

# **“11 Quick Marketing Fixes”**

**A Special Report From  
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# Your “Marketing 101” Basic Fix Checklist

**S**ometimes a freelancer is more like an emergency room doctor than a copywriter.

From the very beginning, I’ve had clients come to me in a *panic* about vanishing profits, pissed-off customers, ads that suddenly stopped working, products that were being returned, and on and on. The equivalent of the busted heads, gory wounds and sputtering hearts that turn up in the ER.

Somewhere along the line, I earned a reputation as a problem solver. I like the rep, too -- and I’m proud that it’s been a long, long time since I’ve encountered a business problem I couldn’t solve.

And solve *fast*. Usually, a great piece of killer copy can fix even the most devastating problems -- by pumping up sales, bringing in fresh new customers, setting up new business arrangements, or soothing a riled customer base. Or to turn the business around 180 degrees, if it’s headed in the wrong direction.

Sometimes, however, I need to go right to the heart of the problem, and start rearranging things from the ground up.

**Often, the problems are just plain fundamental.** It’s really easy for me to work with new clients who are savvy about direct response advertising. But if the client is NOT savvy... it’s like beginning a race 20 feet behind the starting line. You must play a very fast game of “catch up”.

So, like a doctor quickly checking vital signs, I learned to do a *rapid* check-up of the basics on any business patient. No matter how drastic the problem appears, the *solution* to the problem is usually something *stunningly simple*.

The basics are the *first* things to look at.

I’ve got my own checklist in my head now, because I’ve done this for so long. But when I started out -- before I had a lot of experience with different kinds of business disasters -- I had to scramble to figure out what was going on. This checklist you now hold in your hands was created almost 20 years ago... when I was still being astonished at how *fundamental* most solutions were to ailing businesses.

I found this checklist recently, while cleaning out some files in my office. I’m a pack-rat, which is good for anyone who wants to know exactly how I put my reputation and acumen together over the years. Actually, these were just some scribbled notes on a

dog-eared piece of notebook paper... never formally written out... but I recognized the list immediately.

**It served me well in the early days of consulting.** Nothing whatsoever has changed about the fundamentals (nor will they ever change). So, this list should serve *you* well, too... whether you're doing a little consulting yourself, or just checking the vital signs of your own business. It's the result of some serious studying and experimentation... and also all the input from my mentors at the time (which included Jay Abraham and Gary Halbert, among others). Enjoy.



**Checklist Point #1: Do all ads and marketing materials conform to basic direct response rules?**

The vast majority of businesses out there are utterly naïve about advertising... and still labor under the delusion that Madison Avenue knows *anything* at all about bringing in sales. They do not. When a business is sputtering, the first thing to look at is the advertising... the print ads, the Yellow Page ads, the mailed ads, everything. Make sure they have headlines, a hook, clear opening paragraphs, a benefit for every feature, lots of “you” copy (and no bragging), testimonials, a real sales pitch... and a *call to action*.

You know -- **an actual sales pitch.**

Even putting out a *badly-written or quickly-written ad* that covers the basics of direct response... will dramatically increase profit and response... over an empty “message” ad. It's the difference between having a clown run by people's houses shouting absurdities (which is the favorite method of know-nothing ad agencies)... and having a calm, agreeable salesman actually stop and talk to those same people and offer a sales pitch. Make sure your ads are salesmen. Not clowns.

Just *asking* for a sale, in many cases, will multiply results like crazy.

And it doesn't matter if you're selling a product, or offering a service, or in a store front business. Wake up your Inner Salesman and clearly tell people what you have to sell and how they can get it.



**Checklist Point #2: Have you got a back-end for every sale?**

Most businesses ignore the *easy* money to be made with a back-end sale.

Yet, the really smart marketers never forget that the most profitable words in the history of marketing were: “Would you like fries with that?” Instantly doubled the total sale.

Your biggest expense is reaching a *new* customer. If you succeed in winning him over to the point that he pulls out his wallet and gives you money... he will often *continue* to give you money if you offer him something *else*. Yet, you do not need any expensive advertising to do this -- **he’s already listening to you**. You simply have to open your mouth and offer him something else.

Savvy marketers will have something more expensive to sell, and something less expensive. Something else that fits in with whatever the initial sale was... and something else that just has broad appeal. But they will always have *something* on the back-end.



**Checklist Point #3: Have you figured out your USP yet?**

If you cannot explain... in *believable, credible terms*... exactly why your prospect should buy from *you* and not the competition... then you don’t know what your Unique Selling Proposition is.

You sell widgets, and the guy next door sells widgets. Nobody is going to choose you just because you’re cute. You’re either cheaper, or of higher quality, or better with after-sale service, or have a better guarantee, or whatever. You’re *different* in some measurable way that any prospect can easily and quickly understand.

**And this difference must be clearly explained to your prospects.** They cannot read your mind, nor do they have any kind of insider knowledge of your business -- what may be “obvious” to you is meaningless to them. You must explain everything. Take nothing for granted, and assume nothing.

**Added bonus:** Finally figuring out your USP will make writing your *headlines* a thousand times easier. Because the best USPs are vital, pithy and interesting... and that’s an inherent hook for the reader.



**Checklist Point #4: Does your copy read like a real salesman would talk?**

Most business owners are terrified of speaking too clearly to their intended audience. After eons of seeing Madison Avenue shout out meaningless slogans and sing

incoherent jingles... the average businessman just naturally assumes “that must be the kind of advertising that works.”

Not so. What works in print are the *very same principles* that work when you sell to someone face-to-face. You would never sing to a customer in your office. So don’t do it in your ads.

**The best kind of copy is written in “just you and me sitting here” language.** You don’t get fancy, and you don’t talk over anyone’s head. You are clear and precise, and you talk straight *at* your prospect -- so he feels it really is just him and you. Take your prospects aside one by one, and deliver your pitch with enthusiasm and purpose.



**Checklist Point #5: Have you tested other offers or appeals?**

Most people don’t spend enough time figuring out how to price their product or service, and how to offer it in a compelling way. They make a stab at it, and then stick with the same price/appeal for years. They cannot honestly tell you if they are using the absolute *best* price/appeal possible. Because they don’t know.

The answer is to *test*, and test ruthlessly. Marketers are often *astonished* when raising their prices doesn’t cut response even a single percentage point. Others find that they really are overpriced... and by lowering their price *just a few bucks* (say, from \$21 to \$19) they increase sales by a huge margin. **It’s all about the psychology of value and worth. And having numbers to help you decide, so you never guess.**

Plus, of course, any business that relies on a *single* ad for success is asking for shock and horror -- because all ads, no matter how well they pull now, will eventually fatigue. You wouldn’t base your entire business on a single salesman -- don’t risk it on a single ad. Test others, constantly. Have a Plan B.



**Checklist Point #6: Are you taking advantage of joint ventures to reach other lists of people who want your product?**

If you’re in a market with many other marketers, offer a deal for them to sell your stuff to their list for a fifty-fifty split. You save the cost of advertising, and stand to bring in all number of new customers.

The best way to go to another list is with an *endorsement* from the owner of the list. He is already trusted by the list, and his word -- even if he only writes a short note advising people to read your pitch -- can increase readership dramatically.

There is a fear among many list owners that letting anyone else have access to it will rob them of potential profit. This may actually be true of very recent lists... but many other marketers are constantly struggling to find new product to offer their lists, and will welcome the ready-made opportunity you provide with your “new” product.



**Checklist Point #7: Are you building your own house list... and mining it for all it's worth?**

The simplest rule of business is to collect the names of customers and people interested in what you sell... and periodically mail to that list and *ask them to spend more money with you*.

You will never know if they want *more* of what you offer, until you ask them. And most successful direct response businesses thrive off their “house” lists. Going to a cold list or audience is expensive. Going to your own house list is like shooting fish in a barrel.



**Checklist Point #8: Are you re-running successful ads?**

Most business owners get tired of their own ads long before their customer base does.

If you have a winning, profitable ad... *continue* to run or mail it until it is no longer a winner. A well-written ad can run for many years without fatigue. But let the numbers decide. Don't bury a winning ad. At the very least, pull it out again in a year, when your target market has a whole *new* parade passing by that hasn't seen the old ad.



**Checklist Point #9: Do you really know what your customers want?**

Most businessmen who write their own ads create a pitch that appeals to *them*. This is often a mistake. Find out what your *prospects* really want... and then offer it to

them. Never try to educate them on why they should want something else -- instead, offer them exactly what they *already* desire.

Often, this is something *different* than what you believe they *should* want. So be it. You're out to make profits, not prove a point. Let reality be your guide, not wishful thinking.

The best marketers make sure they have a stake in the market they go after. They eat what their prospects eat, read what they read, live where they live. Before you try to woo a strange market, you need to walk a mile in their shoes. Never assume you can "guess" at what will ring their chimes.

Find out.



**Checklist Point #10: Do you know what a customer is worth to you over the long haul?**

Businesses that do not keep house lists of customers, and do not track sales, never realize the "**cumulative net worth**" of a repeat customer. They concentrate on making the first sale only... and then move on.

**Huge mistake.** Just having a good back-end can *double* every single sale. And having a back-end to the *next* sale can quadruple profit. Over a couple of years, that one customer you brought in could be worth many, many times what you originally thought.

This means you should be willing to spend a little bit to find a new customer. Many businesses are content to even *lose* money bringing a new customer in... because they know they'll make huge profit on multiple subsequent sales.

Look at the big picture, over time.



**Checklist Point #11: Do you believe that "luck" has anything to do with success?**

Business owners who don't understand the power of marketing often watch their competition thrive, and simply scratch their heads. They do not attribute the success to the massive and savvy advertising tactics used. They think it's much more mystical than that.

And they are wrong. There is *nothing magical* about great advertising.

Unless you have a completely worthless product -- and we must assume you have something of worth here, or nothing will help -- there are people out there who will want it. You need to *reach out to them* however -- they will not magically realize you exist, nor will they follow angels to your store.

**You must reach them with a clear sales message.** Hook their attention, and create an offer that gets them excited. Find out where they can be found -- in the newspaper, through targeted mailing lists, in certain zip codes, whatever. Test to find the right appeal and price.

*Then get after them.*

Luck has nothing to do with it.

**T**hat's the checklist. For experienced marketers, it may seem simplistic... but no one will doubt that the basics are what get *violated* most often in business.

Use this checklist on yourself, until it becomes second nature. And use it when you're doing triage on someone else's sick biz. You'll be astonished how often the culprit behind a problem... is the simplest thing in the world.