

# Duct Tape Marketing



**The World's Most Practical  
Small Business Marketing Guide**

**John Jantsch**



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## Foreword

# On the Subject of Marketing Integrity

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by Michael E. Gerber, author of *The E-Myth*

I have known John Jantsch for over ten years, first in his role as a certified E-Myth Consultant for my company, E-Myth Worldwide, a role in which he served his clients and my company with the enthusiasm of a disciple, and then later as the founder and CEO of his own marketing consulting firm, Jantsch Communications. During those years, John and I would talk about business, about life, and about his personal process for growing both his business and his knowledge about business so that he could fulfill the single most important objective John has always had—to serve his clients, his community, and his family as best as any man can.

What is remarkable about John is that, unlike many men and women in this tricky world called business who claim to know the unknowable all for the purpose of enhancing their personal brand, he has remained true to who he is—a guy from the middle of America who knows himself as few of us do, and who aspires to nothing more than being a good householder and a good gentleman. But none of this modesty can hide that fact that he has spent a huge amount of the hours of his life drilling down into the practical world of marketing to discover what actually works—and why. Nor does it keep us from seeing his unique

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ability to teach anyone how to put this practical knowledge to work to create a wonderfully effective business.

In short, this book is really about *integrity*—John’s integrity, and that of the true art of marketing—which is why I have called this foreword, “On the Subject of Marketing Integrity”. John and I share a passion for the subject of integrity in marketing. Marketing—which could sometimes be called selling, which could further be called getting someone hot to buy—yes, that’s essentially what everyone who buys this book is looking for, even you, dear reader! After all, to everyone in business, getting someone hot to buy is obviously the holy grail. And that’s what every marketing book worth its salt better be about if it’s going to hold anyone’s attention.

Yes, John keeps his promise, step by step by step, to demonstrate to you how to do marketing to get *your* someone hot to buy *your* something, but also—and this is very, very important—how to do it with integrity. This begs the question I’m actually raising here: what does integrity have to do with marketing? Well, first of all, without integrity, marketing is left to tricks, sophistry, and lies—the same devices the old trickster used with the peas and the shells on the streets of many cities: Is it here? Is it there? Where is it? Is it anywhere? With John, you’ll not only know where the pea is, but long before you wonder, John will have told you forty-two times.

John wants to make sure you don’t get lost here. He wants you to know the science of his craft, not to overwhelm you with his wizardry. In short, it’s true to John’s integrity that he is less interested in you thinking he is a marketing genius—there are more than enough of those out there!—than he is in delivering to you what he’s promised.

This book is just like its namesake—Duct Tape—it’s good, incredibly smart, amazingly practical, and immensely *sticky* stuff. You can begin to put it to use immediately.

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And John tells you how. This book is also amazingly thorough. John spares no effort to dig deep down into the mechanics of marketing, as opposed to the academic clap-trap of marketing. He is less interested in the philosophy than he is in the tools, tasks and skills required to look at marketing as a vocational school of marketing might. When you finish this book, John will want to know that you have applied it to achieve very specific results and will want you to tell him so! Yes, finally, when all is said and done, John wants to talk to you about what you've done and how he's helped you on your path. Like the good friend John is, he'll get back to you from the middle of America and ask you how you're doing, how it's going, and what's up?

I hope this has helped, dear reader. And give John my very best when you see him. He's about to become one of your best friends, too. Which is what I meant with the subject of marketing integrity. Who wouldn't want his customer to become one of his very best friends? I know I would. Wouldn't you?

Introduction

# A Solution to THE Small Business Problem

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Why Is Small Business Marketing So Hard?

There is a reason you are reading this book. You, like countless other small business owners, want to understand how to end your marketing struggle.

Each one of you thinks your plight is unique. “Please, somebody tell me, why is it so hard to market *my* business?” In working with thousands of small business owners, this is the single question I hear most often, and the answer to this near-universal plea is the reason for this book.

You don’t have to look far to understand why this question plagues so many. It really has to do with *why* folks get into starting a business in the first place. The typical small business in America is started by someone who knows how to do something. It might be how to prepare taxes, how to assemble a certain type of gizmo, how to wire a ceiling fan, how to administer a network, or how to plan a wedding. Hardly ever does this know-how include being able to market a business that does those things.

And that’s the basic issue. For most small business owners, marketing is viewed at best as a nice add-on, or at worst as some kind of foreign science whose secrets are locked away in an ivory

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tower somewhere. Small business marketers blurt out “I’m just not good at marketing” almost as readily as a high school student might claim he is not good at math or Latin.

But what if I told you, no matter what your business claims to do or provide, you’re actually in the marketing business. That’s right—*every business is actually a marketing business*. Think about it for a moment. Do you really have a business without being able to reach and motivate a customer?

The failure to grasp this fundamental notion is at the heart of the alarming rate of failure experienced by so many small businesses. If you already own a business you may have already begun to sense this is true. If you are thinking of starting a business, I beg you to finish this book and learn everything you can about marketing before you jump into the frying pan. You simply can’t afford to be “not good” at marketing if you plan to stick around and grow your business.

If you get nothing else from this book, get this: You are in the marketing business! Marketing is an all-encompassing outlook that must inform every activity of your business. It isn’t just a department within your business. When you discover this outlook, marketing your business gets really, really easy.

## What Exactly Is Marketing?

Part of the confusion that surrounds the whole notion of marketing for the small business is the utter confusion that exists in defining marketing in MBA programs, seminars, resources and books that claim to teach the subject.

A prime example of this confusion can be found in one of the prominent marketing textbooks *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*:

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*Marketing, in economics, that part of the process of production and exchange that is concerned with the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer. In popular usage it is defined as the distribution and sale of goods, distribution being understood in a broader sense than the technical economic one.*

Now, that was helpful, wasn't it?

Kind of makes you want to fire up that old distribution- and-sale-of-goods-and-services machine doesn't it? Don't worry, that's the last textbook bit of marketing you will encounter here.

Small business marketers need a totally different definition of marketing—one that's more honest, relevant, and more like real life. Within the world of the small business, the lines between the job and life, customer and business, existence and passion are often thin and blurry. Why accept a definition of marketing that makes things even blurrier? The fact is your marketing approach is the one thing that can clarify everything and help you see your business in an entirely new way. It can infuse every decision that you make and return the passion and excitement to your enterprise.

With that in mind, try this basic small business marketing definition on for size:

*Marketing is getting people who have a specific need or problem to know, like, and trust you.*

It's that simple.

Brilliant, you say, but if that were really the case, why wouldn't everyone just do that? One of the main reasons most businesses fail to take this approach is that they are thrown off track by the most widely practiced form of marketing: Copycat Marketing.

## Introducing Copycat Marketing—perhaps you’ve already met!

Since, as we’ve seen, most small business owners don’t think of themselves as marketers and are too busy doing and creating, when they do turn to marketing, it is in a piecemeal, ad hoc fashion that involves basically copying what they see and hear is working for others. Trying to fill this obvious marketing void, they look around for examples of marketing from others in their industry. In other words, they practice what I like to call Copycat Marketing. In most cases they don’t even realize they are doing it; they just go with marketing practices that are already the accepted norm in their industry.

Don’t believe me? I challenge you pick up any business phone directory you like, flip open to any category, and see if you can differentiate one business from another. In some cases, the ads are so similar, the owners of the business wouldn’t be able pick their own ad from a group if the phone number and name was removed!

But that’s how everyone in our industry does it, right? “We need a tri-fold brochure, business directory ad, and a Web site that begs visitors to click on our ‘About Us’ page.” I mean, we wouldn’t want to be different. What if people noticed, what if people thought we were weird?

Copycat Marketing is chock full of problems, but primarily it is a problem because it is dishonest. Think of the analogy of a gifted painter who has the ability to forge lesser works of art. All a forgery of a really bad painting produces is another really bad painting! Copying someone else’s less than effective marketing is a recipe for failure

The fact that the majority of people don’t respond to most of the marketing that small business put out there, makes Copycat Marketing a surefire way to guarantee that your marketing will

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fail. Your prospects don't know, like or trust you yet, so you better give them a way to tell how you are different. Copycat Marketing simply reinforces that you are the same as everyone else they haven't heard of.

I'm not saying that business owners who fall into this trap are being bad people. I'm just saying that Copycat Marketing doesn't allow them to tell the real story about the wonderful value they have to offer—and that's a shame! It's sickening to see businesses that can and should have a positive impact on the world dying practically unnoticed on a daily basis due to this form of marketing. Marketing should be all about putting your genius on display!

Note: It's worth pointing out that I have also encountered another type of small business marketing I call Ostrich Marketing. Ostrich Marketing is practiced by business owners who simply have no idea what to do with marketing, so they do nothing—they stick their head in the sand and hope. I think you know the results of this practice. If this is you, get your head out of the sand and jump on board now; you'll enjoy the ride!

### **The Duct Tape Marketing Alternative— How Sticky is Your Marketing?**

Somewhere along the way in my twenty-plus years as a small business marketing teacher and coach, I struck upon the ideal metaphor for my own approach to marketing practice. Just as any handyman will tell you that a roll of Duct Tape is the single most useful tool in their toolbox—one they would never be without—so I began to understand that small business marketing must be simple, affordable, always-at-the-ready, and effective at solving any of a host of problems. Yes, the trusty, old roll of Duct Tape became a powerful symbol of versatility and effectiveness that flies in the face of a lot of what passes for marketing today. Every small

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business owner I have ever coached has embraced the metaphor as a powerful way of seeing their own marketing system.

Everyone knows, likes, and trusts Duct Tape—because it works! But let me emphasize one of the most important things about this Duct Tape notion. Duct Tape isn't an effective tool because of its color or packaging. Duct Tape is loved by all *because it sticks*. Your marketing can stick just like Duct Tape too. It can stick in the words of your staff, the minds of your prospects and the hearts of your customers. In fact, in this book you will discover that much like Duct Tape, the more layers you apply, the more your marketing sticks!

So, simply put, *Duct Tape Marketing is a turn-key system for small business marketing—marketing that sticks, every time!*

In this book you will learn how to apply your newfound definition of marketing to your small business, and you will learn the power of applying the Duct Tape Marketing *system* to that very definition.

The small business owner who uses the Duct Tape Marketing system comes to define marketing as: Getting people who have a specific need or problem, to know, like, trust, *and* contact you. Getting a hot prospect to actually pick up the phone and seek you out is the dream situation for most small business owners. How many times have you made the statement, “If I can only get in front of a qualified prospect I can almost always turn them into a client”? A fully functioning Duct Tape Marketing system is the key to turning more leads into more customers.

Ultimately, with the systematic application of Duct Tape Marketing, the definition of the term *marketing* evolves to include this all-encompassing view: Getting people who have a specific need or problem to know, like, trust, do business with, *and* refer you to others who have this same need or problem.

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That's the value of a proven system: it delivers the keys to success every time. And it helps you leverage *more* success.

Duct Tape Marketing asks you to make that fundamental shift I alluded to earlier. It requires that you come to terms with what your business really is—a marketing business. When you truly become a Duct Tape marketer, you begin to view everything that goes on in your business, every contact with your prospect, every team member, every piece of mail you receive, with the eyes and ears of a marketing pro. And in systematizing these activities you will discover how great marketing can continuously increase each of these five keys: *know, like, trust, contact* and *refer*.

### The Duct Tape Marketing System

This book will teach you the Duct Tape Marketing system, giving you practical details on each component, including examples and exercises to help you fully grasp the key ideas and strategies. Each component was designed to fit together as a complete system, but you will also discover, as many businesses do, that the use of one component or strategy may be just enough to move your business forward.

In the first part of this book you will learn the basics of any sound marketing, focusing on the first three aspects of *know, like, and trust* in our basic marketing definition. You will learn to identify your ideal client and then how to articulate your core marketing message. Next you will learn to develop products and services that reach these clients at every stage of their development. Then you will see how to produce marketing materials that educate your clients and attract new ones by the scores. The first section of the book will end with you learning how to get your entire team involved in the Duct Tape way. Your business will discover truly *sticky* marketing. You and your

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team will then be equipped to make your market *know, like, and trust* you more!

The second part of the book will build on the first three aspects of our basic marketing definition (know, like, and trust), and show you how to add the essential Duct Tape System elements of *contact and refer*. You will learn how to turn stickiness into a *system* that works for you. You'll do this by first learning how to run advertising that gets real results. You will then learn to enhance your media attention and expert status. You will also learn to build an education system for turning prospects into clients in the most efficient way. Finally, you will learn how to ramp up a systematic referral machine and how to automate all these *contact and refer* strategies with cutting-edge technology tools.

The final section of the book will show you how Duct Tape marketers really get on a roll, by showing you how to *discover what is working and do more of it*. You will learn to track and manage your efforts with a Marketing Gauge. Then you'll learn the discipline of committing to your plans with a budget and calendar. Finally, you'll discover how to bring it all to life with a Marketing Snapshot. Believe me, it's a picture that you'll want to always be in!

Remember, Duct Tape Marketing is a learning process. This book introduces some very powerful concepts and covers specific ways to use and take advantage of advertising, direct mail, referrals, public relations, strategic partnering, targeting, positioning, Internet marketing, copywriting, blogging, word of mouth, public speaking, writing, articles, coupons, promotions, lead generation, customer service, sales and e-mail marketing.

But, more than anything else, this book is meant to be the beginning of a lifelong journey of learning, growing, and succeeding in your new marketing business. As you read through each chapter in this book, you will find that in many cases one chapter

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builds upon the previous. You will also find nuggets of “I must do this today” information. I would like to suggest that you read this book with two approaches in mind: (1) jump around and find some immediately applicable tips and strategies, and (2) read it through it at least once (with a notepad and pen) with the idea of creating your entire, integrated Duct Tape Marketing system.

## Chapter One

# Identify Your Ideal Client

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**W**hen I talk to groups of small business owners at workshops, I will often make the statement that when you properly target your clients, you will discover that you no longer have to work with jerks. I always get a laugh when I say this, but I can also see people in the audience nod in relief.

You can choose to attract clients that value what you offer, view working with you as a partnership, and want you to succeed, but only if you have a picture of what that ideal client looks like.

The primary purpose of this foundational step is to help you identify, describe and focus on a narrow target clients or segments that are perfectly suited for your business. This may actually include the discovery of several ideal segments.

I want to emphasize this notion of *ideal* for moment. I intentionally use this term to help introduce the concept of business relationships. In healthy client/business interactions the idea of a relationship is at the forefront of all dealings. In a healthy relationship, both parties have responsibilities, needs, and goals. Helping each other get what they need is a given in a good relationship.

In a healthy small business marketing relationship the same applies. So, this notion of ideal customer comes with some givens. When you create a fully functioning marketing system, one that produces predictable results, you gain the confidence to choose who you see as an ideal client. That's not about snobbery; it's

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about basic survival. Clients that don't respect the value you bring, don't pay on time, and don't do their part, will drag your marketing business down faster than any other business dynamic.

If you don't take this step seriously, not only will it be difficult for you to grow your business predictably, you will find yourself with ill-mannered customers.

## **The Ideal Prospect**

One of the reasons we focus so much attention on this notion of defining an ideal target client is that all clients were at one time prospects. So, in effect, what we are really doing here is getting you to define and focus on your Ideal Prospect. Much of your marketing focus, at least initially, will be on creating more and more Ideal Prospects or leads. You will eventually come to the point where you can predict with a fair amount of accuracy that if you generate a certain number of Ideal Prospects, you will in turn convert a predictable number of those prospects to customers.

## **Let History Guide You**

One of the easiest ways to start to get this picture of who or what makes an ideal client is to take a close look at the customers your business has attracted to date. You may find that some segment of your existing business makes up a very focused market. I suggest that you create a spreadsheet of your existing customers and create as many columns as needed to add as much detail as you can about each. Start with the name of the firm or individual, industry, service or product they purchase, and revenue they generated in the last three years or so. We will add more information to this, but once you complete this most basic review, a faint picture of your ideal client will begin to come into focus. Another

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very positive potential outcome of this initial exercise is that many business owners will then also be able to clearly identify markets that they should drop. Holdovers from past business initiatives or old directions can muddy your brand and may in fact be costing your business more than they return.

As a rule of thumb, at this point you should consider firing about 20 percent of your past customers simply on the basis that they no longer fit into the picture of your current business. That may sound a bit harsh, but I suspect that neither you nor they are profiting from the relationship at the moment. Set them up with another supplier and everybody wins.

## Physical Characteristics

In order to get started drawing the clearest possible picture of your Ideal Prospect we first focus on the identifying common physical characteristics. Marketing folks call these *demographics*.

For consumers, demographic characteristics include:

- Age
- Employment status
- Gender
- Occupation
- Income
- Education level

For commercial or business clients, demographic characteristics include:

- Industry
- Employees count
- Type of business

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- Geographic scope of business
- Revenue levels

Again, this isn't a score keeping exercise. You want to keep an eye on characteristics that your best or ideal clients have in common. Look for patterns that never occurred to you previously.

## Emotional Characteristics

This is a tougher one, but may bear fruit if you can tap it. The characteristics that fall to the emotional side are what market research firms would call *psychographics*. The study of psychographic characteristics gets at the emotional makeup of prospects that may give clues to how they make decisions and whom they will ultimately *like and trust*.

Discovering common emotional characteristics is a bit more of an art than science—but it's an important art. What you are looking for here are things like values, fears, desires, and goals. What do they want out of life? What are they not getting? What do they need to know to feel comfortable? What's holding them back? Let me stress here that there is nothing manipulative inherent in this type of reflection. The point of defining your Ideal Prospect is simply *to understand how your company can deliver the greatest value to everyone you work with*. Understanding the emotional decision-making process of your prospect is an important piece of that equation.

One of the best ways to accumulate this type of information is to retrace many of your sales calls, including the ones where you did not get the results you had hoped for. Many times, the objections, questions, and resistance that your prospects pose are really clues that you have not gained their trust or answered their emotional needs when making a purchase.

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Another clue to this type of research is to understand lifestyle patterns of your Ideal Prospects. Sometimes being on the look out for hobbies, interests, books and magazines they read, musical preferences, and travel tastes can produce a deeper glimpse into what your Ideal Prospect really cares about.

*Know, like, and trust*—It's a fact that people often like people who have the same interests. For the small business marketer, building business on relationships may be very much about doing business with clients who have similar beliefs and interests. This isn't a popularity contest, but all things being equal, a buying decision will tip to the business or sales person that the buyer likes the most. All things *not* being equal, a buying decision will tip to the business or sales person that the buyer likes the most—it's called human nature.

## What's The Problem?

Let's revisit our definition of marketing here—*getting people, who have a specific need or problem, to know, like, and trust you.*

Without a need or problem, you don't really have a market. So, what's the problem? What are your customers attempting to solve when they buy your products or retain your services?

I define "problem," for our purposes, very broadly to include needs and wants. A problem may well be getting their computers to talk to each other but it may also be a burning desire to look good to their peers.

The point is not to necessarily understand or judge what people are really buying as it is to identify and acknowledge what you are really selling. Here's the cold hard truth—no matter what you think you are selling or providing, it is the customer who ultimately determines what you are selling. You don't sell goods and services, you sell solutions to problems.

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So, what do you really sell? Is it peace of mind, status, pain relief? State this revelation as bluntly as possible, and your marketing business will benefit immediately.

### **Location, Location, Location**

For some businesses, location is a primary marketing issue. Retail businesses, for instance, commonly depend on a certain defined trading area for clients. Some businesses discover that shipping a product or even making sales calls beyond a certain area is cost prohibitive. It can be helpful to plot on a map the location of your current clients to determine if you have a trading pattern or if certain geographic areas are more desirable in terms of target market concentration.

Businesses that don't feel any real geographic constraints should complete this mapping exercise as you may discover patterns that lead you to pockets of business. In other words, there may very well be a concentration of businesses in certain industries that you serve that you were not aware of until you actually pinpointed the physical location of each client. Hanging a customer pin map on the wall can be a fun way to keep the focus on your clients too.

### **How They Make Buying Decisions**

It's important to understand how your ideal clients come to a buying decision for your product or service. Is it by committee, bid, RFP, gut feeling, referral, impulse or some other process? Perhaps there is no real pattern here, but if you can understand a little more about how your ideal client buys, you can focus on setting up your education system to address their decision-making process.

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### Best Ways to Reach Them

Some narrowly defined markets are very easy to reach; others are very difficult. One of the considerations when defining and ultimately narrowing a target market is to be confident that you can actually reach them to help them know you and learn to like and trust you and your company.

Is there an association that serves this market? Are there publications focused on this market? Can you buy mailing lists made up of this market? Can you network with this market? Add these details to your spreadsheet to help the picture to come into even better focus.

### The Value Factor

One of the guiding principles of the Duct Tape Marketing approach is the ability to charge a premium for your products and services within a chosen target market.

You cannot make a market out of people who *should* need what you offer, even if they desperately *do* need what you offer. When making the final determination of whether you should narrow your focus on a given market niche, you must determine if this market values what you have to offer enough to pay a premium for your expertise and understanding of this given market.

Don't have an answer for this one? Look around for companies that seem to already be thriving in this market. You may be able to find the answers you are seeking based on some readily available information they publish (more on competitive research in the next chapter).

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### Is It a Viable Market?

Okay, now it's decision time. By this point you should have discovered all there is to know about your Ideal Prospect. Now, you've got a decision to make. Is this a viable market?

- Is the market large enough to support your business growth goals?
- Can you easily promote your business to the decision makers in this market?
- Does this market value what you do enough to pay a premium?

### Think Narrow

I want to re-emphasize my call that you take all that you have learned in this chapter and commit your business to serving one or more very well-defined market niches—at the exclusion of all that don't fit your narrow ideal market description or segments.

By focusing on a very specific market niche you are free to develop products and services tailored to its specific needs. Your language and processes then can send a very clear signal that you do indeed understand those unique needs.

Many times niche markets can be easier to communicate with. A specific industry will likely have a trade association, publication, or mailing list readily available. Personalizing your marketing to this easily identifiable group and identifying them by name (construction company owners, salon owners, or chronic headache sufferers) will dramatically increase the effectiveness of your communications.

When you focus on a narrow target market you will often encounter much less competition and hold a competitive edge over generalists who claim to also serve this market.

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### My Dirty Little Marketing Research Secret

I have to tell you that the one place I turn to keep myself rooted in how the world thinks and buys—you know, marketing research—is *People* magazine.

Personally, I don't really care what Mary Kate Olsen's next big move is, but for about 20 years running, more people turn to *People* than any other magazine, and that speaks volumes about what the editors at *People* have got going on. A tough thing for some small business owners to swallow is that it doesn't really matter what you like or dislike, what matters is what your target market likes or dislikes. If your target market is men and women, age 25-54, then *People* magazine is a gold mine of research for your target market. (Think it's a woman's magazine? Well, 33 percent of *People* readers are men—about 12 million)

So, what we're talking about here is research. Read (or at least scan) *People* magazine for these reasons:

- Get a feel for what the majority of Americans want to fight, find, lose, gain, have, give or embrace.
- See design and copy that is easy to scan, read, and digest
- Uncover story angles that could apply to your organization's PR.

If you already read *People*, maybe you have a sense of what I'm talking about. If not, carve out an hour, go to the library, and grab about ten issues and start looking through the pages with this new view in mind. You might find some real nuggets. Plus, now you can tell your friends that you only read *People* for research purposes.

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### More Than One Segment

In some cases you may need to segment your market into several very distinct markets. This may be ideal target markets that have different needs for your product or it may be because different products or services that you offer appeal to different distinct markets.

Many businesses practice this approach already, but when a Duct Tape marketer takes this tack it is with the intent of creating marketing that is tailored to the needs of this specific market niche.

Don't have an ideal client yet?

To locate hot market opportunities think about problems and ways to solve them. In other words, look for people, industries, or companies that have a problem that no one is solving and target solving them. With this approach, it doesn't really matter if they are big, little, new, or old—the defining characteristic is a need. Some of the greatest market innovations in history have taken this approach.

I read once that that Steven Jobs of Apple Computer defined the target market for the iPod as “people who didn't want to carry around 10,000 CDs.” That definition likely explains why young and old, techie and non- could be seen snapping up iPods faster than stores could stock them.

So what problem exists that you could solve, that could define an entire market opportunity? Is it small businesses that can't afford a certain solution? Is it people who don't need full service? Is it someone who wants something faster, smaller, or hassle-free? People who don't like paperwork? Companies that want same-day something? A market of people in transition?

Residential real estate agent Melinda Bartling decided to focus on marketing to women with changing lifestyles.

She knew what she was doing had caught on when Mary, a friend she networked with, referred Melinda to a friend of hers who

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needed to downsize her home. Melinda thanked her for the referral and then asked why Mary didn't refer her friend to Mary's own son who sold real estate. She told her that he would have been too impatient and that she chose her because that was her specialty!

Her Web site, [www.mychanginglifestyle.com](http://www.mychanginglifestyle.com) is a valuable resource for local buyers as well as sellers and women relocating to the area. Any woman coming on board with her firm also has the opportunity for meeting other women with similar interests.

What irritation in your industry does everyone just live with? When have you heard your clients or even your competitors mutter, "That's just the way it is in this business?" Start looking at things differently!

When you go searching for a target market that is hungry for a solution, there are three questions that you should also consider in order to verify whether you truly have identified a hot market:

1. *Do they "want" what I have?* It does not matter if they desperately need what you have. If they do not want it for one reason or another, then you are sunk. You will kill yourself trying to convince someone that they really *should* want what you have to offer. People rarely act to their own benefit unless they want to.
2. *Do they value what you do?* You must look for people who are already investing in the type, or at least the category, of service you have. Price shoppers will always be price shoppers; do-it-yourself types will always be do-it-yourself types. Look for those who appreciate the extra they get from what your solution has to offer.
3. *Are they willing to pay a premium for what you do?* This one is often overlooked and misunderstood. No matter what you sell, you don't need to compete on price.

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### What's On Your Refrigerator?

A big part of the ideal client profile lies in understanding what your clients value, fear, want, need, and dream. No easy task, to say the least. It may be a bit uncomfortable going up to a client and ask, "So Bill, what keeps you up at night?" But, if you knew that, it might help you better understand how to best serve all the Bills in your market?

Here are a couple of questions that I have invented that I use with clients to help me get at this deeper level of understanding in some clever ways. Understand that this is more art than science, so you might as well have some fun with it.

I think you can tell a lot about how a person approaches life by looking into some favorite places. What do you think I could learn about you if I knew

- what was currently on your refrigerator
- what kind of car you do you drive
- your favorite books
- your favorite songs

People don't seem to mind me asking these types of questions, and often the answers, combined with the demographic information I already have, complete the ideal client picture in sometimes fascinating ways.

It all means something to the marketer willing to dig deep enough to assemble the puzzle.

### The Ideal Prospect Profile

Now, take what you've learned to this point and create an Ideal Prospect profile. This is simply a paragraph or two that paint a

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picture of your ideal client almost as though you were describing someone sitting across a table from you. Try to stay with this formula in your description: Physical description + What they want + Their problem + How They Buy + Best way to communicate with them=Ideal Prospect.

Here's an example:

My Ideal Prospect is a service business owner with 15-100 employees and no internal marketing department located in the Chicago metropolitan area. They have typically been in business for over 5 years. These businesses are outwardly successful and have done very little marketing. They have begun to feel constrained due to this lack of marketing.

The greatest problem my Ideal Prospect faces is that they have lost control over the various marketing initiatives and marketing materials that have been created on the fly over the years. Internally, there is no marketing accountability and most, if not all, of the marketing responsibility falls to the owner of the business. They have also found it difficult to grow their business beyond its current market share due to increasing competition.

They desperately want to take their business to the next level.

The best way to reach these Ideal Prospects is through direct mail offering productivity tools, business workshops sponsored by trusted business professionals and referrals from other business professionals.

This description leaves little to chance. I've even sprinkled in clues of things that this ideal client might say when talking to someone at a networking event. This type of description can help your sales team correctly identify Ideal Prospects, help

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referral sources refer the right leads, and help frame any advertising decisions.

With an accurate Ideal Prospects description in hand, you will eventually turn your sales calls into more of an audition. That's right—your prospects will audition to become clients. Again, there's nothing elitist about this idea, you will begin to more fully understand every action or comment made by your prospects as basic signals that this either is or is not an ideal client candidate. Many of the physical characteristics of a prospect can be determined before you ever meet; gleaned from public records and Web sites.

Once you have installed your Duct Tape Marketing lead machine, described in a later chapter, you will establish this physical description of your Ideal Prospect as the minimum requirement for accepting an appointment. Then, discovering the deeper needs and emotional characteristics that ultimately make up the client relationship will become the real job of your sales efforts.

## The Client Profile Tracker

While we have spent the bulk of our time in this chapter on the identification of the Ideal Prospect, I want to point out a practice that I suggest you adopt with each of your existing clients. As you read through this chapter you may have found yourself saying, "I don't know enough about my existing clients to answer that question."

So, let's solve that problem from this point forward by creating the Client Profile Tracker. The Client Profile Tracker is a sheet or form that you create to keep track of as much information about your client as possible. The Client Tracker Profile will go far beyond the basic contact information of your clients and ask you to discover and record personal information about your

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clients such as the hobbies and interests I spoke about earlier in this chapter. Other areas may include family information and school information.

Individually, this information will help you do a much better job of providing value to your clients. Collectively, this information will help you understand and shift your ideal market description as well as the words and messages you use to communicate with this group. This tool can prove invaluable when a salesperson leaves your organization and a client is moved to a new salesperson.

Because of the personal nature of this information, I'm not suggesting that you send a form to your clients to complete or set up a time to interview them, just pay attention. Look around their office; listen to their stories. Ask the occasional question when a personal subject is introduced into a routine conversation.

Another added benefit of this focus on personal details is that it will make you more aware that your client is indeed a person. I know it might sound silly, but in the rush to make the presentation, take the order, and fill the goods, this fact often gets lost. This realization or focus will help you more easily make a connection and establish a relationship with your client. More than ever, I believe people want to do business with organizations that they feel they can develop a connection with—that they can *trust*.

I know that this doesn't always come easily for every business owner; use the Client Profile Tracker to help you connect.

## Prospect List Building

Now that you've come this far, you should have your Ideal Prospect description or Ideal Prospect segments in hand. The next step is to go out there and find the best way to acquire a list of these prospects. This list will become your marketing gold mine.

Now, there are some practical matters I want to address here.

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In the chapters ahead you are going to be introduced to various ways to generate lead and clients, but first we want to establish a working group of prospects that will become the primary focus of your marketing and lead generation activity.

This prospect list will be based as tightly as possible on your ideal target description. Having said that, I realize that for many businesses this list may include tens of thousands of prospects. Do you want to market to all of them at this point? Maybe yes, maybe no. The good news is that you can decide at any point. The first step is to locate the list.

Rather than prospecting for new customers, John Jackson of Integrity Stone prefers to market his services to the tile shops, designers, fabricators, and tradesmen involved in the stone business. He developed a “hit list” of these businesses. Each month, he sends them an actual photo of a job his company has done, so they can see the kind of work he does.

For some, the ideal target market, something like IT managers at firms with 500+ employees or individual of high net worth in a specific neighborhood, will be a small number. The point, in either case, is to find this database, purchase it or some portion of it and start using it as the basis for your lead generation activity described in later chapters.

What do think it would mean to your marketing activity if you had just five hundred highly qualified prospects and your only job was to get them *to know, like, trust, and contact you*. Does that begin to sound like a manageable task?

That’s one of the problems that small business owners suffer from. Many only need 10 or 20 really good clients, but they focus attention on millions of people instead of using a laser-focused education-based marketing program delivered to just enough ideal prospects to get the job done effectively, automatically and easily.

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### Database Marketing

Let me paint an intriguing picture for you. Suppose you ran an ad this week in a trade publication heavily read by your Ideal Prospect. That ad offered the readers a free report titled “The Top 10 Things You Must Know Before You Buy X” (your product of service).

As a result of that ad, 27 people called a toll-free telephone number to order their free report. The names and addresses of those 27 people were e-mailed to your marketing assistant who loaded them into your ACT database, assigned the introductory marketing letter task to each, printed and mailed the letters. Each new prospect was added to your newsletter list and distributed to each of your sales people for a phone follow-up.

This very basic scenario is easily achievable with the use of a database marketing program. The most popular titles include ACT, GoldMine, and Maximizer. This software is often categorized as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, but what it really does for the small business owner is allow you to automate many of the marketing processes and successfully delegate them to others in the organization.

Web based applications such as Sunrise from 37 Signals and Salesforce.com are also enjoying widespread acceptance. There are consultants that help tailor these programs to your specific business needs.

The final action in this step is to consider purchasing and employing one of these powerful pieces of software.

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### Action Steps:

1. Look for common characteristics such as age and gender in among your best clients.
  2. Uncover a common frustration among your target market.
  3. Write a description of ideal your target market in terms that are easy to communicate.
  4. Determine whether your ideal target market is large enough to support your business.
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