

# BU\$INESS OF HERBS

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## FROM THE EDITOR

By Maureen Rogers

We're still getting all the renewals updated so I'm still sending the Bu\$iness of Herbs to many whose memberships are over. Enjoy it ☺ Current members are getting a weekly Marketing 101 newsletter in addition to The Bu\$iness of Herbs. Every week you get a simple (or what I hope is simple) step to take to

improve your marketing skills. Occasionally there are some neat videos, this week two on preparing for a talk. When you renew, you'll get the links to past ones so you won't miss out. I'm reading everything I can find and we're covering the dutiful social media as well. If I get an invitation to attend one more webinar on the subject, I'll scream. So renew at [www.herbnet.com/shop](http://www.herbnet.com/shop) and start promoting your business. Cheapest advertising and marketing info you'll find.

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Far away in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see the beauty, believe in them and try to follow where they lead.

-- Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) American  
Writer

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## BITS & PIECES

from Steve Marsden

"I'm looking for 2 herbs. I need one pound of each for testing and if all works out more later. Bitterroot - *Lewisia rediviva* and sweetgrass - *Hierochloe odorata*"  
[steve@herbaladvantage.com](mailto:steve@herbaladvantage.com)

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I do believe in homeopathy but this came through one of my lists and I have to laugh. If this seems less than holy, oh well.

<http://quantavie.net/2009/07/homeopathic-resuscitation/>

## **When Business is Slow and cash is low, what can you do?**

Ken Varga

October 1, 2009

There are times when a business goes from generating extra cash to generating not enough cash. Any business that has been around for a few years will experience the ebb and flow of our economy...especially in a recession.

There are several ways to promote your business, whether you have an offline business, online business, or home business.

One way that comes to mind usually is to run a price promotion. It is easy to do and will often fill the immediate need for short-term capital. It's especially easy if you have an active, loyal email customer list. Long range, it's likely to hurt though. I don't mean to imply that price promotions are all bad. They are often good. Close-outs or special promotions will help both the supplier and the customer.

Another way is to create a fun event where you invite your A-list of customers to attend and receive offer discounts. You could say that the new inventory is coming in soon, and you want to give them the advantage of saving some money in this terrible economy. I'm sure if you put your mind to it, you can come up with ideas.

A third way could be as simple as creating new methods of advertising your product or service. An ad, a poster, or even a new display unit, are some of the methods that could be used to boost sales and generate some quick cash.

I remember a friend who had an appliance store. When he received a stove that had a dent in it, he advertised it at a low price and told his customers that the reason why was that it had a small dent in the bottom that they wouldn't even notice.

When he had over 300 people inquiring about the item, he quickly realized that he could sell a lot more units, if he intentionally dented the units. He did, and sold out immediately. He does this all of the time now and makes a small fortune. It's a win-win...his customers get the units at lower prices and he gets sales.

What is important when business slows down is that you are willing to do something to get things moving.

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## **Elderberry Prevents Swine Flu**

Recent research has given new scientific evidence to the long-held empirical belief that elderberries possess antiviral activities. The research involved a specific, reproducible elderberry extract developed by HerbalScience Group LLC, and succeeded in identifying key chemical components of the extract that inhibited in vitro infection and were shown to bind directly to Human Influenza A (H1N1) virus particles. The binding blocked the ability of the viruses to enter host cells, and thereby effectively preventing H1N1 infection in vitro. An article detailing the study has been published in the peer-review scientific journal *Phytochemistry*. The article's authors are affiliated with HerbalScience Group, a Naples, Florida, and Singapore-based company dedicated to applying advanced science and technology to the production of botanical drugs and nutraceuticals, and with the Univ. of Miami.

The research results are notable not only because they identified and characterized two

specific flavonoids (plant nutrients that are beneficial to health) that are the major contributors to the anti-influenza activity of the elderberry extract, but also verified how the flavonoids provide that benefit, via direct binding to H1N1 virus particles and blocking the virus from infecting host cells. "Our studies on the elderberry extract have enabled us to identify the key bioactives that contribute to its antiviral activity, and begin to understand how the mixture of natural chemistries present in elderberry functions," says Randall Alberte, CSO of HerbalScience Group. "Using methods, technologies, and procedures that are standard in the pharmaceutical industry and new technologies developed by us, we're able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the elderberry extract in inhibiting viral entry into target cells and effectively blocking its ability to reproduce."

Central to the research was the use of a direct analysis in real time time-of-flight mass spectrometer which is able to detect, identify with high accuracy, and quantify the hundreds or thousands of individual chemicals present in botanical extracts. When this technology is combined with HerbalScience's Platform Technology, this information can be used with other data to rapidly identify the key bioactives present.

The elderberry extract used in the study is the result of technology that enables the company to standardize the chemical profile of any selected botanical in order to deliver a compositionally and functionally consistent product that is effective and safe.

The patented technology was developed for the company by researchers in botanical and natural products chemistry and plant biology, as well as experts in supercritical CO2 and affinity absorbent extraction technologies, methods used for extracting plant phytochemicals.

The company's proprietary and environmentally friendly technology is able to extract a broad diversity of phytochemicals from botanicals and produce a consistent and reliable chemical "fingerprint" for each dose. The scientists also developed a process that

enables the beneficial chemical compounds in botanicals to be enhanced while removing any harmful compounds like heavy metals and pesticides.

Source: HerbalScience *September 11, 2009*

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*This is a real pet peeve of mine and Seth Godin talks about it on his blog*

## **Promiscuous dispersal of your email address**

I just went through the hassle of trying to get some B2B firms the details needed to give me an informed quote on a project.

I visited eight sites. Six of them hide their email address. They use forms of one sort or another. One firm refused to accept more than 500 characters in the "how can we help you" box, while three of them wanted to know what state I was in, etc.

Email contact is like a first date. If you show up with a clipboard and a questionnaire, it's not going to go well, I'm afraid. The object is to earn permission to respond.

If you sell something, set up an address like "sales@xyz.com". Put this on your home page, "contact us if you're looking for more information or a price quote." Sure, you'll get a lot of spam, but deleting spam is a lot easier than finding customers. (Hint, ask your IT people to make it a mailto link, with a subject line built in. That way, you can use the subject line to find the good email).

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## 10 Tips for Web Writing

### How to Write Content for the Web

By Jennifer Kyrnin About.com

Web writing is more than just a marketing pamphlet put online. It's also more than just a list of bullet points about a topic. Use these tips to create Web content that is appealing to your readers and fun for you to write.

#### **Don't just copy the print marketing**

One of the most common mistakes that a beginning website owner does is to just copy and paste the marketing materials from the pamphlets onto the website. Writing for the Web needs to be different from writing for print. The way the Web works is different from print and the writing needs to reflect that.

#### **Write for USA Today readers, not the New York Times**

It's not a reflection of how smart your readers are - it's a fact that the Web is international, and any page you put up is going to be viewed by people with all levels of English knowledge. If you write to a lower level audience you'll be sure to keep people interested because they can more readily understand.

#### **Write articles in an inverted pyramid style**

If you think of your content as a pyramid, the broadest coverage of the topic should be listed first. Then move on to more and more specific as you get further into the page. This is useful to your readers, as they can stop reading and move onto something else once you've gotten as specific as they need. And the more useful you are to your readers the more they will want to read your content.

#### **Write content, not fluff**

Resist the temptation to write in "marketing-speak". Even if you're trying to influence your readers to take a specific action, they are less likely to do it if your page feels like fluff. Provide value in every page you write so that

your readers see a reason to stick with you.

#### **Keep your pages short and to the point**

The Web is not a good location to write your novel, especially as one long page. Even a chapter is too long for most Web readers. Keep your content to under 10,000 characters per page. If you need to write an article that's longer than that, find sub-sections and write each sub-section as a stand-alone page.

#### **Focus on your readers, not on search engines**

SEO is important to get readers. But if your writing is to obviously geared towards search engines you will quickly lose readers. When you write for a keyword phrase, you need to use the phrase enough so that it's recognized as the topic but not so much that your readers notice. If you have the same phrase repeated in a sentence, that's too much. More than twice in a paragraph is too much.

#### **Use lists and short paragraphs**

Keep the content short. The shorter it is, the more likely your readers will read it.

#### **Solicit feedback from your readers**

The Web is interactive, and your writing should reflect that. Asking for feedback (and providing links or forms) is a good way to show that you recognize that you're writing for the Web. And if you include that feedback in the article the page stays dynamic and current and your readers appreciate it.

#### **Use images to expand on your text**

Images can be tempting to sprinkle through pages. But unless you're a photographer or artist, having random images spread through your documents can be distracting and confusing to your readers. Use images to expand on the text, not just decorate it.

#### **Don't apply these rules blindly**

All of these rules can be broken. Know your audience and know why you're breaking the rule before you do so. Have fun with your Web writing, and your audience will have fun with

you.

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## Free Press Release Distribution

Here's the dirty little secret of most free press release distribution services.

Most of them don't distribute anything. They simply take your press release and park it at their website. They exist primarily to get revenue from Google AdSense ads, which show up on the same page as your release.

There's more you need to know.

If you discover that the press release you just submitted includes a typo--like a wrong phone number or a bad URL--you're usually stuck with the error forever. Most of these services don't have help desks.

Paid services like [PRWeb](#) and [Expertclick.com](#) have help desks that can spring into action within minutes after you call.

If your competitors are using keywords correctly in their releases, and you aren't, they win and you lose.

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## When Journalists Ignore Your Releases

This week, seven Publicity Hounds have tips for Joel Kweskin of Charlotte, NC, who needs advice on how to get his press releases published. He has sent many releases to journalists, with little success.

From J. Reeder, a former newspaper editor:

"One of the best things you can do is include a usable photo at 300 dpi and about 4-by-6 size. Make sure to include a caption identifying

anyone in the photo. Then write your release to sell that photo. Most editors are looking for art to go with anything canned to lay out a page."

From Connie Oswald Stofko:

"Just pick up the phone and call the newspaper. It could be you're not meeting their deadlines. Or you're faxing the press release when they want it e-mailed, or vice versa. One paper didn't use a great story I sent them, because they never got it--their email was down."

From Paul Furiga:

"The most important thing you can do is to get to know the people who decide whether your news gets printed. They call it public relations because it's about relationships. And you build a media relationship that leads to placements by initiating a dialogue with the people who decide what's news and what's not. Buy the appropriate editor or reporter coffee. Visit them in the newsroom. Ask them this most important question: 'How can I help YOU?'"

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## Drive Traffic to Your Website

There are many ways to drive traffic to your website, but when you're starting out you'll want to focus mostly on *free* traffic.

One of my favorite ways to get free traffic is by **writing and submitting articles to article directories**. I submit most of my articles to EzineArticles.com. (Make sure you include your website's URL in the blurb or bio that runs with the article.)

Another good way to get free traffic is through **social media marketing**. Search for blogs and forums that are related to your niche and answer questions and post comments. Most forums and blogs will allow you to link back to your website. Just be sure that you are providing good content and that what you have

to say is relevant to the forum's or blog's subject matter.

Keep in mind that most of the people you attract to your website by submitting articles and through social media will not purchase anything from you - at least, they won't purchase anything on their first visit. But that's why you have the opt-in form - to capture their contact information so you can keep bringing them back.



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## **Words To Use In Your Marketing Pieces So People Will Buy What You Are Selling !**

It happens to me almost every time I receive the mail. It's loaded with marketing sales pieces that individuals have spent thousands upon thousands of dollars to produce. I always open them, and wonder why they waste so many dollars in creating these lousy marketing pieces.

As I review the pieces, two things happen to me. I get very frustrated trying to figure out what they are selling, and I also get angry that I have to spend my precious time trying to find out.

The people who produce these pieces are probably very smart, are professionals, and supposedly they are trying to help me solve

some problem I might have. But not one of them has produced a piece that grabs me by the throat and jumps out at me saying, "Ken, here's something for you."

As a result every one of these pieces fail in their attempt to make a sale.

You must grab your prospect's attention immediately.

Selling really starts from the first word that your prospect sees. So, your first words had better be your strongest words, because if they aren't, you've failed.

Before you put together another marketing document, review the following items:

1. Marketing pieces are about prospects and their wants, not about sellers and their products or services.
2. Marketing pieces must be interesting, easy to read and packed with excitement.
3. Marketing pieces are about benefits, not features.
4. Marketing pieces must open with a strong statement and offer enough of an incentive to buy.

If your pieces don't do this, then you need to follow what I am going to review now.

Remember these four words:

1. Offer
2. Testimonial
3. Pain
4. Benefit

These words contain the secret to starting marketing pieces that sell.

Opening with an offer...

At some point in your life you must have gone into a store and bought something on sale only

because it was on sale. If you've bought only because of the sale, you bought because of an offer—a special condition that induces you to buy right now.

Give your prospects a special reason for buying now. The “now”, as much as the product itself, is what gets your prospect to buy. Think of reason for getting your prospects to buy now.

Here are some.

1. Free trial
2. Free Consultation
3. Money-back guarantee
4. Seasonal sale

So, consider starting your pieces with an offer. Always restate the offer over and over again in the text that follows, including the PS.

Opening with a testimonial...

People buy products and services because it's delivered benefits to them. That's why you should open with a testimonial.

You don't want general testimonials. Use testimonials that tell the prospect specifically what the satisfied buyer has achieved and benefits with it.

The strongest testimonials are not general; they are specific. Make sure your testimonials emphasize not only benefits but also the offer itself.

Here's an example. “My profits are up 30% with the (product). That's great, but what's even better is that I got a month's supply free when I took advantage of this special offer.”

Open with pain...

One of the two main reasons why people buy anything is because they are in pain. Hitting them with a strong statement about their pain makes a lot of sense.

Which is a stronger opening? “Here are some facts about our Vitamins” or, “Of course, you want people to look at you, but not because you're fat.”

The second one is about the prospect and promises to do something to help the prospect avoid the pain of being fat.

The truth is people in pain know they are in pain and are often desperate for help. They are only interested in the results your product can give them. The extent to which you drive home the prospect's pain is the extent to which you have gained their attention and begun to persuade them to buy what you are selling.

Open with a benefit...

This last one is the best. A feature is a fact about the product or service, whereas the benefit is what the buyer derives from the feature.

To make benefits work for you, write down every feature of what you are selling and force yourself to list the corresponding benefit. Then lead with the strongest benefit.

Opening with an offer, testimonial, a statement about the pain or with benefits which the prospect will get will make your marketing piece very strong. I guarantee it. Don't hesitate to combine these four to make a stronger opening.

Try an offer + pain + benefit.

The extent to which you open your marketing piece in a way that:

- gives your prospects an immediate reason to take action,
- reassures them about the results based on what other people like them have achieved,
- reminds them of the pain they are in and the fact that they hurt, and

- excites them with what they will get by using what you are selling,

is the extent to which your piece will be read and your product or service will be bought.



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## **Make Your Site More Popular With “Link Juice” Power**

You already know how powerful links can be when it comes to your search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. As Search Engine Specialist Alexis Siemon says: “A link is a shortcut to quickly get you from one website to another. If you can harness the power of the link, you can make your website a force to be reckoned with. That means higher search engine rankings, more traffic to your site, and, eventually, more customers and more money in your pocket.”

But though more and more online marketers are learning about SEO and how it can help deliver lots of quality traffic to their sites, the powerful little link is still a mystery to many. One question I frequently get is about “link juice.”

What is link juice? It is the key to your popularity with the search engines. The more you have, the higher you can rank in the search engines’ results.

To understand link juice, you first need to understand another SEO term: Link Popularity.

Link Popularity is a metric that most search engines use to gauge the “popularity” of a Web page based on how many other Web pages link to it. You could think of it this way: Each link to a Web page that a search engine finds on the Internet counts as a vote for the page it’s linking to. The more links that are pointing to one of your Web pages, the more “popular” a search engine will consider that page to be.

Search engines consider popular pages to be highly relevant. Since they are interested in presenting the most relevant search results to their users, they’ll give popular pages a high ranking. And this will improve your SEO, put your website in front of more search engine users, and ultimately result in more traffic and more potential sales.

But that doesn’t mean you should ask all your friends to link to your site. You don’t want a link from just anybody. You want links from sites with lots of link juice.

Link juice is a way to describe the “weight” a specific link might carry. A link with more weight is going to be more important to the search engines.

Here’s an example of what I mean. Let’s say you’re trying to get a job. Your potential employer is going to be more impressed by recommendations from your boss at your previous company than she will by recommendations from your mailman or your dentist. You could have 100 letters of recommendation from your college buddies, but one powerful letter from the CEO of a business you used to work for will do a lot more to convince her to hire you.

It's the same with the search engines. Each Web page has a certain amount of clout - or link juice - that it can pass to another page. How much is not really something you can accurately measure, but you can get an idea of how good a link is (how much link juice it has) by looking at a few variables:

**1. How many links are pointing to the page?** If a page has hundreds or thousands of links pointing to it, chances are the links on that page have good link juice that can be passed on to outside pages (like your page).

Let's say MortgageBroker.com has a ton of link juice. If you are in the mortgage brokerage business and get this site to link to you, it could pass on a lot of link juice. (It's like getting a job recommendation from the top dog in your industry.)

**2. How many outgoing links does that page have?** Pages with too many outgoing links (20 or more) usually have less link juice than pages with 10 or fewer outgoing links. That's because sites with too many links to outside sites aren't as choosy.

Think about it this way: If a food critic rates every restaurant she visits as "5-star," you might not believe she's got a very discerning palate. But if she gives her top recommendation only to a few restaurants, you would be more inclined to try them out. After all, they are the only restaurants she likes out of thousands.

If a page has lots of links pointing to it and a small number of links pointing out, it's probably a good page with plenty of link juice. A link on that site pointing to your site would be beneficial to you.

**3. Is the page that links to you in a similar niche?** It's important to build up links to your site, but you must make sure those links come from sites that complement yours. In other words, don't request links from sites that

are about mortgages if your business is about sporting goods.

**4. How much real content does the page have?** Pages that have very little content and are mostly made up of outgoing links have less link juice to offer. The best links are usually from pages that have lots of "real" content and a small number of incoming links.

Once you've found a site that has a lot of link juice, request a link from it. Remember, the more link juice you can get, the higher you will rank with the search engines.

*Contributed by Edwin Huertas*

Edwin Huertas is Search Engine Marketing Specialist for *Early to Rise*



## Are Vampire Words Sucking the Life Out of Your Writing?

Vampires are everywhere at the moment. At the movies (Twilight), on your TV (True Blood) ... and in your copy.

It's nothing new. E.B. White recognised the problem in his revision of Strunk's Elements of Style:

"Rather, very, little, pretty – these are the leeches that infest the pond of prose, sucking the blood of words."

White was writing back in the 1950s, though. With the internet making writers and publishers of us all, those little words aren't just leeches: they're full-grown vampires. And they need to be stopped.

### How to Spot Vampire Words

As well as White's "Rather, very, little, pretty", there's a few other words you might recognize in your own copy. Here's a few examples:

- Quite
- Fairly
- Sometimes
- Often
- May

These are all qualifiers: wishy-washy qualifiers at that. They suck the life-force from a red-blooded sentence. They make readers yawn, or switch off, or lose confidence.

So stop qualifying. Start being [bold and direct](#). Sure, you might risk a few pedantic types taking issue in the comments – but you'll be keeping the rest of your readers gripped.

When you edit your copy, hone in on those words that are sucking your sentences dry. What grabs you?

"You may see fairly impressive results"

Or

"You'll see impressive results"

Grab a piece of your copy. Go through it and highlight every qualifying word you can find: adjectives and adverbs. Here's an example, from [Ten Timeless Persuasive Writing Tips](#):

Want to convince your readers to do something or agree with your point of view?

OK, that was a **silly** question. Of course you do.

Persuasion is **generally** an exercise in creating a win-win situation. You present a case that others find **beneficial** to agree with. You make them an offer they can't refuse, but not in the **manipulative** *Godfather* sense.

If you take a word out, would the sentence still make sense?

"Silly" and "Beneficial" are obviously necessary. "Manipulative" isn't grammatically essential, but it makes the meaning clearer.

When you're not sure with a word like "generally", ask yourself whether it makes the sentence stronger, or whether it's draining its life blood.

"Generally" is the one word that could be cut, to make the sentence read "Persuasion is an exercise in creating a win-win situation".

### Clear Those Suckers Outta Your Headlines

The worst place for a vampire-word to lodge itself is in a headline. A quick reminder from [How to Write Magnetic Headlines](#):

"On average, 8 out of 10 people will read headline copy, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest."

Want more people to make it past the headline? Then don't put a vampire in their way.

Don't write "Fairly Recent Research May Indicate..."

Write "New Study Shows..."

Don't write "Some Reasons Why List Posts Usually Work"

Write "[7 Reasons Why List Posts Always Work](#)"

Don't write "Why Your Blog Might Not Be Making Much Money"

Write "[Why You Can't Make Money Blogging](#)"

You get the idea.

## What To Do With Your Vampire Words

We all know how to deal with vampires.

Stake them.

Cut those words right out of your copy, and don't look back.

*About the Author: In between watching episodes of True Blood, Ali Hale occasionally gets some writing done. She's a freelancer, a post-grad creative writing student, and a blogger for several sites, including her own [Aliventures](#) on "getting more from life".*



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## 10 Surefire Ways to Curb Shopping Cart Abandonment

By Amy Africa  
July 16, 2009

Here are 10 proven ideas for improving your shopping cart and checkout process.

**1. Determine if you really need a "view cart" page.** Many companies have "view cart" pages even though they don't really need them. If users are abandoning on your "view cart" page — or the two subsequent pages — definitely test your process. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Where are they abandoning?
- Are your upsell and marketing messages confusing users?
- Is there information on the page that's not appropriate, such as catalog codes for a pay-per-click customer?
- Is your number of items per order low enough that it makes the page just an extra page to plow through?
- Could you further folks along the process without it?

Decide if you need to make a few tweaks or a complete overhaul. Your decision will depend on your customers, your days to sale, whether there's purchasing authority involved and so on.

**2. Reduce, eliminate or delete as many navigational elements as you possibly can in the checkout.** Users don't need distractions — they need to place their orders. Don't worry, they don't need to disappear for long; you can offer them again at the confirmation page.

**3. Use big buttons.** The bigger, the better. Buttons leading to the next step should be bigger than the ones leading to the previous step. And next-step buttons should be to the right.

**4. Use a picture of a Wilford Brimley-type (read: old-fashioned Santa Claus) in the right-hand column of your site.** Why Wilford? You need a picture of someone you'd give your money to. (And no, not for a lap dance. Someone, er, a little more reputable.)

**5. Offer alternate ways to contact you, in several different places.** Put your phone number at the top, bottom and right-hand column of your site. Your email address should be in those three areas as well. Fax numbers and postal addresses should be in the right-hand column and along the bottom. You don't want phone calls? Tough bananas. Users won't call you unless they need to — that's why they're on the web in the first place. If they call, something is likely wrong with your site or they're in the category that won't place orders online, even with incentives. For some groups, this can account for more than half of the people.

**6. Address privacy and security on every view.** Users need to see this every time they scroll down to a new page.

**7. Show payment method icons.** Tested, these icons work better than just showing the text links or line-listing drop-downs. Remember: People see things in pictures, not in text.

**8. Collect a secondary email address.** Very few companies do this, but it's a very effective way to collect "good" names.

**9. Use a temperature bar.** Yes, it's ugly. Deal with it.

**10. Review your error handling messages, presentation and choices.** For many, this is a huge issue and can result in up to 15 percent of your abandons.

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## Twittering With Consumers

Within the past 12 months, **Twitter** has moved from a curious time waster to a serious business tool. To some consumers, that's a problem - another user-oriented tool being invaded by business. To others, it's a way to connect to businesses like never before. And to businesses of all sizes, it's an opportunity that cannot be missed. And as more consumers join Twitter and the service gains visibility in the public eye, people will not only accept businesses, but expect to find and actively search for them (you) just like in the blogosphere.

Of course, there are pitfalls too. A fake business Twitter account can cause severe backlash. "Janet," a fake Exxon employee Twitterer caused some problems, even if the intentions were good. Because of its relative anonymity, it's important to monitor your company on Twitter. Try **TweetBeep** - you can enter keywords and URLs and be alerted every time someone tweets about it, even if they use a shortened URL. **TweetScan** is another good one.

There are some good examples too. [Whole Foods](#) uses Twitter to answer customer service questions, post news about the industry and their products and share recipes. They have 7,940\* followers, as of this writing. But here's the thing - they follow 8,489 other people on Twitter. They're not just responding to people because they "have" to, they are actively seeking connections. [Southwest Airlines](#) is another active Twitter user. One of the ways they use the site is post special deals and savings.

Connecting successfully with consumers on Twitter follows much the same pattern as other forms of social media.

- Be transparent. Coming right out and telling consumers that you are a business, but you're there to help, not to pester is the best way to gain acceptance. And it starts with your Twitter account name. ComcastCares is a good example of using the brand name and stating purpose.
- Provide value. One of the great things about Twitter is the 140 character limit. You can alert consumers of industry news, new products or special deals without needing to author a long blog post.
- Be vigilant, but not overbearing. You want to update regularly, but you don't want to be a burden - it's easy for users to get overwhelmed with an influx of tweets. Choose your postings wisely.
- Be prompt. Twitter users expect immediate gratification - it's one of the reasons to use Twitter. If you get a query from one of your consumers, reply quickly, even if you don't have a complete answer for them yet. Twitter conversations flow quickly and you want to make sure you don't let something like a minor complaint get out of hand. Therefore, it's a good idea to have a dedicated person to handle your company twittering.

Of course, to be successful, you need to build a loyal following. Check out [Twellow](#). You can search for Twitter users by industry and category. Target users with lots of followers and high activity rates and start making friends. [TwitScoop](#) shows a cloud-based view of activity on Twitter and you can also use it to find and track conversations by keywords - another good way to find active users in your industry. [Just Tweet It](#) is another good tool to find like-minded people. Once you start following some people and have some followers, [Twubble](#) can make friend suggestions based on those people. And since you likely already have a blog with some loyal readers, make sure they know about your Twitter account. WordPress bloggers can install a [Twitter widget](#).

Finally, just because Twitter is a phenomenon without borders, that doesn't mean it's not useful for local services and businesses. [TwitterLocal](#) provides a feed of Tweets when you enter your location and range you want to search. The TwitterLocal Leader Board identifies the top twittered locations (Tokyo is first, followed by New York) and top twitterers in those locations - a good way to find local influencers.

*\* Whole Foods gained another five followers on Twitter by the time I finished writing this article. See what I mean?*

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## Monopolize Search Engine Results with a Blog and Social Media

A theme has come up recently as we work with some small business clients on **whether or not they should have a blog**, and whether or not they should optimize it for the search engines. (Crazy, *right?*)

The concern seems to be that if they optimize their blog for the keywords they're targeting, they are in fact competing against their own Web site, and thus their own self-interest.

However, **as long as all your properties are funneling traffic to your Web site for conversion, or able to handle conversions themselves, you have nothing to worry about.**

It's more like the game of Monopoly: the more properties you own, the more traffic you're likely to get. (Except in this case people are happy to be your guest.)

In fact, **if you add optimized, quality content at YouTube, Flickr, Squidoo, and other social media sites, you can really start to monopolize Google's search results for your targeted keyword phrases.** And since photos, videos, and localized content are becoming more prevalent at search engines, you don't want to cede that opportunity to your competition.

**To create quality content you should use a combination of some keyword research and the questions you get on a regular basis.** Often, if a client--or just a random person--sends me an email with a good question I'll generalize the details and turn it into a blog post. Then I'll send them an email with the link to the blog post.

Not only are you helping out your customer or prospect in that case, you're creating content that can help drive more prospects to your blog, Web site, or social media presence.

Just remember to **create keyword-rich links back to relevant pages on your site** so you can continue the conversation.

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## 5 Ways to Market like a Psychotherapist

Psychotherapy, a discipline intended to help people, is actually a form of marketing.

Does that thought make you uncomfortable? Or even seem a little creepy?

American psychiatrist Jerome Frank put it eloquently over forty years ago: psychotherapy is the art of [\*Persuasion and Healing\*](#).

A good therapist needs to do more than just teach her clients to have more positive feelings.

She actually needs to sell those feelings, in order to get the results her patients want.

### **Psychotherapy sells the “good” feelings**

In *Persuasion and Healing*, Frank said:

“[S]uccess in therapy depends in large part on its ability to combat the patient’s demoralization and heighten his hopes of relief. All forms of psychotherapy do this implicitly, regardless of their explicit aims. Progress in therapy, in turn, further shifts the balance toward the ‘welfare emotions’ [...] such as love, joy, and pride, so that, with luck, the process becomes self-enhancing.”

So psychotherapists promote these positive or “welfare” emotions.

Why would that be marketing?

Because when your dog pees on your carpet or someone cuts in front of you on the freeway, you need to be sold on why staying cool is more productive than going berserk.

Like any smart marketer, the psychotherapist needs to determine the right time to “sell” the patient on feeling good instead of bad. She needs to be mindful of emotional intelligence literature, which shows that emotional health is dynamic, and that it’s healthy to fluctuate between non-welfare and welfare emotions.

(In other words, as every good copywriter knows, [negativity isn’t always a bad thing](#).)

### **Psychotherapy sells ideas and attitudes**

When you see your psychotherapist, she has to do a lot of persuasive work to convince you that you’ll get over that failed relationship. Your grieving heart has a hard time believing a word of it.

She has to work to persuade you that even though all of your life you were trained to be nice, being assertive is actually okay.

Sometimes marketing propels us to *buy stuff*, and sometimes it persuades us to adopt *ideas and attitudes*. The process isn’t actually all that different. And even when we’re selling products, we often need to do the work of selling ideas first.

### **How to market like a psychotherapist**

To market like a psychotherapist, you can start with these five basic steps:

1. Don’t think in simplistic terms of selling products or services. Find the *ideas and attitudes* that you are really trying to sell. You’re not manipulating people to buy; you’re presenting them with ideas and attitudes that they can choose to adopt.
2. Before you can persuade, you have to thoroughly understand your “patient.” With the web at your fingertips, you can conduct your own polls, take Twitter’s pulse, or use web analytics to study your traffic. Thoughtful research helps you to be more empathetic toward your prospects, because you listen to and care about their concerns, questions, and interests.
3. Be mindful of the professional literature in your field. Psychotherapists go through years of professional training to learn the best-respected theories and modalities. Make an ongoing study of the best research and thinking on persuasion.
4. Instead of viewing your work as selling or marketing, see it for what it is: a comfortable conversation on a couch, about topics that are important to everyday people.
5. Share the ideas and attitudes that benefit your customers. Psychotherapists market “welfare” emotions because

they want people to lead happier, more effective lives. Learn to market the ideas that you see helping your customers do the same.

*About the Author:* Melissa Karnaze writes about the intelligence of emotions on [Mindful Construct](#) and [Twitter](#).



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## Branding Helps Connect With Consumers

September 10, 2009 · by Armando Roggio

**Building an emotional** and social connection with shoppers can create lasting relationships that produce both pleasing shopping experiences and increased profit. This is most commonly referred to as "branding" and it can be one of the most important keys to ecommerce success.

In July 2009, Amazon announced its plans to purchase 10-year-old online retailer Zappos for \$850 million. One could argue that Zappos had been growing sales and making a lot of money, but in reality what Zappos had that was so valuable was not its revenue, its website, its logistics, its inventory, or even its famously extravagant customer service organization. Rather, what Amazon is really buying is Zappos' brand and the promise that brand offers to customers and potential customers. Through ads, through press releases, and through consistently excellent customer service, Zappos

developed a brand that customers liked and responded to.

## The Secret of Brand: It Is a Promise

At the heart of Zappos' brand was a promise to provide excellent customer service. Zappos advertised its customer service and often told the press about its commitment to providing exceptional shopping experiences. For example, Zappos representatives often told members of the media that although the company was based in Las Vegas, Nevada, it had a shipping operation in Kentucky, which was, said Zappos's personnel, a stone's throw from FedEx's shipping hub. This meant, according to Zappos, that it could get your order to the shipper faster than its competition. The company also publicly announced that it paid trainees to quit because it wanted only committed employees taking care of its customers.

Essentially, Zappos was successful because they made a brand promise—great customer care—and they did everything they could to live out that promise.

## Make Your Own Brand Promise

While it may not be realistic for your online store to try and match Zappos' brand success, you can still develop an authentic brand promise and enjoy the success and opportunities that come with a solid reputation.

Your store's brand promise will consist of one central and concise statement that describes your mission, strategy, values, communications, and behavior. This statement, your brand promise, must be authentic and true. Zappos was committed to customer service. That was and is the company's brand promise. And it affected every aspect of its operation.

Try to develop a single sentence that describes your company's brand promise.

## Once You Have a Brand Promise, Live Up To It

An effective brand promise will be evident in every aspect of your ecommerce operation, including your website, your customer care, and your advertising. And if you are really going to gain some equity from your brand, you need to make the promise a systemic part of your operation.

For example, let's imagine that you sell extra large shoes for guys with extra big feet, and your brand promise is to "provide hundreds of shoe styles in sizes 13 to 20 at competitive prices." This brand promise would inform your actions. You might personally contact hundreds of shoe manufacturers asking them only about their larger sized offerings. You could—if you had big feet—personally test every style that you sell, since finding and trying out shoes would be consistent with your brand promise.

Having done this work, you could send out a press release about how you wear a different pair of shoes each week and then write your own review of the shoes, posting those reviews to your own website. In the release, you could mention that if you don't like the shoe you stop carrying it.

### Summing Up

A brand is really a promise and a relationship that can lead to many happy shopping experiences for your customers and increased profits for your business. It is also a defining mission statement that can and should guide how you do business. In the long run, well-branded companies outperform the no-names.

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