



MARKETING, NETWORKING AND BUSINESS WISDOM for the Home-Based Entrepreneur (Excerpts from *The HBB Confidential™*)

MARKETING

1. In order to build your business, you need to become known both online and offline. Write and publish articles. Look for opportunities to speak publicly and through radio and teleclass interviews. Attend networking functions. Join professional business clubs and trade associations. Volunteer at community events.

2. Establish Yourself As An Expert

In order to set yourself apart from the masses in your industry, make a point to understand every aspect of your profession, industry and target market, then share your knowledge.

By sharing and educating through newsletters, articles, and public speaking engagements, you will establish yourself as an expert and will become known as the "go to" person for advice and guidance.

You will establish a level of trust with your prospects and readers, and when it's time for them to make use of your products or services, you'll be the first (and possibly only) person they call.

3. Is Your E-Mail Address Helping or Hurting Your Business?

If you want to be taken seriously and regarded as a professional business owner, one of the first things requiring your attention is your e-mail address.

Using a Hotmail, Yahoo or AOL address is unprofessional and may actually be reason enough for a potential client or customer to look elsewhere for service.

Start using an e-mail address with your domain name in it and avoid cutesy or comical names unless cuteness and comedy are your business.

Which e-mail address is more professional?

cutiepie666@AOL.com or helen@moderndaybusiness.com

Public e-mail accounts fill up quickly and are regarded as fly-by-night accounts that provide no connection to a strong, established, successful business.

If you don't have a web site, use an e-mail address provided by your ISP (Internet Service Provider).

4. If you don't own a business but are thinking about starting one, consider how easily you could set yourself apart from the competition through a marketing campaign that boasts about your emphasis on respecting your customer's time by answering your calls personally instead of sending them through automated telephone systems.



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5. Teach a class or write an article for your local paper. It makes you look like an expert and garners low-cost attention for your business.
6. Appear on TV. Local cable stations often have reasonable advertising rates at time slots throughout the day and night. Although you may not reach prime-time viewers, you will make an impression on potential customers who are introduced to you from the comfort of their own homes.
7. Got a happy customer? Encourage her share the joy by telling others what she's gained from using your products or services. Even better ... get a written testimonial to add to your marketing arsenal.
8. Join online forums. Find online discussion boards that cater to your audience, and join in the conversation.

Always include your URL in your signature, but don't do any hard selling. If you do, most groups will ban you immediately. Instead, provide useful information that will make people want to go to your site for more.

9. Are you letting people know what your web site address is? Put it on your letterhead, business cards, brochures and in your e-mail signatures. Place it wherever potential visitors are likely to see it. Include it on any promotional items you give away, all press releases, in your Yellow Pages ad and on company vehicles.
10. Toot your own horn. Don't hesitate to proudly share what you do and who you help. There's no need to be modest when you have something to offer that can change lives for the better.
11. Offer a free e-zine (electronic magazine) or newsletter to a list of subscribers. It will enable you to build trust while establishing credibility in your field.
12. Write an e-book and offer it as a gift to people who sign-up for your newsletter. People love receiving things for free.
13. Form strategic alliances and joint venture partnerships with others who sell to your target market, yet don't directly compete with you. By you touting their business and their touting yours, you will extend your reach exponentially.
14. Donate door prizes for community and networking events. Not only might your name be publicly announced as a generous donor, the lucky recipient just might become your next client or customer!
15. Volunteer for local charity events. For example, if a Special Olympics Torch Run is being held in your community and you're a massage therapist, offer free 15-minute massages to participants.
16. Submit press releases both on and offline.



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17. Send greeting and post cards as a thank you to potential clients and as a relationship-building tool with existing clients. An excellent online contact system that saves money, time and can earn you a residual income is www.cardattraction.com
18. Add testimonials and endorsements to all your printed material.
19. Over deliver. When someone asks you for advice or input, give him more than he expects. Show your generosity and willingness to help by going above and beyond his expectations.
20. Focus on a specific niche. Don't try to be everything to everyone otherwise you will get lost in the mass of generalities. Offer your products and services to a specific segment of the population.

NETWORKING

21. **Do You Belong To Any Organizations or Groups Related to Your Business Field?**

If not, you're missing out on a great opportunity to expand your reach, learn from the combined experience of others, and add to your credibility as a professional business owner.

Belonging to a professional organization also gives you the boost of confidence and sense of professionalism that sometimes loses effect when you're working from the comfort of home.

Take a half hour to yourself and sit down with your phone book or the Internet and do a little checking into what kinds of organizations you can join in your community or online.

22. Start with a purpose. It does you no good to attend any networking function unless you define your objectives as to why you're there.
23. Wear your nametag on the **right** side to provide an easy sight line to your name when shaking hands.
24. When you attend a networking event or conference, put your Web address on your nametag, along with your name. It will be a conversation starter ... and plant a little seed giving the people you meet the idea to visit your website.
25. Are you communicating effectively with your clients and prospects? People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Studies show that by active listening (nodding your head, looking clients in the eye, and repeating back what they've said) lets them know they're being heard and indicates to them that you care.



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Active listening is one of the most effective skills you can utilize to improve networking results.

26. Don't be indifferent. All people want to be treated with courtesy and respect. Take the time to look people in the eyes when you speak to them, speak in a well-modulated tone, and say "please" and "thank you". It will go a long way.
27. Be positive. We all cheer up when we're in the presence of good-humored people. If you want to get the best reaction out of the people you meet, smile at them.
28. Give information and referrals freely at networking events. If you can't provide the solution to a problem, you may know of someone who can. Share the knowledge.
29. Have an effective handshake. Have you ever been on the receiving end of at least one "bone-crusher" and one "limp fish"? Practice your handshake to avoid giving one of those yourself!
30. Introduce yourself. Say your name clearly, shake hands and deliver your 10-30 second elevator speech.
31. Start the conversation by asking questions: why people are there, what they hope to gain, how they found out about the event. Avoid monopolizing the conversation.
32. Only if appropriate ask for or offer a card. If you don't have a match between service offered and needs, don't waste a card.
33. Be clear on your mission. Be honest with people by respecting their time, and don't have a hidden agenda.
34. Don't stay too long in one place. After eight to ten minutes, excuse yourself and continue on.
35. Instead of asking, "How many leads have I received?" Ask, "How many leads have I given."
36. Just because someone isn't in need of your product or services, doesn't mean they don't know someone who is. Be kind and network with an open mind.
37. Networking is a long-term project. If you don't get the results you want after one or two functions, hang tight. It will pay off in the long haul.
38. It's not about collecting as many business cards as you possibly can, then running out the door to start calling the owners. It about finding qualified leads and forming quality relationships.



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39. Once the event is over, your networking doesn't stop. Follow up with those you've met, keep in contact, share information and offer to help in any way you can.
40. Send a written acknowledgement or "Thank You" [card](#) to your networking contacts. This will go a long way in establishing win-win relationships.

GENERAL

41. Every detail counts when it comes to presenting yourself and the **first 30 seconds** are the most critical. Instead of arguing the injustice of it all, accept it as fact and make it work in your favor.

Clothing - In the business world, the suit is a staple and the color of that suit also has an impact (dark colors always do better). Make sure you have complementary footwear too.

Grooming - Have well groomed hair and nails. If you go out with a messy do (no ponytails!), or unshaven face, you will be viewed as lazy, sloppy and untrustworthy. (This isn't my personal opinion, it's fact!)

Travel - Arrive in a clean, tidy vehicle and make sure it's void of kids toys, fast food containers, papers strewn about and animal hair.

Add a firm handshake, breath mint, good posture and a smile, and you're set.

42. As you build and grow your business, keep in mind the importance of building long-term relationships with your clients and customers.

One way to do this is to ask for their feedback on a regular basis. You can ask them to complete a short questionnaire or just ask them straight out when you're talking to them.

You could start with, "I value you as a client and would like to make sure I'm serving you in the best way possible. Would you mind answering three short questions for me?"

Then, with their permission, follow with:

1. If you could name an exceptional benefit or value my business is offering you, what would that be?
2. If you could name one thing you would like to see more or less of, what would that be?
3. Is there something that I am not currently providing to you as a client/customer that you would love to receive?



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This act of seeking your client's feedback will give you insight into what you do best and areas for improvement. It will also empower your business relationship immediately because you're giving your client a say in how they would like to be served.

43. Acknowledge Your Customer

How many times have you been served by someone who barely looked up at you, grunted a, "How you are you today?" without really caring either way, talking on the telephone or leafing through a booklet, while taking your payment, throwing it into the till and slapping your receipt on the counter?

How did this make you feel? Is this the kind of treatment you'd like to receive every time you give your hard earned money to someone?

To give your clients or customers the respect and attention they deserve, put down the reading material, place the telephone on hold, and greet them with a genuine smile and your undivided attention.

This simple gesture of respect takes only seconds and will go a long way in developing long-time clients and valuable referrals. People don't always remember what you said or what you did, but they do remember how you made them feel.

Make them feel like they're a million dollar customer and who knows, maybe some day they will be. ;0)

44. Know thy critics and then, ignore them.

If we listened to every naysayer and small thinker who gave us advice, we'd still be wearing loin cloths and wrestling our next meal to the ground.

Even "experts" have been wrong in their predictions. If you have an idea, take it as far as you can. Explore it thoroughly for soundness, trust your gut, don't let failure keep you from persevering, and for heaven's sake, close your ears to those small minds that say it can't be done.

To help reinforce the fact that almost anything is possible, take a look at these 10 predictions that were far from accurate.

1. Charles H. Duell, Office of Patents, 1899 ... "Everything that can be invented has been invented."
2. A Boeing engineer, after the first flight of the 247 (a twin-engine plane that carried ten people) ... "There will never be a bigger plane built."
3. William Thomson, Lord Kelvin English scientist, 1899 ... "Radio has no future. Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible. X-rays will prove to be a hoax."



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4. Lee DeForest, inventor ... "While theoretically and technically television may be feasible, commercially and financially it is an impossibility."
 5. Thomas J. Watson, chairman of the board of IBM ... "I think there's a world market for about five computers."
 6. H.M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927 ... "Who wants to hear actors talk?"
 7. Western Union memo, 1876 ... "This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication."
 8. Ken Olson, president of Digital Equipment Corp. 1977 ... "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."
 9. Business Week, August 2, 1968 ... "With over 50 foreign cars already on sale here, the Japanese auto industry isn't likely to carve out a big slice of the US market."
 10. Margaret Thatcher, 1974 ... "It will be years--not in my time--before a woman will become Prime Minister."
45. If you produce an Ezine or newsletter, there are several great content checkers that will help you determine if your message stands a good chance of being delivered. Some of my favorites are:

[Lyris Content Checker](#)
[Spam Check](#)
[Ezine Check](#)

I always run my content through these checks prior to releasing an issue, and last issue ranked between a 0-2. Normally anything more than a 5 will cause concern.

Although the content was considered "clean", The HBBC was still blocked by all AOL and sbcglobal accounts. It turned out this was due to a server conflict between these ISP's and [KickStartCart](#).

Unfortunately, these things happen in the daily course of business and although some "bad eggs" may make it difficult for others at times, most problems can be resolved with a quick call to the affected ISP.

46. **The Process Is More Important Than The Goal**

Setting goals is an admirable and encouraged practice, but there is something even more important than the goal and that is the process. It's who you become on the way to achieving your goal that makes all of the difference.

When you set your sights on making a dream come true then work towards



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that dream, you become stronger and smarter than you were when you first started.

After you've reached your goal, it will be easier for you to repeat the process and reach it again if need be.

Some wealthy business people have lost everything due to a stroke of bad luck, poor judgment or events they had no control over. The interesting thing is, however, that within a very short time, they are usually right back to where they were before the loss, and sometimes even wealthier!

It's who these people became in the process of building their first empire that allows them to do it again. They have the knowledge, the skill, the resources, the contacts.

As you set your goals, keep in mind that it's who you become in the process that is most important. Enjoy your reward and be proud of who you become along the way.

47. Build Your Client/Customer Base

The successful entrepreneur understands that although it may seem illogical to give valuable information away to prospective clients and customers, she is not sabotaging but actually strengthening her business.

Not everyone will be able to buy your services or have a use for them, however, every smart entrepreneur knows that by providing useful information, she is building her reputation as an expert and a valuable resource.

The higher you are held in regard, the greater the chance will be that you will be referred when someone does require a service or product you offer.

Share your expertise, build your credibility and they will come.

48. Provide a separate entrance for clients and business associates if possible. It's not a good idea to make clients pass through your living space to get to your office.

This may take your client's focus away from your business and might even cause her to question your professionalism or capabilities.

49. Always answer the phone with enthusiasm in your voice and show your appreciation for the caller. Good phone manners are essential.
50. If you find yourself passive and timid when speaking on the phone, stand up. By changing your physiology, your confidence level will increase and you will take on a more authoritative and professional tone.



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51. Make sure all of your print material is professional. If your business is to be your livelihood, don't treat it as a hobby with homemade marketing material.
52. Have your web site professionally created by someone with a marketing background. Sites made from do-it-yourself templates not only look homemade, but don't incorporate proven online marketing strategies.
53. Have a professional copywriter prepare your sales copy or take a copywriting course. The success of your online presence lies in your ability to communicate through powerful copy.
54. Commit to ongoing learning. The world and consumer needs are changing at an alarming rate. Stay ahead of change or be in a position to move with it, otherwise you will find yourself left behind.
55. Invest in personal growth. There are a variety of books written by greats like Wayne Dyer, Dr. Deepak Chopra, James Redfield, Carol Adrienne, Marianne Williamson, Dr. Phil McGraw, Dr. David Hawkins, Dale Carnegie, Stephen R. Covey and Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, to name a few.
56. Take on a leadership position. Whether it be a seat on a local board, the head of a mastermind group, or the leader of an online forum, you will increase your leadership skills and raise your profile as an expert and professional.
57. Always have something free to offer. Free information, free samples, or any small gift that will create a positive experience and sincere appreciation in a potential client.
58. Find a business owner or competitor you respect and admire and model their positive qualities. What are they doing right? What about their approach, presentation, or style appeals to you and how can you learn from it?
59. Step out of your comfort zone and make things happen. Life doesn't happen to you, it happens from you, so put your ideas into action and create your future.
60. Trim the fat. If you have clients or customers who are bringing you down, fire them. They not only decrease your energy and passion for your business, but have an impact on how you interact with your great clients and customers. Only work with people you love to work with, those who inspire and energize you.