



# Getting Back to Basics

*When the Going Gets Tough,  
the Tough Get a Better Marketing Plan*

**To be honest, it doesn't take an MBA to find clients when the economy is booming. Finding them when the market slows down takes innovative thinking, clear-cut goals and an achievable well thought out action plan.**

To come up with new marketing tactics you need to first understand what marketing is all about. Therefore, here is a basic definition: Marketing is the art of finding people who are interested in buying what you have to sell. Telling them why they should buy it from you. Then, selling it to them.

Let's break down each factor step by step. You'll need two notebooks one for "professional prospects" and another for "consumer prospects."

## Step One

### Finding People to Sell To

Open your professional notebook and jot down every business category that could potentially send you referrals. Once you have exhausted all possibilities look your list over. Narrow it down to your top picks and write each down at the top of a separate page.

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By Carol Lustig

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Similarly, in your consumer notebook brainstorm on the type of person who could be in the market for your services right now. Once you have exhausted all options note your top picks each at the top of a separate page.

Now that you know who you're looking for let's put them under the microscope to see if they are indeed your best prospects.

Again, take professional prospects first. In this step you will detail in your notebook why you think each particular category is a viable prospect. Make detailed observations. Delve into the local economy and what is going on in each industry in your area. Are they hot or are they not?

You may discover as you go through this process that you'll further narrow down and eliminate more business categories because they may not yield the best return. Eventually, you will come up with your top choices for professional prospects.

Now lets move on to consumers. There is a great book I highly recommend that you read. It is called, *Who Moved my Cheese* by Dr. Spencer Johnson. In the mortgage industry your "cheese," is your new home buyers market. In the last few years, you have seen this market dry up and "move." So now it is up to you to "find NEW cheese." What you need to do is really keep your eyes wide open to your particular regional situation.

Just as you did with your professional process go through the steps of narrowing down each target audience. Detail why they would be a viable prospect base or why they would not. Decide what groups will yield the highest return on your marketing time and dollars.

## Step Two

### Why Should I Buy it from You?

OK, here's another thing that is not a secret. You are not the only one doing what you do or, selling what you sell. By now you have identified viable categories of business and consumers you feel are good prospects. You know about their current situation. The next step is understanding what you need to say to sell.

In your professional notebook, start new pages for each of the top prospects you identified. Devise a list of the prime factors that will motivate each group. Why would they send you referrals? What can you offer? Answer the questions, "why do they need you and why would they want to do business with you?"

In your consumer notebook, start a new page for each category and "see the world through their eyes." List their "pain points." What questions might they ask? What are their main issues or problems? Again, determine what you can offer as opposed to your competition.

Let me explain to you a bit about what I mean. If you give your very best sales pitch on white lilies and your entire audience wants to buy red roses then you aren't going to sell much. Coming up with a motivating sales message isn't a matter of what is important to you—it is a matter of what is important to your prospects. How you can fill their needs?

It's time to casually go talk to "your people." Really understand "their language." What are they talking about? What are their concerns? What words will motivate them? Come up with your top five selling and speaking points for each professional group and each consumer group.

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## Step Three

### Selling it to them

So let's review. You have your best professional and consumer prospects identified. You understand what is important to each so you can deliver a targeted message. Now it's time to put your best sales pitch in front of each group.

Start new pages for each of your best professional prospect categories. On each page start a list of ways you can find each group. This could be via association meetings or publications, local networking meetings, business to business events, ads or banners on Web sites. You can also make notes on what details would be important when renting a list for each group.

Correspondingly, start a new page for each consumer prospect category and detail ways to reach out to each specific group. For example you might reach parents through school outlets, seniors through organizations, etc. Methods may include asking to speak at meetings as an expert, taking out ads in local targeted publications, using local TV or radio, writing articles for Web sites or doing a mailing via a rented consumer or home owner list.

Congratulations! You now know your best prospects. You know what you need to say to sell and you know where your message needs to go. It's time to close your notebooks and start putting these tactics into action. It's time to come up with a marketing plan.

First, know your budget. Have a realistic idea of what you can invest in yourself. Plan out what you will spend for consumer and prospects each month in the categories of online/Web, in-person networking, advertising and direct mailings. Use the five speaking points for each group to devise targeted ads or messages.

Look for our next article when we will detail more about how to get business from your existing customer database, as well how to work with rental list companies to get the best bang for your rental buck. •