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**Breakthrough Strategic Marketing
Big Business Marketing for the Small, No-Budget Business Owner
Craving Big-Buck Success**

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The Breakthrough Career Coach

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**A strategic planning model to help entrepreneurs develop
optimal marketing success on-line and off.**

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**Breakthrough Strategic Marketing
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Introduction:

Welcome to “Breakthrough Strategic Marketing, Big Business Marketing for the Small No-Budget Business Owner Craving Big-Buck Success.” I think you’ll find the content to be slightly different from many of the marketing resources you’ve picked up before. You see, too many marketers focus on a snappy tag line or a pricey marketing campaign without really understanding the “drivers” for their marketing efforts. Once you can unmistakably identify the “who, when, where, what’s and why’s” of your marketing, you will be able to fulfill your marketing and sales objectives effortlessly, no matter what your marketing budget.

I invite you to not only read the content, but I urge you to complete the exercises outlined on the following pages. While this report is copyrighted, you have my permission to reprint these pages for your own reading convenience or to use this as a lead generating tool for your own business or web site – that’s part of the beauty of low or no budget marketing –sharing resources, providing value, attracting leads and getting your name out there in cyberspace or the marketplace.

As long as the book is not modified, reprinted in its entirety and refers to the author as well as includes the contact information, you may distribute this ebook freely.

No matter your industry, product, service or budget, I am confident the strategy outlined will provide you with the market advantage you need to profoundly impact your results. With strategic planning, you will be able to implement powerful content, tools and methods to breakthrough real or perceived limitations and achieve your most compelling objectives.

Enjoy the book. I wish you the greatest breakthrough success!

Jeannette

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.

Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sun Tzū c. 490 BC, Chinese military strategist

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Battles, Games and Marketing Efforts Are Won By Great Strategy.

We're talking the kind of strategy employed by major players who understand that influential marketing can only happen as a result of great positioning, clear benefits and targeted messages that speak the language of specific customer markets. And that can only happen through strategic planning.

Businesses succeed for a variety of reasons: hard work ranks up there at the top along with great planning and resources. Some say luck has a role – others say it is a matter of being in the right place at the right time. But two things seem to stand out – quality products or services and a well developed business plan that includes *highly effective branding and marketing with implementation done through a detailed action plan.*

It's easy to assume that good planning is one of the most common reasons for success. Not too many of us would consciously choose to let our success be a total crap shoot. Unfortunately, the reality is that it's easy to get tied up in the day-to-day details without having the information, options or resources to ensure our goals are met. Good plans based on good information bring goals to fruition.

Perception is strong and sight weak. In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things.

Miyamoto Musashi 1584-1645

A well-thought-out strategy and plan does more than determine what actions will be taken in the future. It helps you to better determine your options, identify areas of need, and evaluate the methods and resources that are available to you in critical areas. By planning what the successful future will look like, you have the ability to put smaller details into proper perspective and set goals that will ultimately create the success you crave.

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Let's face it, as a solopreneur or small business owner, it's tough to breakthrough the intense competition to snag market share, build credibility and grow profits. Not too many small businesses or independents have deep pockets for unlimited marketing.

As solopreneurs, we know what we know. If you're a doctor running a private practice, you could be the best in your field as a medical practitioner. But that doesn't mean you're accomplished as a business development manager or marketing guru. And that's the rub, because if you can't get the word out and attract clients to your product or service, the gigs up. Those who succeed have learned the secrets of tapping into the industry, adapting proven methods, and incorporating new techniques that take advantage of the momentum that occurs when a potential customer is inspired by great marketing that moves them to choose you as their solution of choice above all the rest.

So the big question is "how do I do that?"

We'll get into some specifics later in this book. But if you really want your marketing efforts to succeed, we need to talk strategy before we get into your methods.

Marketing is not an event, but a process . . .

It has a beginning, a middle, but never an end, for it is a process. You improve it, perfect it, change it, even pause it. But you never stop it completely."

Jay Conrad Levinson

Visualization, commitment and their affect on action cannot be understated. You have to clearly understand where you, your product or service is headed and how and why it fills an important need. That is the most elementary rule in marketing – find a need and fill it. This e-book has been developed to help you do that in the most reliable and effective way.

If you were going to go on vacation, would you just pack a bag and hang out at the bus stop and hope you ended up someplace nice? Or would you research locations, plan for your budget, make reservations and pack accordingly so you'd have what you need when you go?

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And so it is with strategic marketing. Large companies use strategic planning methods to create calculated, deliberate well thought out tactics to promote their growth and success. They understand that to cut through the competition they have to be unique and demonstrate some type of competitive advantage. So before they spend time on market segments, messages, or action steps, they focus on their vision. You should too.

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

Walt Disney

Your vision will allow you to work with the end result in mind. It will keep you focused and help you to make good decisions when you're inundated with challenges. In creating a vision, you will be positioned to respond to opportunities rather than react to market conditions or competitive pressures.

This ebook will provide you with the understanding, format and structure to help you to develop, crystallize and communicate your vision and your strategic marketing plan. It will also provide the development process necessary so you can achieve the plans you make and goals you set. It will provide you with the process to understand where you are, what potential opportunities exist for you, your product or service and most important, help you determine what goal-directed actions must be taken to ensure that your future – as you envision it – becomes reality.

**"Nobody counts the number of ads you run;
they just remember the impression you make."**

William Bernbach

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PART ONE - STRATEGIC PLANNING

Too many businesspeople view weak market conditions or a poor economy as the reason for their lack of success. However, even in the worst economy, leaders in every field succeed. They have learned that success is not based on the conditions of the world, but on the decisions they make and the goals they choose to set and achieve. Success doesn't just happen. It happens because you predetermine your success, plan, set goals and make it happen.

Planning the strategic marketing for your business involves four stages:

1. Understanding the current conditions both inside, as well as outside the company.
2. Visualizing and identifying the future, as you want it to be.
3. Determining the goals you must achieve and planning their achievement. And finally...
4. Implementing the plan.

The term *strategic marketing* can be defined as the method that determines and promotes the future of your product or service, and identifies appropriate messages, processes and resources that will be needed to achieve your goals. It's a thought process, based on the belief that the function of business is to attract and maintain customers.

As you go through this thought process, you will find a heavy emphasis on the customer's needs. As one of today's marketing greats, Alex Mandossian told me, "It's all about celebrating your client." That's a simple statement that makes a lot of sense since it's your customers who generate referrals, build your credibility and grow your revenues.

**"The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well
the product or service fits him and sells itself."**

Peter F. Drucker

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Marketing is the process that determines what products or services will be offered to select market segments, and how you will communicate with these segments to create a preference in the mind of the customer to do business with you. As we go through this market planning process, we will look at different market segments as groups of customers with similar needs. We'll also evaluate the potential of off-line and on-line methods to reach your target markets. The more effectively you can identify which segments are appropriate to your business, and understand their individual needs and wants, the more you can target the delivery of your products and services.

Elements of Strategic Marketing:

The **vision statement** is a statement of your **purpose and mission**. It articulates, in detail, the business you are in and describes the products or services you provide. This statement should speak in terms of customer satisfaction needs, meaning address **benefits not features**. It should also include your values and principles. People don't buy products or services. They buy solutions and you and your values, beliefs and principles are a large part of how a customer **feels** about the solution. Since emotion is a powerful motivator, this is not something to ignore.

Your vision needs to answer the following:

- How do you see your relationship with your customers
- How do you see your relationship with strategic partners
- How do you see your relationship with your suppliers and vendors
- How do you see your relationship with the environment
- How do you see your relationship with the community you serve

The vision is a statement of potential. It helps to set apart your uniqueness and your competitive advantage. It is a description of what you (your company) can become and when effectively communicated, provides a focus for marketing efforts.

A values and principles statement creates a foundation of integrity. It clarifies why you are in business and defines important truths that guide your actions.

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If your primary purpose is to attract and maintain customers in order to generate long-term profits or financial viability, issues such as **customer expectations, product quality and service** must be included in the values and principles statement. Your values and principles should take into consideration how you feel about and the value you place upon your customers, your strategic partners, the community and with all others with whom you do business.

The company's relationships with its customers are of primary importance. Many successful business people prioritize their focus in the following order:

1. Quality products and services
2. Customer satisfaction, and
3. Improving profitability

As a priority, each of these areas should drive the message and the method of strategic marketing.

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark.

You know what you are doing, but nobody else does."

Steuart Henderson Britt, advertising consultant, 1970.

Clarify Core Values

This process is important, because it lets your target market know what to expect from you. It allows potential customers to identify with you – a critical component in building relationships. In addition it further promotes your distinctiveness in the market.

Let's get clear about values. These are the principals, ethics and standards that guide your words and actions. You decide how high to set the bar. What do you want to be known for? What kind of reputation do you want to have in the industry?

Write your Values Statement here:

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Creating Your Vision Statement

As mentioned, an effective vision statement should convey a realistic, credible, attractive and inspiring future for you and/or your company. The vision illustrates the long-term future that you aspire to create.

Drafting a vision statement will take some time, effort and energy. While each organization's vision statement is unique, you might want to research vision statements of companies or people you respect. Write a draft of your vision statement based on your the goals and passions. Once your draft is completed and you have some thoughts down on paper, it will be easier to go back and revise the statement, until you get something you feel really jazzed about.

Write your Vision Statement here:

Creating Your Mission Statement

The mission statement states your purpose. It must tell the marketplace why you are in business and what you will do. It indicates action. It communicates your understanding of the needs your potential clients and explains how you can provide the solution to those needs. Your values should be reflected in the mission statement and the mission statement should support your vision.

Write Your Mission Statement Here:

For many companies and solopreneurs, the information captured through the process of writing a statement of values, vision and mission helps them to develop a *brand*.

Ordinary people
can spread good and bad information about brands faster than marketers."

Ray Johnson

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This was exactly how I created the “Breakthrough” brand for my services. I choose to work with individuals and companies who want to *breakthrough real and perceived limitations to develop untapped potential* – who are motivated to *penetrate the masses of the ordinary and commonplace to do and achieve the incomparable. My values and mission are completely tied into helping others succeed. I can’t be a success unless my clients are successful.* For me and my clients, it’s all about rising above the masses of undistinguished, unremarkable and mediocre to create solutions and take action to achieve infinite success. Hence, Breakthrough was born as my brand.

Now, I have six companies under the breakthrough brand – Breakthrough Career Coaching, Breakthrough Training, Breakthrough Outplacement, Breakthrough Solutions, Breakthrough Connections and Breakthrough Strategies.

Let’s consider your target market.

Who do you serve? What are they’re needs? Where are they located? How large is this group? What are the demographics?

Until you can accurately answer these questions, you could waste a lot of time, effort and money in ineffective marketing.

The External Market Assessment:

An external market assessment lets you evaluate specific market segments, complete a competitive analysis and consider trends in your market and industry.

Market Segments – the purpose of defining market segments is to identify those areas where you have potential buyers with specific needs. When you find large groups of customers with similar needs, you can define this group as a market segment. Understanding these segments allows you to tailor your products and services to the needs of these specific segments, building a competitive advantage. By being aware of your market segments and their needs, you can quickly respond to changing trends in the market.

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Here's an example. I normally work with accomplished professionals who have been in the workforce for over 8 years. But through the process of evaluating market segments, I was able to identify a growing population of potential clients that I hadn't targeted before.

Boomers (like me) are aging. Many have been downsized, laid-off or taken early retirement due to workforce pressures. People in this age group have been virtually ignored but are clamoring for services. They want to know how to professionally reinvent themselves. They want to learn what opportunities are available to them. They want to acquire the skills and resources they need to cross the presumed age barrier and assumptions that are attached. These folks have needs and they want a *breakthrough!* The good news is that's the solution I provide.

Let's consider who you'll be marketing to:

Who are your preferred clients?

What do you know about them?

What are their primary needs?

What are the primary solutions you provide to these needs?

Trends - in the external appraisal, you need to understand the trends which are taking place in your industry, in your customers' industries, and in the world in general. This will enable you to position yourself for success. Not only is the Internet a great place to market your products or services, it is a valuable resource to help you conduct research.

The future influences the present just as much as the past.

Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900, German poet and philosopher

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Find answers to questions like: What's different today about the markets I serve and markets served by my customers? What will be different tomorrow? How can these changes influence the products and services I offer? What are the trends taking place in my industry? How are my competitors marketing their products and service on-line? What approach are they taking off-line? What are the trends taking place in my customers' businesses? Be responsive to these trends and you will outdistance your competitors by addressing your customers' needs.

"A coincidence is a trend we have decided not to take seriously."

Philip Slater, *The Wayward Gate: Science and the Supernatural*

While I was conducting my research I learned two things about current trends.

First, through survey results, government reports and publications, I learned that increasing numbers of professionals were leaving the corporate environment to start their own businesses. To support this growing population within my target market, I offer products and services such as this one for entrepreneurs.

Secondly, I realized that boomers not only had needs, but this was a population that was going to continue to grow as more and more people continued to age. This trend illustrated how that my services would be needed for quite some time providing long-term growth opportunities in an expanding market segment.

By identifying various market segments and providing solutions to their needs, you can realize a significant increase in sales.

**"We live in a world today where lemonade is made from artificial flavors
and furniture polish is made from real lemons."**

Alfred E. Neumann, (c. 1956 -)

The last element of an external assessment is a **Competitive Analysis**.

Once segments have been defined, you can then focus on why customers should buy from you rather than your competitors. By targeting specific groups of customers, you

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can tailor your product offering rather than trying to be all things to all people. In an age of specialization and intense competition, having a competitive edge makes a big difference.

In viewing your competition, you need to understand how competitive the performance of your product is versus your competitor's products. The fact that your product is of better quality, more efficient, longer lasting, or has a greater value is meaningless when compared to what that means to a customer.

What's important are the benefits of those features, such as more economical, safer, more prestigious, better return on investment, etc. You must analyze how the features of your products stack up against the features of other products which are available. After you have identified how your features compare, you must translate these features into benefits which will motivate the customer to buy.

Questions dealing with product versatility, quality, ease of use, reliability, etc. must be addressed. Some companies actually create new segments by bringing a product or service to the market that never before existed like on-line audio-messages, picture phones or web-casting.

"A product is something made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by the customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique.

A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless."

Stephen King, WPP Group, London

Whether someone will do business with you is normally determined by your ability to communicate how you will satisfy their needs. **In reality, your customer doesn't buy what you're selling; they buy the benefits of your product or service.**

Federal Express moves packages; their customers buy next day delivery. Nordstrom sells clothes; their customers buy exceptional service. Google is a search engine – they are the industry leader because of speed and accuracy.

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Therefore as a seller or provider, **you must think in terms of why your customers buy your product, not what you produce or provide.**

With the focus on market segments and customer expectations, you can see opportunities more clearly. The ability to see needs more specifically enables you to organize your available resources more effectively.

Vicks took the traditional cough medicine which had the side effect of making the customer drowsy, and renamed it "Nyquil." They focused on the market segment that suffered from cold symptoms at night, when they were trying to sleep. Federal Express defined their segment, not as people who wanted send their packages across the country, but as those who "absolutely, positively" had to have their packages delivered.

***How about you – What expectations are you fulfilling for your market segment?
How can you better communicate that to build your own brand?***

You must also analyze how competitive you are and how well you keep up with technology in the marketplace. Today is all about speed and relationships. People with strong alliances and resources have the advantage.

Can you boast about your record of on-time delivery, quality products, superior service or extensive selection?

Have you reached out to strategic partners who could help you attract and provide new benefits?

Have you cultivated relationships that could elevate your visibility and position in the market?

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Understanding these two variables, competitiveness and positioning/partnering, provides you with issues which need to be addressed if you are to succeed.

**In marketing I've seen only one strategy that can't miss - and that is to
market to your best customers first, your best prospects second
and the rest of the world last.**

John Romero

Internal Appraisal – It's all about you:

Now look at your own business. There are three elements that need to be addressed:

1. The way you work in relation to the markets you serve.
2. The resources you have available or need to be made available.
3. An understanding of your strengths and limitations.

The Way You Work – Relationship to Your Markets:

It is your responsibility to assure that you're positioned to respond to the changing needs of the customers you serve. You may not be able to change the world in which you do business, however you do have the ability to ensure that you make the changes necessary in your own business so that you can effectively respond to the changes taking place in your markets.

Ask yourself – Is it easy to do business with me on-line and off?

Is the way a customer places an order an easy process?

How do I respond, and how quickly, when a customer has a problem?

Are my invoices correct and easy to understand?

Do I have the resources to answer the questions or respond to needs of my customers?

How do I react to our customers when we make a mistake?

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Am I able to capture information from visitors on my web site?

Do I have a way to communicate with new referrals or site visitors to build a relationship?

By understanding your customers' needs, wants, and expectations, you have the ability to structure your company and position your marketing to gain a true competitive advantage.

**"You don't close a sale, you open a relationship if you want to build
a long-term, successful enterprise."**

Patricia Fripp

Resources:

A company is a collection of resources. These days one of the most important resources is your website. No company has an unlimited collection of resources, so how you utilize the ones you have and which new ones you acquire will be a major factor in determining how effective you are with your marketing strategies. The goals you accomplish will be dependent upon the actions you take with the resources you have available.

As new customers' needs are identified in the market segments you've selected, you will begin to see the resources which will be required to meet those customers' needs.

Do you need to develop new products?

Do you need greater visibility?

Do you need more technical data to support your product?

Are your support services competitive?

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Is your target market begging for solutions you could provide if only you could get out from under all the administrative stuff?

Understanding your markets allows you to better understand what you will need to do to ensure that you can effectively compete and succeed. Using the Internet, check out other businesses in your industry and evaluate their service offerings, pricing, web presence, and communication methods to reach and respond to their target markets.

Not only can you gain competitive intelligence, you can also create what has been called a "swipe file". When you see great ideas, take the concept and revise it to accommodate your budget, your message and your service offerings.

**"The secret of all effective originality in advertising
is not the creation of new and tricky words and pictures,
but one of putting familiar words and pictures into new relationships."**

Leo Burnett

Strengths and Limitations:

Your external assessment and internal appraisal will identify concerns which need to be addressed and strengths upon which you can build through your marketing. The section on competitive analysis, trends, structure/function, and resources, will bring issues to the surface which will have an impact on your ability to succeed in your chosen market segments. This section will be the summary of these issues.

In evaluating different market segments you looked at what the characteristics of these segments might be. In the strengths and limitations section, you can begin to focus on your business strengths in relation to the market segments you will be targeting.

While many focus on eliminating the company's limitations, equal if not greater emphasis must be placed on exploiting your strengths. This is where competitive advantage is built.

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My competitive strengths in the market are:

My limitations are:

"A hunch is creativity trying to tell you something."

Frank Capra

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PART TWO - CREATING YOUR STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

SMART Marketing Goals

A good marketing goal is like any good goal – it must be ***SMART***:

- ***Specific,***
- ***Measurable***
- ***Attainable***
- ***Realistically high, and***
- ***Trackable***

This is especially helpful when we realize that goals help us work smart, not hard. Note, these goals need to be stated in a positive way. It is virtually impossible to achieve the positive when you are focused on the negative.

"Your brand's power lies in dominance.

It is better to have 50% of one market, instead of 10% of five markets."

Al Ries

The goals developed as part of this process form the basis for the marketing plan.

Developing the action steps to accomplish these goals is the marketing plan.

Your focus must be on meeting or exceeding customers' expectations.

Our day-to-day activities and priorities becomes that of ensuring that the goal-directed actions developed as part of the goal planning process are being taken. These goals define the strategies you will employ in order to be successful.

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The Market Plan

The Market Plan deals specifically with:

1. What products and services the company will provide to the selected market segments.
2. How the company will communicate with these segments
3. What support is needed to be successful.

Advertising is salesmanship mass produced. No one would bother to use advertising if he could talk to all his prospects face-to-face. But he can't."

Morris Hite, Adman: Morris Hite's Methods for Winning the Ad Game, 1988

Advertising is a term used to define the various communications you'll use to build a preference in the mind of your customer so that they will want to do business with you.

I'm sure you've noticed advertising trends in the marketplace. While the term used to be limited to primarily billboard, print, radio, or television advertisements, that's now old school. "Advertising" has been replaced by "Market Communications" signifying new techniques and a much broader array of methods to build relationships and "reach out and touch" your select markets.

With new technology and the acceptance of the Internet, marketing options have exploded giving so-called "traditional methods" even more presence. Examples of typical marketing venues include a web presence through a company web site – with and without audio and video messages, direct mail, press releases, Blogs, on-line and off-line newsletters, point of purchase displays, corporate identity brochures, Podcasting, listing in trade directories, strategic partnerships, links and ad words, yellow pages, and articles in trade magazines and journals.

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By understanding which market segments you're going to target, you are better able to focus your efforts on the best methods of reaching this group of customers.

For instance, if you targeting a customer in the "tween" to 30 age bracket, you would probably do well to investigate Podcasting. In the case of my boomer market, Ipods have less appeal and a more mainstream approach is more broadly accepted and effective.

"People spend money when and where they feel good."

Walt Disney

So how do you put it together?

First, consider the resources you already have and determine ways to make them more effective. For instance, do you have an ezine? If so, do you write your own articles? If you answered yes, you can use your articles for one of the most significant yet inexpensive ways to gain valuable exposure.

There are numerous article depositories on the Web. Do a simple Google search to find them. These sites allow you to contribute articles for other people to use. As a contributing author, it is free to add content to most sites. The bottom of each article will have a brief byline that provides information about you. For other people to use your articles, the byline **must** be included with the article.

Here's an example of my byline:

Jeannette Kraar, president of Performance Management International is the Breakthrough Career Coach and an internationally-acclaimed trainer, speaker and consultant. Jeannette has helped hundreds of clients succeed even in the most turbulent times. She is the author of BREAKTHROUGH, The Hate My Job, Need A Life, Can't Get No Satisfaction SOLUTION. Learn more about the book at www.breakthroughcareersolutions.com. Email Jeannette at pmi@manageyoursuccess.com or visit her on-line at pmi@manageyoursuccess.com

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Want to know why this is so valuable?

- First it's free. No money is required for this activity.
- Second, it takes almost no time. You already wrote the article for another purpose. Now you're just optimizing your outcome potential from the initial effort.
- Third, as your article gets picked up, you will gain important visibility that will drive traffic to your website and prompt growth of your opt-in list.
- Fourth, you will become known as an expert in your field. Just a small perk that will prove to be a major attractor for free press and other important coverage.

There are many more benefits, but I think you get the idea. Since I started submitting articles to these depositories, I have attracted international clients, gained credibility that prompted larger consulting projects, grown my personal lists and attracted several significant strategic alliances.

So consider this, you have the expertise for much of your value-based **advertising** by offering your knowledge to others. And, If you've completed the first part of this ebook, **you have much of the substance for your marketing messages that will speak to your target audience in terms of benefits that support your objectives, values, strengths and goals.**

Creative without strategy is called 'art.' Creative with strategy is called 'advertising.'

Jef I. Richards

Of course for most of us, unless we are gifted copywriters, the pain comes from how to get our message across in way that is compelling. And let's get real. Working with an advertising agency probably doesn't fit in your budget right now. But that doesn't mean you can't benefit from a pro. There are many great PR authorities, copywriting experts and marketing gurus who can help you for free or for a fee. They all offer free ezines that are packed with valuable insights and ideas. Many offer teleclasses and seminars to arm you with the skills you need to effectively get the word out for a fraction of the cost of hiring someone to do it for you.

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I've included a few of my favorite resources you might want to check out and you can find many more by doing a quick Google search on line. Visit their websites and sign up for free ezines that are loaded with tips and techniques.

Marketing

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**Breakthrough Strategic Marketing
Big Business Marketing for the Small, No-Budget Business Owner
Craving Big-Buck Success.**

Here's one of the best little known resources I've ever found on the net – **Small Business Town**: <http://www.smbtn.com/smallbusinessstown/>. This site is crammed with all kinds of information that can take you from incompetence to “damn am I smart” in nano-seconds. Once you visit the site, click on guides and then peruse the marketing section.

All of the guidebooks on the site are dynamic, but you need to check out **guide book 59 called “Words That Sell.”** If I had to leave my office in a fire and could only save one thing – this would be the resource I'd grab. It was written by Patsula Media for The Entrepreneur's Guidebook Series and it's offered as a free resource. With this guide you will be able to wordsmith your strategic focus into outrageously captivating messages that will drive your marketing and grow your business.

As for ezine distribution, I've been using **Constant Contact** for years and find that it allows be to have the most professional look, with the greatest easy of use. And, the price is affordable too.

Would you benefit from a free website evaluation? I use JTalia, and Julie would be happy to do a review for you. Contact her at www.italia.com.

Strategy and timing are the Himalayas of marketing. Everything else is the Catskills.

Al Ries

You've gone through an evaluation process and gained a few resources. Consider the internal and external assessments you completed to help you know who to direct your marketing to and what strengths to use in your promotions.

Now all you need is the “mouthpiece of choice” to get the word on the streets. Marketing doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. It just has to be effective.

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The best strategic plan includes a variety of options that can be implemented simultaneously. To see where you get the best bang for your marketing buck, be sure to code each method so you can track effectiveness.

Here's some low-budget but highly effective marketing ideas to get you moving toward some phenomenal breakthroughs:

- Get out there and use the "Two-foot rule." Talk to everyone and anyone who gets within two feet. Be enthusiastic, sincere and professional. Let your personality shine through.
- Contact groups and associations that attract your target customers and offer to give free talks. Have handouts and evaluation sheets to get contact information from the people attending. (Your handouts can double as an article on-line)
- Ask for referrals.
- As you get names, grow out your database for on and off-line marketing. Create an on-line newsletter that includes information and resources of interest to your market.
- Establish strategic partnerships to grow visibility and scope of offerings.
- Get off-line and write a personal note. The impact can be huge.
- Build relationships with the media before you need them.
- Recruit your suppliers as marketing agents. They work for free.

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- Write "tip sheets" for your clients and potential customers. People hang on to these so be sure to include all you contact information.
- Make your web page a source of value that brings visitors back by providing free information and resources.
- Create an e-zine.
- Get testimonials from your clients and have them on your web site and marketing materials.
- Practice copywriting using tips and real letters from the pro's.
- Ask your market what they want. Put a questionnaire on your website, or send one to your opt-in list. Check out www.surveymonkey.com. Their basic service is good and it's free.
- Create a great signature that includes your branding and have it go out on everything you send.
- Change your voice mail message often. Tell people what you're doing and what you're promoting.
- Postcards are a great inexpensive way to market off-line and have been proven to be much more effective than regular mail.
- Ask for what you want

"Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten"

Gucci family motto

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By creating a strategic marketing process based on specific missions, values and goals, you have much of your message defined. You will have the ability to focus your efforts and energies more easily and in such a way that actions are taken on goals which will move you towards the achievement of your missions and objectives. This is your job and when you do it successfully more than just a mission is achieved. Everyone who permits you to lead them prospers and grows.

However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.

Sir Winston Churchill 1874-1965, English statesman

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeannette Kraar, President of Performance Management International, is a highly-acclaimed coach, seminar leader, and business consultant. Her expertise draws on 25 years of practical experience in corporate management, career coaching, training and development and executive search. She specializes in a goal achievement process that closes the gap between current and desired performance with strong emphasis on strategic planning, performance improvement and skill development.

Hundreds of Jeannette's clients from industries spanning financial and professional services, technology, healthcare, retailing and consulting within corporations, non-profits and government agencies have learned to succeed even in the most turbulent times. She has coached individuals and consulted with corporations through economic swings, aging populations, the rise of the Internet, ever-shifting markets, changing technology, and other economic uncertainties,

Jeannette's new book, BREAKTHROUGH, The Hate My Job, Need A Life, Got Laid Off, Can't Get No Satisfaction SOLUTION is available through amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and retail bookstores.

A sample of Jeannette's clients are represented by SAP, Avon Products, AT&T, Motorola, Medtronic, True Value, Delta Airlines, Kaplan College, News Media, Midwest Eye Center, Bottomless Closet, Frito Lay and Fruitful Yield. In addition, she has worked with various non-profit agencies affiliated with the national Welfare to Work Program.

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