so they will be open to learning more.

In a sense, they are beginning their research, and you can begin to tell them more about the details of your solution. Now they want to know about the benefits that your solution offers.

Remember, features are nice, but it's the benefits that the features provide, that's really going to motivate them and get them to take action.

There are many powerful motivators you can offer at this stage.

- You can talk about the features and the benefits of your solution.

- You can show images of people who have solved their problem.

- You can provide proof that your solution works through testimonials.

But the best thing to do is move them to the next stage of the Sales Cycle where you connect with their emotions and get them to visualize your solution.

But remember, they don't know you, or like and trust you yet. Until they do they won't be fully ready to buy. This is where you must show them that you truly care about helping them solve their problem.

STAGE 3 - EMOTIONAL CREDIBILITY

This is the most important and most powerful stage in the Sales Cycle.

Why?

Because like the old saying says…

"People buy on emotion and justify the purchase with logic."

It's only when you connect your solution emotionally to your prospect that they are really "warmed up" and getting ready to buy.

So, the question on their minds at this stage is…

"How will I feel when I solve my problem?"

Now this is not something they will necessarily even think or verbalize. **It's really the unconscious need that is implied by the problem.** Deep down they want to satisfy the underlying emotion. They are seeking — joy, satisfaction, security, beauty, or health — with the essence of it all being happiness.

And if this sounds familiar it's because it comes from that Psychology 101 class you took back in college. It's basically Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

To refresh your memory, he said that there were fundamental needs that every human needed satisfied. They fall in this order.

- Physiological needs like food, water, rest, air, etc.

- Security needs like safety, employment, health, shelter.

- Emotional needs like love, family, friendship, sexual intimacy.

- Self-Esteem needs like respect, confidence, social recognition.

- Self-Actualization needs like creativity, spiritual satisfaction, morality, personal growth.

If you can understand how your solution relates to these underlying needs, you can begin to connect emotionally with your prospect.

Now you might be saying, 'this is all too touchy-feely for me' but believe me, these are the underlying emotions that MUST be satisfied to get a long-term customer, and every "problem" is framed by one of the above needs on some level.

So how do we make this emotional connection on our website?

- We can show images of people who have solved their problem.

- We can offer stories and testimonials from people who have solved their problems.

- We can use the benefit driven language that we know is the WIFT that everyone is looking for.

- We can tell our own story of how we solved our problem and how it made us feel.

Qualifying/Moving Statements

We are actually beyond qualifying statements at this point. More than likely, if someone reaches this stage we know they are interested in solving their problem. At this point we are trying to move someone to the next stage, so it might be time to think of them as "**Moving Statements**." Here's some good examples…

- "Would you like to hear the story of Joe Smith and how this solution changed his life?"

- "Here's a list of the top benefits this solution provides?"

- "I myself suffered from this problem. Here's how that problem affected me and what I did about it. I'm so much happier/healthier/more secure now."

STAGE 4 - PRODUCT CREDIBILITY

Even though we know that emotions and benefits are what will make the sale, many prospects will still need to "**justify the purchase with logic**," before they are ready to take action. This stage will give them the information they need to feel comfortable.

The question on their minds at this stage…

"Is this the best of the available solutions?"

So, the content you need for this stage are the solution's advantages over other products. This is a good time to share any awards or citations the solution has received and any "Good Housekeeping Seals of Approval" that might add credibility and trust for your product or service.

This is the time to talk about…

- Features AND Benefits

- Special capabilities

- Who's using it

- Demonstrable facts about the product

- Comparison tests with competition

But we have to remember we can't just be talking about "features" here. Without adding the benefit, just listing features will not move people to act.

Before your prospect is going to be completely ready to buy, they need to feel good about, not only the product, but you as well. And unless you are a well-known brand with lots of good will already, you still have a big job to do — to gain your prospects trust. This stage is just one piece of that puzzle — and you won't make the sale with product credibility alone.

There are still more questions that your prospect needs answered — up until the last moment when they make their decision.

STAGE 5 - INVOLVEMENT

When your prospect reaches this stage it's time to celebrate. It means you've done a good job moving them through the other stages, and they are probably pretty serious about considering your solution.

Here's the question on their minds…

"How do I learn more?"

This implies they are fully engaged with wanting to solve their problem. In fact, they might be ready to buy now. So be sure to **offer them a link** to your final Sales Page.

But at the very least, even if they are not quite ready, it means they want to deepen the relationship and learn more about you and your product or service.

So how do you do that?

- You let them sign up for your email list

- You tell them about your Facebook page

- You let them follow you on Twitter

- You give them a free e-book that gives them a glimpse into what your solution offers.

- You send them to a **Contact Form** where they can ask for more information.

- You give them a call and offer to help.

- You **Ask For The Order**

Yes, these are all great options for you to have. It truly means they are a **well-qualified prospect and now you can talk to them entirely differently.**

NOW YOU CAN SELL!

Gently of course… But you can begin to introduce them to the final details of how to buy your solution.

And at this moment you can offer the final reassurances that will get them off the fence and get them to act on their problem.

It's also a great time to introduce them to the next stage… **The Incentive**.

STAGE 5 - INCENTIVE

Making that final decision to buy is not always, easy even though your prospect knows they like and need your solution. They may still have doubts. They may even still have objections they need to be answered.

But for the most part, this stage is about giving them a good reason to act now.

Here's the question on their minds…

"Why should I buy now?"

Now depending on the type of business you are in, there could be many answers to this question.

If your solution is "time-sensitive," like an accountant during tax time, or a contractor fixing some damage in a home, then your prospect is probably pretty motivated to buy. Still you'll need to make sure your "Product Credibility" stage content is effective.

And even for these types of businesses, having an incentive can be helpful. Perhaps that "free consultation" or promotion of "$50 off your first job" will be enough to get them to pick you, but if your business is competitive, then it's important to offer something to win the job. And here's why you want to work hard to win that business.

Lifetime Customer Value

For many businesses, that first sale can lead to many more. The value of that customer over the lifetime of the relationship can be substantial. For a plumber, a doctor, a lawyer, or a dentist, the **Lifetime Value** can be many times that first sale.

So, it's safe to say, that the larger your businesses' Lifetime Customer Value, the harder you want to work to get that first sale and the more incentive you want to offer.

Of course, to keep that customer for a "lifetime" you better deliver on your solution. Otherwise they will be gone anyways.

But like the marketing axiom says… **"it's easier (and cheaper) to keep a customer than it is to get a new one."**

This Incentive Stage is the time to go all out to make sure you do everything possible to get the order.

The Guarantee

This is always critical to any business, but especially to an online business. Your prospect is facing a computer screen and even a seasoned online buyer gets squeamish when it's time to "pull the plug" and press that Buy Now button. You MUST have a guarantee of some kind at this point.

Whether that guarantee is "money back" or a "risk free" statement, you must offer some reassurance at this stage. They are feeling that queasiness in their stomachs and you have to deal with it. You have to make them feel better and know that whatever happens, they can't lose.

And don't just say your guarantee once. Offer it many times and in many places, so that you can keep reassuring your prospect and get them to feel comfortable and trust you.

Again, it's a good time to **remind people of the testimonials** you have and all the happy customers who have come before them. There's no better incentive than the story of a happy customer.

STAGE 6 - DECISION

Hooray! They are ready to decide.

Of course, you want to make it super easy for them to buy now. Your *Sales Page* should be clear and simple, and easy to navigate.

The question on their minds at this stage...

"How do I buy?"

The answer should always be... It's Easy!

TYPES OF DECISIONS

OK depending on your business there could be many types of "orders," or, **Most Wanted Responses.** You could want them to...

- Give you a phone call

- Fill out a form

- Press the "Buy Now" Button

- Go to a partner website that actually completes the sale

- Fill out your email signup.

Each of these decisions may still feel risky for them. You must keep giving your **reassurances** down to the last second.

- Remind them of the benefits

- Remind them of your testimonials

- Remind them of your guarantee

- Remind them of your guarantee (yes it's that important)

But again, all of these reassurance should be gentle and respectful. Don't get too pushy and always be trying to **put yourself in your customer's shoes**. Try to imagine how they are feeling and remember that Golden Rule**... do unto others...**

Your "mindset" at this point is one of **a solution provider trying to help someone solve a problem**. If your site's content always has that tone, especially at this critical stage, you will gain a customer, and help someone solve their problem.

Now isn't that what it's all about?

Building Your Sales Funnel

Your **Sales Funnel** is the tools and tactics you use to move someone through your **Sales Cycle**.

Your Sales Funnel begins wherever you meet a customer or prospect — your touchpoint. It ends when they buy your product or service — or when they buy again.

In reality, every promotion may have its own **Sales Cycle.**

For example, if you are promoting a special discount for a specific product or service, then the sales funnel begins when you present the promotion to your customer and ends when they buy.

Along the way you'll want to use tools and tactics that are appropriate to that promotions **Value Proposition**.

You'll want to target the right prospects and you'll want to use benefit-driven language along that cycle that drives that promotions conversion to a sale.

Of course, there are many places where you can connect your prospect to your Sales Funnel.

- In an online ad on Facebook, Google or some market specific website

- In an email

- On your website

- On a flyer you handout

- In a Social Media post

- Offline on signs and posters

Email Marketing

Email Marketing is often misunderstood these days. Many equate it to the SPAM we all often see in our mail boxes. No one likes SPAM. So many people assume that email marketing doesn't work these days.

But the fact is, **Email Marketing** is probably the most effective form of online marketing you can do. No other marketing tactic is more manageable or more cost effective.

But it must be done correctly. When done correctly it will be a critical component of your Sales Funnel and perhaps the most effective. But few companies in my experience understand how to do it correctly.

First of all it must be…

Permission-Based!

When someone gives you their email address **willingly**, it begins an entirely new relationship. **They are giving you permission to market to them**.

And more importantly, it indicates someone who is a well-qualified prospect. It means they are warmed

up and ready for more — even if the more is just a deepening of the relationship.

That moment they give you their email is critical. They may never be more inclined to hear your message. They are paying full attention.

But never is the **Golden Rule** more important. If you truly empathize with their needs at that moment you can begin a long relationship — and if you abuse the opportunity they will be gone, and it may not only be a lost opportunity, but you may actually hurt your credibility and reputation.

Getting Them To Signup

There are many markets where people are eager to join your email "club". If your business provides a recreational or social service, like golf, sports, entertainment, or something fun, people will be happy to be reminded of discounts, specials, and the latest news in that niche. They can clearly see **What's In It For Them**.

But for some markets it's much harder to get people to give you their email address.

I don't know about you but I don't give out my email address easily. There has to be a good reason and the process must be simple and straight forward.

If someone asks for too much information, or makes it complicated, I'm likely to abandon the process.

So, why would someone give you their email address?

- They like what they see on your website or feel your product or service is of high quality

- They think you are professional

- They have received good service from you

- They are passionate about the market you are in and feel you are passionate too

- They believe that there will be a benefit from giving you their email

- They see an incentive to sign up

- You make it very easy

The Incentive

As part of the signup "transaction" you can offer a small gift to incentivize them to sign up. This will increase your signup rate substantially. The incentive must be something that they feel is valuable to them. Ideally it should also be something that gives them the opportunity to learn more about you — to test your product or service — to increase your credibility in their eyes.

The incentive can be…

- A trial version of your product or service

- An eBook that helps them understand their problem

- A free sample of your product or service

- A coupon or discount off their first order

Make It Very Easy

The easier you make it to sign up the higher your signup rate will be. It's that simple. All you really need is a first name and an email to get them into your sales funnel and begin your relationship.

If you want to get more demographic information, go back to them with a request for that information. If they are truly engaged they will be happy to give it to you. Plus, it will be **further qualification that they a truly good prospect**.

Sign Up Forms

The form you use to sign people up to your list is also critical. It must be simple and eye-catching. It should ask for minimal information.

Certainly, there should be a page on your website where people can join that explains all the benefits of joining. There should be several links on every page of your site that lead to this sign up page.

But what works best is a pop-up form that appears automatically after someone has been on your site for a certain amount of time.

I know what you are saying… these pop up forms are intrusive and you don't like them.

But the fact of the matter is… **they work**. You'll get far more signups when you proactively ask for their email than if you passively wait for them to sign up.

Of course, the pop-up must make it clear what the **What's In It For Them**. And your incentive should be clear. Again, use your empathy to put yourself in your prospects shoes and imagine how they feel and what would motivate them to give you their email address.

Now What?

You've just added a new prospect to your database. That prospect is leaning your way. Again, they may never be more warmed up and ready for your message. You must leverage this moment and take advantage of this opportunity. It may not come again.

This is a perfect time for an Autoresponder.

What's an Autoresponder

An Autoresponder is an automated message that goes out to your new prospect automatically after they take an action — like signing up for your list — or some other action they take (more about this later).

This message can be nothing more than a sincere thank you for joining your "club" or it can be more

detailed with an overview of your "solution" and links back to your website.

It can even be a series of emails that introduce your new prospect to various aspects of your value proposition — a getting-to-know-you message series.

It can also be…

- A marketing survey

- A link to a page where you ask for more information about them

- A coupon for a discount

- Educational information

The point is it should be something they want and believe is valuable to them. If they feel you are really giving them something, they will feel grateful and may even feel they should reciprocate in some way. This will help cement your relationship and allow you to build it going forward.

Drip Campaign

A good Autoresponder should be able to send more than one message during its "sequence". You might want to automatically send one message a week for an indefinite amount of time. This is sometimes called a "drip" campaign.

A good autoresponder sequence actually moves people through your **Sales Cycle** by leading them through each step they need to take.

The tone in these emails is one of a "solution provider" and the goal is to offer help and encourage them to solve their problem.

There is often a strong educational component to these emails, and this education helps them understand their problem and your solution better. If done right they will often feel grateful for your help and want to return the favor.

Newsletter Emails

A common type of email is the monthly newsletter. In the newsletter you update people on things going on in your market or provide news that should be interesting. Often businesses use these newsletters as an excuse for promoting various parts of their business. It's often just an excuse to talk about themselves. These types of emails seldom do much unless they are very customer focused. Again, people don't want to know how great you are — they want to know how great you are going to make them.

Promotional Emails

Another common type of email you might send are promotional emails that talk about a specific promotion or activity.

- A sale

- A special coupon

- An event

- A limited-time discount

These might go out weekly or whenever you have something special to tell your fans.

If these emails are nothing more than excuses to sell, than they may reach deaf ears. If they truly offer value to your customer, and they perceive it that way, they can be effective. Once again, ask yourself how you would feel if you got this email.

If you mix promotional emails, with entertaining emails and educational emails, you'll have a better chance of keeping your customer's attention.

If you send emails that have little value to your customers then they might turn you off or even feel manipulated. That's never good for your credibility.

How Often To Send

Can you send too many emails?

Well that depends on how you look at your list.

If you think of your list as customers and prospects you never want to lose — even if they aren't paying attention and seldom buy something — then you'll want to **hoard** your list and never want them to opt

out. You'll be very careful not to offend them by sending too many emails.

But if you think of your email marketing as a **qualifying mechanism** and a way to identify your best customers — the people who open every email and are paying close attention — then you'll base your email frequency on **open rate** and by the actual responsiveness of your best customers.

Most email marketers agree that 15-20% of your list will open **EVERY** email you send. In some markets, it's higher than that.

These are the customers that really want to build the relationship. These are the life blood of every business. These folks have the highest **Lifetime Customer Value** and can make or break a business.

My view is **focus on your best customers**, and forget about those that may opt out. They probably don't have much of a **Lifetime Customer Value** anyways. I judge my list by focusing on quality — not quantity.

So how many emails should you send?

If you can keep your open rate above 20%, then send an email every day if you wish.

Of course, you must send emails with value and are interesting, and maybe even look professional. As long as they meet the Golden Rule and you wouldn't mind receiving them yourself, go ahead

and send. Remember your top customers are **all in** — just like you.

And a good email system will help you identify those great customers, and even segment them into a separate list. You do that with **triggers**.

Autoresponder Triggers

A good autoresponder can do more than just send out emails when someone signs up. A good autoresponder should respond to **triggers** and react based on those triggers.

For example, if you send an email and ask someone if they are interested in weddings, and give them a **link** to your wedding page, the email system should automatically segment them into a new category of **wedding prospects**. They might even be added to a new drip sequence that explains your wedding offerings and moves them into an entirely new **Sales Cycle**. This is when your email marketing system is begin to become your Customer Relationship Management syste.

Email Marketing or CRM?

If you think about it, a good email marketing system is about more than just sending out emails to your list. It's really about Customer Relationship Management.

Think about it… you are hoping for a long relationship with your customer. In order to maximize

your customers lifetime value, you want to grow that relationship, learn about them, and respond with solutions that keep them coming back. It should never be "wham bam, thank you mamn." You want a relationship based on mutual understanding and a trust that you will deliver a valuable product or service, time after time, and year after year.

What Does a Good Customer Relationship Management System Do?

If you analyze your relationship with your customer and think of all the various touches you have with them, you begin to see that it's like any relationship. It will change over time based on changing needs and marketplace evolution.

Perhaps your marketplace has new products and features being added all the time.

Perhaps your customers' needs change and they need new, more up-to-date solutions.

These are all new opportunities. The better you know your customer, the quicker you can respond to these marketplace changes and offer the new solutions your customer will be looking for — from you or your competition.

If your CRM system tracks customer demographics, orders, email responses, and automates your marketing, you can understand your customer

better, and be there when your customer is ready for the next new thing — ahead of your competition.

So, when evaluating your email marketing system, consider the future, and look for features that will grow with your market and customer relationship needs.

CUSTOMER LIST

While you are adding people your email list, what you are really doing is beginning your relationship with your customer. Hopefully that relationship will be long and prosperous for both of you.

There's a common saying in online marketing that **The Money Is In The List**. Even with all the email Spam out there, it's still true.

But instead of just a list of people that have given you their email addresses, you should think of them as your **Customer List.** And to succeed you have to **manage those customers,** so think of your email system as a **Customer Relationship Management System**. If you have a business based on repeat business, then it's definitely your customer list. Don't forget about **Lifetime Customer Value**. Your goal is a long-term relationship.

We've already talked about having an email list signup on your site. It's an important **qualification tool** and will let you build that long-term relationship

with your customer. Again, when they sign up, they are raising their hands and telling you they are a good prospect.

Remember, for many businesses the Sales Cycle could be long. Prospects don't always make a decision right away. If you can keep in touch, provide valuable information, and be the squeaky wheel, you might be the one that gets the grease when they are ready to make a decision.

A good list will do several things for your business.

- It will let you keep in touch and keep your prospect engaged in the Sales Cycle.

- It will let you identify real prospects that are truly interested in what you have to offer.

- It will let you proactively reach out to them without needing for them to come back to your website. You can take charge of the sales process.

- It will let you demonstrate the benefits of your knowledge, or your product or service.

- It will let you move prospects to new stages in the Sales Cycle.

- It will let you tell prospects, and existing customers, about promotions, incentives, offers, and important news in your business niche.

But best of all, it will deepen your relationship with your prospects and customers and sustain your business when the economy is bad or when the search engines become fickle.

Yes "the money is in the list." If you use your **Prospect List** effectively, it can be a way to increase revenue without depending on search engines or returning site visitors to keep your business moving forward.

MOST WANTED RESPONSES

The beauty of online marketing is people will raise their hands and tell you they have a problem. Then It's your job to lead them to the solution they need on your website.

Now by "raising their hands" I mean they take an action that tells you what they need and that they are truly interested in solving their problem. These are your **Most Wanted Responses** (**MWRs**).

Your MWRs are simply that actions you would like your visitors to take on your website. Certainly, you would like them to buy your product or service, but your MWR actually has many intermediate steps long before your prospects click the "buy now" button, or pick up the phone and give you a call. Think of these as your **Micro Conversions**.

Remember, when someone arrives on your website they could be at any stage in the **Sales Cycle**. They could be just beginning their journey, or they could be very ready to buy — NOW.

But whatever stage they are at, you literally have seconds to get their attention. If you don't get that attention they will be gone, and you will lose a sale even though your visitor may have been completely ready to buy.

MWR 1 - You Want Them To Stay

So, your first, and maybe the Most Important Most Wanted Response (MIMWR) **is to get people to stay on your site.**

What's the big deal you say? After all they did come to your site for a reason. Why wouldn't they at least stick around until they get their answer?

Google analytics stats show that most of your visitors (60-80%) will leave within the first 10 seconds of arriving on your site. Scary thought, right?

Why?

There could be many reasons they would leave quickly…

- They don't like your design.

- They felt your site was unprofessional.

- They came to your site by mistake.

- But by far the most important reason is…

- They didn't find what they were looking for.

Certainly, a site design that is appropriate for your type of business is critical. If it's confusing or just looks amateurish that's plenty of reason for someone to leave. Remember they will probably go to many of your competitor's websites before they are ready.

And if they perhaps clicked on the wrong link and realized they were in the wrong place, that's enough reason for them to leave. Not common but it does happen.

But the main reason people leave is because they didn't find what they were looking for. This could be for many reasons.

- The text link you gave them at your touchpoint was misleading and didn't actually deliver the expected result.

- They couldn't find what they were looking for quickly enough. This probably means your site navigation is not effective.

But the big reason...

They couldn't find the **WIFT**… they couldn't find **What's In It For Them.**

And the sad thing is… perhaps your site actually could give them the solution they were looking for… but they never found it. Again, your navigation may be part of the problem, but I bet it is often because you didn't present your **Value Proposition** clearly and quickly. See the next section for a discussion of this important **site-stickiness** tool.

MWR 2 - You Want Them To Read Your Content

You're great, benefit-driven content is what will move them through your Sales Cycle. If they don't

read it (or watch a video) you won't move them and get them to take action. This is obviously a very important MWR.

One of the keys to getting them to read your stuff is to make it easy for them to read. **Short sentences and short paragraphs**, with lots of sub-headlines and bullets, will let them skim and then read easily.

A website is not like a book. It's not easy to read and they could be reading on laptops, tablets, and more often, smart phones.

But again, if you use powerful headlines that are dripping with benefits, you'll keep them interested and keep them moving through your Sales Cycle.

MWR 3 - YOU WANT THEM TO MOVE TO THE NEXT STAGE

If your content continually reminds them of their problem (and their pain), you'll keep them motivated to move to the next stage.

A **text link** that offers the benefit of them moving to that next stage, is a great way to get them to that next page. Be sure the page really offers the benefit implied by the text link and make it clear to them that there's a **What's In It For Them** at the other end of the click. Something like…

"Want to hear how people just like you solved their problem. Click here for some real-world testimonials from happy customers."

MWR 3 - You Want Them To Join Your Sales Funnel

One of the best ways to determine if one of your visitors is really a good prospect is to ask them to sign up for your email list. If they are willing to give you their email it proves they are committed to solving their problem.

Once they commit, you know they are a real prospect and now you can talk to them in a different way. You can begin to deepen the relationship and share more about your solution.

The key to getting someone to give you their email is to make it clear what the benefit will be if they do. Tell them you will be sending quality information and only things that will be helpful to them. You can even offer an incentive like a free ebook or sample of your product.

Don't oversell it. Be sure that you can deliver on your incentive or they will opt out, and you will have burned a potential customer. And they won't be back.

One of the goals of getting them to sign up is to make sure you have a real prospect. If you push too hard you may end up with a half-hearted prospect instead of someone who is genuinely interested in solving their problem. They'll opt-out of your list soon anyways.

MWR 4 - You Want To Get Them To Your Sales Pages

Of course, your ultimate MWR is to get them to take an action that will make you money. If you've set up your Sales Funnel correctly, they should be anxious to finally solve their problem and buy your product or service.

So this is the time to "ask for the order" and get them to take the action they really want to take anyways. Don't forget to remind them of your Guarantee and those ultimate benefits they are going to receive. At this point they need a little reassurance they are doing the right thing. But deep down they know they are.

Value Proposition

What's a Value Proposition (VP)?

It's the main, big picture benefit your site offers. It's the What's In It For Them for your site's visitors.

Your VP is something that should be easy to see on your site. In fact, it should be the first thing a visitor notices when they get there. It should be in your header and integral to the imagery your site presents to visitors.

There are actually a few ways to communicate your Value Proposition to your site visitors.

Slogan

This is sometimes called a tagline.

For example…

If you are a house painter you might say.

"Making the world more beautiful, one house at a time."

Or…

"More than just house painting… home beautification."

Or…

"We not only paint your house… we make your world more beautiful."

These slogan's should be built into your site's header. The header should also present a visual representation of your VP as well. Perhaps people experiencing the benefits of what you offer.

BENEFIT PARAGRAPH

On your home page, but also at any major entry point to your website, you should add a benefit paragraph or **Value Proposition Statement.** This is longer than a slogan and lets you tell more of your story and again, what's in it for your visitors if they stay.

Here's a good formula to use for creating the VP statement.

Headline.

What is the end-benefit you're offering, in 1 short sentence. It can mention the product and/or the customer. It should grab your visitor's attention and make them want to stay and read more.

Sub-headline or a 2-3 sentence paragraph.

A specific explanation of what you do or offer, and for whom — and why is it useful.

3 bullet points.

List the key benefits of your business.

Visual.

Show an image that reinforces your main message. Usually **an image of a person experiencing the benefits of your value proposition** works best.

Now your Value Proposition is very important and should be thought through carefully. It can make or break your site and a good one will improve your site's stickiness dramatically.

SITE NAVIGATION

Your website **Navigation** is critical. Without good navigation your visitors won't find what they are looking for and they will be gone. It's that simple and that important.

Here's what I mean by Navigation…

- **Navigation is any link on any page that takes your visitor to a new part of your website.**

- The Navigation can be along the left side of your site, across the top horizontally, or along the right column.

- The Navigation can be in drop-down menus that show links to category-specific content.

- Navigation links can even be within your text in the body of your content.

- Navigation could even lead to somewhere else on the same page.

Uses For Your Navigation

- To lead people through your content and make it easy to find all of your pages. In this case you want to offer *Category Headlines* that act like your *Table of Contents* and make it easy to find specific content.

- To take visitors to the most important/popular/latest content on your site.

- To lead people to your promotions and Sales Page.

But the most important use is…

- To move your visitors through your Sales Cycle

Remember, your visitors will arrive on your site at any stage of the Sales Cycle. You want to make it easy for them to find the next stage they want to go to. In other words… to help them answer **the next question they have before they are ready to buy.**

In many ways, this is what makes online marketing so powerful. With proper Navigation, your visitors will literally move themselves through the Sales Cycle, all the way to your Shopping Cart or Call To Action.

- They can get all of their questions answered.

- They can get themselves emotionally connected to solving their problem.

- They can learn about product features important to them.

- They can read testimonials.

- They can choose to buy when they are ready.

There's an old marketing saying that "people hate to be sold but they love to buy."

A good website lets them buy unbothered, un-harrassed, and unimpeded, right up to the **Buy Now** button.

But this only can happen if they can find everything they need along the way. Great Navigation is the key to that.

Navigation Text

Just like all content on your website, the actual text for your Navigation must be benefit-driven. It should be absolutely clear **What's In It For Them** at the other end of the click.

And when they get to that new location there should be **no surprises or disappointments**. It must deliver exactly as advertised. Otherwise they will be gone.

Many websites miss this important "marketing" opportunity that your Navigation text offers. Too often I see boring, confusing, and lackluster text in the Navigation.

Don't get me wrong. This is no time to be cute or creative. Just the facts please. Use as few words as possible and make it absolutely clear what they will find. But always add a benefit, or an interesting incentive to click when you can.

And of course, remember that the ultimate goal is to keep people reading your content and moving

down your **Sales Cycle**. That's the main goal of your button's content and your Navigation in general.

SALES PAGES

Of course your Sales Pages are where the rubber hits the road. This is the place where you get your prospect to take the action you would like. It's where you get your Ultimate Most Wanted Response. It's where you make a sale.

It's also where you must be the most careful.

Your prospect has taken a long path to get here. Perhaps it's taken days or months to move them through your Sales Cycle. But now they are ready. They are ready to make that important *Buying Decision*.

Now you hope you've answered all of their questions. You remember those questions right?

- **Awareness** — "What is my problem and why should I solve it?"

- **Interest** — "Will this solution solve my problem?"

- **Emotional Credibility** — "How will I feel when I solve my problem?"

- **Product Credibility** — "Is this the best of available solutions?"

- **Involvement** — "How do I learn more?"

- **Incentive** — "Why should I buy now?"

- **Decision** — "How do I buy?"

IT'S TIME TO BE SENSITIVE

Now you might assume that there's nothing to do here but *Ask For The Order.* But you'd be wrong.

Again, put yourself in their shoes.

- They might be scared.

- They are about to spend money, perhaps when their money is tight.

- They may have doubts about you and your solution. They may even have some specific questions or objections that haven't been answered.

Plus, all they've been doing is looking at an impersonal computer screen. There's not a real person involved. Yes you've showed your face in a video and passionately shared your desire to help them. But was that enough?

REVIEW THE SALES CYCLE

The best thing you can do for them at this point is to reassure them they are making the right decision.

- Remind them of the pain they are feeling.

- Remind them of the benefits of solving their problem.

- Remind them of how they will feel when they solve their problem.

- Remind them of why your product is better.

Then…

Give them your guarantee… again.

Remind them that there is NO RISK. They have nothing to lose. They have nothing to fear but fear itself.

It finally time for them to **Take Action** and be free of their problem.

All this needs to be on your **Sales Page**.

How Do You Know If You've Got It Right?

You don't.

That's why we always **Track, Test, and Tweak** until we are sure we have the best elements and copy on our Sales Page.

And **Google Analytics** will let you test different variations of your page until you know what works best. They have something called Goals that let's you A/B test your pages until they are converting at the highest possible rate.

Don't Forget: Conversion Is King

Again **Conversion Rate** is the ultimate metric. Remember, that's the percentage of visitors to your

site that actually end up buying your product or service. Conversion Rate is the ultimate metric for whether your site is working or not. Increasing your CR just 1% can mean the difference between making money and going out of business.

Conversion Rate is too big of a topic for this book, but be aware that once you have your Sales Funnel setup and all of your pieces are in place, it's what you will focus on to grow your business and keep it moving forward and making money.

How To Build Your Sales Page

The content on your Sales Page should basically move your visitor through the Sales Cycle again. The elements on this page should follow this format…

Problem

Remind people of the problem they are experiencing. This should be specific to the solution you are offering on this page.

Benefit

Remind people of the benefit of solving their problem. Put it in concrete terms and remind people of how they will feel once they solve their problem.

Testimonial

Provide testimonials from happy customers. Make sure the testimonials are specific to the product you

are offering here and would ideally make your visitor feel the "joy" of solving their problem.
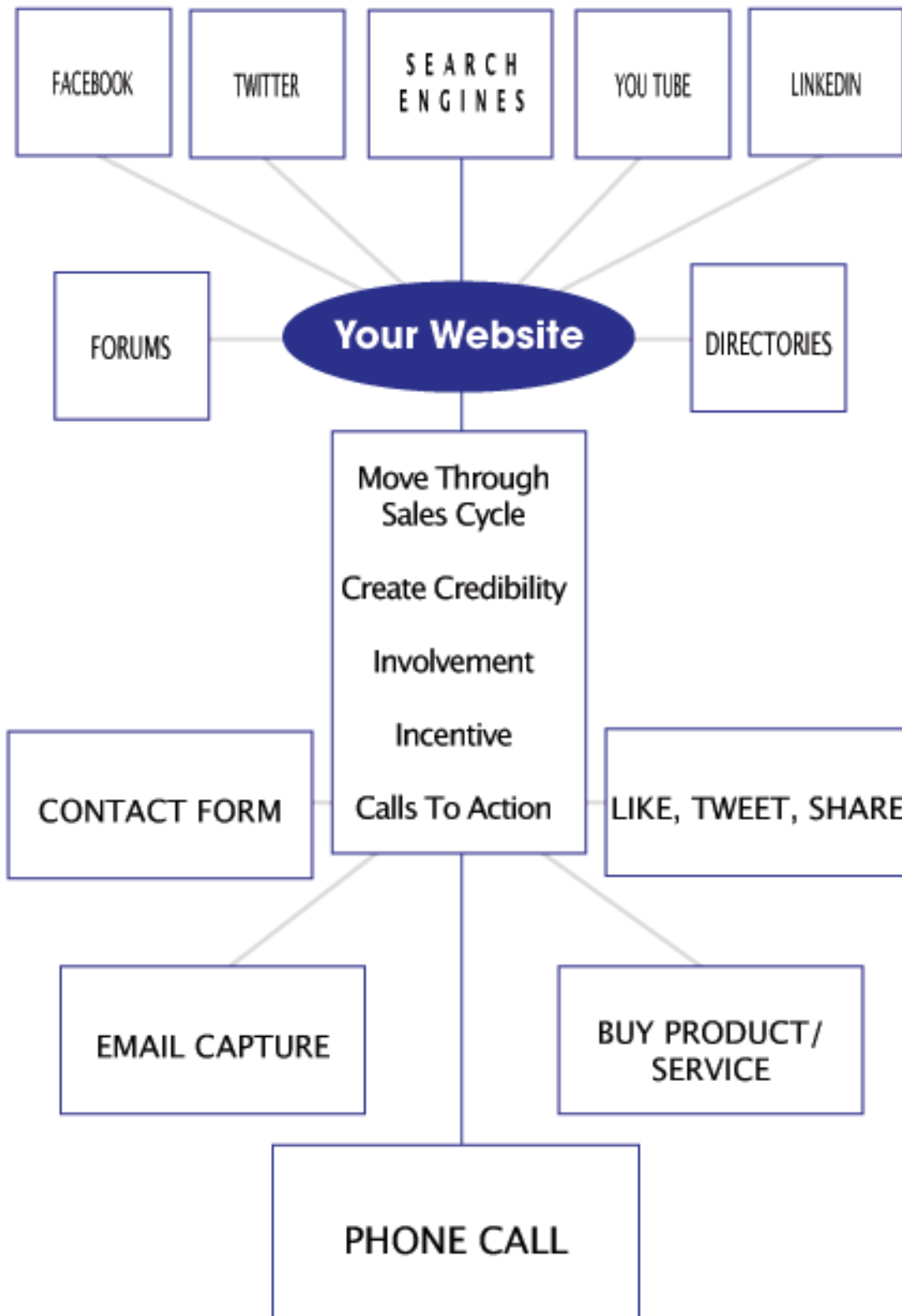
Call To Action

The specific **Buy Now, Sign Up Here, Go Here, Call This Number, or Fill Out This Form** action you want them to take. This click/action should be in the form of a text link or specific button image that is clicked on.

Incentive

Your final **Guarantee**, or **Reason To Act**, that will reassure them and let them know there is no risk involved, or that delaying will add some additional pain.

Get all these elements right and you will be able to turn visitors into customers every time.

YOUR ONLINE SALES FUNNEL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

SEARCH ENGINES

YOU TUBE

LINKEDIN

FORUMS

Your Website

DIRECTORIES

Move Through
Sales Cycle

Create Credibility

Involvement

Incentive

Calls To Action

CONTACT FORM

LIKE, TWEET, SHARE

EMAIL CAPTURE

BUY PRODUCT/
SERVICE

PHONE CALL

Your Call To Action

YOUR CALL TO ACTION

This is YOUR Call To Action. This is where you take your website from "not ready for prime time" to a *Conversion Machine* moving people through your Sales Cycle and making your "cash register" sing.

Now every business is different and your particular Sales Cycle will probably be unique to you.

But all businesses are **about solving problems**. Once you understand your prospects and can empathize with their problems you can begin to move them to your solution and get them to take action.

So that's where you want to start.

PROSPECT PROFILE

Build a profile of your typical prospect. Ask yourself.

- How old are they?

- Male or female?

- Financial situation?

- Are they educated, or not?

- Why do they want to solve this problem?

- How are they likely to feel when they solve their problem?

- What pains are they feeling about the problem?

- What types of solutions are they likely to want?

- What is their Underlying Need?

You want to get inside their heads. You want to be able to relate to the conversation in their heads. You want to feel like you really know them — that you relate to them almost like you would one of your friends.

Until you do this you can't really talk to them in any meaningful way. Your words will sound hollow. They won't trust you. And they certainly won't buy from you.

So, begin by getting to know your ideal customer intimately. Learn to think like them. And above all, try to learn how they feel about their problem.

I've said it before and I'll say it again — the most important marketing skill you can have is **Empathy**!

SALES CYCLE WORKSHEET

A great way to get a handle on your online marketing is to analyze the Sales Cycle for your particular type of business. This will help you understand what your prospect needs at each stage of the *Sales Cycle*.

I have a Worksheet that can help you. It will help you think through each stage and what keywords, questions, and search issues your prospect might have at each stage. Click here to download this Microsoft Word file.

It will also help you analyze your online competition for your business and see what they are doing now for their customers. If you don't have a good sense of "where the bar is" in your niche, your marketing may miss the target and your prospects will be going elsewhere for their solutions.

Resources

Here's some resources to help you get a jump start on improving your Sales Cycle.